

Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)
"Beyond Words – EmPowering people"

Jo Giles
February 2022



Gas Network Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Eligibility Criteria

Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)	
In order to qualify as a VCMA project, a project must:	
VCMA Eligibility Criteria	Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)
a) Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA project;	Yes
b) Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or ii. Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO; 	Yes
c) Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	Yes
d) Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and	Yes
e) Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.	N/a
Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair and replacement projects	
In order to qualify as a VCMA project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	
a) A GDN has to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role;	N/a
b) The household cannot afford to service, repair or replace the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance; and;	N/a
c) Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement.	N/a
Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects	

In order to qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
a) Meet the above company specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria;	N/a
b) Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	N/a
c) Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	N/a

Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Registration Table 2

Information Required	Description
Project Title	Beyond Words
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent Ltd
Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only	N/a
Date of PEA Submission	February 2022
VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number	jo.giles@cadentgas.com
Total Cost (£k)	£75,000
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	£75,000
Problem(s)	<p>The overarching principle of our strategy is not to utilise labels and categories, but to provide services for all, recognising the specific circumstances of each customer individually and tailoring services to meet their needs. Providing services for all means gaining and maintaining a deep understanding of our customers, mapping their needs and co-creating responses with partners to ensure that the appropriate skills and services are deployed.</p> <p>Cadent has a licence condition to treat customers fairly – providing them with equal access to our services. This includes helping customers to understand what to do in a gas emergency, raise awareness of the PSR (to support self-resilience) and key safety messages including scam awareness, all of which currently we predominately share via web, social media and pamphlets – meaning all via the written word. Many people find it difficult to process or understand the written word – that’s before you start to include language barriers. Picture stories are accessible to everyone whether you can read words or not.</p>

Working with the charity **Beyond Words** (*Registered charity number: 1183942*), each story is co-created, 'with and for' people who find pictures easier to understand than words. This includes people with learning disabilities and/or autism, people with cognitive or communication difficulties, such as Dementia, people who have difficulty with reading, including some Deaf¹ people and people who do not use the language of the country where they are living.

Visual literacy² removes barriers to understanding, reduces anxiety and enables people to make their voice heard. Many various needs and circumstances mean that a person would benefit from key messages being communicated in a visual way. To expand on the scale of this inclusion, requirement across Cadent's networks and the UK are detailed below:

Autism is a lifelong condition that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them. There are around 700,000 people on the autism spectrum in the UK – that's more than 1 in 100. If you include their families, autism is a part of daily life for 2.8 million people (National Autistic Society).

Dyslexia sees individuals experiencing difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, word recognition and / or sequencing. It is estimated that 1 in every 10 people have dyslexia (NHS 2020).

Cognitive impairment/Dementia(s) – are also main areas of inclusion; those who have one of the brain diseases umbrellaed under 'Dementia(s) and cognitive impairments as a result of a brain injury, brain tumour or stroke.

Dementia(s) – According to research via Alzheimer's Society there are more than 850,000 people in the UK living with Dementia(s) 1 in 14 people over 65 and 1 in 6 people over the age of 80 have dementia. Across Cadent's networks (from ONS data via the Social Indicator Mapping Tool) there is 17.67% of people who are over 65+ years equating to approximately 408,000 and 2.35% being 85+ years this equates to approximately 126,500 who are potentially currently living with Dementia(s). With an aging population, this is predicted to grow – forecast by 2051 to be over 2 million.

Brain Injury - It is not commonly known that exposure to CO, a gas formed by burning common household fuels, can ultimately lead to a type of brain injury known as **Anoxic brain injury**. The effects of this can be as disabling

¹ Deaf with a capital 'd' denotes that someone is deaf from birth.

² The ability to interpret, negotiate, and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image.

	<p>as other forms of brain injury, such as a stroke or head injury. Every year, carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is responsible for approximately 4000³ attendances at A&E departments.</p> <p>Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)⁴ - There were 348,453 UK admissions to hospitals with acquired brain injury in 2016-17. That is 531 admissions per 100,000 of the population. In total it is estimated that there are 1.3 million individuals in the UK living with ABI.</p> <p>As part of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) we should take every step to support a 'persons' ('P' as the act refers) decision making and that includes communicating in more accessible ways to help all understand, process and respond to information which supports independent living, whilst keeping safe and warm.</p> <p>Calculating details of the individuals but not withstanding the impacts upon those who care for and provide supported decision making:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Need:</th> <th>Estimated impact/reach</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Autism</td> <td>700,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dyslexia (in Cadent networks)</td> <td>3,200,000⁵</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dementia(s)</td> <td>850,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anoxic brain injury</td> <td>600 pa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brain Injury</td> <td>1,300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stroke survivors England</td> <td>1,200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-English speaking (c.2% Eng pop)</td> <td>863,150</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It is apparent that Cadent's current communication options require extending to ensure accessibility. Using picture stories designed for and by users is overdue and this first publication will provide greater support to our customer base than we have managed previously.</p>	Need:	Estimated impact/reach	Autism	700,000	Dyslexia (in Cadent networks)	3,200,000 ⁵	Dementia(s)	850,000	Anoxic brain injury	600 pa	Brain Injury	1,300,000	Stroke survivors England	1,200,000	Non-English speaking (c.2% Eng pop)	863,150
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<p>Scope and Objectives</p> <p>The scope and objectives of the VCMA Project should be clearly defined including the benefits which would directly impact customers on the participating GDNs' network(s), and where the benefits of the VCMA Projects lie.</p>	<p>The Aim</p> <p>This project will provide the first adapted communication item to support those who find it easier to understand pictures rather than words supporting PSR customers and those who would benefit from being registered; across a wide range of needs, circumstances and potentially vulnerable situations.</p> <p>It is the ambition that this publication will be the first in a small number of relevant subjects, helping to build on-going trust, improved knowledge and engagement with the industry – Stories with Utilities.</p>																

