



Annual stakeholder report

2018/19



WOULD YOU LIKE to find out more about what we do or tell us what you think of our services, how we can improve them, or maybe how we can better work together?

Our customers can need extra help for a variety of reasons: because their gas supply is interrupted; they've developed a long-term health condition or they may be taking care of an older or unwell relative. Whatever the reason, our message is to get in touch to explain your needs and how we can help.

If you'd like to take part in one of our stakeholder and customer panels – to share your views and help shape the services we provide – please see the contact details below.



If you'd like to keep up to date with our stakeholder e-newsletter 'Let's Connect' and other engagement activities you can register at www.wwutilities.co.uk/stakeholderengagement



If you'd like to get in touch with our stakeholder team, you can call **02929 278546** or email engagement@wwutilities.co.uk. Your views are important to us – and we look forward to hearing from you.



If you have a new idea for a product, service or research that might be relevant to what we do, our Innovation Team would be delighted to hear from you – please call **02920 278958** or email innovation@wwutilities.co.uk. Our challenges are on our website at www.wwutilities.co.uk/innovation.



Our Warm Home Assistance scheme can provide financial help with new gas connections and you can find out more by calling **02920 278713** or email warmhomeassistance@wwutilities.co.uk.



If you fancy joining our team, our latest job vacancies are on our website and you can contact us by calling **02920 278628** or email recruitment@wwutilities.co.uk.

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Introduction

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT to understand the wants and needs of our customers and stakeholders is at the heart of what we do. We know that only by listening and responding to those who use our services will we maintain legitimacy in their eyes. Colleagues business-wide engage with customers and other stakeholders daily, so it is of paramount importance we continuously build on and improve our approach by valuing and acting on feedback.

We have embarked on a journey to improve our approach to stakeholder engagement through developing and evolving our strategy, while not losing sight of the values that underpin our business. Our approach has been validated by internal and external stakeholders, and it is consistent across our current and future business planning. In 2018/19, we engaged with more than 26,000 stakeholders through a range of communication channels, building knowledge of the channels best suited to engaging with different groups of stakeholders, tailoring our methods to suit. We have acted on feedback and addressed customer and stakeholder needs, resulting in 190 actions.

Our safety record testifies to the dedication of colleagues in meeting this key stakeholder priority, but we continue to strive for continuous improvement and have again been awarded a RoSPA Gold Award for the sixth year running. Our focus on delivering valued outcomes has continued to evolve, and we have adopted an innovative approach to measuring benefits to enable us to understand the wider social value of services delivered. Our over-arching focus on providing our consumers with value for money services is reflected in our overall impact to the average consumer gas bill. Our charges for 2018/19 were £121, down from £154 in 2013/14¹.

We have not stood still and whilst safety, reliability and supporting vulnerable customers remain important priorities for our stakeholders and us, our impact on the environment has also ranked as a high priority for stakeholders – our Gold Gamechanger award for the Freedom Project and BS 18477 accreditation reinforces this. Our engagement on future energy solutions has been a key component of this so that we can continue to meet the needs of both existing and future customers going forward.

Graham Edwards
Chief Executive



¹ 2018/19 prices

About us

WE DON'T SELL GAS

– we deliver it through our extensive network of pipes to homes, businesses and other organisations in Wales and the south west of England. Our job is to make sure our 7.5 million customers are kept safe and warm, with a level of service they can trust.

We operate the pipe network through which people receive gas from their supplier (the company to whom they pay their gas bill). Safety is a key priority. We respond swiftly to gas emergencies and invest heavily to improve the quality of our network. Every day our colleagues replace old metal pipes with new durable ones – improving the reliability of our network, reducing leakage for many years to come.

In winter, a large proportion of the heat and power used by homes and businesses comes from the gas network. We are making sure that we can meet this demand for the long term, providing a reliable, affordable and increasingly sustainable service.

To help shape that future we engaged widely with stakeholders using a range of methods including a multi-layered media campaign, market research, events and our usual engagement channels. Feedback from this engagement has helped shape our existing services and activities and is making sure that our future plans take in a broad range of views.

