

# Annual Stakeholder Report

2019/2020



# About us

We operate the pipe network in Wales and south west England 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, during 2019/20 we engaged widely with stakeholders using a range of methods including market research, social media, events and our usual engagement channels. Feedback from this engagement, together with the information we get from the thousands of customer contacts we have daily, has helped shape our existing services and activities and is making sure that our future plans take in a broad range of views.

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# Introduction

I am delighted to welcome you to our 2019/20 Annual Stakeholder Report, where we demonstrate how insight and engagement feedback has supported the delivery of positive outcomes for customers and other stakeholders.

Our evolved engagement strategy has supported our continued focus on high quality engagement. In 2019/20 we engaged with more than 32,000 people, including more than 21,000 doorstep conversations with customers; acting on feedback, we have delivered 152 stakeholder outcomes.

We developed our measurement framework, so that by clearly setting targets for what we are seeking to achieve and carefully measuring and evaluating results, we can hold ourselves accountable for our progress on responding to customer and other stakeholder feedback – see more on page 24.

In response to stakeholders' continued requests to place safety as a key priority, this year we were awarded our seventh RoSPA Gold Award and, for the second year running, we won the RoSPA Oil and Gas Sector Award. We continue to

seek to provide value for money services for our customers; during GD1 to date – the price control period running for eight years from 2013 – the average customer bill has been £133. We have committed to customers that we will maintain this average bill price in the next price control period, running for five years from April 2021.

Stakeholders have given us a clear steer to focus on sustainability and innovation, to deliver outcomes now and into the future to ensure wellbeing – from an economic, environmental and societal perspective.

We've engaged on and embraced the UN Sustainable Development Goals and will report on our progress towards agreed targets, annually – you can read more on this on page 23.

We're part of the wider energy debate, making it inclusive for all customers and stakeholders is our key concern. Views from wider research and opinion formers show there is no one solution to decarbonisation; a variety of solutions applied on a regional basis will offer customers and stakeholders the bespoke decarbonisation outcomes they

need and want – we are playing a significant role in this area and you can find out more about this on pages 15 to 17.

Colleague training, supported by our wellbeing strategy and plans, is preparing our workforce for an evolving energy industry, as well as further developing skills to support customer wellbeing. Our ambition, priorities and values define our culture, setting our clear direction. We've evolved our ambition, but our values haven't changed – putting customers first, taking pride in our work, working as a team and bringing energy into shaping our future.

Our ambition is to go above and beyond what people expect of us. We want to help communities, businesses and the economy to thrive by delivering reliable, affordable and sustainable energy long into the future. Our aim is to not simply deliver today, but to lead the way.

With 2020 marking our 15th birthday, and as we head towards the next price control period, I am immensely proud of what team WWU has achieved – and what we are preparing to achieve for our customers and other stakeholders going forward.



Graham Edwards  
Chief Executive

# Awards and achievements

RoSPA Winner  
Gold Award –  
7th consecutive  
year

RoSPA Winner  
Oil and Gas  
Sector Award –  
2nd consecutive  
year

Achilles  
Accreditation  
100% score –  
6th consecutive  
year

Institute of  
Customer  
Service –  
ServiceMark

BS 18477  
Inclusive Service  
Provision

IGEM –  
Joint Winner  
Customer  
Service Award

IGEM  
Project of  
the year

iiP Silver  
accreditation  
until 2020

EIC UK Energy  
Innovation Awards  
Winner Best  
Collaborative  
Project

EIC UK Energy  
Innovation Awards  
Winner Best  
Emerging  
Cross Vector  
Technology

EIC UK Energy  
Innovation Awards  
Winner Best  
Social Impact

ISO 45001  
Occupational  
Health and  
Management  
Systems and  
Guidance

ISO 14001  
Environmental  
Management  
System

ISO 55001  
Asset  
Management

# Highlights of the year

**11,652**  
signed up to the  
Priority Services  
Register

More than  
**32,000**  
stakeholders  
engaged

**4,783**  
CO alarms  
distributed

**9.17**  
customer  
satisfaction  
overall score

**57**  
mental health  
first aiders

**93**  
Institute of  
Customer Service  
UK business  
benchmarking  
score

**159**  
actions taken  
following  
feedback

**228**  
innovative ideas  
received

**83.99%**  
complaints  
resolved in one  
working day

More than  
**429km**  
of main replaced

**Zero**  
ombudsman  
rulings

**51**  
CO safety  
sessions engaging  
over 2,700 pupils

**99%**  
of gas  
emergency call-  
outs attended  
within one hour

**150**  
free of charge  
meter moves

More than  
**£516,800**  
recovered from  
unregistered  
gas users

**168**  
new starters

# Our stakeholder engagement strategy and approach

## Our business-wide focus on sustainability

Our strategy and associated processes make sure we continuously capture feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, review it and put in place appropriate action plans to continuously improve our services.

Based on feedback, we have now placed greater focus on sustainability and evolved our objective to reflect this.

## Our objective

We are a sustainable 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 outcomes our stakeholders want and ultimately shape the way our business operates.

## Our guiding principles of engagement

Our objective is supported by three guiding principles reflecting our business values and stakeholder engagement approach. This year, we updated our continuous improvement principle to include opportunities as well as issues.

