

# 2022-2023 Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Showcase

Feedback Report



# Contents

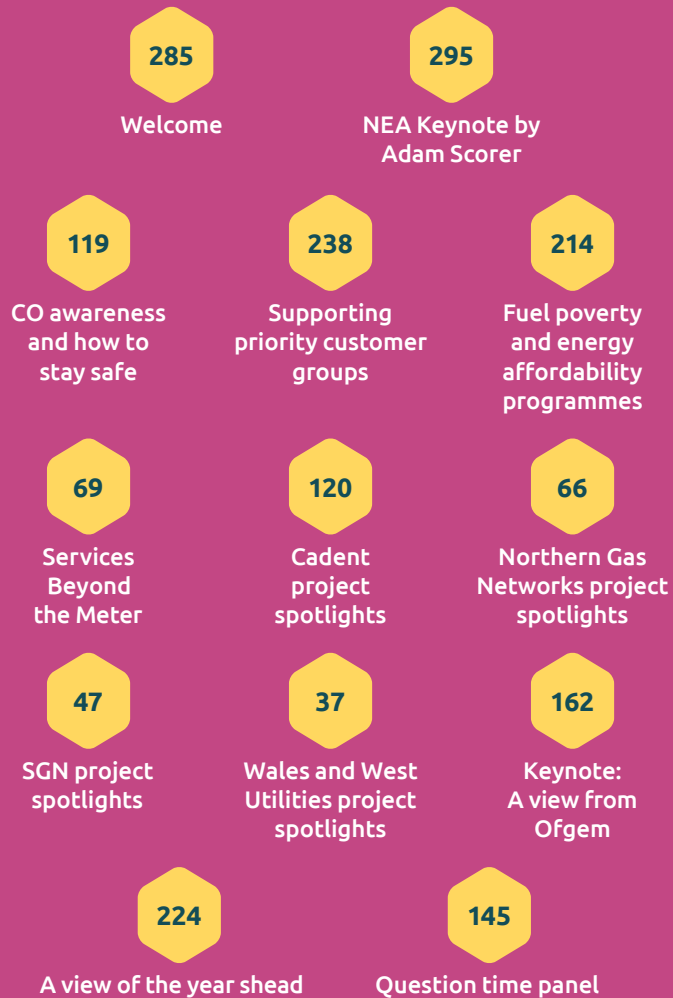
**Key showcase statistics**  
**Project feedback Q&A**

**Appendix**

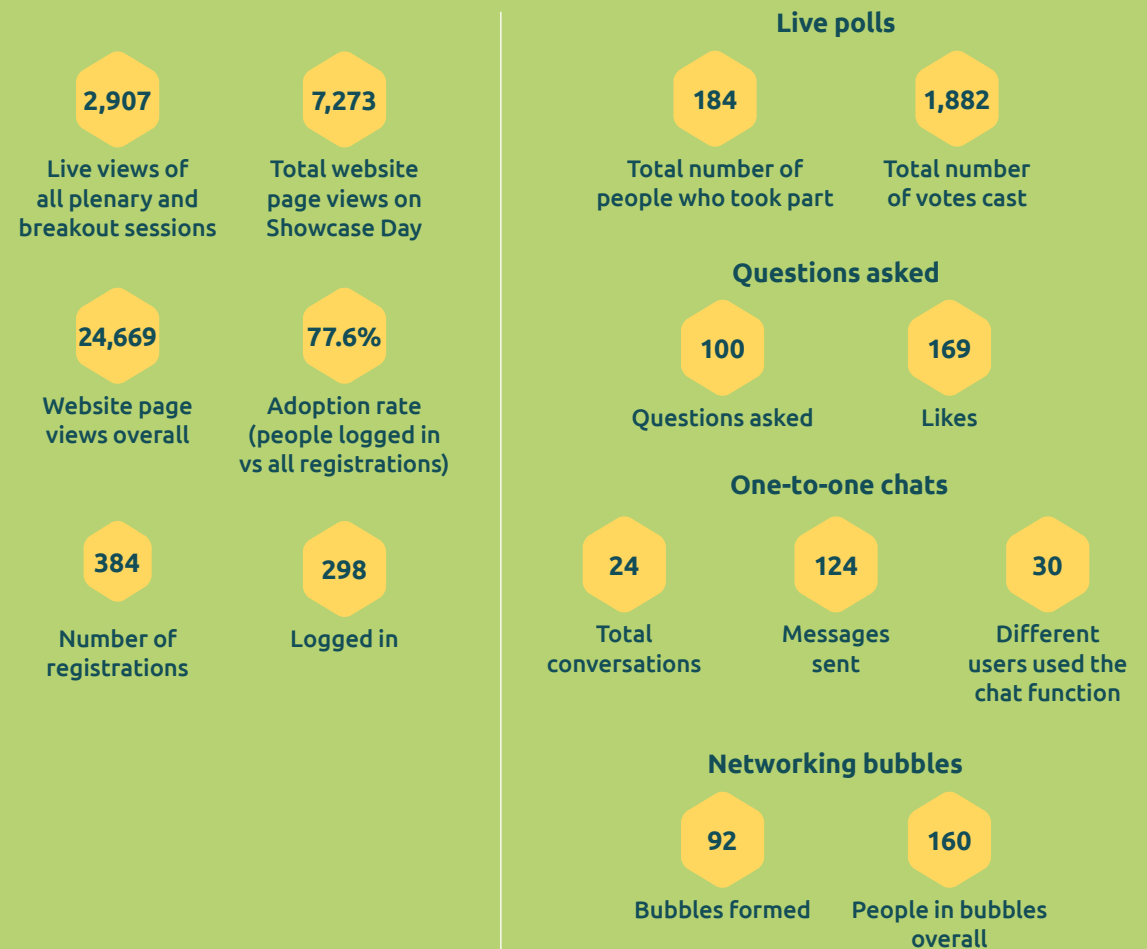
# Key showcase statistics

# Key statistics

## Attendees per session



## Engagement statistics

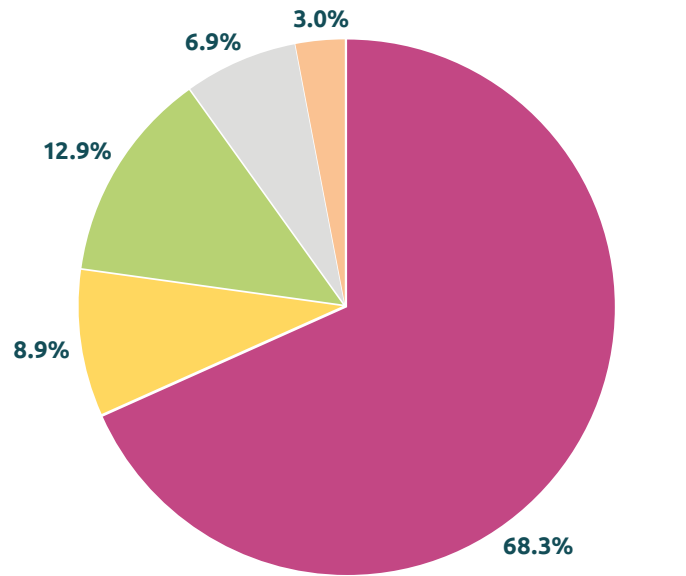


# Project feedback

Feedback collected during the Showcase on  
both collaborative and individual projects.

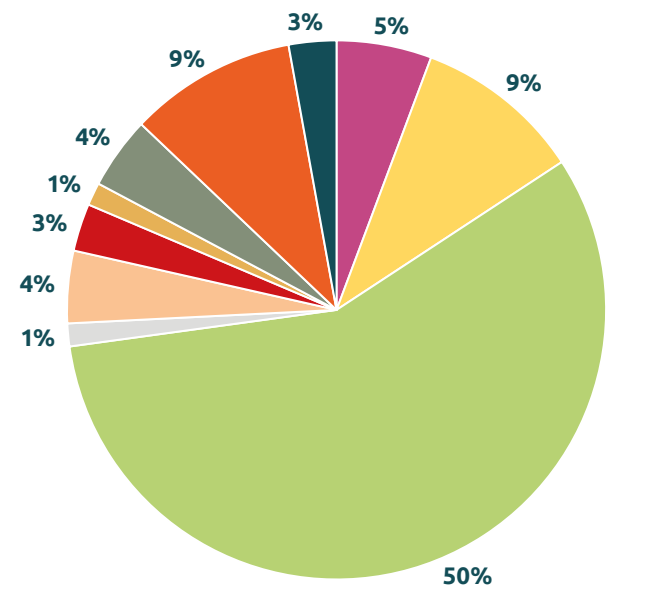
# Attendee expectations

## What do you hope to get out of today's Showcase event?



- Hearing and learning about other projects
- Hearing from NEA
- Hearing from Ofgem
- Networking opportunities
- Opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback

## Which session are you most looking forward to today?



- Keynote from NEA
- Carbon monoxide awareness projects
- Fuel poverty and energy affordability projects
- Services Beyond the Meter
- Cadent's project spotlights
- SGN's project spotlights
- Wales & West Utilities' project spotlights
- Keynote from Ofgem
- A view of the year ahead
- Question time panel discussion

# Supporting priority customer groups

## Scope DES

Do you feel that the CO awareness campaign is a good use of customers money to promote CO safety?