³ Not all individuals who are impacted by being exposed to CO result in Anoxic brain injury – but it is considered around 10 to 15% of people who have severe carbon monoxide poisoning develop long-term complications (NHS)


⁴ 1.3 million people in the UK live with ABI, with a cost to the economy of £15 billion per annum from House of Commons Library Debate Pack (Number CDP 2019/0111, 8 May 2019) Acquired brain injury.

⁵ 6.3 million people in the UK are unable to communicate in English

	<p>Tackling loneliness is fundamental to an informed and connected life - too many people with learning disabilities and other needs such as brain injury, are not living their lives to the full. By creating and making this highly accessible information freely available, we will help in the reduction of isolation and loneliness of key groups in society who deserve and need greater inclusion.</p> <p>We also aim to take this first step with Beyond Words, to enhance Cadent's reputation to be a force for good; for both our customers, colleagues and communities that we live & work in supporting our ambition to make it <i>easier, fairer and greener</i> by ensuring that we are inclusive and work effectively to not leave customer behind as the energy industry transforms towards Net Zero.</p> <p>The Scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the first Beyond Words document/book to help customers to understand the safeguarding services available through Cadent and why the PSR is important, how it can support them and the key safety messages including relevant details from Utilities Against Scams (UAS) to aid independent living with the support of your utility industry – helping to keep all customers safe, warm and independent. • Cadent to sign up to the Beyond Words 'BELONG manifesto'; a living manifesto for a better life for people with learning disabilities and a call to action for more inclusive communities everywhere. Utilise case studies to embed across Cadent and encourage other utility companies to join too. • Utilise key partnerships to promote, deliver a greater awareness of the PSR, safety messages and Safeguarding Services available to them. <p>Through these steps we aim to reach 250,000 energy consumers who find it more difficult to process or understand the written word, in an impactful and deliberate manner – helping to underpin safe independent living and supported decision making.</p>
<p>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</p>	<p>This project allows Cadent to deliver on our commitments and licence conditions in a new way which can then be shared more broadly across other utility members to have the greatest consistent impact. It supports those who currently find themselves vulnerable due to not being able to engage, understand or have their voice heard due to circumstances out of their control.</p> <p>This project will set the approach for removing barriers which currently prevent Cadent and other utilities to provide truly equal access to our services.</p> <p>As human beings, whatever our intellectual or emotional capacity or impairment, we have a right to communicate our feelings, thoughts, needs, wishes and desires and to</p>

	<p>be treated as equal partners in that communication. Supporting the Mental Capacity Act (MCA), designing practices and procedures to support those on the Priority Services Register (PSR); or those who would benefit from being on the PSR and working to deliver against licence conditions to Treat Customers Fairly, this project provides an equalised platform to achieve this.</p> <p>This project will not only reach audiences that have been difficult to engage with before, it will give them the opportunity to have a voice.</p>
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</p>	<p>Warwick University completed a paper on the Beyond Words approach, revised in February 2021 by Mairi Ann Cullen and Richard Hastings, both from the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR). They detailed how in today's world, lack of access to high quality information and difficulties in communicating with other people, mean that people with learning disabilities are disadvantaged and excluded. They continued to say,</p> <p>“Research tells us that people with learning disabilities face serious inequalities in health (e.g., they die younger, receive poorer quality care, and have more mental health difficulties), in socio-economic domains (e.g., very few adults with learning disabilities have a job, families are more likely to live in poverty), in education (educational outcomes are poor, including difficulties with reading), and in quality of life (disability hate crime is common, many lack access to leisure and other activities and friendships are rare). Contributing to these inequalities are the closely related problems of: (a) accessing and understanding information, and (b) communicating and sharing with other people about both difficult problems and the everyday activities of life.”</p> <p>They continue to explain how the process of creation of the Beyond Words books means more than simply involving people representative of the expected readership in the book development process; it means working together with them as equal partners who bring their own expertise and experience to the process, alongside other experts in the topic area of a book who bring their own perspectives to the process, as do the artists and editors. In this way, each book is co-produced and emerges from the interplay among the different expert perspectives.</p> <p>The National Autistic Society state that visual supports are a communication tool that can be used with autistic people. They can be used in most situations, are adaptable and portable; helping in helping to support most situations to encourage independence, improve understanding, avoid frustration and anxiety and can make communication physical and consistent, rather than fleeting and inconsistent like spoken words can be.</p> <p>Working with Cadent's Strategic Partner Queen Alexandra College (QAC) who are based in Birmingham and are a national, residential college offering innovative and holistic approach to learning and</p>