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

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

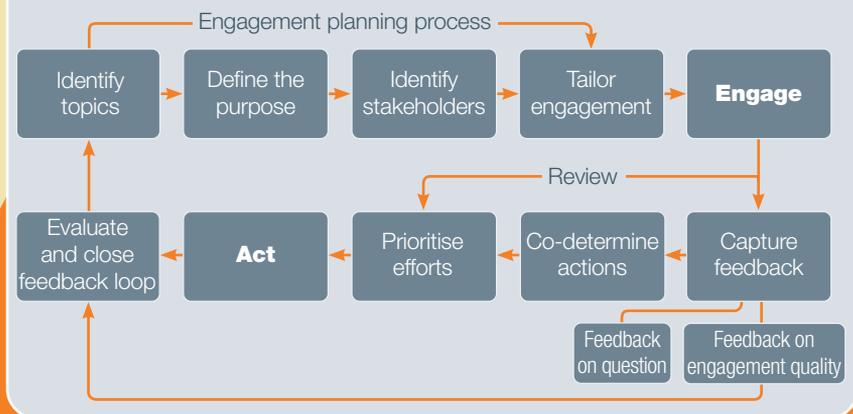
**Continuous improvement** – aiming to identify key stakeholder issues before they arise and proactively and effectively resolving them when they do; making the most of and acting on stakeholder opportunities, and communicating all outcomes to stakeholders.

## Our engagement approach

Our engagement approach is a continuous loop of sequential steps detailing how we start, conduct and finish our engagement activities – with the final evaluation feeding back into new engagement.



### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY IN PRACTICE



**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.

**Second**, we carry out engagement.

**Third**, 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.

**Fourth**, we undertake the agreed actions and priorities.

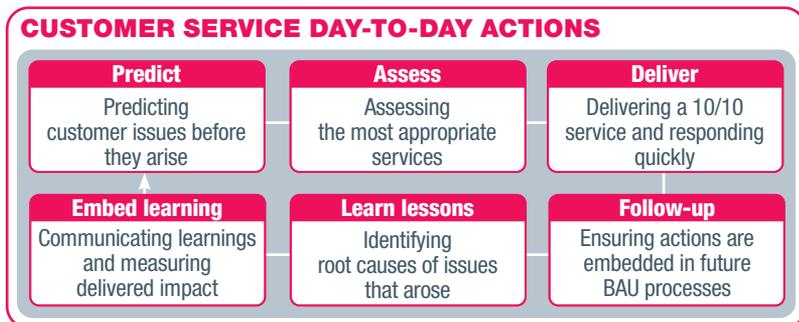
**Finally**, we evaluate the engagement we've carried out to determine if we have met the purpose and achieved outcomes. We feed lessons learned, stakeholder opinions and advice back into further engagement planning, completing the loop.

# Our customer service and consumer vulnerability strategies

Our stakeholder engagement strategy sits alongside and is complementary to our customer service and consumer vulnerability strategies. The three strategies define how we go about understanding and acting on the wants, preferences and needs of our stakeholders, to drive positive outcomes for them and also for our sustainable business.

## Customer service strategy

Our customer service strategy shows how our ambition and customer commitments are delivered through our day-to-day actions (see below). These are enabled by our people and the values we hold, together with our culture, and delivery is supported by our systems and processes.



We made the provision of excellent customer service a key priority from the very start of our existence as a standalone business and this has been recognised in the most recent audit report as part of our Institute of Customer Service ICS ServiceMark reaccreditation.

\* 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 ensure they regularly evolve to deliver ongoing value.

## Our customer service ambition

is to deliver outstanding service to our customers and businesses by predicting, assessing and tailoring responses to customer needs. Through continuous improvement and accountability, we aim to lead the way in customer service within and beyond our sector.

## ICS assessor's comments:

"I have seen plenty of evidence to support this ethos of focusing on the people and doing the right thing for all stakeholders. It was also clear that this is consistently driven from the top of the organisation – not just from discussions with the senior leadership team but also from my conversations with 'front line' employees. Those I spoke with talked about feeling involved and well connected to the business strategy, trusted to make decisions and empowered to bring forward and follow up on any suggestions for improvement."

## Consumer vulnerability strategy

Our consumer vulnerability strategy is a discrete addition to our customer service strategy, describing how we identify and support customers in vulnerable situations with tailored services in a cost-efficient and effective way.

The capabilities which support our objective\* make sure we can deliver by being underpinned by our everyday actions (see below). Our bespoke tools and processes are designed to help us support our customers' wants and needs in value for money ways.

### OBJECTIVE

- **Analyse and identify** Knowing who needs support, when and how
- **Partner** Working with third parties to deliver services we are not best placed to offer
- **Deliver** Providing a cost-effective suite of tailored services that addresses vulnerability
- **Engage** Understanding what support our communities want and need
- **Facilitate** Giving colleagues the skills to identify and manage support for vulnerable customers
- **Evaluate** Ensuring the services have the intended impact and remain the most suitable approach

# Using data, research and insight to drive our priorities

We make use of a wide range of data sources to understand our stakeholders' preferences and how we can better plan and deliver to effectively meet their needs. This includes stakeholder feedback, as well as external research and publicly available insight, such as from Government sources.