**98%**  
Yes

**2%**  
Don't know

Would you be in favour of continuing with similar campaigns in the future?

**84%**  
Yes, more similar projects

**14%**  
Continue with about the same number of similar projects

**2%**  
Less similar projects

Is supporting vulnerable customers important to you?

**100%**  
Yes

Did the Scope DES line offer enough support to vulnerable customers?

**32%**  
Yes, it offers enough support

**41%**  
It could offer more support

**27%**  
Don't know



# Supporting priority customer groups continued

## Marie Curie

Was the high reach of the project a surprise, compared to expected reach?



Yes



No



I expected the reach to be higher



Don't know

Do you feel we should increase the reach?



Yes



Stay the same

Do you think projects like this should be a priority for VCMA investment or do you think the money would be better invested in other areas?



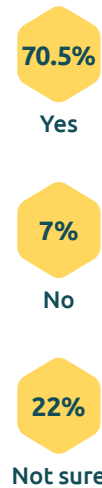
Yes



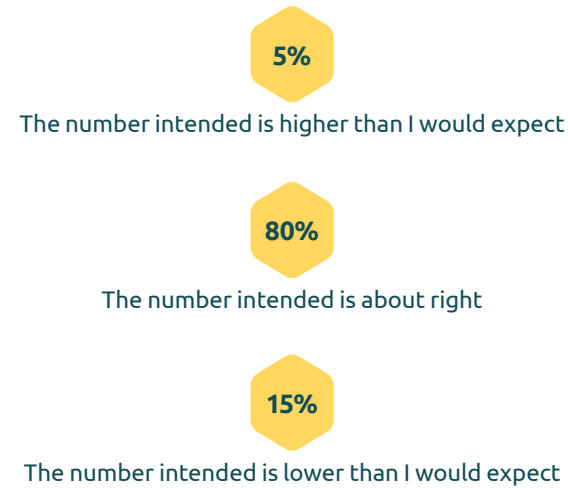
# Supporting priority customer groups continued

## Older people's collaboration

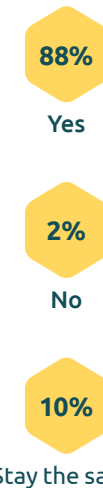
Do you feel that the GDNs should be focusing on older people when considering current and future projects?



Is the total number of people the project intends to reach what you would expect of such a project?



Do you feel we should increase the reach?





# Carbon monoxide awareness and how to stay safe

## APPCOG – Looking forward initiative

Would you be in favour of continuing with similar campaigns in the future?

68%

Yes, more campaigns please

32%

About the same number of campaigns

Is raising awareness of CO important to you?

100%

Yes

Was the campaign messaging suitable and effectively educate people on CO and raise awareness?

100%

Yes

Do you feel that the CO awareness campaign is a good use of customers money to promote CO safety?

100%

Yes



# Carbon monoxide awareness and how to stay safe continued

## Bonanza Schools education programme and Game Over project

Is the total number of people reached what you would expect of such a project?

50%

The number reached is higher than I would expect

50%

The number reached is about right

Do you feel that the GDNs should be targeting school children and students to raise awareness of CO?

100%

Yes

Do you feel we should increase reach?

94%

Increase reach

6%

Stay the same



# Carbon monoxide awareness and how to stay safe continued

## Scouts CO package

Is the messaging and approach clear and inclusive?

64%

Yes

36%

It could be better

Is the total number of people reached what you would expect of such a project?

22%

The number reached is higher than I would expect

78%

The number reached is about right

Do you feel we should increase reach?

100%

Yes

Do you feel that the GDNs should be targeting Scouts to raise awareness of CO?

100%

Yes



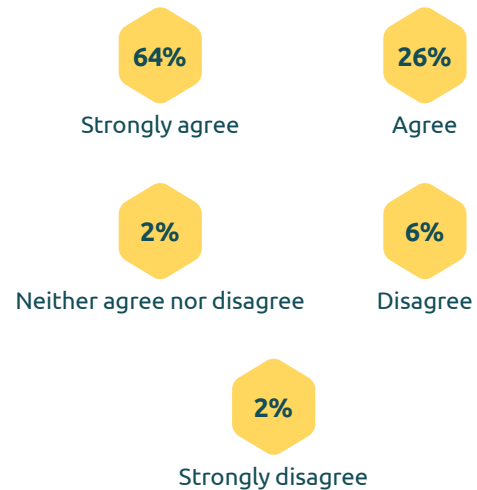
# Fuel poverty and energy affordability programmes

## Citizens Advice Bureau collaborative

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "When reporting on a project's overall outcomes, it is important to measure more than just the financial gains to clients – i.e. GDNs should also evaluate the improvements in wellbeing etc?"



To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Working with nationally recognised brands like Citizens Advice means that the GDNs are able to engage and support customers most impacted by fuel poverty and affordability concerns?"



To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "As well as funding, delivery partners like the Citizens Advice England & Wales benefit greatly from projects like the Energy Safeguarding and CO Safety partnership, due to the value offered to staff through free training (e.g. carbon monoxide safety)?"





# Fuel poverty and energy affordability programmes continued

## NEA and Wise Group warm and safe homes

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "A free to use, open to the public advice line is an effective way of supporting households most impacted by affordability and fuel poverty?"

46%

Strongly agree

49%

Agree

5%

Neither agree nor disagree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Given the scale of hardship customers face as a result of the energy/cost of living crisis, GDNs are aiming to ramp up their investment in fuel poverty and affordability projects through wide-reaching partnerships like the WASH programme."

47%

Strongly agree

49%

Agree

4%

Neither agree nor disagree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Funders like GDNs can rely more upon customers acting upon advice they receive from expert partners like National Energy Action and Wise Group, versus attempting to deliver advice through their own channels."

64%

Strongly agree

28%

Agree

5%

Neither agree nor disagree

3%

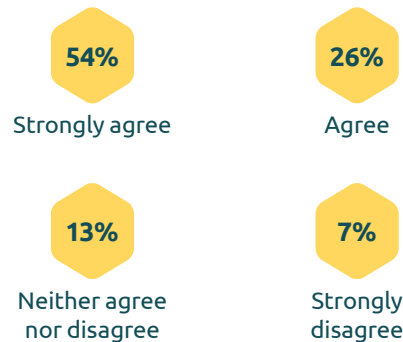
Strongly disagree



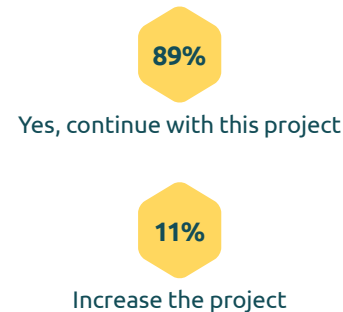
# Fuel poverty and energy affordability programmes continued

## MyBnk – Financial inclusion and energy safeguarding schools programme

Imagine you are a parent/guardian of a child that attends a school that receives a My Bnk Financial Inclusion and Energy Safeguarding session. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "School is the right setting for children to learn about these topics, and I think the project is a good use of a child's school hours."

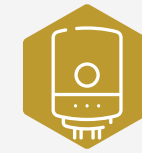


Would you be in favour of continuing with this project in the future?



To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Engaging primary school children on the topics of energy efficiency and financial well-being is an effective use of VCMA due to the facts that children can share learning with parents, and they are the customers of tomorrow."





# Services Beyond the Meter (SBtM)

Do you feel that the Services Beyond the Meter offering, is a good use of customers money to protect our customers in vulnerable situations



Yes

Would you be in favour of SBtM continuing in the future?



Yes

Is providing this service to our most vulnerable customers across the GDNs important to you?



Yes



Don't know

Does our Services Beyond the Meter offering go far enough to support those most in need?



