



GDN Collaborative Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Royal Association for Deaf People

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Date December 2024

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;	Y
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; 	Y
c) Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	Y
d) Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and	Y
e) Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local) funding.	Y
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	Y
c) Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	Y

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

Information Required	Description						
Project Title	Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD) – Collaborative						
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent and Wales & West Utilities						
New / Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New						
Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only	Cadent (lead partner) and Wales & West Utilities						
Date of PEA Submission	January 2025						
VCMA Project Contact Name, email, and Number	Name: Phil Burrows Title: Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery Email: Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com Number: 07773 545451						
Total Cost (£k)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Overall</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cadent</td> <td>£129,721.93</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>£64,999.66</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Overall	Cadent	£129,721.93	WWU	£64,999.66
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Cadent	£129,721.93						
WWU	£64,999.66						
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	£194,721.59						
Problem(s)	<p>Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD) work with deaf people, particularly those whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language (BSL). An estimated 1.2 million adults in the UK have hearing loss severe enough that they would not be able to hear most conversational speech.¹ Many have poor reading/comprehension skills in English (their second language) and struggle to access information and advice. Often lonely and isolated due to communication barriers. They are four times more likely to be unemployed so unlikely to have occupational or private pension and almost all rent their homes.</p> <p>Deaf people do not access mainstream media² and therefore are unaware of some benefits, e.g., Pensions Credit (entitling them to Warm Home Discounts). They have difficulty completing forms in English – for benefits, grants or switching energy providers. Deaf people, especially the older generation, hesitate to trust hearing workers – even via an interpreter. RAD uses BSL, understands deaf culture, and can establish rapport quickly. Deaf people and their networks are more likely to navigate to RAD’s website and social media pages for access to this information in their first language. Deaf people are more likely to be unemployed or stuck in poorly paid entry-level jobs, they are disproportionately more likely to be living in poverty.</p> <p>Furthermore, most do not understand the information provided by utility companies or where to find that help to access the information.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is currently no offer nationally to provide information to deaf people about the rising costs of utilities through a collaboration between an energy provider and a deaf organisation. 2. There is currently no partnership offering nationally that provides information to deaf people about The Priority Services Register (PSR). 3. There is currently no partnership offering nationally to provide information to deaf people about Carbon Monoxide (CO) and its risks to life. 						

¹ [Prevalence of deafness and hearing loss - RNID](#)

² [Reading and Deaf Children - an overview - BATOD](#)

	<p>4. There are inconsistencies nationally with the information available to deaf people and limited options on where people can find advice and guidance on financial support from energy companies on the cost-of-living crisis.</p>
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p>This project proposes to create a service that will target the need for PSR promotion among the deaf community, to offer support and advice to deaf people in financial hardship and to address the need to better understand Carbon Monoxide. The project will create an advice service gateway for people to present at with their issues and RAD, acting as triage system through the provision of general IAG (information, advice, and guidance) service, can incorporate the three priorities within their assistance to people and identify those who are living with fuel poverty and other safeguarding concerns. In addition, they expect that clients will present directly with issues of debt arising from the cost-of-living crisis, utility issues, and concerns about understanding the news and associated topics related to energy.</p> <p>The project will ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By signing-up to the PSR, RAD will identify the reasons behind customers' vulnerabilities and take additional actions to support them when delivering key services. 2. The dangers and risks of carbon monoxide, and the importance of installing a carbon monoxide alarm and ensuring appliances are safe. 3. Combating fuel poverty. Making customers aware of the individual services that RAD offer to help protect them and keep them safe and warm in their homes. <p>Additionally, the added value of this project would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide a wrap-around service. Deaf people can access an information service providing wrap-around support and introduced to other services and/ or funded projects within RADvice, RAD's live chat facility, advocacy, and employment services plus signposting to other ad hoc special projects. 2. Through social media or remote support. RAD uses a variety of social media platforms including, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn - we can also support customers with appointments remotely via video calls in BSL and other methods. 3. Referral for in-home service. A customer who cannot travel or requires a home visit will be offered a service through a referral process. <p>Once through the triage process, deaf individuals will have support with;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PSR – discussing what it is, and how it could benefit them. Assisting the individual with the registration (where IT skills are lacking), as well as being part of the social media campaign. 2. Carbon Monoxide – providing information through workshops, one-to-one conversations, and social media content on CO poisoning and how to recognise it. 3. Fuel Poverty – providing information and guidance on preventing fuel poverty, as well as signposting to colleagues and services that can support people. Including keeping people up to date with information on the ever-changing environment of energy costs. <p>RAD currently have 16 Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) colleagues who have previously received basic energy awareness delivered by National Energy Action (NEA). A further five colleagues, have been trained within the first few months of the initial project pilot with Cadent and are now an additional resource for RAD, successfully creating jobs for deaf people who historically find it difficult to find employment.</p> <p>RAD employees will be aware of any trusts, schemes or benefits that might help people with the rising costs, providing information about saving energy or switching suppliers. Customers will also receive information about installation of carbon monoxide detectors and how to check they are working correctly.</p>