## Customer research signposts better support options

We've used research to help us gain an in-depth understanding of the needs and preferences of customers living in vulnerable situations so we can make informed decisions on the support services we provide. Our research insight was gained over an 18-month engagement programme, during which we used a variety of research methods to suit different audiences. We spoke to people living in vulnerable situations, vulnerability support case workers, professional carers and a range of other customers.

## What we found out

- Emotional vulnerability emerged as a key issue in almost all circumstances, so this is an important consideration for us when we are designing support services. Essential to this is effective communication and minimal disruption to customers' routines to reduce anxiety.
- We found that awareness among all those with whom we engaged of who we are and the services we are responsible for delivering, as well as the industry Priority Services Register (PSR), is low. However, once people become aware of these, their perceptions are positive and it was highlighted that building awareness of the PSR among customers in vulnerable situations should be a priority.
- We also found that affordability and awareness of the cost of running alternative heating and

cooking equipment when gas supplies are interrupted, either for essential improvement works or when a gas leak occurs, are particularly important.

- Working with third parties such as carers, family and healthcare workers to support people living in vulnerable situations is critical and using appropriate communication methods tailored to individuals is key.

We shared the research results with colleagues in an interactive workshop to explore the findings and how we can effectively meet customer needs. Twenty resulting actions were identified across the short, medium and long term that would improve customer outcomes, with 12 set for completion within a year – and good progress has been made on these.

## Action on training

A key recommendation was that our colleagues receive appropriate training to recognise and understand the needs of people living in vulnerable situations, including consideration of emotional intelligence.

The action we took was to produce new training modules on emotional intelligence and other soft skills, in a range of formats to suit different learning styles and support wider access to the training.

The outcome for our customers is that colleagues are more sensitive to the needs of customers' different physical and mental circumstances and they told us they feel more confident to communicate with customers in appropriate ways.



Effective customer communication is critical

## Key customer personas

# Using research and intelligence to understand what's important to our customers

We need to know who our customers are, how they feel about the gas services we provide and what's important to them when we are working in their communities. This helps us improve the service we provide, knowing that we are working to meet people's expectations.

Our Customer Support Officers had more than 21,000 doorstep conversations in 2019/20 and we have looked at combining our colleague customer insight with the findings from customer research that identified

characteristics of different customer personas in our area. We then worked with experts to identify and define the main customer types and their personas that we can expect to encounter out on the patch (see right).

This means we are able to build a better understanding of who our customers are and with this information we can support our on-the-ground colleagues as well as those based in the office, to more effectively and confidently handle face-to-face and challenging customer conversations.



Aled, aged 27

while his wife is at work, he freelances from home and looks after their six-year-old twins. "I have a set routine with the kids that I need to stick to, so I want to know what's going on."



David, aged 35

has a medical condition that means he needs a bit of extra support. "I need to know I have a reliable gas supply and that any work is carried out around my needs."



Maureen, aged 72

moved into a bungalow a few years ago, after developing arthritis. "I need to know that I can get out of my home when I need to and count on my gas supply when I'm in - particularly during the winter."



Sally, aged 32

is focused on her career and things are going really well for her right now. "I'm really busy. While I know these works might be in my best interest, they're a headache if I need to make special arrangements."