Yes



No



Don't know

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# Services Beyond the Meter (SBTM) continued

Do you feel we should grow this so that even more customers can benefit?

93%

Yes

7%

Don't know

Is the total number of people reached what you would expect of such a project?

62%

The number reached is about right

38%

The number reached is lower than I would expect

Do you feel that the GDNs should be working in partnership with other organisations to offer repair/replace of gas appliances to eligible customers?

100%

Yes

Is the messaging on our SBM project clear and inclusive?

67%

Yes

33%

It could be better

# Cadent projects

## Fuel Poverty Partnership Ecosystem

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:  
The scale of hardship faced by customers in vulnerable situations as a result of the cost of living and fuel crisis(s) heightens the need for gas distribution network to innovate and create new methods of maximising the range and depth of support offered to customers.

67%

Strongly agree

33%

Agree

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:  
The challenges experienced by funders, delivery partners and customers outlined in the presentation resonate with me based on my experience.

33%

Strongly agree

63%

Agree

4%

Neither agree nor disagree

## A little energy campaign

What extent do you agree with the following statement:  
Wide reaching mass campaigns that improve customers' awareness of energy saving techniques are an effective method of supporting customers with less complex needs and should be delivered alongside projects that offer more tailored one-to-one advice.

19%

Strongly agree

78%

Agree

4%

Neither agree nor disagree

What extent do you agree with the following statement:  
Despite the recent decrease in the Ofgem energy price cap, projects like the 'A Little Energy Campaign' will still provide an important and valuable service to customers in vulnerable situations in the years to come.

36%

Strongly agree

64%

Agree

# Cadent projects continued

## Centre for Warmth project

To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

The recently announced increase in Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance funding (repurposing 70% of the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme into the VCMA) would be best utilised on partnerships with grass routes charities like Centres For Warmth?

59%

Agree – working with more local charities enables a greater proportion of the funding to reach customers with the greatest need

41%

Somewhat agree – a hybrid approach is needed where GDNs focus on both larger scale national partnerships and projects that support local charities to deliver at a grassroots level

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Grassroots charities based out of community centres can effectively engage customers in severely vulnerable situations.

90%

Strongly agree

10%

Agree

## Healthy Home solutions

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Gas distribution networks should utilise data-driven approaches (like the Healthy Homes Solutions pilot) to supplement their wider activities that identify and engage customers in vulnerable situations.

56%

Strongly agree

44%

Agree

The Cadent partnership with Healthy Homes Solutions and the Vulnerability Registration Service analysed a large range of data to profile the spread of customers in vulnerable situations living on Cadent's networks. Which of the following types of data do you believe should be prioritised when attempting to target customers that stand to benefit most from services funded through the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance:

39%

Household income

11%

Property EPC rating

22%

National fuel poverty statistics

19%

Index of multiple deprivation

6%

Claimants of means tested benefits

3%

Other

# SGN projects

## Citizens Advice Scotland – Safe and Warm Scotland

Did you know your local Citizens Advice Bureau can give energy advice?

83%

Yes

17%

No

Did you know you can find energy advice online at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/>

71%

Yes

25%

No

4%

Don't know

Do you know how to refer clients to your local Citizens Advice Bureau?

65%

Yes

22%

No

13%

Don't know

Did you know that your local Citizens Advice Bureau can give you information about the Priority Services Register?

74%

Yes

13%

No

13%

Don't know

# SGN projects continued

## Safe and Warm Community Scheme

What strikes you as the most important for grassroots groups supporting local people?

63%

Knowing how to engage with people

13%

Able to put people at ease

25%

Having broad basic knowledge on energy and carbon monoxide safety

In your experience, what makes the biggest difference for local organisations to be best able to support their communities in this area of activity?

25%

Good staff and volunteers

50%

Well known and trusted in the community

13%

Reliable long term funding

12%

Strong leadership

In your experience, what single topic or issue to do with managing energy and understanding gas safety is least understood?

40%

Bills & how billing works

20%

Smell disorders and smell safety

20%

PSR

20%

Understanding the dangers of CO

What information and support is most needed by individuals who are facing crisis situations right now?

33%

Reassurance of long term solutions

33%

Reassurance that help and support is available and easily accessible

33%

More support is needed overall

# Q&A

# Q&A questions

## Supporting priority customer groups

Question	Response
<p>Scope DES – How are the disabled people for this project identified? Are they existing SCOPE customers?</p>	<p>The approach to offering the support is; 1) existing Scope service users referred in via other Scope services 2) direct marketing within the Scope community 3) External marketing, including via Scope charity shops 4) referrals directly via GDNs and 5) referrals from other organisations including charities and local authorities.</p>
<p>Marie Curie – There was some really worrying statistics shown in your presentation about the needs of people with a terminal illness. Does your partnership include research or insights to assess the impact of the support offered?</p>	<p>The Marie Curie team monitor the outcomes against all of our project scope. In addition, the team review the case work provided by the dedicated Energy Support Officers so that we gain insights of what the needs are and what support is provided to address these needs. By working closely with the Marie Curie team, we have also been actively involved with bringing together energy industry participants and relevant charities to better understand the real lived experiences. Through the partnership we do get invited to take part and learn from research and insights that the Marie Curie team bring together. This month they shared their latest incredibly powerful report on the struggle many terminally ill people face in paying for their energy. <a href="https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/policy/poverty">https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/policy/poverty</a>  <a href="https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/benefits-entitlements/other-financial-matters/energy-bills">https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/benefits-entitlements/other-financial-matters/energy-bills</a></p>
<p>You spoke about the success of the partnership in Scotland being a catalyst for broader collaboration with Age Cymru and Age UK. What lessons have your learned so far about needs of older people?</p>	<p>Our partners are seeing that many older people are still facing disproportionate hardship as a direct result of covid and more recently the cost of living. We understand that older people are making choices to reduce spend on household essentials like food and energy rather than ask for help or go into debt. We've learned through co-design that older people like a variety of different ways to engage, as a group, there is a higher proportion of older people less confident on digital channels especially when it comes to digital security. Trust is really important and getting information and advice from the regional charities has helped to open the doors to services well beyond energy. For example, support to access pension credits, which has a significant impact on the financial health of older people. Via our partnership with Age Scotland, the team conducted research to understand how older people were dealing in practical terms with the increased costs of energy, including was in which they were managing energy usage with results shared. Age Scotland will conduct another survey with results being published August 23.  <a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/our-impact/policy-research-influencing/reports-research/help-to-turn-up-the-heat/">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/our-impact/policy-research-influencing/reports-research/help-to-turn-up-the-heat/</a></p>

## Supporting priority customer groups continued

Question	Response
<p>Scope DES – What is the future aspiration for the project? Is it a proof of concept or are you looking to scale up and set up as a longer-term project going forward?</p>	<p>The partnership with Scope originated from a regional partnership with SGN that had been delivering dedicated energy and water advice to disabled people since 2020. The reason the partnership was established was built on the foundation of data which highlighted that disabled people were paying more for their energy based upon need against an income gap which meant that many disabled people were struggling to afford a safe and warm home. In addition, many disabled people are not aware of the Priority Services Register and the associated safeguards linked to being registered with their utility companies. Following the success of the Disability Energy Service with Water support, this partnership was scaled up with the support of the other gas networks, enabling a GB wide service. As a group of GDNs this partnership aligns to our strategic ambition to support customers who are most in need. This project has demonstrated meaningful outcomes and a positive social return on investment to date. Our current partnership end date is marked for May 2024, we will continue to review and work with Scope to determine how to move forward. This could be an extension or upscale of the existing project or a new proposal incorporating other factors.</p> <p><a href="https://www.scope.org.uk/media/press-releases/extra-costs-for-disabled-people-go-through-the-roof/">https://www.scope.org.uk/media/press-releases/extra-costs-for-disabled-people-go-through-the-roof/</a></p>
<p>Marie Curie – You covered the increased costs of people who are living with a terminal illness, but what about the energy resilience, the essential needs of people with hospice care at home?</p>	<p>Working with Marie Curie, we have a focus on making sure that terminally ill people are known to their energy company so that support can proactively be provided, not just with energy costs, but in the case of a loss of supply, a gas emergency, water outage or power cut. In addition to the training and the promotion of the Priority Services Register we’ve also hosted a round table meeting with representatives across energy and consumer advocacy groups, as well as charities including Kidney Care UK, Hospice UK and Parkinsons UK to look at how other industry mechanisms and data sharing can help with ensuring the most vulnerable in our community are known to their energy networks companies enabling support to be offered proactively.</p>
<p>Age UK – How are older people identified for support though the partnership?</p>	<p>Support is offered to older people through the partnership in a range of ways. Depending on location, this can be via direct marketing including mailers and social media campaigns, as well as community events and other forms of signposting through partner networks. In addition, the GDN engineers can either make a referral for or signpost customers to the partners when in their homes. Also, all three partners are well known advice services for older people, and they provide tailored advice based on circumstance, and the rights and benefits for older people, so people come to the agencies already.</p>
<p>Marie Curie- What do you do to support people off work with long-term sickness who are on stat pay and are struggling to pay their bills? What if they are terminally ill but just long-term ill?</p>	<p>Our partner Marie Curie provides support services tailored to the needs of people and their families with terminal illnesses and offer help to callers of their Information and Advice team. If the team are unable to provide advice based upon the support services required, they would signpost to other organisations where this need could be addressed.</p>