Awards and achievements

Investors in people

Silver accreditation until 2020



Welsh Contact Centre Awards

Business Improvement Strategy Award



Lotus Awards

Lotus awards winner (2nd consecutive year)



IGEM Awards

Company of the Year

IGEM Awards

Energy Efficiency Award

ISO 45001

Occupational Health and Safety Management – migrated from OHSAS

CIPD

Silver Award in Best Employee Engagement Initiative

CIPD

Finalists Apprenticeship Scheme

Software AG

Best Digital Business

Regen's Green Energy Awards

Clean Energy Scheme Award

ISO 14001

Environmental Management System

The IET

Power and Energy (Highly Commended)

Business Green Technology Awards

R&D Programme of the Year

BS 18477

Inclusive Service Provision

Achilles Accreditation

100% Score for working to the 'highest standards' in the health and safety arena, a score not matched by any other utility company to date. (6th consecutive year)

ISO 55001

International Certificate of Asset Management

Network Awards

Innovation Project of the Year



Network Awards

Gold in the Gamechanger Award



Institute of Customer Service (ICS)

ICS UK CSI Business benchmarking

RoSPA

Winner of Gold Award (6th consecutive year) – Winner Oil and Gas sector award



ICS

ServiceMark distinction



Our engagement strategy and approach

Critical friends continued to help shape our engagement

During 2018/19, we were keen to make sure that our engagement strategy was clearly set to enable us to identify the needs and wants of all our stakeholders.

We set about a three month review to evolve our strategy and the range of supporting tools and processes that help with its delivery, to make sure we are meeting the needs and higher expectations of our diverse and increasingly more sophisticated consumers and other stakeholders.

Our executive team and Critical Friends Panel (CFP) – an informed

and enduring stakeholder group, helped our review and supported in co-determining the wording of our revised objective and guiding principles.

100 per cent of the CFP survey respondents supported our approach to engagement. Our revised objective and principles are set out below.

Our objective:

“We are a responsible business, putting people and communities at the heart of what we do. By engaging in tailored ways, we identify our stakeholders’ wants and needs while maximising the value we add for our customers. The informed feedback we gather will result in clear and measurable actions that deliver the outcomes our stakeholders want and ultimately shape the way our business operates.”

Guiding principles

Our objective is supported by three high-level principles that inform how we approach our engagement:

Inclusivity

– encouraging a wide range of diverse customers and stakeholders to co-determine priority issues and engagements, as well as voice opinions on business initiatives.

Transparency

– consistently demonstrate that openness, honesty and accountability guide the organisation’s decisions and are embedded within initiatives and outputs.

Continuous improvement

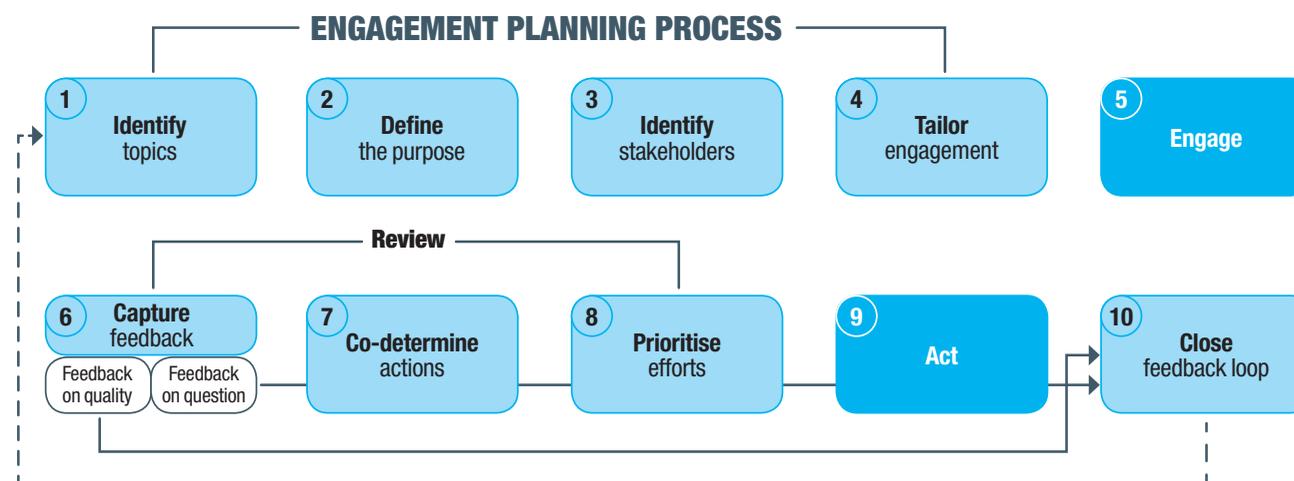
– aiming to identify key stakeholder issues before they arise, proactively and effectively resolve issues when they do and make sure that the outcomes are communicated to stakeholders.



Our engagement approach

Engagement planning process diagram

Our engagement approach consists of a series of sequential steps that detail how we start, conduct and finish engagement activities. It also details how engagement efforts are reviewed and continually improved upon.



- **First**, we plan – acting on feedback and intelligence to understand how we can best meet stakeholders’ needs, while identifying the key purpose of the engagement.
- **Secondly**, we carry out engagement.
- **Thirdly**, we review the engagement feedback on the topics discussed as well as the quality and appropriateness of the actual engagement and work with stakeholders to co-determine actions and priorities.
- **Fourthly**, we undertake the agreed actions and priorities.
- **Finally**, we gather stakeholder opinions and advice to feed back into our further engagement planning, completing the loop.