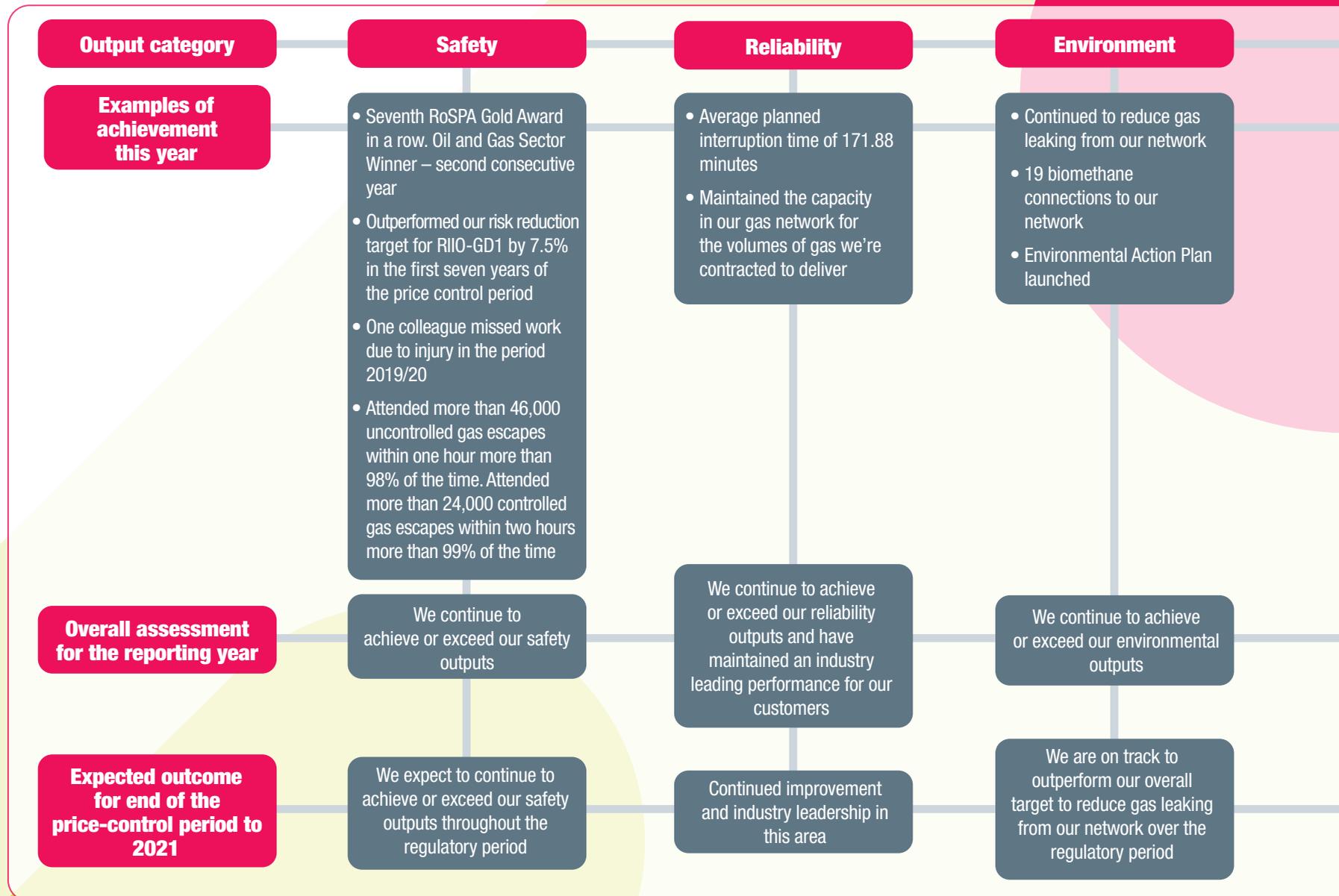


Faraz, 41

runs a popular, busy café in a large town. He's worked really hard to grow his business over the last four years and he's knocked through to the unit next door to expand his kitchen and squeeze in more tables.

"My business depends on its gas supply. On a cold day, people want hot food! It's as simple as that."

# Performance across regulated output categories



## Customer service

- Overall customer satisfaction score 9.17 in 2019/20
- Resolved 84% of complaints within one working day
- More than £516,000 recovered from unregistered gas users

We continue to achieve or exceed our customer service outputs and focus on adding gradual improvement

## Social

- Retained the British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision (BS 18477)
- More than 857 households benefitted from our "Healthy Homes, Healthy People" assistance with average savings of £661 per household
- More than 4,700 carbon monoxide alarms provided to customers in the most vulnerable situations
- Referred 11,652 customers to the priority services register who are now able to receive support

On track to achieve or exceed our targets for the regulatory period

## Connections

- 99.69% of connection quotations were issued within agreed standards of service including 72% of standard quotations issued on the day of contact

We continue to achieve or exceed our outputs in each area

## Innovation

- £12.8 million saved through innovation (April 2013 to March 2020)

# A sustainable future means our business priorities reflect your priorities

## Engaging with our stakeholders

Our business is driven by our five priorities (right) – which align with those of our stakeholders.

We constantly seek out stakeholder feedback to help shape our business plans. Over the last year, we evolved our engagement to gain in-depth insight from our stakeholders to fully understand their needs, wants and preferences to help us build a sustainable future for them and our business.

Listening to different views and responding to feedback has helped us develop the services that have delivered added benefits for our customers.

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.

Following, are some examples of who we've engaged with, what they've told us and what we've done as a result of listening to and acting on their feedback.



# Designing our future

How we are adapting to the current impacts of climate change

The River Severn flooded at Gloucester



Designing  
**OUR FUTURE**

The weight of water caused a wall to collapse in Old Furnace, Pontypool



In responding to concerns on climate change, we took a leading role, alongside companies Landmark and Ambient Risk Analytics, in developing an innovative tool to help essential utilities in gas, electricity, water and telecoms take action to protect their assets from increased flood risks and maintain reliable services.

Following a pilot trial, the mapping product was launched to the market in 2018, as Britain's first national flood map, incorporating current and future predictive flood scenarios for 2020 and far beyond.

We became the first utility in the UK to use the data as part of its UK Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment, Reporting and Investment requirements. We used the mapping tool to demonstrate to a recent joint Health & Safety Executive and Environment Agency visit to our high-pressure gas storage site that it would not flood

and cause the storage vessels to become buoyant – even during a one-in-100 years' storm weather event.

The mapping tool also helped us identify that some of our above ground gas pipes crossing a river could be at risk if the river bank was flooded. As a result, we remediated it and protection worked very well – although there were some issues with upstream flooding this year caused by Storm Dennis, which could not have been predicted.

During storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge, a reliable gas supply was an important consideration for customers and other stakeholders. With significant flooding in Monmouthshire, we joined the rapidly established Recovery Co-ordination Group working together to identify, quantify impact and resolve problems for the local community.

Mains replacement work in Taunton



## Formula 1 innovation minimises further climate change impact

Energy harvesting is one of the ways that we have responded to stakeholder feedback to do more to protect the environment.