## Supporting priority customer groups continued

Question	Response
<p>We're keen to understand how our energy advice services can better engage and support customers with disabilities/ life limiting illnesses. Are there any suggestions around how energy advice providers can better support people with disabilities / health conditions? Are there opportunities for wider collaboration?</p>	<p>We're keen to ensure that disabled people and those with long term health conditions get the tailored support they need. Scope offer partners through their Scope Utilities Membership (SUM) access to inclusion training amongst other services, that help us to understand how we can better support these groups. We also encourage collaboration and would welcome an opportunity to make introductions to our existing partners or talk to new potential partners about ways in which we can work better together to support more eligible households access tailored support.</p> <p>Please get in touch if you'd like to find out more; SGN – <a href="mailto:positive.impact@sgn.co.uk">positive.impact@sgn.co.uk</a></p>
<p>Are the projects discussed still taking referrals and how would we refer customers in please?</p>	<p>All three partnerships are still delivering tailored support services for customers under the VCMA scheme.</p> <p>Marie Curie – If you're living with a terminal illness or caring for someone who is and you're worried about energy bills, you can call Marie Curie's Support Line and ask to speak to one of our dedicated Energy Support Officers. They can give you expert information on things like supplier-specific support, grants, and energy efficiency updates. Tel: 0800 090 2309</p> <p>For Scope – The service is available for disabled people including where there is someone disabled living in your home; you can request an appointment to access support via our dedicated utility advice specialists at: <a href="https://www.scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support">https://www.scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support</a>, who will arrange a follow up that meets your communication need.</p> <p>For information and support services for the Age Collaboration; each charity has information available on it's website to help older people who have questions about how to access help to maintain a safe and warm home, and a telephone advice service where dedicated advisers can support with energy and benefits advice.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/energy">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/energy</a>,</p> <p><a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig30_save_energy_pay_less_inf.pdf">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig30_save_energy_pay_less_inf.pdf</a></p> <p>Age Scotland – 0800 1244 222 Age Cymru – 0300 303 44 98 Age UK – 0800 678 1602</p>

## Supporting priority customer groups continued

Question	Response
<p>Could you include water advice as part of the offering e.g., links with water and energy?</p>	<p>All our partnerships although focus on energy safeguarding, recognise water as an essential utility service. In England and Wales, these partnerships include information about water social tariffs and all partnerships GB wide highlight the importance of registration to the water Priority Services Register. For example, our partnership with Scope is promoted externally as the Disability Energy Advice Service with Water Advice. Through sector improvements in data sharing, households that sign up to join the PSR for energy will be shared with their water company in England and Wales. See <a href="http://www.thepsr.co.uk">www.thepsr.co.uk</a> for more information</p>
<p>Can you please share which SROI model you have used?</p>	<p>For all the partnerships shared in the Supporting priority customer groups session the SROI calculation was completed by SIA Partners independently as SGN's external assurance partner. The SIA Partners team work closely with the delivery partner during co-design to better understand the ambition of the partnership, how the service will identify and support beneficiaries and the assumed impact that will have on the broader community as a result. SIA Partners have experience in working in different sectors to assess the social impact of initiatives that deliver common outcomes for customers, these form an agreed set of values in a proxy bank. SIA use the DNO SROI model as a basis to help ensure our social value and SROI calculations align as much as possible and are comparable to the wider industry. Where the outcome/ service is new then a new proxy value is researched and generated by the SIA team using the Green Book as a foundation. The team then assess the likelihood of delivering the full potential of this outcome and apply various discount factors based on success rate, deadweight, attribution, and other probability factors.</p>
<p>Can you explain a little more about the common SROI approach being applied to these projects? what are the common inputs and outputs that are being measured? Thank you</p>	<p>For all the partnerships shared in the Supporting priority customer groups session the SROI calculation was completed by SIA Partners independently as SGN's external assurance partner. The SIA Partners team work closely with the delivery partner during co-design to better understand the ambition of the partnership, how the service will identify and support beneficiaries and the assumed impact that will have on the broader community as a result. Common outcomes for customers that are measured to assess the social impact of a project include, energy advice behavioural, energy advice advocacy, access to energy advice measures, access to unclaimed benefits, access to Warm Home Discount, access to water social tariff, PSR registration, carbon monoxide awareness, carbon monoxide alarm provision, and new boiler / heating system.</p> <p>The GDNs are all currently involved in an industry wide project facilitated by ENA that includes DNO's and TSO's, working with a social value specialist to develop a single Social Value Framework. This will mean that we're all using a common tool, with a common set of proxies and supporting governance criteria to forecast and calculate our social value and SROI, therefore providing more consistent, credible, and comparable figures across the industry.</p>

## Supporting priority customer groups continued

Question	Response
<p>I work for Fifth Sense and our work is funded by Cadent, I deliver engagement sessions around Smell disorders and Smell safety including gas leaks, how can I link in with these projects to share my engagement sessions to further support Priority customers?</p>	<p>Thank you for your offer to engage more widely. The GDNs work closely with each other to share best practice and to review regional partnerships with a view of extending the delivery of the scheme where the partnership has the potential to deliver outcomes in line with the GDNs collaborative strategic approach. For vulnerability, there is a GDN working group that meets once a month to share updates on existing collaborative partnerships and discuss potential new collaborative partnerships based on either existing local initiatives or gaps in our collaborative plan. We are collaborating to look at a wider project on how we can bring VCMA partners together to help access support services and share best practice across Britain. In the meantime, for partners with an existing project with a GDN future collaborative projects would be presented via that GDN, as Cadent is the lead GDN we would ask you to speak to the team about the possibility of greater collaboration with other VCMA partnerships.</p>
<p>These are fantastic initiatives but are potentially one-offs. How do you now proceed with ensuring they are replicated across wider geographies and other GDNs. They offer so much value that it'd be a shame that it's a postcode lottery for who can access them. What's the replication process?</p>	<p>The projects shared in the 'Supporting priority customer groups' session are partnerships that cover England, Scotland, and Wales. Marie Curie was a partnership co-designed from the start to be UK wide as it was embedded into their broader community and the Information and Advice service, whereas both Scope and the Age collaboration started off as regional projects that were established by SGN with the intention to pilot and then roll out wider based on their success. When targeting a specific community based upon a common need we looked at partners that already have a trusted role in providing advice and support services to this community. This lends itself well to national partnerships especially where there is a centralised support service in place already. Some projects are more suited to local delivery, usually as the delivery partner has an established local presence rather than a national one. Where this is the case in local partnerships, we've started to see the coming together of organisations to build national capacity, a good example of this is the Age Collaboration.</p>
<p>Are all projects calculating SROI using the same method and figures and is this set by the GDN?</p>	<p>Coming into GD2 all GDNs had been on different journeys in terms of calculating SROI and social value linked to projects and partnerships. All GDNs use similar principals to calculating social value and SROI, however there have been inconsistencies in the way in which these have been applied and this does mean that up to now comparing the SROI's across all GDN projects difficult. We've recognised this challenge and have pushed for a single consistent Social Value Framework that all GDNs can work from. We've actually now gone further than that and the GDNs are all currently involved in an industry wide project facilitated by ENA that includes DNO's and TSO's, working with a social value specialist to develop a single Social Value Framework for use across the Energy industry. This will mean that we're all using a common tool, with a common set of proxies and supporting governance criteria to forecast and calculate our social value and SROI, therefore providing more consistent, credible, and comparable figures across the industry. This will be in place later this year for use on any new projects and partnerships, be that company specific or collaborative. We also plan to re-assess a cross section of our existing partnerships to identify any discrepancies and provide confidence and comparability.</p>

