

# Annual stakeholder report

2017/18



# INTRODUCTION

**WOULD YOU LIKE** to find out more about what we do? Or what we can do for you? Customers sometimes need extra help for a variety of reasons. It could be because their gas supply is interrupted or they've developed a long-term health condition or they're taking care of an older relative. Whatever the reason, our message is to get in touch and we'll tell you how we can help. If you'd like to take part in one of our stakeholder and customer panels – to give us your views and help shape the services we provide – please see the contact details below.



You can get in touch with our Stakeholder team by calling **02920 278546** or emailing [engagement@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:engagement@wwutilities.co.uk). We look forward to hearing from you. Your views are important to us.



You can visit our website [www.wwutilities.co.uk](http://www.wwutilities.co.uk) to find out more about us.



Check out our Facebook page [facebook.com/wwutilities](https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities). You can contact us here at any time, we post general news updates about what we are doing.



Follow us on Twitter [@wwutilities](https://twitter.com/wwutilities) to see our news – and please contact us here about anything you'd like to know or tell us about.



Contact our Innovation team if you have a new idea for a product or research that might be relevant to what we do. Call **02920 278958** or email [innovation@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:innovation@wwutilities.co.uk). To see what our challenges are visit [www.wwutilities.co.uk/innovation](http://www.wwutilities.co.uk/innovation)



Our Warm Home Assistance scheme can provide financial help with new connections to our gas network. You can find out more by emailing [warmhomeassistance@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:warmhomeassistance@wwutilities.co.uk) or calling **02920 278713**.



People interested in joining our team can see the latest job vacancies on our website. Contact us by emailing [recruitment@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@wwutilities.co.uk) or calling **02920 278958**.

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**WE WANT TO** engage with more of our stakeholders, listen to their feedback and use it to improve our business performance. It's important to us that stakeholders' voices are reflected in our current and future business plans.

We share the same priorities as our stakeholders and their voice influences our decisions. Their top priorities are still raising awareness of carbon monoxide and supporting people in vulnerable situations. So we've developed key partnerships to help deliver for these groups and we've again received the British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision, showing our commitment to delivering for customers in vulnerable situations.

Excellent service delivery is at the heart of what we do. Stakeholders tell us delivering great service should remain a priority and our Distinction-level ServiceMark from the Institute of Customer Service not only tells us we're getting this right, it also helps us measure our performance against others.

This report details our achievements during 2017/18 and highlights some of the great work we've done in engaging a wider audience.

As well as forging new partnerships and engaging with national and local politicians, we ran our first TV advert as part of our 'Let's connect' campaign to help us gather the views of even more people.

And as part of our preparations for the next price control period set by our regulator Ofgem, we ran a huge consumer engagement programme to get people's views so we can plan for the future and provide them with the services they want – at the best value for money.

We believe stakeholders have the right to shape the services we provide. Only by listening to them and delivering what they want will we really be able to claim we're successful.

**Graham Edwards**  
Chief Executive



## ABOUT US

**WE DELIVER GAS** 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, warm and receive a level of service they can trust.

We don't sell gas, we operate the pipe network through which people receive gas from their supplier (the company they pay their gas bill to). Safety is a key priority. We respond swiftly to gas emergencies and invest heavily to improve the quality of our network. Every day our skilled colleagues are replacing old metal pipes with new plastic ones – improving the reliability and safety of our gas network for many years to come.

In winter, as much as 80% of the heat and power needed by homes and businesses comes from the gas network. We are making sure that we can meet that demand for the long term, providing a reliable, affordable and increasingly sustainable service.

To help shape that future, we consulted widely with as many stakeholders as possible through a range of surveys, opinion research and focus groups, multimedia campaigns and our usual engagement channels. These valuable voices will help us to make sure our plans for the future take in a broad range of views.

## OUR STRATEGY

**TO HELP US** with our business plans, we focused on improving engagement and ran a far-reaching public consultation programme.

Our strategy is multi-channel, seeks to develop partnerships to access hard-to-reach stakeholders and customers, encourages dialogue and recognises how valuable stakeholder feedback is to our overall success.