How research has shaped our priorities

We analysed the 21,000 responses to our *Let's Connect – Have your Say* consumer consultation campaign to understand what would drive higher levels of customer satisfaction.

We then cross-referenced this to other research and complementary work to fill knowledge gaps and explored the findings in more depth with specific stakeholder groups. These included small businesses and customers living in vulnerable situations. We ran further research, asking 27 attitudinal and lifestyle

statements to enable identification of customer segments to help us prioritise our service delivery in the most appropriate way for each segmented customer type.

Each segmented customer type has an associated persona, and differs by level of engagement in topics related to the gas and energy industry as well as environmental concern. Having a safe gas network was consistently a customer priority with reliability also key, along with environmental concerns and social obligations. This is consistent with the *Let's Connect* results.

There were clear demographic differences, with younger females more focused on the environment and safety and younger males on innovation and convenience.



Working together

Partners and collaborative working

Working with partners, like Care & Repair in Wales and England, Warm Wales and Fire & Rescue Services, who are trusted to go into the homes of people in vulnerable situations helps them access a vast range of support measures and services to improve safety, minimise the impact of any disruptions and support independent living, to safeguard this group of customers.

Sharing training leads to sharing knowledge

We acted on partner feedback to hold joint partner training workshops across our network area providing opportunity for sharing learning and insight on how we can all work better together to deliver outcomes that best meet customer needs. Following training workshops, online feedback to us by partners increased by more than 400 per cent, evidencing the impact of, and justifying our investment in, partner training.

Extending priority groups to support vulnerability

Stakeholders told us to extend our priority groups to incorporate a wider group of 'people living in poverty'. We've acted on this advice so more people can benefit from our support to keep them safe.



Cross-utility collaboration

We joined forces with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and Western Power Distribution in 2016 for the first joint utility vulnerability conference, Stronger Together, and worked on the first cross-utility data-sharing agreement with them to support sharing of Priority Services Register sign-ups. We've also agreed involvement in a safeguarding conference DCWW is leading in north Wales and committed to collaboration in similar events to increase collaboration and support vulnerability.

Highlights of the year

In the 2018/19 regulatory year (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019)

4,227 customers referred to the PSR **15** COLLEAGUE WELLBEING CHAMPIONS **More than 26,000** Stakeholders engaged

More than **4,830** CO alarms distributed **1st** COLLEAGUE WELLBEING CONFERENCE

9.18 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OVERALL SCORE **INCREASED BIOMETHANE PLANTS CONNECTED TO 19**

93.6 Institute of Customer Service UK CSI business benchmarking score

190 actions completed following feedback

211 innovative ideas received **137** **84%** complaints resolved in one working day

MORE THAN **398 KM** OF MAIN REPLACED **new recruits in the south west** **ZERO** OMBUDSMAN RULINGS

30 CO safety sessions engaging over 1000 pupils

99% OF GAS EMERGENCY CALL-OUTS ATTENDED WITHIN ONE HOUR **132** More than **76,500** gas emergency call outs

free of charge meter moves **206** new starters

More than £326,000 recovered from unregistered gas users

98% of reinstatements completed in 48 hours

Our consumer vulnerability strategy

We have developed and evolved our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy (CVS) to reflect our focus on continual improvement as well as supporting our stakeholders' feedback that this is an area of key focus for us.

In reviewing our strategy, we researched examples of best practice in the sector and incorporated lessons learnt. Our

draft strategy was then reviewed by our executive team as well as our Critical Friends Panel (CFP) and modified accordingly. Our CFP advised on changes to our objective, which we incorporated as well as re-ordering our six capabilities.

This strategy is a discreet part of our Customer Services Strategy and complements our Stakeholder

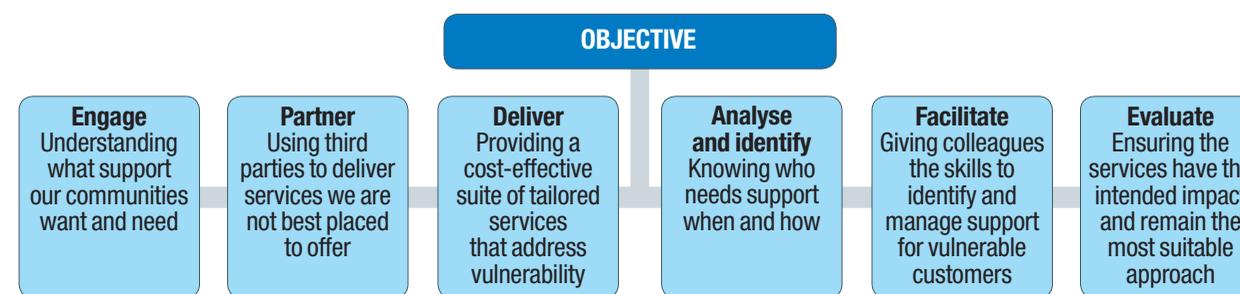
Engagement Strategy which, in turn, helps inform our CVS by identifying the wants and needs of our stakeholders, including those customers in vulnerable situations. Our CVS outlines the processes and tools to effectively act on those wants and needs and interacts with our corporate social responsibility.