	<p>These IAG specialists will be managed by a project lead who will oversee the programme, ensuring that information and training are up to date and that we reach the maximum number of customers.</p> <p>RAD will also recruit volunteers as 'energy awareness ambassadors' to help with the distribution of information across the regions. Volunteers will help to ensure fairness in the provision of the number of events geographically, and likely more time spent in deprived areas.</p>
<p>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</p>	<p>The GDNs believe that this project meets all the VCMA company specific and collaborative eligibility criteria.</p> <p><u>Company specific VCMA eligibility criteria</u></p> <p>A. The project is forecasted to have a positive SROI: We believe that the project has the deliverables necessary to create a positive social return on investment (SROI). The GDNs will utilise social value proxies and calculations approved by industry experts. More information on the project's positive forecasted SROI can be found in the relevant section below.</p> <p>B. The project will either:</p> <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 <p>The project delivers services that meet all three elements of this criteria. For example, the workshops will create one-to-one appointment's where individuals can get help and advice on income maximisation and benefit checks. The project will also raise awareness of the dangers of CO and promote registration to the PSR.</p> <p>C. Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these: This project has clearly defined outcomes and success criteria, and the associated actions to meet them. Further information on the project's outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria can be found in the relevant section below.</p> <p>D. Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations, and: The GDNs believe that this project goes outside of activities funded through other price control mechanisms due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The types of services being delivered to customer, and, b) The method in which the support is delivered to customers (e.g., through a publicly facing advice line and in person community events) <p>E. Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local) funding: This project will be delivered solely through the GDNs' VCMA funding.</p> <p><u>Collaborative VCMA projects criteria</u></p> <p>A. Meet the above company specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria: N/A</p> <p>B. Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and: This project will benefit customers in vulnerable situations living across two gas distribution network areas of Great Britain.</p>

