

Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Big C Welfare Rights Service

Nicola Campbell – Safeguarding & Community Partnership Lead

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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 a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) and Net Present Value (NPV) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project (GDNs should use a common SROI model.	Y
b) Either: 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 license 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	
To qualify as a VCMA Project, essential gas appliance servicing must meet the following criteria:	
a) Either: i. A GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or iii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that	N/A

makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes.	
b) The household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, which is assessed against criteria consistent with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery document 1 (see Appendix 1).	N/A
c) Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord, national, devolved, local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance service.	N/A

Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for Collaborative VCMA Projects	
To qualify as a Collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
a) Meet the above company-specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria;	N/A
b) Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	N/A
c) Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	N/A

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

Information Required	Description
Project Title	Big C Welfare Rights Service
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent
New / Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New
Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only	Cadent – network specific
Date of PEA Submission	February 2025
VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number	Name: Phil Burrows Job Title: Customer Vulnerability Social Programmes Manager Email: phil.burrows@cadentgas.com Phone: 07773545451
Total Cost (£k)	Partner costs: £150,226.00 Literature: £1,000.00 Project management costs (4%): £6,049.04

Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	£157,275.04
Problem(s)	<p>Cancer patients and their carers who rely on Big C Norfolk's services often face severe financial hardships, exacerbated by the ongoing cost of living crisis. A cancer diagnosis frequently leads to a loss of income, as patients may have to stop working due to treatment side effects, while carers may reduce their working hours or leave their jobs entirely to provide necessary support. At the same time, medical costs, travel expenses for hospital appointments and higher energy bills (due to the need for a warm home during treatment) place additional financial strain on households. These increased expenses, combined with reduced earnings, create a significant burden, making it difficult for patients and carers to cover essential living costs.</p> <p>Norfolk has areas of deprivation which fall within the lowest decibel of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) meaning a loss of income due to cancer or an increase in costs due to many of the reasons stated above can have a devastating impact, both financially and psychologically.</p> <p>Big C Cancer Charity provided stats to show a 5% increase in demand year on year for the January-October period of 2023/2024 for their Welfare Rights Service. 16.9% of overall new contact with Big C is to initially seek financial advice and access the service, however 31.5% go on to access a qualified advisor.</p> <p>Support from companies such as Cadent is crucial in alleviating these financial pressures and ensuring that cancer patients and their carers do not have to struggle alone.</p>
Scope and Objectives	<p>The project aims to increase the support available to cancer patients and carers by increasing capacity of advisors that are available. The objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cancer patients and carers supported with Welfare Rights in Norfolk • Increase in registration on the PSR for those who meet the criteria in Norfolk • Postcode information to show geographic reach of funding • Gained income for those accessing the service • Enhanced skills for our Support & Information team around energy saving and efficiency that is shared to benefit their users.
Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA	<p>We believe that the project meets all the vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance eligibility criteria:</p> <p>a. Have a positive, or forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project:</p> <p><i>The project delivers a positive forecasted social return on investment. This is based on achieving the target reach for income maximisation, registrations to the PSR and educating individuals on energy efficiency and CO awareness.</i></p> <p>b. Either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or, Provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or, Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO; <p><i>The project delivers services that meet all three elements of this criteria. For example, the advisers will be educated on energy efficiency and CO</i></p>