Our consumer vulnerability objective

"Safeguard all vulnerable customers by proactively identifying stakeholders' needs to deliver innovative and tailored support that goes above and beyond our obligations. Working with diverse partners, we will continually monitor and annually review the success of our safeguards to make sure they regularly evolve to deliver ongoing value."

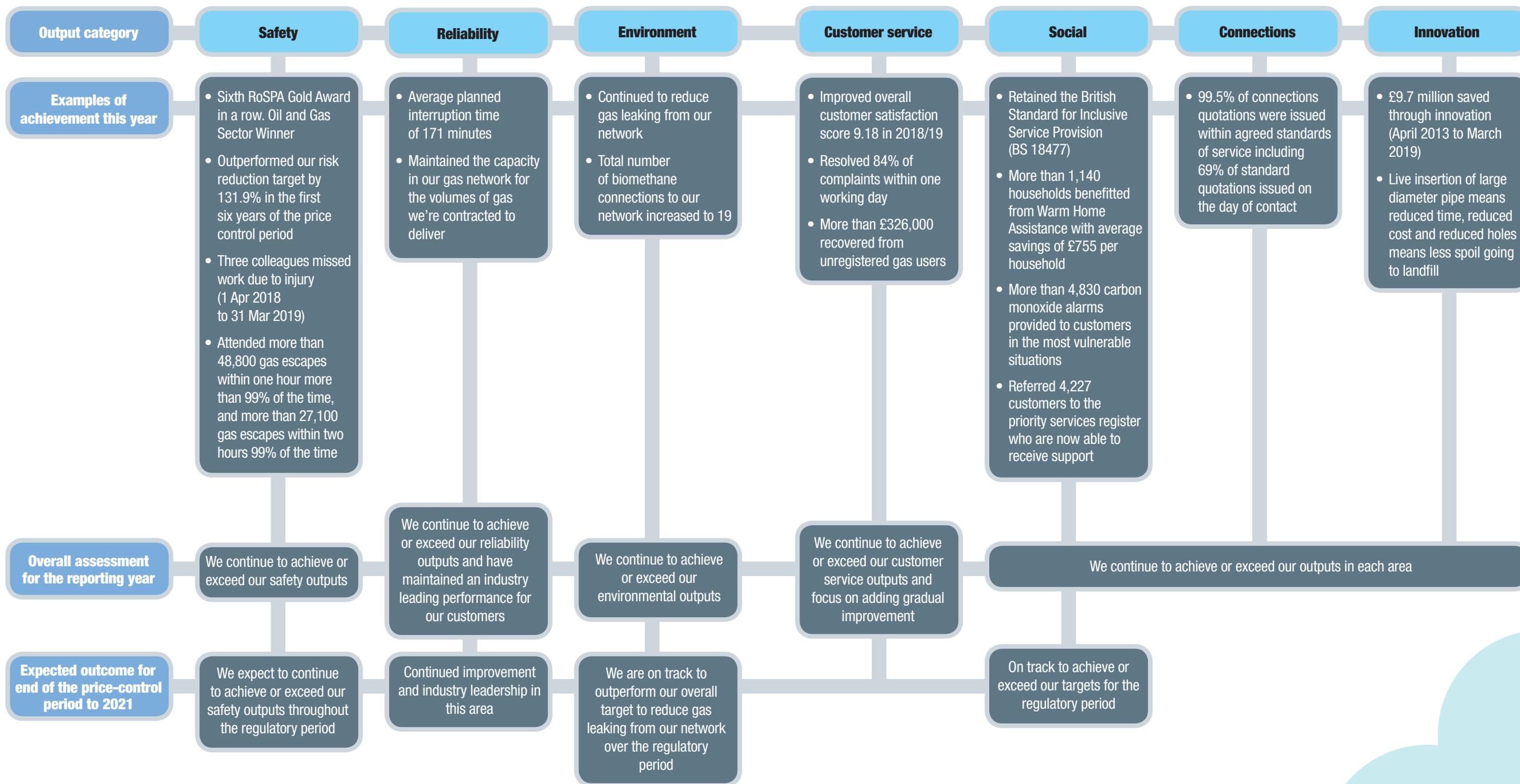
Our capabilities

The objective is underpinned by our capabilities. These are the areas that we focus on to deliver the objective:



The six capabilities outlined above translate into day-to-day actions which are supported by tools and processes to make sure that our customers' needs and wants are met cost effectively.