	<p>C. Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies: This project will be funded by two GDNs.</p>
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</p>	<p><u>Cadent stakeholder evidence</u></p> <p>Cadent’s energy diaries revealed that stakeholders were keen to push initiatives that focused on CO awareness, Priority Services Registrations and Energy Efficiency advice especially with the increase in cost of living. It focuses on those hardest to reach and research shows that the deaf community fall heavily into that category.</p> <p>RAD has said through its reporting to funders it demonstrated that the deaf communities lack of awareness was broader than they anticipated. As they identified this growing need and recognised that more deaf people were without access to this specialist information, they started to introduce elements of this advice into their existing IAG locations.</p> <p>In a survey conducted by RAD of their service users they discovered that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 79% of deaf people surveys did not know what the PSR was 2. 56% did not know what Carbon Monoxide is 3. 89% of respondents said they needed financial advice with their gas bills 4. 21% of respondents said that they needed financial help immediately <p>This collaborative project is an extension of the successful initial phase of collaboration between Cadent and RAD, ensuring regionally tailored support to continue into Wales & West Utilities network and allow RAD to explore new opportunities for greater joint impact.</p> <p>RAD’s tailored services empower clients to navigate complex systems and improve their financial situations, ensuring they receive the assistance needed to manage energy costs and avoid fuel poverty.</p> <p>A recent participant from a RAD/Cadent workshop noted “We don’t get access to the same things [normally],” highlighting the need for targeted support for underserved communities.</p> <p>The existing partnership with Cadent has led to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Integration: Enhances coordination and alignment in service delivery • Effective Reporting: Robust systems for transparency and detailed insights into service performance. • Enhanced Communication: Better collaboration through regular meetings and shared reporting platforms. • Refined Service Delivery: Adoption of best practices and new technologies for improved service delivery. • Ongoing Feedback: Continuous refinement of services based on feedback from Cadent Gas. <p><u>WWU stakeholder evidence</u></p> <p>Through our business planning activities, priority customer research and stakeholders told us that tackling fuel poverty was a priority for WWU alongside raising awareness of the PSR and the dangers of CO amongst disadvantaged communities and those who are most in need.</p> <p>Our continued engagement with stakeholders such as the NEA, Citizens Advice, and charities supported by fuel poverty statistics shows due to high inflation and record energy prices that fuel poverty is impacted more homes than ever. People who were struggling are now not using the heating or limiting use to unhealthy levels and appliances are not being serviced leading to future safety risks. The crisis has meant people who have never been in trouble now find themselves needing help but not knowing where to turn for advice.</p>

	<p>We have tested support for projects under the VCMA which target fuel poverty through our Independent Stakeholder Group, Citizens panels, VCMA showcase events and Regional Workshops with overwhelming support to continue and do even more. Feedback demonstrated that projects should continue to be delivered through partnership organisations who are experts in delivering support services, such as RAD.</p>																
<p>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</p>	<p><u>Project Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All deaf people who present at a gateway service for standard support, or any workshop will have or receive a meaningful conversation about the PSR. All individuals having PSR conversations will receive advice about the registration process and where necessary, support to register. All individuals who present to the standard service will be made aware of support available to them generally, including how to reduce energy bills. All individuals who present to the service with issues relating to energy i.e., financial hardship, to understand their bills – will receive information on Carbon Monoxide (CO) workshops and other supporting resources. All individuals who present to the service will be made aware of RAD's other services that could support them. <p><u>Implementation Plan</u></p> <p>Service Delivery:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="424 913 1449 2087"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="424 913 767 965"></th> <th data-bbox="774 913 1102 965">Cadent</th> <th data-bbox="1109 913 1449 965">WWU</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 974 767 1245">Client Engagement:</td> <td data-bbox="774 974 1102 1245">Maintain ongoing outreach efforts in the community, using established relationships and trust built over the past two years to further engage and refer clients into services, including the Priority Services Register (PSR).</td> <td data-bbox="1109 974 1449 1245">Dedicate time to outreach and build a client base in the community, actively promote, gain trust and build relationships to meaningfully refer into services including.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="424 1254 767 1576">Workshops:</td> <td data-bbox="774 1254 1102 1576">Continue running interactive workshops at familiar, accessible venues like libraries and community centres. 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		new benefits or energy services.	health concerns, and access to additional services. This tailored approach ensures comprehensive support for each individual's unique circumstances.																		
	Remote Support:	Strengthen remote consultations through social media and video calls in BSL, with a focus on rural customers. Based on feedback, more regular remote events will be introduced to ensure continued accessibility.	Provide consultations and support via social media and video calls in BSL, particularly for rural customers.																		
	<p>Training and Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Training: Building on existing staff expertise, additional training will be offered on gas-related safety and energy-saving issues, ensuring that staff are up to date with both Cadent Gas and WWU requirements. IAG Specialists: Existing RAD staff will continue to receive specialised training, and new recruitment will target expanding job opportunities for deaf individuals in line with the project's growth. <p><u>Success Criteria</u></p> <p>The success of the project will be measured by meeting the below criteria over 12-months:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Cadent</th> <th>WWU</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>One-to-one appointments (covering three topics: CO, PSR & EE Advice)</td> <td>1,250 (for each topic).</td> <td>300 (for each topic).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Workshop Attendances (covering three topics: CO, PSR & EE Advice)</td> <td>1,100 (for each topic).</td> <td>240 (for each topic).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority Services Registrations</td> <td>450</td> <td>210</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Complex Cases (in addition to the one-to-one appointments).</td> <td>750</td> <td>150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social media views</td> <td>20,000</td> <td>8,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Cadent	WWU	One-to-one appointments (covering three topics: CO, PSR & EE Advice)	1,250 (for each topic).	300 (for each topic).	Workshop Attendances (covering three topics: CO, PSR & EE Advice)	1,100 (for each topic).	240 (for each topic).	Priority Services Registrations	450	210	Complex Cases (in addition to the one-to-one appointments).	750	150	Social media views	20,000	8,000
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Project Partners and Third Parties Involved	Royal Association for Deaf People, Cadent and Wales & West Utilities																				
Potential for New Learning	The project offers the GDNs the opportunity to build on the previous learnings from the collaboration between RAD and Cadent and first hand identify the needs of some of the most vulnerable individuals that would have fallen outside of some of our existing projects due to the lack of accessibility. RAD have the knowledge in this field to enhance collaborative working with many of our existing projects across both networks.																				
Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations	<u>Scale of VCMA project</u>																				