Our operations rely on our fleet of vans. Following research in 2017, we introduced technology to harvest the energy our vehicle engines create to power electrical equipment used by our engineers.

This technology is similar to that seen in Formula 1,

where waste energy from cars' braking is converted to provide a power boost.

This means we can store energy created on journeys to power equipment on site – this saves on cost, reduces emissions and is also quieter, so reduces disruption for our stakeholders.

We've fitted 20 units so far, with the entire fleet being upgraded over the next four years.



### KEY FACT:

» Reducing engine idling for two hours a day across 10 vehicles saves 192 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and £90,000 in fuel over the life of the vehicles

## Pathfinder Plus helps communities understand the impact of decarbonisation choices

Customers and other stakeholders have told us decarbonising communities is important – and reaching ‘net zero’ is a priority.

To support energy planners to understand the impact of different decarbonisation options, we developed Pathfinder, which analyses current energy data and future options, assessing the viability of any decarbonisation approach. It defines the implications of energy investment plans, showing their impact on energy reliability, and the resultant carbon emissions, in a way that is easy for people outside of our industry to understand.

We have now improved the model and developed

Pathfinder Plus – which can provide robust comparisons of customer costs for each energy scenario modelled. We have shared the new model with other gas networks and have offered it to local authorities – it has also been requested by Energy Systems Catapult.

Our modelling is being used to deliver the Milford Haven: Energy Kingdom project in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council in west Wales, aiming to accelerate transition to an integrated hydrogen and renewable energy system. The intended outcome will be a blueprint for greener local energy generation, contributing to the Welsh and UK Governments’ goals of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

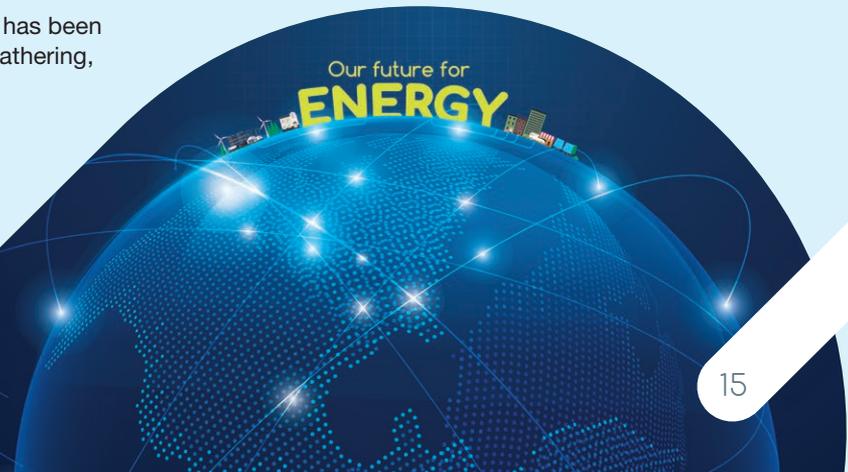
## Regional stakeholders help refine modelling of Future Energy Scenarios (FESs)

Looking at how energy is used and how that will be sustained or not across our regions, helps us put together long term plans for forecasting how much gas we will need to distribute around our network.

This is important so that we make sure we plan the right capacity of gas on an ongoing basis to serve our customers’ needs and that we do this over the very long term – 20 years +.

The way that we have approached this has been to use a ‘bottom-up’ process of data-gathering,

energy system analysis and by engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. This showed that our initial projections for the use of hydrogen were not high enough. We subsequently shared our findings with National Grid to feed into their national strategies, which showed that, in some cases, taking a localised approach is more appropriate and will result in better outcomes for communities.



## Focus on hydrogen to reach net zero

We are responding to stakeholder requests for more sustainable energy solutions, having spoken to local community stakeholder representatives, key energy sector experts and politicians, as well as our customers. We have and will continue to work collaboratively to explore how we might use 'green and blue' hydrogen in our network and are working to prepare our network to be net zero ready.

Where the hydrogen comes from is important. At the moment, it's mainly produced industrially from natural gas, which generates significant carbon emissions. That type is known as "grey" hydrogen. A cleaner version is "blue" hydrogen, for which the carbon emissions are captured and stored, or reused. The cleanest one of all is "green" hydrogen, which is generated by renewable energy sources without producing carbon emissions in the first place.

We're a core support member of the Wales Hydrogen Trade Association, launched in 2020 in Cardiff. The launch was on the same day as a Welsh Government debate on hydrogen decarbonisation, so we were able to engage with knowledgeable stakeholders on this topic. One of our Directors presented at the event, assuring

attendees of our commitment to affordable, sustainable energy for the future. This organisation is set up to advocate for and build capacity to advance a Wales hydrogen economy.

When we engaged with customers at energy deep dive focus groups in 2019, they told us they would be accepting of hydrogen as a fuel, but needed to understand and be assured of its safety. So we will be involved in raising public awareness of hydrogen, its importance as a green gas for the future and how they might use hydrogen in the future.

A key area of focus in 2019/20 has been the completion of HyHy, a model-based feasibility study to assess Cardiff's combined energy demands to understand how using hybrid heating technology, in combination with bulk hydrogen supply, can achieve national carbon targets. We've engaged on this project with our regulator Ofgem, BEIS and the UK Committee on Climate Change, and have acted on their feedback to build in a generous off-shore wind energy generation scenario into the project.