Performance across regulated output categories



Our business priorities are your priorities

Engaging with our stakeholders

OUR BUSINESS is driven through our five priorities (right) – which align with those of our stakeholders.

We constantly take on board stakeholder feedback to help shape our business plans and, having engaged with many more stakeholders in 2018/19, we learned a lot.

As a values-driven business, we make sure engagement is part of everyone's job in our company. Listening and responding to people has helped us develop services that have delivered added benefits for our customers.

In this section, we outline examples of who we've engaged with, what they've told us and what we've done as a result of their feedback.

We're proud of how we engage with people, the values we live and work by every day and the valuable outcomes we've delivered for all our stakeholders this year.



Demanding safety always



Safety is our top priority – and our research and engagement feedback tells us it's also stakeholders' key priority. This is important, as we work to bring about improvements that are consistent with stakeholders' wants and needs.

Our stakeholders can rest assured that our safety record is second to none and we are

consistently recognised in accreditations and awards.

In 2017/18, we achieved our 5th Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Award. We took on board the assessors' feedback so that we could further improve and bring greater benefits for our customers.

The great news is that we have now achieved our 6th gold award



Raising gas safety awareness to young people and our communities

in consecutive years – a better achievement than any other UK energy network. We also won the RoSPA Oil and Gas Sector Award and, as we were in the top three across all sectors, we were automatically finalists for the ultimate safety award – the Sir George Earle Trophy.

Our focus on maintaining the highest standards was recognised with a 100 per cent score in our Achilles supplier audit – again for the sixth consecutive year – in recognition of our strong management systems. We also successfully transitioned from OHSAS 18001 for health and safety management systems to globally recognised ISO 45001.

Our colleague *Road to Zero* safety initiative continues, and cable strikes – where we inadvertently hit other utilities' cables – have reduced from 56 strikes per annum in 2013 to 15 in 2018, which reduces disruption to the public, carbon emissions and harm to colleagues.

Our stakeholders consistently tell us to raise awareness of the risks of carbon monoxide (CO) as a priority, so we have built on our work in schools to not only reach pupils but to extend our reach into communities and to their families. Our Gas Safety Ambassadors, recruited last year, are getting more closely involved with their local communities by going into schools and other community groups to raise awareness of CO safety.

We've now introduced a Gas Safety Ambassador award scheme linked to their engagement with lead Ambassadors appointed to recognise their valued contribution.

We have also developed and piloted CO safety awareness sessions for older and BAME groups, which we will review during 2019.

We have continued the tried and tested approach of using the soft

toy bear 'Safety Seymour' to deliver CO messages to younger schoolchildren, refining lessons based on feedback to tailor delivery for our local stakeholders. We have also worked with other gas networks promoting the young persons' CO Safety Competition and are proud that for three years running we've had a national winner from our operating region. Our successful schools' CO safety programme has resulted in us being invited back to schools year on year.

To help get our gas safety messages out to more young people, we have co-designed with teachers a version of the safety lesson as an online, downloadable resource – taking a co-design approach is consistent with our evolved stakeholder engagement strategy. The safety session links with our COdebreakers CO initiative and has been trialled with young people, and is set to go live across our area in 2019/20.

Doing all we can to provide a reliable supply and promote sustainability

CASE STUDY

Keeping customers in the loop about work in their street

We know that replacing gas pipes can be very disruptive for communities, so we set about improving the experience.

We mapped the whole process from start to finish – from initially assessing the pipes that needed to be replaced, to finishing the job, clearing our sites and letting people get on with their lives.

We looked at every stage to see where we could improve. Customer complaints and tracking social media allows us to find out where improvements are needed.

The root causes are generally commuter disruption, untidy sites, or not delivering the high-quality customer service for which we are generally known.

We could see communication pinch points right upfront in the programme planning process, as well as customer communications throughout scheme delivery.

Our Critical Friends Panel Members and stakeholders at Regional Community Workshops told us our work could be very challenging for small businesses, so we set out to improve that.

We set up a new role of Customer Support Officers (CSOs) a few years ago, to help deliver on the

ground customer support, and we intensified our efforts to engage with business customers close to gas pipe replacement schemes.

CSOs helped us compile a list of the most frequently asked questions about our works and now these are automatically sent out with customer letters advising that we are going to start replacing gas pipes. We also show customers what our sites should look like to be safe, so they know what to look out for.

Making these changes has reduced complaints about our work in communities – and we have even received some customer compliments about how we are helping improve customers' experience of gas pipe replacement schemes.