## Supporting priority customer groups continued

Question	Response
<p>Its more around the link with reducing water use can reduce energy bills</p>	<p>Our partners include information on efficient use of energy, and this includes water efficiency especially key to laundry settings, kettle use and shower times to highlight the relationship between hot water and energy costs. For example, <a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig30_save_energy_pay_less_inf.pdf">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig30_save_energy_pay_less_inf.pdf</a>  <b>Scope</b> – the service provides water support in England and Wales – <a href="https://www.scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support/">https://www.scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support/</a> <b>Scottish Water</b> – <a href="https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/your-home/campaigns">https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/your-home/campaigns</a></p>
<p>We deal with a lot of older clients on Anglesey who live in very rural areas and only have access to services through our intervention (CAB Ynys Mon). Is there a referral process for older clients? (Addressed to all)</p>	<p><b>WWU:</b> Warm Wales can take referrals across North Wales through the Healthy Homes Healthy People project. We also have a project with Adra but focused on Gwynedd, another very rural area. Please contact us through the <a href="mailto:VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk">VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk</a> box with an outline of you need and volumes. It would be good to know if these customers are on the gas network or off grid as we recognise much of Anglesey is.</p>
<p>Great to see GDNs take a more active role in supporting their vulnerable customers, has anything been learned through these projects that is being applied to how they run their businesses and support their wider customer base?</p>	<p><b>SGN</b>                  We work closely with our partners to better understand the needs of specific vulnerable customer groups and review our customer journeys to ensure that we're able to offer relevant support services and training for our teams based on need. This has enabled the development of customer referral pathways to ensure that vulnerable customers get tailored support services that are designed for them. We use the research and insights shared from our partners to help us prepare our winter support programme, and last year this included bringing together the SGN leadership team and senior leaders from Citizens Advice, Age Scotland, Scope, and Fuel Bank Foundation to help ensure that our business we're prepared with understanding the challenges our customers were facing. Insight the teams share has also enriched greater collaboration as we've understood the needs of vulnerable customer groups and adapted to meet these needs and will continue to support us as we continue to co-design initiatives through our VCMA portfolio.</p> <p><b>Cadent</b>                  Cadent have learnt lots through these projects, there is so much valuable insight that is available to help shape and support our broader VCMA and vulnerability strategy and creation of other partnerships. As well as this we have been able to offer our own colleagues more support and education. One thing we have seen more than anything is that fuel poverty and the cost-of-living crisis has impacted more than we ever could have expected</p> <p><b>WWU</b>                  The ability to go beyond our core Licence obligations to help customers has been welcomed across the business. Projects that support customers get back on gas, or the help lift them out of fuel poverty are very satisfying. The insight from partners is really helping us develop our services and make a strong case for continued funding for services through our future business plans</p>
<p>Citizen Housing – we work closely with Severn Trent as part of Energy service to make sure any customers who are eligible are signed up to the Big Difference Scheme and water saving measures are posted to customers to bring costs down</p>	<p><b>Cadent</b>                  Cadent do not work with Citizen Housing at present we would be happy for Oliver to reach out directly to us at <a href="mailto:wecare@cadent.com">wecare@cadent.com</a></p>

## CO awareness and how to stay safe

Question	Response
APPCOG – Given the success of the campaign, would the GDNs be doing similar campaigns in the future?	We are committed to doing different campaigns over the next few years including various summer and winter campaigns highlighting the dangers of CO and raising awareness as well as PSR sign-ups. We would of course also consider repeating the campaign that we did with APPCOG this year and in future years.
Bonanza – Do you feel that we will ever get to a point where the education messaging in schools for CO becomes saturated?	Large-scale campaigns are one of many ways we look to engage people with our messaging. Large-scale campaigns won't make everyone that sees them do something, but it is a great way of "planting a seed " in the minds of people and this can of course be followed up through our other messaging and projects. We tend to work on the approach that between 1% and 8% (depending on the media type) will do something with the message they have seen.
Scouts – Is the intention to extend this project beyond the current 3-year term?	We are seeing some great outcomes from this partnership, especially now with the new activities live, and we expect this to increase further with increased engagement from the roll out of the adult e-learning package. Assuming the outcomes achieve our expected targets, we have sufficient budget left, and Scouts are on board we'd be very keen to continue this partnership through to at least the end of GD2.
Game Over – How do you ensure students are acting upon the messaging they receive through the campaign?	We completed research prior to the project starting to make the messaging as impactful as possible for the targeted audience and will be following this up with post campaign surveys to find out what actions have been taken and by how many. We will use this information to make inform future projects
APPCOG – Do you feel that the best way to reach people with such an important message is through a mass campaign?	Large-scale campaigns are one of many ways we look to engage people with our messaging. Large-scale campaigns won't make everyone that sees them do something, but it is a great way of "planting a seed " in the minds of people and this can of course be followed up through our other messaging and projects. We tend to work on the approach that between 1% and 8% (depending on the media type) will do something with the message they have seen.
Bonanza – How can the education programme be grown and scaled up?	We are always looking at how we can scale up the messaging to key audiences. We have recently launched our CO assembly which allows us to reach the whole school at once with a CO safety message. It is like a "lite" version of the classroom sessions.
Game Over – What will you do to increase the number of students who visit the UK GDN website?	Further content development of the website would be required to bring it in line with the interests of the target audience which would help promote and encourage users to visit this space, but would welcome any feedback in the meantime
Scouts – Given the success of the Scouts project, would the GDNs consider a similar partnership with other youth groups such as Girl Guides?	Scouts were our first port of call due to their shared inclusive ethos and clear links both with the recreational activities as part of Scouting activities and in home safety messaging included in the Scouting resources. This could be something we'd extend out to other youth groups provided they too share our inclusive ethos, and we can demonstrate strong outcomes and a positive social return on investment.

# Q&A questions continued



## CO awareness and how to stay safe continued

Question	Response
The CO Education initiatives at schools sounds like it has great reach to raise awareness, but you mentioned that CO is not on the national education curriculum. Have you explored doing this to educate children at scale across Britain?	Yes, and it is something we are working hard to influence curriculum makers on!
Have you linked in with National Fire Cadets – am sure they could fit this into the syllabus?	No but we definitely will do, I think this is a great idea!
I volunteer as an Enterprise Advisor with Careers Enterprise Company who work across schools and FE Colleges. Well worth connecting with them potentially	Another great idea and something that we will definitely look into. It would be great to have a coffee and a chat with you on this. Please feel free to reach out to me <a href="mailto:phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com">phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com</a> .
CO is on the curriculum in science and PSHE (or equivalent) in secondary school and is examined at GCSE. Looking at how to engage and promote the GDN teaching support materials to marry with the curriculum is key to this.	This is something that we can look into. There is no doubt that the coverage in the NC is very limited and doesn't necessarily talk about the dangers and how to stay safe. This is something that we will continue to pursue and push forward.
Considering Duke of Edinburgh module will also help with getting CO into the secondary school age group.	This is not something we have thought about but definitely something that we can look at moving forward. Great idea!
Are there any plans for the CO programmes be developed to reach more excluded communities? Languages and culture barriers are an issue.	This is something that we are always looking to

## Fuel poverty and energy affordability

Question	Response
Citizens Advice – It must be difficult to keep track of the outcomes. How do you understand the effectiveness of this project?	That’s a great question and we are of course really keen to ensure that the projects that we fund are impactful to our customers. We’re really pleased that on this project in particular, Citizens Advice provide very detailed reporting information on a monthly basis, so that we can see the specific outcomes achieved and that includes more holistic outcomes across all advice areas, not just energy and CO. In addition to this, we receive regular case studies which really brings this work to life and gives greater insight into the individual impact of this work.
MyBnk – The project is aimed at primary school aged children, are you considering extending the partnership delivery into high schools using the same approach?	We have faced challenges engaging with high schools on other projects especially following the disruption of covid 19. The team at MyBnk do have a secondary school programme and are testing whether an age-appropriate module would be welcomed by the school communities they serve already and based on this insight we’ll review and progress accordingly. Ideally it would work, and we’d be confident in the link between financial literacy and learning about energy matters as a practical way to empower young people.
Citizens Advice – Does this project cover all parts of the UK? Any there any gaps?	Citizens Advice local offices are all separate charities and they vary in terms of their capacity and energy advice provision, but the beauty of the carbon monoxide and energy advice project is that it embeds a consistent training approach and delivery model across all participating local offices. Not all Citizens Advice offices are included in this project but GDNs can and have used their own vulnerability mapping data to identify any key gaps, and in some cases have built relationships with local citizens advice offices to address this. We also liaise with other partners including DNOs to ensure that we are not duplicating effort and to streamline funding in these areas.
WASH – Do you think that the Warm and Safe Homes and Nice Group advice lines are accessible to customers with the most severe and complex needs?	National Energy Action and Wise Group are recognised experts that customers in vulnerable situations place trust in when experiencing crisis. Cadent’s and SGN’s funding not only supports the telephone advice lines, but also enables NEA and the Wise Group to deliver face to face support through community events in areas of high need. The gas distribution networks also ensure that each VCMA partnership selected for funding forms part of a wider strategy to create accessible support for customers from all demographics.
WASH – Do you feel that there is a need for the gas distribution networks to continue to fund the project, and what different challenges may customers face in the years ahead?	Despite recent falls in inflation and the energy price cap, it is clear that there still remains a need for large scale publicly available advice to help households alleviate the impacts of fuel poverty. The national fuel poverty rates for England, Scotland, and Wales were 13.1%, 24.6%, and 45% prior to the start of the fuel/cost of living crisis, equating to millions of households across Great Britain. Insight from partners and actual case studies from recent VCMA projects support the hypothesis that customers in vulnerable situations have borrowed money to meet their living costs in 2022-2023. This may lead to an increase in energy and wider debt in the coming years, and customers will need tailored advice on how to manage and clear this.