2019/20 also saw the launch of The South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC) which will identify process options to reduce carbon emissions, options for Carbon Capture Usage

and Storage (CCUS) and for an infrastructure backbone to enable large scale CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction across Wales and beyond. As part of SWIC, we are working collaboratively on a project led by Tata Steel on the south Wales hydrogen vision – zero carbon gas. Our role has been to share best practice in modelling whole energy system approaches and to work with stakeholders to support the zero carbon vision.

GAS GOES GREEN



Chris Clarke, our Energy Strategy Director

### KEY FACTS:

- » Green hydrogen is made from renewable electricity, no CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted
- » Blue hydrogen is made from natural gas, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are captured and stored

# Gas Decarbonisation Pathways Project

Gas Goes Green – a regional perspective

We're collaborating with other gas networks on the Gas Goes Green project designed to deliver stakeholders' requirements for a low-cost, low-carbon gas network across the UK.

The project has produced a detailed plan to deliver a zero-carbon gas system that includes the regulatory, technical and operational actions that are needed to deliver this in the UK regions for which each gas network maintains responsibility.

For our regions of Wales and the south west of England, it concluded we should plan for significant use of biomethane and hybrid heating systems, with hydrogen being used in

specific areas, such as the industrial cluster in south west Wales and large cities along the M4 corridor.

Early in 2020, we hosted a regional launch of the *Pathways to Net Zero* report to share, discuss and gather feedback on its findings with key stakeholders, including the Welsh Government Environment and Rural Affairs Minister.

Feedback from the event was very positive, with some highlighting the report's provision of a viable pathway for decarbonising gas, which accounts for more than 80% of the heating for homes and businesses, and which will support the Welsh Government's net zero carbon emissions ambition.

Our Chief Executive speaking at the regional launch of the Pathways Report



# Driving outstanding service

Driving   
OUTSTANDING  
SERVICE

We always try to exceed expectations and to meet the specific needs of our stakeholders and communities. We achieve this through a range of engagements and service improvements – such as our Sign Video app and attending Dementia Cafes. Our Customer Support Officers provide one-to-one support in the community.

## Customer Support Officers keep customers in the loop

Getting customer communications right is key to providing excellent customer service – our own data and customer research feedback showed this should be a key focus. In 2017, we introduced Customer Support Officers (CSOs) to build community relationships, providing

information and reassurance to customers, including about our gas pipe replacement work. Three years on, we've scaled up this invaluable resource. Their local insight has helped identify customers in vulnerable situations and their specific needs.

Our CSOs are proud of what they have achieved and in 2019, CSO David Carter was a finalist in the 2019 IGEM Young Person's

paper competition. His paper and presentation, *Improving communication during mains replacement work*, covered the evolution of the CSO role.

## Getting communication right

Our engineer attended a gas escape call at the home of a customer with hearing problems. The elderly customer pointed out the source of the smell, but struggled to communicate through written messages.

The engineer called the Sign Video app to allow a three-way call with a British Sign Language expert, which put the customer at ease. The customer said

they were lonely, had no local friends who understood signing and felt isolated at home.

Our engineer gained the customers' permission to help through using the app, made the gas appliances safe then contacted our priority services team who liaised with social services to visit the customer and provide support.



David Carter, finalist in the 2019 IGEM Young Person's paper competition

# Acting on feedback to build awareness of the Priority Services Register (PSR)

Partner organisations highlighted the importance of getting people living in vulnerable situations on to the PSR – to receive extra support from utility companies.

Our new strategy was to extend reach to the families, friends and carers of our target audience – the people our customers trust to support them. We decided to trial a social media campaign to promote PSR sign-up (see below). The result has been a huge uptake, with 11,652 registrations in 2019/20.

## Facebook newsfeed ads



**Wales & West Utilities** Sponsored

👶 If you have a child under 5...  
👨👩👧👦 Or know someone who does...  
/ Sign up to the Priority Services Register to get support from your gas, water and electricity companies.



WWWUTILITIES.CO.UK  
**Priority Services Register**



**Wales & West Utilities** Sponsored

👤 If you're living with a long term health condition...  
Or know someone who is...  
/ Sign up to the Priority Services Register to get support from your gas, water and electricity companies.



WWWUTILITIES.CO.UK  
**Priority Services Register**



**Wales & West Utilities** Sponsored

👴 If you are over 60...  
👨👩👧👦 Or live with someone who is...  
/ Sign up to the Priority Services Register to get support from your gas, water and electricity companies.



WWWUTILITIES.CO.UK  
**Priority Services Register**

## Supporting people having difficulty paying their fuel bills

Wellbeing suffers when people have financial problems, and we know that tackling fuel poverty is only one part of the equation. In our experience and from engagement

feedback, we find that many people in fuel poverty have lower incomes and struggle generally with day-to-day necessities – which in turn can impact their health.

## Healthy Homes, Healthy People

We fund a fuel poverty support programme, Healthy Homes, Healthy People, which takes a rounded approach to the problem. It is run through our partnerships with Warm Wales and the Centre for Sustainable Energy, who are central to helping us engage and meet the needs of hard to reach groups.