	<p>support to young adults. They create learning opportunities for people with visual impairment and/or other disabilities to realise their potential to work and to live independently. When contacted as key experts/stakeholders, they provided the insight that,</p> <p><i>"16.4% of adults in England, or 7.1 million people, can be described as having 'very poor literacy skills'" The National Literacy Trust tells us, which is a clear indicator that text is not always the best or only way to provide people with information"</i>.</p> <p>[QAC All Formats team] <i>"as a business who produces Accessible Format documents, are aware of the need to give people the opportunity to receive information in a format that is most suitable for them. We spend a lot of our time speaking to companies and organisations about the importance of reaching as many of their own customers as they possibly can by providing them with information they can understand",. "we know the importance of recognising the individual and ensuring the right tools are used to communicate with them, and giving them a choice, so they have the best chance of understanding any important information being provided to them"</i>.</p>
<p>Information Required</p>	<p>Description</p>
<p>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and publication of a Beyond Words book 'How do I' - £60k • Share with Partners for distribution – printing costs & delivery £12.5k – an 18-month programme to reach and inform a 250,000 new audience • Provide free copies to a minimum of 1,500 Libraries across the Cadent networks creating future routes of communication on key safety and utility messages - £2.5k. • Embed process improvements across Cadent to help people with supported decision-making actions such as checking for understanding during interactions – embedding the MCA. • Raise awareness of the PSR in a way that provides equal access to over 400,000 (the Person & their Carer) • Support the reduction of isolation and loneliness by making this information freely available to those who would benefit from greater inclusion. • Understand the impacts of the work and consider the best next publication(s) –creating a trilogy of useful information; potentially including 'What does Net Zero mean to me'
<p>Project Partners and Third Parties Involved</p>	<p>Details below are key partners that we will work with but the project is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond Words – Registered as a charity in 2019, will be the creator of document/artwork. Through

	<p>their website we have options to run book clubs to promote awareness of the chosen book.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoJ – NMCF Leadership Group – Reputation/launch support. • Alzheimer’s Society – Partner in promoting the publication and understanding future topics relevant to Cadent/utilities to invest in (ie. maybe Safeguarding Services relevant for Dementia(s)/cognitive impairment specifically). • Headway – National charity supporting and championing brain injury issues. • Carer’s Trust – Working across their framework of ‘network partners’ providing support and guidance to over 500,000 unpaid carers across the UK. • Queen Alexandra College (QAC) – A specialist college in Birmingham supporting independent living and nationally leading accessible innovation. • Royal Assc. of Deaf – the oldest national charity supporting those who are born or become Deaf/deaf. 										
<p>Potential for New Learning</p>	<p>Through the creation of the first publication, Cadent will be the first utility to work with Beyond Words and it will allow us to establish the next relevant topic.</p> <p>Through sharing the publication through Libraries and partners we will understand future distribution routes and consider eBooklets as an additional option for the first and future stories.</p> <p>Via Cadent’s work we will establish new partner opportunities both national and regional.</p> <p>Through working with Beyond Words, there may be the opportunity to recruit new customers (particularly those with learning disabilities) to the customer forum to take part in future engagement events</p>										
<p>Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations</p> <p>The Funding Licensee(s) should justify the scale of the VCMA Project – including the scale of the investment relative to its potential benefits. As part of this it should provide the SROI calculation.</p>	<p>The attached paper has been calculated by SIA Partners – showing a positive SROI.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Total figures (5-year)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Cost</td> <td>£75,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gross Present Value</td> <td>£95,483</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NPV¹</td> <td>£20,483</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SROI²</td> <td>£0.27</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p> PDF</p> <p>Cadent Beyond Words v1.0.pdf</p>	Total figures (5-year)		Total Cost	£75,000	Gross Present Value	£95,483	NPV ¹	£20,483	SROI ²	£0.27
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<p>VCMA Project Start and End Date</p>	<p>Project dates: Mar 2022 – Oct 2024</p> <p>Creation followed by 12-18-month communication programme via partners.</p>										

Geographical Area	The project will predominately be based in England but through the Beyond Words website & Cadent Partner reach details will extend to support the needs supported by this project.
Remaining Amount in the Allowance at Time of Registration	Remaining funding left in the Licensee's/ Licensees' funding pot.

Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - PEA Control Table

In order to ensure that a VCMA project is registered in accordance with the Ofgem VCMA governance document (incl. project eligibility assessment), the below table should be completed as part of the project registration process.	
Stage 1: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team PEA Peer Review	
Date Immediate Team Peer Review Completed: 01/03/2022	Review Completed By: Gemma Norton
Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review	
Date Management Review Completed: 02/02/2022	Review Completed By: Simon Hames
Step 3: Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off	
Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off Date: 02/03/2022	
Step 4: Upload PEA Document to the Website & Notification Email Sent to Ofgem (vcma@ofgem.gov.uk): March 2022	
Date that PEA Document Uploaded to the Website: March 2022	
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