"... when they [WWU] replaced the gas pipes in Usk it was a massive task... However, ... the job was well organised and efficient – communication really clear. ... My little boy loves mud, holes and diggers and the team answered all his questions... one remembered his name and used it when we saw him – it made him feel special... Thank you!"

Usk local resident

Taking a much longer-term view of planned gas pipe replacement work

We realised that there could be better sharing of high-level infrastructure plans between ourselves, local authorities and other utilities, so we set up a Strategic Infrastructure Steering Group, first trialled in Cardiff. We chose Cardiff because there are plans for a new metro and it is set to be a potential zero-carbon, hydrogen-powered city of the future.

We shared our long-term gas pipe replacement plans for the greater Cardiff area and others shared their longer-term plans. The group's terms of reference have now been circulated for agreement and future meeting dates are set.

Once a successful format has been agreed, this template will be used to set up similar groups across our area.



Skilled workforce delivers on customers' priorities

Our comprehensive research with domestic and small business customers told us that a safe and reliable network are their key priorities. For this, we must maintain a resilient workforce, but we struggle to recruit appropriately in south west England. We engaged with South West Business Council as a member, and joined its Education & Skills group to discuss how we might best recruit in this area. We also supported the FSB South West Business Awards, to help us meet other businesses who recruit in this market.

The outcome of advice on how to structure our recruitment and where to offer up our job applications was the successful recruitment of 137 new colleagues in the south west joining the team during 2018/19.

To build awareness of our career opportunities, we also used our colleague magazine 2W to promote our recruitment campaign, encouraging ex-forces colleagues to come forward and provide insight on how best to represent ourselves at careers fairs to appeal to other ex-forces personnel. One suggestion was for such colleagues to attend the fairs to speak to ex-forces attendees and we are planning a careers fair for the near future.

Our desk research showed that ex-forces personnel have many skills, but can find the recruitment

process difficult. To encourage applications from ex-forces personnel, we now chair a Veteran group in association with Business in the Community. We hosted 'Military is Good for Business' training with the Officers Association, and the resulting output was representatives from 17 different organisations attended. This ongoing recruitment project will continue to be developed during 2019/20.



CASE STUDY

Power generators – best practice sharing to support developers

We have 37 gas-fired power stations connected to our network, including 30 of the new generation peaking plants which generate power intermittently at peak demand periods in support of renewable generation.

We have been at the forefront of this changing power generation landscape, engaging with developers to connect these sites since 2014.

The initial spate of connections happened in south Wales where available land from a decline of old industry and embedded benefits made this an attractive area to locate power generation to meet the existing power deficit. New connections in Wales and south west areas have now balanced out and are not showing any sign of slowing down.

This is a new type of load onto the gas network due to the intermittent daily profile and fast ramp up to full load.

To fully understand the impact of these loads and to support this significant growth area, we have had regular engagement with the power developers and produced new processes to ensure

successful connection and supply of gas to these sites.

We held a “Distributed Generation – Working with you” workshop, with 31 attendees, during the summer of 2018 to further engage with developers, consultants and other Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) on our processes. We showcased our updated connections, commercial documentation and processes on the day, as part of sharing best practice and encouraging further collaboration. These processes and documentation have been honed with input from developers to make the whole connections

process easier for both developers and networks.

This first workshop raised more issues around inconsistency with different GDN processes and all stakeholders expressed a need for further collaboration on this topic.

We shared feedback with the other networks and, having committed to engaging further on this important area, lead a post-event teleconference to agree next steps with the other gas networks.

A second cross-network workshop is expected to be held in the near future.



Driving outstanding service

We're delivering an inclusive and outstanding level of service for our customers and protecting the most vulnerable among them.

Our priority customers

We were the first gas network to be recognised for meeting requirements in line with the prestigious British Standard 18477 for our work to help vulnerable customers and we continue to maintain this standard.

Getting up close and personal to our biggest gas consumers

It is important for us to understand the wants and needs of our major customers. Good, two-way engagement is fundamental to their businesses – and ours. Every year, we survey our industrial customers and we also ask them if they'd like to arrange to meet us to discuss anything specifically that we may be able to offer help with. In 2018/19, we appointed key account managers for each major customer and this has proven to be a really effective way of getting their

feedback. Several major customers have welcomed this approach.

By visiting our major customers, we have been able to share knowledge on new technologies, as well as allay fears about infrastructure changes, and also help resolve issues with third parties with whom we have good contacts. We now have a better understanding of our major gas users future gas demands, which helps us better plan the requirements that will be made of the gas network, so we can meet our customers' priority of receiving a reliable gas supply.

