

## Wales & West Utilities Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

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*Managing Better with Carbon Monoxide Monitors*

Care & Repair

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*Sophie Stone*

[Sophie.Stone@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:Sophie.Stone@wwutilities.co.uk)

07977804612

*Original November 2022*

*Updated November 2024*

## 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:

- a) have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project;
- b) either:
  - i. provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or
  - ii. provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or
  - iii. reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;
- c) have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;
- d) go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and
- e) not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.<sup>1</sup>

## Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair, and replacement

In order to qualify as a VCMA Project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance<sup>2</sup> servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:

- a) a GDN has to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role;
- b) the household cannot afford to service, repair or replace unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance; and
- c) sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement.

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<sup>1</sup> If part, but not full, funding is available through an external funding source for an eligible project, VCMA funding can be used for the remaining amount.

<sup>2</sup> Essential gas appliances are gas fuelled heating systems (including gas boilers and gas fires), and gas cookers.

## Information required for the registration of VCMA projects

Information required	Description
Project title	Managing better with carbon monoxide (CO) monitors
Funding GDN(s)	Wales & West Utilities
New/ Updated PEA	Updated
VCMA Project contact name, email and number	Sophie Stone <a href="mailto:Sophie.Stone@wwutilities.co.uk">Sophie.Stone@wwutilities.co.uk</a> 07977804612
Total Cost (£)	Original: £130,000 Updated February 2024: £40,000
Total VCMA funding required (£)	£130,000  Updated November 2024: Additional investment of £40,000 New Total - £170,000
Problem(s)	<p>People with sensory loss do not have access to specialist equipment, information, or advice on Carbon Monoxide in a way that is accessible and meets their needs.</p> <p>People who are deaf are particularly affected due to sound-based alarm systems being most commonly used. More work is needed to protect older people with sensory loss from Carbon Monoxide (CO).</p> <p>Wales &amp; West Utilities will look to extend this successful partnership with Care and Repair Cymru, which began in RIIO GD1, and looked to raise awareness of the dangers of CO with over 60's in Wales, whilst making referrals the Priority Service Register (PSR); and look to incorporate further work to identify meaningful solutions for people experiencing sensory loss.</p>
Scope and Objectives	<p>This project is ready to commence via specialist Managing Better caseworkers, who are specially trained to offer information and advice to help assist people living with sensory loss aged over 50 across Wales to live independently at home. In 2022 , Managing Better helped 2,265 people in Wales and in 2021 the service won Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Diversity Award in recognition of the methods we use to deliver Managing Better.</p>

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	<p>We will offer carbon monoxide monitors and PSR sign ups to all Managing Better clients, and ensure they understand how to use the monitor, and what to do if the alarm goes off or they think they are experiencing CO poisoning. We will produce and deliver materials on how to use their CO monitor in a way that meets their needs, for example (but not limited to) Braille or Large Print. Around 8% of all people helped via Managing Better are aged under 60, so with this project we aim to expand the age range of people we are able to help, as well as accessing those harder to reach groups living with sensory loss who require specialist methods of communication.</p> <p>The objectives and benefits of this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expanded reach of the current partnership to those aged under 60 and living in additionally vulnerable situations with sensory loss.</li><li>- Provision of CO monitors, PSR sign ups and specialist information and advice to improve housing safety for those living with sensory loss in Wales.</li><li>- Access to additional materials on information about carbon monoxide monitors and gas safety that support those with specialist communication needs. These resources will be used in homes across Wales within the Care &amp; Repair network and will be shared with our Managing Better project partners (detailed below), further expanding WWU reach via these new specialist materials.</li><li>- An awareness campaign using these materials, with our Managing Better partners.</li></ul> <p>Updated November 2024:</p> <p>From 2024, WWU will increase the current funding provision by £20k for inflation to the current services.</p> <p>In addition, following the recommendations made by Care &amp; Repair in their managing better with carbon monoxide alarms report published in August 2023, WWU will provide an additional £20,000 to allow Care &amp; Repair to purchase 60 Bellman and Symfon adapted CO alarm systems for deaf/hard of hearing clients.</p>
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<p>Why the Project is being funded through the VCMA, and how this aligns to GDN's VCMA Strategy</p>	<p>CO awareness and our work to minimise risk and prevent harm is explicit in the definition of the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA).</p> <p>The VCMA supports the GDNs individual business plans and ambitions and can be utilised for VCMA projects focusing on supporting vulnerability and carbon monoxide safety initiatives. The requirements are stipulated as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or</li> <li>• provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or</li> <li>• reduce the risk of harm caused by CO.</li> </ul> <p>By providing CO safety information we are both providing awareness of the dangers of CO and reducing the risk of harm caused by CO with the intention that people take this messaging on board and take further action to prevent it.</p> <p>Updated November 2024:</p> <p>All GDNs have committed to spending VCMA money within four strategic pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fuel Poverty &amp; Energy Affordability</li> <li>2. Services Beyond The Meter</li> <li>3. Supporting Priority Customer Groups</li> <li>4. Carbon Monoxide Awareness</li> </ol> <p>This project aligns to strategic pillar four.</p>
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/ Customer support</p>	<p>In our business plan, we provided extensive evidence of support from stakeholder for us to continue to raise awareness of CO.</p> <p>At a stakeholder prioritisation and value for money workshop, attendees ranked investment in CO awareness raising, alongside other vulnerability support, as their top priority.</p> <p>During discussions between our 30-strong representative Citizens' Panel on supporting people living in vulnerable situations, participants commented on the significant potential impacts of carbon monoxide poisoning and the need to ensure the safety of customers in relation to this issue.</p> <p>Updated November 2024:</p> <p>In collaboration with Wales &amp; West Utilities Care &amp; Repair carried out interviews with Managing Better caseworkers to gain a better understanding of the needs of people who have</p>