## Fuel poverty and energy affordability continued

Question	Response
<p>My BNK – You talked about the take home resources; can you tell us what’s included?</p>	<p>The take home resources include an interactive manga style comic that explores a real home scenario that addresses both energy efficiency and gas safety including CO. This is aimed at young people. In addition, the schools are provided with a resource for families on energy crisis support.</p>
<p>Citizens Advice – Hi, when delivering telephone energy advice, it often happens that there’s a need to actually make a home visit for a variety of issues, such as heating system support, damp, mould cases, meter issues etc, do Citizens Advice work in partnership with other organisations, who provide this In-home support across all regions?</p>	<p>Citizens Advice doesn’t currently partner with any other organisations who provide home visits for this purpose however, this responsibility would generally sit within the network of our local offices. We would expect each office to have an extensive knowledge of the companies/services available within their local area and have the appropriate referral/signposting agreements in place.</p>
<p>These are all fantastic projects. Two questions: 1) How can we move from these potentially being one-offs to replicating them across GDNs and geographies? As great as each one is in isolation, there is a risk of a postcode lottery of support unless they are replicated more widely. 2) What is the approach to SROI (social return on investment) adopted by all GDNs? What are the common inputs being measured? Thank you.</p>	<p>For the 1st question – the CA project is already a national project with NGN, SGN &amp; Wales and West The second question – Whilst currently GDNs are using slightly different models, many of the proxy values are the same. From the end of September, early October a common model will be adopted by all GDNs. This has been the result of a working group facilitated by the Energy Networks Association to establish one common model for VCMA projects. Ofgem are fully aware of this</p>
<p>Great to hear how a pilot in one GDN area has been expanded across others through collaboration between GDNs. What’s the scope/ process for other national providers to broach this, given the unprecedented demand for support across the UK?</p>	<p>If a project pilot has been successful in one GDN area and has proven to be scalable then the project partner can submit a proposal to the lead GDN to scale up their existing project to a national collaborative project with the other GDNs. This will then be taken to the VCMA GDN steering group for approval</p>
<p>I’d be interested in carbon monoxide awareness training for my team-where could I find resources on this?</p>	<p>NGN Fund a vulnerability trainer. NGN can provide CO awareness training through their vulnerability trainer. Think CO also provide free CO training through the gas safe charity, the contact for them is Simon Main or Hillary Bath</p>



## Fuel poverty and energy affordability continued

Question	Response
<p>WASH – how do you ensure this complements existing local energy advice services rather than competing with them?</p>	<p>Our WASH programme (Warm and Safe homes) is supported by NEA and was set up to support people in Fuel Poverty across England and Wales access resources around energy efficiency, income maximisation and other local or national support services specific to the household needs. This was a telephony-based initiative which with the support of VCMA we have expanded into local communities, helping reach smaller community organisations who may not have the local support in place to help deliver services such as energy efficiency advice and support with heating homes more affordably. For existing local energy services there are opportunities to work with the GDNs on smaller initiative’s which would support their community and we welcome the opportunity to explore this further.</p>
<p>£30+ SROI for NEA/WISE partnerships is really impressive – can you share some of the proxies used to reach this number? It just seems really high compared to other similar programmes providing support and advice.</p>	<p>For this project we provide financial support to fuel poor households as well as energy efficiency advice and have taken essential face to face support services into the community, ensuring we reach fuel poor households who are hard to engage across our networks. This project’s SROI value will come from financial gains and the societal benefits, and the investment in communities educating front line workers and supporting hard to reach households on how to use their energy safely, efficiently, and affordably</p>
<p>My Bank work sounds really great – and these ‘life skills’ are much needed! Interested to know about whether you think this could be rolled out nationally?</p>	<p>The MyBnk project has been scaled up into a collaborative project with SGN, Cadent, Wales and West and NGN</p>
<p>Do GDNs see a value in working with local energy advice organisations as well as national organisations in the delivery of their aims, organisations with established expertise in this area, local knowledge and networks, who do have capacity for face-to-face meetings and can therefore engage with the most vulnerable customers who struggle with phone calls, can be hard to engage,</p>	<p>The GDNs fund small grass roots organisations as well as large national organisations. These grass root regional projects do fund for organisations to carry out face to face interactions with vulnerable customers across the nation. One such example is the NGN DIAL project based in Leeds., This is a peer led support project that is based locally with disabled people that carry out face to face interactions on a daily bases with vulnerable, disabled customers, providing energy advice as well as PSR information and CO awareness information.</p>
<p>In Answer to question 1 – I’m an energy advisor for CAB Ynys Mon (Anglesey). We work with ECO4 installers and NEST Wales to revamp home heating systems and insulation to reduce or prevent mould growth and damp. We also work with suppliers to deal with Metering issues directly through CAB dedicated teams where applicable.</p>	<p>WWU answered in WWU question section</p>

## Services Beyond the Meter

Question	Response
<p>How are you shaping the project so that timeframes are kept as short as possible, and customers aren't left long periods without sources of heating and/or hot water?</p>	<p>We work closely with the organisations who deliver these services to keep the timeframes as compact as possible, but we are also assessing the value of providing proactive servicing as a preventative measure rather than reacting to something that's already gone wrong. This will enable us to reduce the likelihood that people will spend time without their heating and hot water and is something that is being explored as part of VCMA2 funding.</p>
<p>Are there any plans to grow the project and review the eligibility, so you can help more vulnerable customers?</p>	<p>We are constantly reviewing the criteria we use to assess eligibility to ensure we can help as many vulnerable customers as possible, and we are currently reviewing this collaboratively as a group of GDNs to ensure there is fairness and consistency. It is also important to mention that all customers are eligible for energy efficiency and income maximisation advice and support, and we look to refer and signpost all customers that we believe may benefit from these services?</p>
<p>How do the Services Beyond the Meter and one number projects align and work together?</p>	<p>As we have grown our SBTM offering and built internal technical capability, we are now ensuring that the 2 projects work together and we now use our directly employed upskilled engineers to complete some of the repair, service and replace work internally. This ensures we can help more customers and ensure our funding is utilised effectively. This is something we will continue to do. Allowing us to work with both NEA and groundwork across our networks to strengthen our working relationship to the benefit of our customers.</p>
<p>How are customers identified for essential gas appliance repair? Is this common across the gas networks?</p>	<p>Customers are identified via our front-line colleagues who attend customers' homes to respond to an emergency work order. If the engineer needs to disconnect an appliance or any part of the gas installation, they would have discussions with the customer to understand if they require support. If they believe the customer maybe eligible for support, they would be referred to one of our partners to check and confirm eligibility and next steps.</p>
<p>I am an energy advisor and I have vulnerable customers who are unable to get to their meter and I am finding the suppliers being very difficult in supporting them. I have gone to the energy ombudsman for them, but it has been very stressful for myself and my clients.</p>	<p>Please feel free to contact me on <a href="mailto:sam.graham@cadentgas.com">sam.graham@cadentgas.com</a> and I will try and help and put you in touch with the correct team in our business. I also have strong contacts with suppliers across the UK and would be happy to engage them. I would also strongly recommend a smart meter for these customers as this would remove the need to access the meter other than in an emergency to access the control valve. Please contact me and i will be happy to try and support.</p>
<p>Is it only available for PSR customers?</p>	<p>At the moment, Customers must be on the PSR to qualify for a follow-on work order to complete a CMDDA1 job. We are constantly reviewing this and are working with external stakeholders to review this as a business. As this work is funded through the VCMA, it is right to focus our support on the most vulnerable at this time</p>