CASE STUDY

The quality of our customer service is industry leading, and we have twice achieved a prestigious ServiceMark accreditation from The Institute of Customer Service



We launched a series of customer experience improvements around our gas pipe replacement scheme, working with partners and building on best practice elsewhere, which have resulted in customer feedback scores on our planned work increasing from 8.66 in quarter one to 8.91 in quarter four with a high score of 9.06 in February 2019.

Central to this was the introduction in 2017/18 of customer service officers (CSOs) who support

operational teams in delivering outstanding levels of service to customers, by:

- monitoring customer satisfaction down to team level, where there can be more direct and earlier intervention to resolve problems, and visiting customers to answer questions about work face to face
- acting as customer safeguarding experts, helping engineers support the most vulnerable people, including

- those living with dementia
- delivering gas and carbon monoxide safety sessions in schools as a socially responsible business.

Alongside the CSOs, we have developed other initiatives, like new values-based training, a new colleague performance incentive system and enhanced customer communications, which have led to an overall improvement in performance.

Every day's a school day – colleague training supports customer service excellence

Comprehensive colleague training programmes underpin our service delivery and help us meet the needs of our stakeholders. And this year we were rewarded by receiving our highest-ever business bench-marking score for service excellence of 93.6 out of 100 from the Institute of Customer Service.

Our training includes both colleagues and partners and starts

with our comprehensive new starter induction course, through to regular updates and specialist training such as dementia friends, gas safety ambassadors, mental health first aid and, of course, being a safety critical business, our comprehensive and ongoing safety training programme.

We focus on continuous improvement, so we are always looking for ways to improve delivery to our priority customers – working with Hijinx Theatre is an example of how we have incorporated best practice from across the energy sector. Our Hijinx training provides a safe environment for colleagues

to practice interacting with actors who have Down's syndrome, autism and a range of other learning disabilities. Training takes the form of role-play, using real life workplace scenarios. Participants pause and analyse what works – as well as what doesn't work, and how they can improve their customer interaction – as well as exploring the use and style of appropriate language.

We evaluated the training to improve its effectiveness, tailoring various scenarios to fit with different colleague roles, to make sure it meets a range of needs.

Driving
OUTSTANDING
SERVICE

CASE STUDY

Healthy Homes, Healthy People

For some of our customers, paying for energy requires a relatively high proportion of their income. This affects people on relatively low incomes, those living in homes that are hard to heat and households that are not connected to the gas network.

We continue to identify and engage with these stakeholders both directly and through our partner organisations, to better understand how we can best meet their needs and reduce incidences of fuel poverty.

Our Healthy Homes, Healthy People programme was co-designed with fuel poverty organisation Warm Wales. It brings together the FRESH (Foundation for Housing) vulnerability mapping tool – identifying 'street clusters' of fuel poor, energy inefficient homes using mass energy performance certificate analysis, with local knowledge gathered by 'on the ground' community energy champions to pinpoint 'hard to reach' homes.

The champions engage with householders to better understand their needs and undertake 'whole house and person' surveys to highlight savings and benefits applicable.

The average saving per household identified is £755, with some people saving considerably more. During 2019/20, we will be looking to evaluate the social return on investment for this programme so stakeholders, as well as ourselves, can make better informed investment decisions.

Designing our future

The sky's the limit



Maintaining a safe and reliable network are key stakeholder priorities and drone technology could transform the energy industry – and we're at the forefront of an exciting collaborative project to unlock its potential.

Drones could revolutionise the way we monitor and maintain our gas assets – potentially improving safety and reducing costs – and to that end we're spearheading a cross-country, pioneering project to establish a standard and

framework for all energy networks to use.

This pathfinder project, launched in April 2018, sees us working alongside gas and electricity networks and key industry partners such as the Civil Aviation Authority and the Department for Transport and sets out to shape the future for drone applications.

What does the future hold?

The main aim of the project is to develop the standards and define the regulatory environment so drone technology can be deployed by our industry. By adopting these principles, the industry would be allowed to fly drones beyond visible line of sight (BVLOS) – which only

the military can do at present.

Trials on both electricity and gas networks were planned for the spring of 2019.

Key benefits

Using drones has significant advantages – we currently rely on helicopters to carry out video inspections of our infrastructure, surveying some 2,362km of gas pipeline every four years and manual inspections every fortnight. Using drones will reduce health and safety risks and reduce costs, enabling us to carry out more regular video inspections, improving the quality of data we collect. With the project progressing well, we could see the first drones enter service by the end of 2021.

CASE STUDY

Working together to decarbonise communities

We are working side by side with community energy groups and local authorities to use our technical expertise to help deliver energy projects that benefit the wider population. Community members share their local knowledge and together we can develop low carbon energy solutions that are owned by local communities.