To help us focus our fuel poor support activities, we use a vulnerability mapping tool. It identifies 'street clusters'

of fuel poor homes using property datasets, mass energy performance analysis and Experian data, which helps us prioritise, with Local Authorities, which areas to target. This is then brought together with local knowledge and other referrals to cross check, e.g. from GPs, health professionals and local support groups.

This approach was recognised as best practice in the UK Energy Innovation Awards in 2019, where it won the Best Social Impact Award category.

Once target areas are identified, local partner advisors engage with people in their homes to provide whole house and person surveys, including energy efficiency and benefits' checks.

The results are monitored and analysed and the household savings, as a result of the intervention, calculated. To obtain a fuller understanding of the value of this support, we also look at the wider social benefits of this approach and we will continue to look at the wider impact of support going forward.

# Demanding safety always



Safety is a key priority for our customers and other stakeholders, so it's a key focus for us.

We consider all aspects of safety, including putting safe working processes and practices in place in relation to our day-to-day physical work as well as the more general wellbeing of our colleagues and the wider community.

This year, we are proud to have won the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Award for the seventh consecutive year, while also being awarded their Oil Sector and Gas Sector Award for the second successive year.



The results of our work to keep communities safe was exemplified when youngster Jaydee-Lee received a Pride of Britain Award for saving the lives of her younger brother and mum by recognising the signs of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning – after she'd attended one of our primary school gas safety sessions.



# Prevention is better than cure

Our approach to wellbeing is proactive and we lead in this area, chairing a gas network Occupational Health Forum. Regular engagement with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) helps us improve processes and identify risks earlier. We also look at external trends and seek out best practice via our Wellbeing Forum.

For a long time, we have recognised the importance of operational colleagues getting enough sleep, as fatigue at work is a risk when colleagues are working 'on-call'

to respond to emergencies. We have developed policies to raise awareness and reduce this risk – not only to address the impact of work on sleep but also new parents and health conditions.

We've shared this approach with other networks, as an example of good practice in responding to stakeholder needs.

Each year we run a colleague 'Be Winter Safe' campaign focusing on relevant topics based on insight and last winter, wellbeing and fatigue avoidance was a key feature.

## TOP TIPS to Be Winter Safe

- Look after yourself.** Mental health is as important as physical health.
- Keep your head, hands and feet **warm and dry.**
- Drink and eat enough.** Take a break if you need it.
- Wear the right boots.** Remember your grips.

# Keeping communities safe from carbon monoxide (CO) risks

Stakeholders have told us to continue to raise awareness of CO risks and to focus our activities in those areas where we can achieve the biggest impact, in value for money ways.

Educating primary school-age children is our main focus area, this includes Gas Safety Ambassador visits to schools and making our CO resources available as bilingual (Welsh and English) digital downloads.

This year we delivered around 50 face-to-face CO gas safety sessions to more than 2,700 primary school pupils, using the all gas distribution network backed Safety Seymour programme.

In response to Covid-19, we updated our online educational activity resources linked to the Science curriculum, to support home-schooling. We further developed a joint gas network Safety Seymour website with additional educational materials with a fun twist, including safety

yoga, which we promoted extensively with a social media campaign.

We also provide alarms to those in the most vulnerable circumstances and our partners – Fire & Rescue Services, Care & Repair and Warm Wales, Warm West – distribute most of our CO alarms and associated advice provision. Having direct contact with customers living in vulnerable situations on a daily basis enables them to assess needs, position CO alarms and provide advice.



Expanded online role for Safety Seymour

We are supporting the All Party Parliamentary CO Group's new research programme into how carers and health workers can be better protected from CO risks during home visits. The plan is to use the experiences of our partner organisations and the research findings will help deliver safer home visiting practices.



Delivery of a gas safety session to primary school pupils

# Ramping up collaboration

Innovation is allowing us to explore how best to support the needs of those in vulnerable circumstances and take a more inclusive approach. This could take the form of new services, data and management practices, technologies or partnerships.

Reducing the impact our essential works have on the public is always at the forefront of discussions at our annual Customer Conference, so when concerns were raised about the ramps we use on our sites, the opportunity to innovate emerged.

“Whizz-Kidz is pleased to be involved in the Ramp Up project. It allows us to share views and experiences on how difficult day-to-day life can be for wheelchair users. We believe it is important for our families to be involved in campaigning for improvements in their community and we are excited to be part of the results.”

– Jo Fashan, Associate Director at Whizz-Kidz



## Need

We identified some of our vulnerable customers can find it hard to navigate around our street works, so we looked for an innovative solution. The problem was that traditional kerb ramps used around street works can create challenges for customers using mobility scooters and wheelchairs.

## Approach

We understand the importance of collaboration, not just to make sure learning is shared and duplication avoided with our network partners but also to make sure we fully leverage the expertise and capabilities of our supply chain.

This project brings together 11 partners, led by Wales & West Utilities and supported by the Energy Innovation Centre, four gas and electricity networks, three manufacturers, Frazer-Nash Consultancy and children's charity Whizz-Kidz.

It will produce a better kerb transition ramp, and Whizz-Kidz plan to test the prototypes and make recommendations on which they found easiest to navigate.