## Services Beyond the Meter continued

Question	Response
<p>Are there plans for SGN and WWU to join and adopt this service for its customers?</p>	<p>SGN and WWU run their own support programmes for vulnerable customer work beyond the meter. However, we would really like them to adopt the SBtM approach that we have taken, and we will continue to engage and offer the chance of collaborative working as we move forward</p>
<p>I work for Fifth Sense who are funded by Cadent to deliver smell safety messages, educating public and professionals around smell disorders and the impact that can have on smell safety. How can I link into the Services Beyond the Meter work to increase understanding and reach around smell safety and smell disorders?</p>	<p>Please email me on <a href="mailto:sam.graham@cadentgas.com">sam.graham@cadentgas.com</a> and we will be happy to discuss what we can do to promote and increase awareness of this. In the past year we have specifically supported customers in this type of situation by providing gas alarms and we would welcome the chance to work closer with you on the great project.</p>
<p>Age UK Nottingham &amp; Nottinghamshire's Safe &amp; Sound service offer welfare benefit checks, scams advice and energy advice / measures. We give advice on CO and gas safety and register clients for PSR. As a home improvement caseworker, I source funding for heating repairs and replacements. I am very interested in partnership working with Cadent if I could be advised who to contact, I would be grateful.</p>	<p>Please email me on <a href="mailto:sam.graham@cadentgas.com">sam.graham@cadentgas.com</a> and we will be happy to discuss this further. We are always looking to work with likeminded organisations and we would welcome the chance to look and do something.</p>

## Cadent spotlights

Question	Response
Partnership Eco System – How will Cadent measure the success of the project – e.g., how will you measure if this approach is more successful than BAU?	<p>We are using three main metrics to measure the success of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The SROI of the project (the financial and societal benefits of the work for fuel poor customers, divided by the cost of delivery);</li> <li>ii. The total scale of impact (the gross present value of the work); and</li> <li>ii. The # of customers lifted out of fuel poverty</li> <li>iv. The SROI of the work will be compared to that of past projects delivered by Cadent, to determine whether it is more successful than BAU.</li> </ul>
Partnership Eco System – How will you know if this approach works for the customer?	Our central partner, operating as the “hub” of the pilot, will be collecting programme level customer satisfaction information that asks a set of questions aiming to understand whether the process has been clear, easy to manage, and effective from a customer’s perspective.
Healthy Homes – What factors influenced the projects high customer engagement rate when compared to historic GDN vulnerability projects?	There were several factors that influenced the high customer engagement rate on the project: 1) Partnering with the Vulnerability Registration Service to communicate with customers known to identify as vulnerable. 2) Utilising the branding of Healthy Homes Solutions and the Vulnerability Registration Service to promote trust amongst customers. 3) Signing customers up to services such as the Priority Services Register and Telephone Preference Service by proxy – offering customers simplicity and immediate benefits.
Healthy Homes – Are there any other applications for Healthy Homes Solutions data profiling work that can support customers in vulnerable situations?	Building on the carbon monoxide awareness, Priority Services Register, income maximisation services offered through the pilot, Cadent, Healthy Homes Solutions and the Vulnerability Registration Service have agreed to an expansion of the pilot to target a further 10,000 households. This expanded project will offer additional services around mental health, Alzheimer’s support, and energy efficiency advice.
A little energy – What are you planning next as a follow up to the campaign?	Due to the success of the campaign, we are already planning our next campaign. We are growing the theme of “a little energy” and we are targeting specific groups of people with specific messages. The name of this campaign will be “every contact counts”. The campaign will once again involve energy efficiency advice as well as a few surprises ad will start in September time and run to Christmas.
Little energy – Interested in how you measured SROI, did you measure behavioural change?	It is very difficult to accurately calculate SROI from a campaign such as this for various reasons. There has to be assumptions made around how many people take action and what action they take. In terms of this campaign we used an average of 3% of people taking action as a result of our messaging. We then have a bank of SROI values that we apply.

## Cadent spotlights continued

Question	Response
Are there any GDPR issues for the Eco system approach (sharing vulnerable customer details)	GDPR is, of course, a concern for any project involving customer data – specifically vulnerable customer data. The pilot, and any future scaling of this approach, has looked to reduce and manage this concern by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Only transferring customer data between partners where absolutely necessary (i.e. anonymising data where possible, only collecting the minimum data required to deliver the quality of service we're aiming for); and</li><li>ii. Putting clear data sharing agreements in place that are specifically mapped to these required data flows.</li></ul>
Eco – Were all of the delivery partners easy to engage/accepting of the approach? Was this wholly funded by VCMA?	Nearly 30 partners were engaged early on in the design process. They had the chance to identify pain points that the pilot looked to mitigate or solve (for example minimising funding cliff edges by pooling funding pots).
CfW – does Cadent support continue after mains works has been completed?	This led partners to be broadly supportive of the pilot. There were however differences of opinion or concerns (for example a desire to see this trialed nationally rather than locally) that, while we have noted and will look to address in the future, we chose not to take on for the initial pilot.

## Northern Gas Networks – spotlights

Question	Response
The toolkit can be found at <a href="http://www.warmhubs.com">www.warmhubs.com</a>	This is the Warm Hubs Toolkit which NGN fund through our VCMA project with Community Action Northumberland
Sounds brilliant – can the links/ resources be shared please?	Yes, all links and resources can be shared with stakeholders, please contact: <a href="mailto:SOOrd@northerngas.co.uk">SOOrd@northerngas.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:LRatcliffe@northerngas.co.uk">LRatcliffe@northerngas.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:vcma@northerngas.co.uk">vcma@northerngas.co.uk</a>
Did the hubs cover a range of age and vulnerability demographics	The Warm Hubs are for anyone to access. The hubs are expanding and are opening across the NGN network with the help of the Warm Hubs Project Coordinator based in Community Action Northumberland. The hubs are predominantly based in rural locations across the network and are free to attend. This model isn't restricted to rural localities nor age. At the moment there are over 30 hubs based in Northumberland and more are opening across the network, in particular in Cumbria

## SGN – spotlights

Question	Response
Would you consider doing other projects like the one in Surrey, partnering with other county councils to support schemes like warm spaces or warm hubs?	We would welcome projects with other local authorities on county level projects where we can bring together community organisations that support vulnerable households stay safe and warm. It has proven to be a successful way to engage a large number of community / grassroots organisations to build skills, capacity and resources to help households in need. We're keen to apply the learning from our Surrey project in other areas and the Surrey team are open to sharing how they approached community engagement, what worked and what was less successful.
What learning can you share about this project to help other county level winter schemes?	There have been lots of lessons learned from this project as it exceeded our expectations. Key learnings have been to ensure that the sessions in 'warm hubs' are engaging and designed with the target group in mind rather than advertising a 'warm hub' in isolation. We found that by creating activities for target communities we could provide support services that were specific to need, and more people attended. For example, events for young families having activities for children enabled parents / carers to access help and advice services whilst not having to worry about what the children would do during this time as the environment was inviting for families.