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	<p>hearing loss or are Deaf when it comes to having accessible information and equipment that can protect them from Carbon Monoxide.</p> <p>People who are Deaf or are living with hearing loss do not have easy access to information, advice or specialist equipment which could protect them from CO. They are particularly affected as CO alarms are commonly sound based. More work is needed to protect older people who are Deaf or live with hearing loss from CO.</p> <p>The British Deaf Association also surveyed 75 Deaf people across 4 groups in Swansea, Barry, Cardiff &amp; Bridgend. Following these interviews Care &amp; Repair Cymru and WWU produced the “Managing Better with Carbon Monoxide Report”. One of the recommendations was to make specialist Carbon Monoxide equipment more accessible to Deaf and hard of hearing clients.</p>
<p>Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Care &amp; Repair will integrate conversations on carbon monoxide and gas safety into all home visits with their Managing Better clients. Between April 2020 and March 2021, this was 2,265 people.</li> <li>- Improve home (gas) safety for people in Wales living with sensory loss through CO monitor fitting and awareness raising during home visits and telephone assessments</li> <li>- Improve health and wellbeing for Wales’ most vulnerable older people living with sensory loss by alleviating worry and signing up clients with sensory loss to the PSR</li> <li>- Ensure people living with sensory loss in their own home understand how to access help if their alarm goes off or they suspect carbon monoxide exposure through bespoke materials that meet their communication needs</li> <li>- Enable people living with sensory loss to access materials on carbon monoxide and gas safety in a medium that meets their communication needs. Care &amp; Repair will share these materials with our partners, further expanding the reach of the project.</li> <li>- Further raise awareness of the work of WWU across Wales with the people we come into contact with directly through our client facing work, and indirectly via our partners and their</li> </ul>

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	<p>networks, including the Stroke Association, Alzheimer’s Society, RNIB and RNID,</p> <p>Updated November 2024:</p> <p>- Care &amp; Repair will purchase 60 complete adapted carbon monoxide alarm systems from Bellman &amp; Symfon and specialist Caseworkers will identify eligible people, who wouldn’t benefit from traditional hard of hearing alarms, whilst also working with partners across Wales to help identify clients; for example RNID, British Deaf Association and Centre of Sign-Sight-Sound in North Wales.</p>
Project Partners and third parties involved	This project will be delivered in partnership between Wales & West Utilities, and Care and Repair Cymru.
Potential for new learning	This project will help us better understand the impact of specialist CO monitors for the older members of our customer base, that suffer with sensory loss.
Scale of VCMA Project and SROI calculations, including NPV	<p>Using our historic data, we have forecasted a reach over the term of this project and calculated the SROI over a 5-year period:</p> <p>Total gross present value = £2,074,118.56          Net Present Value = £1,925,977.58          SROI per £1 spent = £13.00</p> <p>SROI Updated November 2024:</p> <p>We have taken the forecasted numbers expected by Care &amp; Repair throughout the delivery period and calculated the following SROI over the duration of the project:</p> <p>Total Gross Present Value = £787,067.15          Net Present Value = £632,708.90          Positive SROI per £1 spent = £4.10</p> <p>Please note that the updated SROI calculation was completed using the GDN-shared SROI rulebook released in September 2024, which produces stricter and more accurate results compared to previous models.</p>
VCMA Project start and end date	This project will begin on 1 April 2022 and run until 31 March 2026.
Geographical area	This project will be delivered across the whole of Wales.

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<p>Internal governance and project management evidence</p>	<p>Care &amp; Repair's project proposal has been reviewed through various industry working groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- GDN Vulnerability Working Group (monthly)</li><li>- VCMA Steering Group</li></ul> <p>This project is also supported by stakeholders (as outlined above).</p> <p>The project will be managed and led by WWU and will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Monthly project review meetings</li><li>- Quarterly stakeholder review meetings</li><li>- Stage gate review after 1 year of delivery</li><li>- Ongoing reviews throughout the duration of the project regarding delivery of outcomes - this will feed into lessons learnt and shared best practice to ensure the project is successful in delivering value for money and maximising outcomes for customers and communities.</li></ul>
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