	<p><i>awareness to allow them a better understanding of where to signpost individuals should they need any further help above and beyond what Big C are already delivering.</i></p> <p>c. Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these:</p> <p><i>The project objective and actions are detailed below.</i></p> <p>d. Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations, and,</p> <p><i>This method of delivering support to individuals in vulnerable situations falls outside of Cadent's BAU activities and other licence conditions.</i></p> <p>e. Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local) funding,</p> <p><i>This project will be solely delivered through Cadent's VCMA funding.</i></p>
Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support	<p>²Every two minutes someone in the UK is diagnosed with cancer. With one in every two people likely to get a cancer diagnosis at some point in our lives, it is a disease that affects us all. A staggering 37% of cancers diagnosed are preventable through lifestyle awareness and early identification can make a huge difference to positive outcomes. At Big C they invest a lot of time and energy into raising awareness of signs and symptoms, encouraging healthy lifestyles and behavioural change throughout the communities, schools and colleges in Norfolk.</p> <p>People affected by cancer face so many challenges. These include anxiety over their diagnosis, future and finances. Pain, nausea and fatigue from treatment and its side effects. Social isolation and loneliness, concerns over appearance and a lack of self-confidence.</p> <p>Research into health inequalities shows that outcomes for people with cancer are significantly worse for those in deprived areas, those financially challenged, minority groups, and hard to reach groups. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Big C work in areas of deprivation supporting and educating communities of underserved populations in the larger areas alongside rural communities. These include particular focus on the deaf community, those with Dementia, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, Homeless, Immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ+ communities, neurodiverse community and their carers and individuals with learning difficulties.</p>
Information Required	Description
Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria	<p><u>Project Outcomes</u></p> <p>This project will aim to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice sessions delivered to individuals on general advice and welfare • Provide information on income maximisation to service users using the welfare and benefits advice service.

² [Cancer Statistics for the UK](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the Priority Services Register (PSR) to all individuals. • Sign up around 70% of those discussing the PSR to the register. • Provide advice on energy saving opportunities • Educate all users on Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness. <p><u>Success Criteria</u></p> <p>The success of the project will be measured by meeting the below criteria over 13-months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach 1,966 individuals via advice sessions delivered • Provide 1,600 service users with advice on income maximisation • Educate 1,517 individuals about the PSR • Sign 1,062 individuals up to the PSR • Provide 531 service users with advice on energy efficiency • Educate 531 service users about CO awareness.
Project Partners and Third Parties Involved	Big C Norfolk Cancer Charity
Potential for New Learning	<p>The collaboration between Cadent and the Big C Cancer Charity in Norfolk to fund additional advisers in areas of deprivation presents significant opportunities for new learning. By extending support to underserved communities, the project can gather valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by individuals affected by cancer in these regions. Understanding these specific needs will enable the development of tailored interventions that address both medical and socio-economic factors, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of cancer support services.</p> <p>Moreover, this initiative offers a platform to assess the impact of integrated welfare advice on patient outcomes. The Big C Cancer Charity already provides practical assistance through welfare advisers who offer guidance on benefits, housing, employment issues, and more. By deploying additional advisors funded by Cadent into areas of deprivation, the project can evaluate how such support influences patient's quality of life, treatment adherence, and mental well-being. These findings could inform best practices for incorporating holistic support services into cancer care, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>Furthermore, the partnership can explore strategies to overcome barriers to assessing support services in areas of deprivation. Challenges such as transportation, awareness, and trust in healthcare providers often hinder service utilisation. By actively engaging with these communities, the project can identify effective methods to promote service uptake, such as community outreach programmes or mobile advisory units. The lessons learned from these efforts can guide future initiatives aimed at reducing health disparities and ensuring fair access to cancer support services across diverse populations.</p>
Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations, including NPV	<p><u>Scale of VCMA Project</u></p> <p>Cadent will invest £157,275.04 in partnership with Big C Cancer Charity. The project will be delivered from 1st March 2025 to 31st March 2026. It will enable targeted individuals in Norfolk to access welfare and advice serves as well as educate them on the PSR and CO awareness.</p> <p><u>SROI Calculations</u></p>

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

In order to ensure that a VCMA project is registered in accordance with the Ofgem VCMA governance document (incl. project eligibility assessment), the below table should be completed as part of the project registration process.	
Stage 1: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team PEA Peer Review	
Date Immediate Team Peer Review Completed: 14/02/2025	Review Completed By: Kate Ravenscroft
Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review	
Date Management Review Completed: 18/02/2025	Review Completed By: Gemma Norton
Step 3: Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programmes Sign-Off: Phil Burrows	
Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off Date: 18/02/2025	
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: March 2025	
Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: March 2025	