## Wales & West Utilities – spotlights

Question	Response
<p>Kidney Care UK -This is an excellent project – congratulations- can this be extended to other areas of WWU?</p>	<p>It is certainly something we are exploring. For this particular project, it has been one approach for Wales supported by NHS Wales Healthcare in England which is structured differently. Rather than us creating a project specifically for the southwest, we are already in discussion with the other networks and are working with Kidney Care UK and supporting organisations to understand how this model could work across all of our networks to cover a UK wide footprint and reach more people who are in need of this support.</p>
<p>Healthy homes, healthy networks – what strategies are you using to engage with people in other areas? are you working with local energy advice groups who are active in the ‘extremities’? there is a strong network of energy advice giving organisations in Devon and Cornwall</p>	<p>Our network covers a mix of rural and urban communities, and it can be challenging reaching and supporting those in the ‘extremities’, however, there are a lot organisations who are already working with those hard to reach communities and doing some great work. For example, there are lots of energy hubs and energy wardens working in community groups and supporting those most in need.</p> <p>Tamar Energy and Community is an example of this, where they’ve created links with local authorities and councils who are focused particularly on fuel poverty and energy efficiency and it’s really reaching those groups. For us, it’s important we are able to raise awareness of the support available directly through our projects or indirectly through other organisations who can help.</p> <p>It’s about creating opportunities and creating those valuable partnerships and links by encouraging organisations to work together to create a robust eco-system of holistic support.</p>
<p>We (Lifeskills) can help promote your gas ambassador workshops. We have a captive audience of teachers during a Lifeskills visit :)</p>	<p>It’s great to hear that organisations can support this initiative and develop new projects. If you would like to discuss further, please contact <a href="mailto:VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk">VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk</a></p>

## General questions

Question	Response
Are you running programme for children from ethnic minorities?	In terms of our education programmes, the programmes are run right across the UK and visit all communities and geographies. The beauty of Safety Seymour is that it can be enjoyed equally as much with children where English isn't their first language due to the content.
Ethnic minorities children might not attend Scout groups so there is a gap	Around 7% of Scouts are from ethnic minorities. The Scouting movement is incredibly focused on growing this number. As GDNs we are able to reach various children through our own education packages and work within our outreach to communities however there is always more that can be done. If you have any suggestion on how we can grow our support to all children, then please feel free to get in touch. <a href="mailto:phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com">phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com</a>
How do agencies such as Citizens Advice, access or refer consumers to the various funded schemes in order to benefit from them? There are a great number of projects mentioned that sound fantastic.	The new increased VCMA funding will enable the GDNs to work with partners to increase capacity on VCMA projects to accept a greater number of 3rd party referrals. The networks' previous focus was to build capacity to help partners deliver support to their existing client bases with the original VCMA funding. The networks will work with partners (e.g., charities, local authorities, and emergency services) to develop referral pathways into VCMA projects that have been expended with the increased funding.
Ofgem – There are a notably high number of fines placed with energy suppliers for service issues, what steps are being taken to prevent the same issues reoccurring such as poor service or over charging? And what happens to the money taken from those fines?	In terms of how the gas networks prevent issues such as poor service, the customer vulnerability teams within the GDNs ensure that operational colleagues (connections sales agents, operations colleagues etc.) are briefed and upskilled to be able to effectively communicate and support customers in vulnerable situations with different needs – e.g., language barriers, mobility issues, neurodiversity etc. The VCMA should not be used to cross subsidise networks' BAU activities, and instead the customer vulnerability teams should knowledge share with colleagues, rather than funding activities that reduce the risk of poor performance.
Given the scale of the investment now being made via the VCMA, is there potential for it to provide a more general connectivity function across the energy advice sector to help maximise impact? The point around collaboration comes through strongly, but visibility of the various excellent local schemes sometimes makes this challenging. We must not compete given the scale of the challenge faced by customers.	The networks are acutely aware of the risk of increased disjointedness and competition with the significant increase in available VCMA funding. As such, networks such as Cadent and NGN are exploring new ways of joining up support to assist customers through a single face/interaction – e.g., the Fuel Poverty Partnership Ecosystem pilots in Birmingham and Cumbria. The networks also aim to ensure that they work with partners to best utilise their expertise, rather than asking a partner to spread themselves too thinly and work outside of their area of true expertise.
Would we get a recording of this	All the sessions are available on the website for the day so please feel free to revisit and watch the sessions that you missed.



## General questions continued

Question	Response
How does a community hub apply to seek support through Centres for Warmth?	We would be more than happy to discuss it with you and talk you through the process. Please feel free to contact me on <a href="mailto:phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com">phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com</a>
A key feature of the VCMA is to enable communities to help themselves – this is a significant challenge when some of the key groups are so small. In these instances, throwing money at these groups is not effective as they are not geared to handle a rapid influx of cash. How are the GDNs planning to help these groups to be able to continue to help communities as funds increase?	When we work with any organisation or partner we ensure that we are able to make the process as smooth as possible. This could be support from our Procurement teams or creating simpler contracts that are easier to navigate around. In terms of giving money to small organisations, this is often done on a phased basis and on hitting milestones. We also support such organisations throughout the project and ensure that they have everything they need to achieve success.
Given the remit of VCMA to contribute to reducing carbon emissions & net zero goals, will the funding of domestic small energy-efficiency measures now be included in the funding specification?	Unfortunately, there is no provision in the VCMA to procure energy efficiency measures as this is out of scope. We do, however, work with organisations that are able to provide energy efficiency measures as part of our partnerships. The GDNs have talked at length with Ofgem about the inclusion of energy measures in the VCMA however at this moment in time their view remains steadfast.

# Appendix

# VCMA facts

How many collaborative projects have the four GDNs worked together on last financial?

28

What is the total investment of collaborative VCMA money so far in the price control?

£20m

How many customers have we supported across all our projects?

£14.7m

What is the total SROI generated from all our collaborative projects?

£41m

How many people signed up to attend this showcase?

345

In total how many pages have been written in the annual reports this year including the collaborative?

201

How many different speakers are involved in today's showcase event?

34

How far would all the CO alarms that have been issued this year stretch if you laid them in a straight line?

311.4m

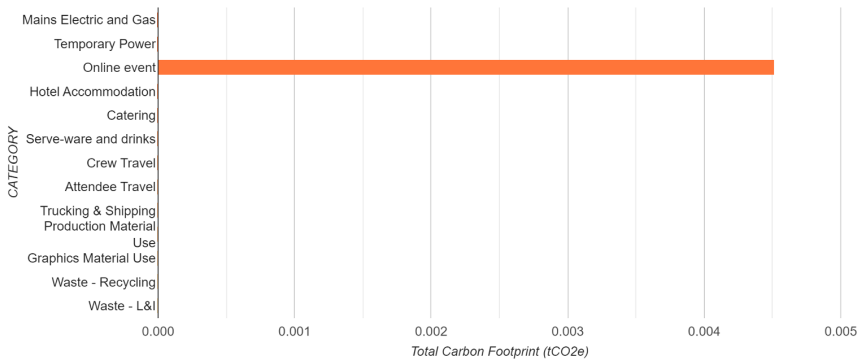
In total how many miles are there between all the GDN head offices starting at NGN to Cadent to WWU to SGN (southern)?

407 miles

# Carbon Impact Report

Using TRACE carbon impact reporting tool, as expected 100% of emissions came from energy.

Emissions breakdown by category



Total Energy emissions

0.00 tCO2e

Contribution to overall emissions

100.00%

Energy emissions per attendee

0.02 kgCO2e

Emissions for energy for streaming / online

0.00 tCO2e

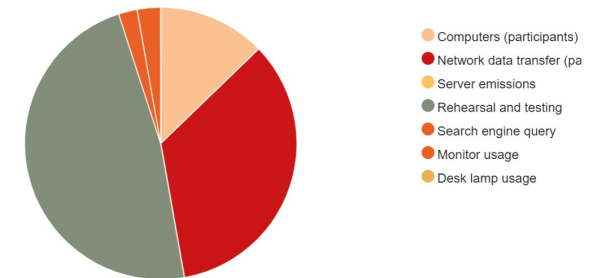
% of total emissions

100.00%

Streaming/online Energy emissions per attendee

0.02 kgCO2e

Breakdown of Streaming (Hybrid / Virtual) Elements



Total Attendees

0

In Person

296

Virtual

Carbon Footprint

0.00 tCO2e

Total carbon footprint

0.02 kgCO2e

Average carbon footprint per attendee

Waste Footprint

0.00 tonnes

Total Waste Footprint

0.00 kg

Average waste per attendee

# Resources

**Please click on the links below to navigate to the VCMA Showcase Resources**

*[VCMA Annual Collaborative Report 2022-2023](#)*

*[Cadent VCMA Annual Report 2022-2023](#)*

*[Northern Gas Networks VCMA Annual Report 2022-2023](#)*

*[SGN VCMA Annual Report 2022-2023](#)*

*[Wales & West Utilities VCMA Annual Report 2022-2023](#)*

*[Carbon monoxide and how to stay safe – video](#)*

*[Supporting priority customer groups – video](#)*

*[Fuel poverty and energy affordability – video](#)*

*[Services Beyond the Meter – video](#)*

*[Carbon Monoxide and how to stay safe – slides](#)*

*[Supporting priority customer groups – slides](#)*

*[Fuel poverty and energy affordability – slides](#)*

*[Services Beyond the Meter – slides](#)*

*[Cadent project spotlight – slides](#)*

*[Northern Gas Networks project spotlight – slides](#)*

*[SGN project spotlight – slides](#)*

*[Wales & West Utilities project spotlight – slides](#)*



**Vulnerability and  
Carbon Monoxide  
Allowance**