### Our promise

We engage with people using the most appropriate channels. We listen to and act on their feedback to make sure we continue to deliver outstanding levels of gas safety, reliability and customer service so we're trusted and valued by the millions of people we serve every day.

### Engaging to plan for the future

Stakeholder feedback will be key in shaping our business plan for the next price-control period which starts in April 2021.

During 2018, we embarked on a multi-channel stakeholder engagement campaign to reach more people, focusing on the simple message: 'Let's connect'. We also ran a TV advertising campaign which was complemented with adverts on buses, in newspapers and on digital and social media channels.

Our more than 1,400 colleagues helped drive people to our survey and our presence at community events helped us reach more than 645,000 people across our area.

### Partnerships

Developing strategic partnerships is key to our engagement strategy because they help us deliver priority services to people in vulnerable situations. By working with organisations such as Care & Repair and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), we're gaining insight and connecting with hard-to-reach consumers and stakeholders.



## AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### OUR MAIN

achievements over the first five years of an eight-year regulatory period, which began in April 2013:

More than 430,000 gas emergency call-outs



More than 8,400 Warm Home Assistance connections



68 apprentices recruited



More than 57,400 new connections



More than 2,200 kilometres of main replaced



More than 6,400 people signed up to the Priority Services Register (PSR)



### Important achievements in 2017/18

Our outstanding work has been recognised by a range of independent bodies in the past 12 months.

### Safety first

Safety is one of our key priorities and we're delighted to say we've won our fifth Gold Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) – a record in the industry. We also received a commendation from RoSPA for our high safety standards at the Oil and Gas Sector Awards.

And for the first time, we achieved accreditation for the international Occupational Health and Safety standard OHSAS 18001 following a four-day audit of our health and safety management systems.



### Service success

The Institute of Customer Service (ICS) has again awarded us its ServiceMark with Distinction for meeting its demanding national customer service standard. Our customer satisfaction score of 90.4 is much higher than the average utility sector score of 73.3 and all-sector score of 77.4.

And our commitment to making sure we look after all customers, especially those in vulnerable situations, has once again been recognised by the British Standards Institute (BSI), which verified our British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision (BS 18477) for the whole business.



### People power

We've been awarded silver accreditation against the Investors in People

(IIP) Standard, showing our commitment to good people management. This is the international standard that defines what it takes to lead, support and manage people effectively to achieve sustainable results.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Silver

### Company of the Year

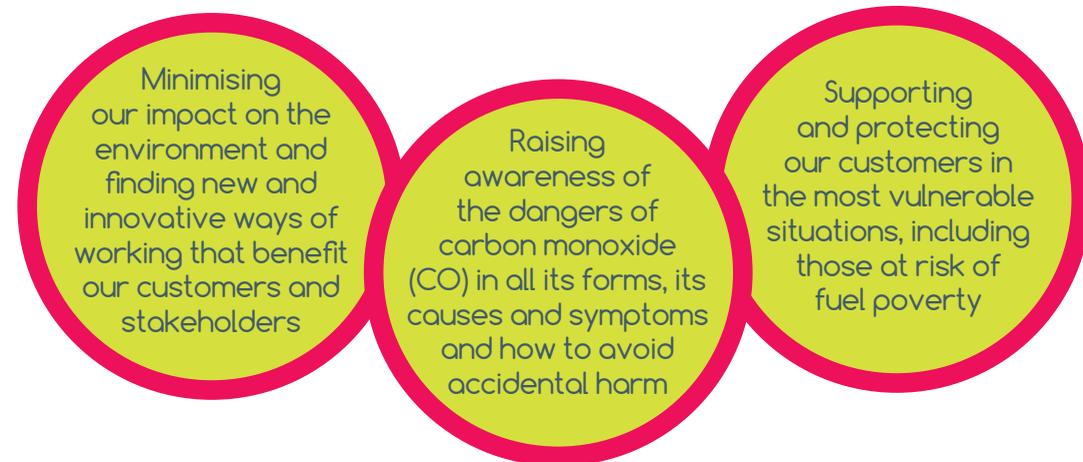
We're really proud to have been awarded IGEM's prestigious Company of the Year Award for our work in 2017/18. The judges said we're "a top-performing company – not just among utilities but in wider industry". At the same awards, we also scooped the Energy Efficiency Award for our Freedom hybrid heating project work.