## Benefits

This pioneering project demonstrates how lots of partners can come together to tackle a nationwide problem.

Working with experts is essential and bringing in Whizz-Kidz gives us invaluable insight into how wheelchair or mobility scooter users view our street works, something that will help generate ideas for improving accessibility in all aspects of our work. Involving three manufacturers enables supply chain growth, which could lead to more inclusive product designs and competition.

The scale of this collaboration will make sure the benefits of our solution will be felt and learning shared throughout the UK.

Doing all we can to  
**PROVIDE  
A RELIABLE  
GAS SUPPLY**  
& PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

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

In 2019/20, we invested £70m in our gas pipe network, replacing more than 429km of old metal pipes with a more durable version able to transport the green gases that are connecting into our system, resulting in improvements to reliability, reduced emissions from leakage and long term sustainability.



## Building a sustainable future

Sustainability is a key theme across all our business areas – reflecting an important priority for our stakeholders. We've made a commitment to align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) to support us to achieve this. While we contribute to all 17 UN SDGs, we focus on seven goals, identified through stakeholder and colleague engagement.

### The seven key goals are:

- Affordable and clean energy
- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Life on land
- Partnerships for the goals

Engagement on our detailed contribution to each goal is ongoing.

## Protecting our environment

Protecting the environment is ever more important to our stakeholders and we recognise that we have a key role to play in helping to protect our environment for future generations. In 2019, we published our Environmental Action Plan, shaped by stakeholders. While implementation of the plan is in the early stages, we have undertaken extensive work to baseline our activities initially through use of a Government (Defra) metric for Biodiversity and our Social Return on Investment tool (SROI).

**Example:** Local authority feedback told us that tree planting is very important. We used our SROI tool to measure wider social net benefits including carbon sequestration and others such as amenity value and shade. The voluntary sector helped us shape the best approach to this and we further engaged with mental health charity Growing Spaces to better understand the associated benefits to mental wellbeing of environmental protection.



# Delivering value for money

Delivering value for money for our stakeholders is critical – so we continuously evaluate and update how we measure, monitor and review engagement effectiveness, associated actions and outcomes.

In 2019/20 we expanded use of our SROI tool to a wider range of business activities including our Pathfinder model and data sharing, Healthy Homes, Healthy People, theft of gas, tree planting and others. The diagram below shows the data flows associated with measuring benefits in this way.

## OUR SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI) APPROACH TO MEASURING BENEFITS

### INPUTS

- Projected cost of initiatives being assessed
- Direct financial benefits provided to customers as a result of an initiative
- Financial proxies and detailed probability assumptions for social benefits delivered by initiatives, supported by extensive literature review of respected governmental and institutional sources

### PROCESS

- Cost benefit analysis based on the SROI methodology backed by the UK Cabinet Office

### OUTPUTS

- A Net Present Value of any initiative and its comparable options which takes into account financial and quantified social benefits to customers, stakeholders and society
- A clear comparison of the benefits offered by comparable options across key metrics – **this allows us to pick the option that maximises value to society**

By measuring the wider benefits of our activities, we are able to prioritise those delivering most value.

## Healthy Homes, Healthy People assistance

We monitor the direct financial impact of our Healthy Homes, Healthy People assistance (see right) to make sure the support we deliver results in savings for individual households.

### Healthy Homes, Healthy People assistance

| 2019/20      | Savings         | Households assisted | Average saving per household |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| S Wales      | £278,899        | 369                 | £756                         |
| N Wales      | £151,640        | 186                 | £815                         |
| Cornwall     | £121,400        | 233                 | £521                         |
| Severn Wye   | £14,384         | 69                  | £208                         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>£566,323</b> | <b>857</b>          | <b>£661</b>                  |

We have also calculated the wider SROI of this support, which showed for every £1 spent a wider net benefit of £8.66 was achieved.

This approach to understanding wider benefits has been shared with partners in the voluntary sector; we worked with Care & Repair, using the SROI tool, to understand the wider social benefits of its home decluttering Attic Project.

# Future focus

We are now in the last year of the current price control period, with the next price control due to start in April 2021 to cover the five years to 2026.

We have made a number of commitments to deliver for our customers in our new Business Plan. In preparation for this, our main areas of focus in the coming months will be:

- To continue embedding our culture, where sustainability – including wellbeing, innovation and stakeholder engagement, are core to our business ethic.
- To continue building, developing and testing new engagement methods, to fit with a changing external environment. We will also develop a sophisticated evaluation and measurement framework to ensure accountability.
- To build on our company-wide engagement training, focusing on online learning to fit with more remote working.
- To use our experience of customer educated panels to develop a Citizens' Panel with regional representation.
- To evaluate our newly launched Safe and Warm Community Fund – focusing on outcomes and critical success factors.
- To engage further on new colleague skill requirements, to meet the needs of a changing external environment.



# Find out more

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](http://www.wwutilities.co.uk/stakeholderengagement).



If you'd like to get in touch with our **Stakeholder team**, you can call 02920 278536 or email [engagement@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:innovation@wwutilities.co.uk). Our challenges are on our website at [www.wwutilities.co.uk/innovation](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:recruitment@wwutilities.co.uk).

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