The collaboration will deliver a further 12-months extension of the existing Cadent/RAD partnership as well as delivering a new 12-month project with Wales & West Utilities, reaching 30,890 deaf individuals across both GDN networks.

The Gas Distribution Networks worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIRIO Strategies on the development of the Industry Standard Social Value Framework and supporting GDN Rulebook. We have used that GDN Rulebook to carry out an assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership. Carrying out an assessment of the predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net Social Return on Investment of £8.20 for the duration of the 12-month project.

GDN Rulebook
Latest Version Date: 27-09-2024



Load Project:

Project information:		Results:	
Name:	RAD	Cost (discounted):	£185,967.61
WACC:	4.97%	Customer volume:	7400
Year of assessment:	2025	GPV:	£1,710,135.61
Start year of benefits:	2025	NPV:	£1,524,168.01
End year of benefits:	2026	SROI:	£8.20
Attribution:	0.00%		

Non-standardised activity inputs:

Cost (discounted):	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Calculate"/> <input type="button" value="Save"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/>
GPV:	<input type="text"/>	

One-year social return on investment = £1: £8.20

VCMA Project Start and End Date

VCMA Project Start Date: 01st April 2025
VCMA Project End Date: 31st March 2026

Geographical Area

The project will be delivered across Cadent and Wales & West Utilities networks.

Internal governance and project management evidence

Cadent have been running a project partnership with RAD since 1st April 2023 and have introduced WWU into the project, co-designing the extension of the partnership to ensure that it aligns with the delivery of our collaborative vulnerability strategy and the VCMA governance criteria.

The SROI for this 12-month project has been calculated using information that has been provided by RAD, as set out in the project outcomes section of this document.

We have based the SROI on those figures which has generated a five-year forecast SROI of £41.97 using the GDN Rulebook.

Cadent, RAD and WWU will meet quarterly to review outcomes, share best practise and continue to grow the project from strength to strength, ensuring all customers are being support and address any issues that may arise.

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

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: GDN Collaboration Group PEA Review
 Date completed: 22 January 2024
 Review completed by:
 Job title:

GDN:	Name(s):
Cadent	Gurvinder Dosanjh
WWU	Sophie Shorney

Stage 2: GD2CVG Panel Review
 Date review completed: 22 January 2024
 Review completed by:
 Job title:

GDN:	Name(s)
Cadent	Gurvinder Dosanjh
WWU	Nigel Winnan

Step 3: Participating GDN individual signatory sign-off

GDN	Name(s)	Signature(s)	Date
Cadent:	Philip Burrows	<i>Philip Burrows</i>	07/02/2025
WWU:	Nigel Winnan	<i>Nigel Winnan</i>	5/02/2025

Step 4: Upload PEA Document to the Website & Notification Email Sent to Ofgem (vcma@ofgem.gov.uk)

Date that PEA Document Uploaded to the Website: February 25

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