In Bristol, we have worked with community group Zero West, and through workshops and steering groups we have explored

appropriate decarbonisation solutions, using our tried and tested *2050 Energy Pathfinder model* – which can identify the best low carbon options to provide an area with the energy it requires.

We gave Zero West a licence to use the model as well as ongoing support on how to use and interpret the outputs. Zero West has gone on to generate potential future low carbon energy scenarios for the south west of England. One of the outcomes of this collaboration and sharing has

been to improve expertise in the community to assess different energy solutions.

"The model is superb. I feel like I'm really beginning to see how useful it is. We intend to have something to show soon." Zero West community member

In Caldicot, south Wales, we have been involved in similar community engagement, including providing data, modelling and analysis advice and support with a range of low carbon energy options.



Stakeholders involved are supportive of the project and we are working alongside them to help deliver a more informed and evidenced decarbonisation strategy for the market town of Caldicot.

In Swindon, we have been supporting the communities' vision of a Green City, again using our

2050 Energy Pathfinder model, which has resulted in a design for a decarbonised city.

Note: Our innovative 2050 Energy Pathfinder model assesses how different energy mixes could offer future secure, affordable and sustainable energy solutions. Any energy scenario can be modelled, and results show the costs,

carbon impact and any shortfall/surplus in heat and power supply.

The model was refined, honed and peer reviewed in 2017/18 and, in 2018/19, we started to roll out the model, along with our support, for community benefit.

Delivering value for money



Work sharing – Teams now work more closely together, sharing resources across regions to make sure operational work is undertaken in a more efficient way.

Measuring benefits – Our new tool to measure the social return on our investments evaluates initiatives

or projects and monetises the wider social benefits that each project/initiative brings about and ranks them accordingly.

This means that we are able to direct our resources to the areas that bring the greatest benefits.

Continuous bill reductions

– Our value for money service is reflected in the overall impact on the average consumer gas bill. Our charges for 2018/19 were £121, down from £154 in 2013/14².

² 2018/19 prices

CASE STUDY

World-first innovation gives wide range of benefits

To improve our operational customer service, we need to understand what drives customer satisfaction. So, we carried out in-depth analysis of existing customer data and current research and found that, by reducing the time people are off gas as well as completing gas pipe replacement schemes quickly, customer satisfaction could rise from 41 per cent to 98 per cent.

We know replacement work is disruptive, messy and can seem prolonged – and, for us, working in some areas can be difficult. Faced with a complex job on the outskirts of Bristol in 2018, we

engaged our innovation team for support in identifying a solution.

The result was a world first – large-diameter 'live' mains insertion. This meant that we didn't need to 'open cut' the road, so did less digging with fewer holes. The scheme took less time to complete, reducing community disruption – which is something our consumer vulnerability research told us is very important for this group of stakeholders.

And this has resulted in some significant benefits. By using live mains insertion, we saved an estimated £500,000 on the cost

of the scheme and by digging less holes we avoided around 3,000 tonnes of excavated material being sent to landfill. The time taken to complete the job reduced from an estimated 40 weeks to 11 weeks, so the community benefited from 29 weeks' less disruption.



Our culture

Our colleagues are the lynchpin in making sure we keep the gas flowing to our customers and provide excellent service delivery. And we are committed to improving their wellbeing across the business – as making sure we have a resilient workforce, effectively delivering for customers, is business critical.

Our commitment extends to both colleagues and their families, who can access a 24-hour employee assistance help-line and programme, and benefit from monthly health and wellbeing promotions. In April 2018, we held our first internal Wellbeing Conference, where sixty colleagues improved their awareness of wellbeing and mental health and could sign the 'Time to Change' pledge – our chief executive signed up.

Following feedback from the conference, we developed our 'Wellbeing Wheel' of five best practice steps to wellbeing. We

recruited and trained 15 colleague Wellbeing Champions and, together with our 33 colleague Mental Health First Aiders, they help us meet the outcomes from the 'Wellbeing Wheel' and 'Time to Change' pledge actions – while also driving a business-wide calendar of wellbeing events. We introduced a colleague e-learning programme, supported with management briefings and a

take-home reminder booklet, which will be rolled out to all colleagues during 2019. We shared our wellbeing strategy and action plan with the Occupational Health Gas Industry Group, to benchmark and improve, and are learning further best practice from others, including a cognitive behavioural therapist from the University of Wales, the Health & Safety Executive and a psychologist from the NHS.



Future focus

Our main areas of focus in the coming months are:

- Focus on business-wide engagement training, seeking innovative methods to engage a diverse team
- Build our work on measuring wider impact including the use of our social return on investment tool

- Build on our community engagement, specifically on future energy solutions and social responsibility
- Reach out to more colleagues with executive support in building a culture of engagement through our 'Engagement Champions'
- Review and refresh our customer service strategy



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