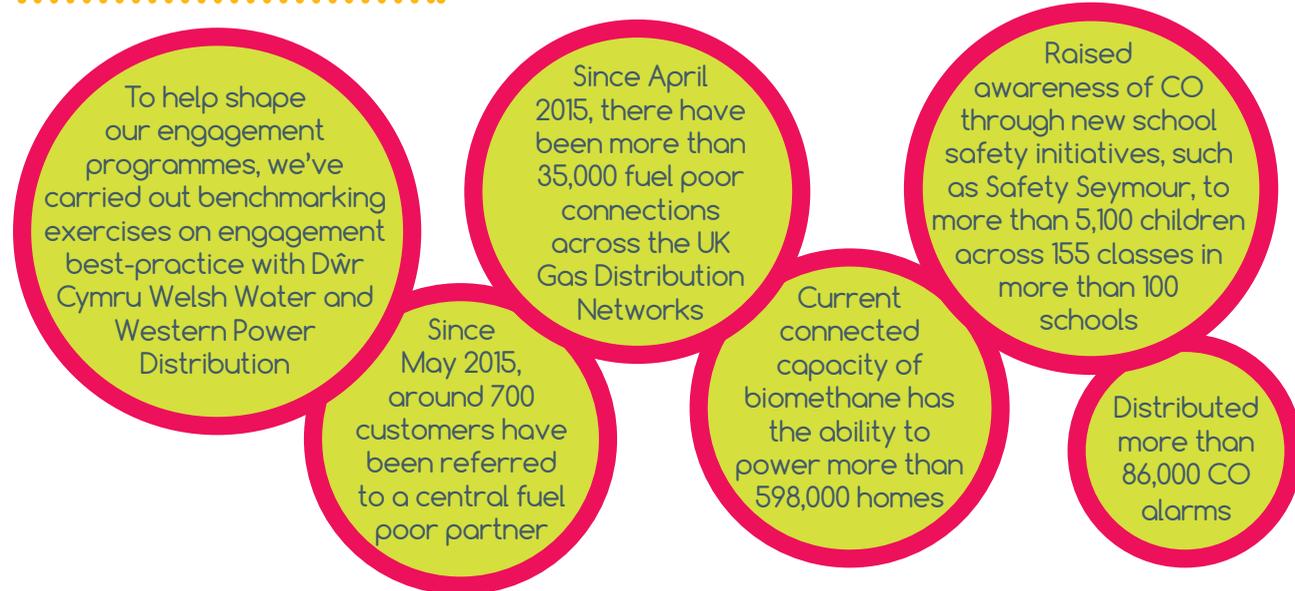
## COLLABORATION WITH OTHER NETWORKS

We actively collaborate with other gas networks and utilities across the UK, to deliver valuable outcomes for our stakeholders.

Our collaboration and joint commitment is focused on:



Our collaboration highlights:



## OVERVIEW OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

in the 2017/18 regulatory year

(1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018)

**20** GAS SAFETY AMBASSADORS RECRUITED

**4,581** CO ALARMS DISTRIBUTED

**CO AWARENESS INCREASE 38%**

**90,000** HOMES COULD BE POWERED WITH GREEN GAS

**83%** COMPLAINTS RESOLVED IN 24 HOURS

**97%** LIKELIHOOD TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION TO PROTECT FROM CO

More than **3,515** customers added to PSR

**95%** OF REINSTATEMENTS COMPLETED IN 48HRS

**137** FREE-OF-CHARGE METER MOVES

MORE THAN **83,000** GAS EMERGENCY CALL-OUTS

**FOUR** WORKSHOPS HOSTED, ATTENDED BY MORE THAN **75** STAKEHOLDERS

**ZERO** OMBUDSMAN RULINGS

**£540,000** recovered from unregistered gas users

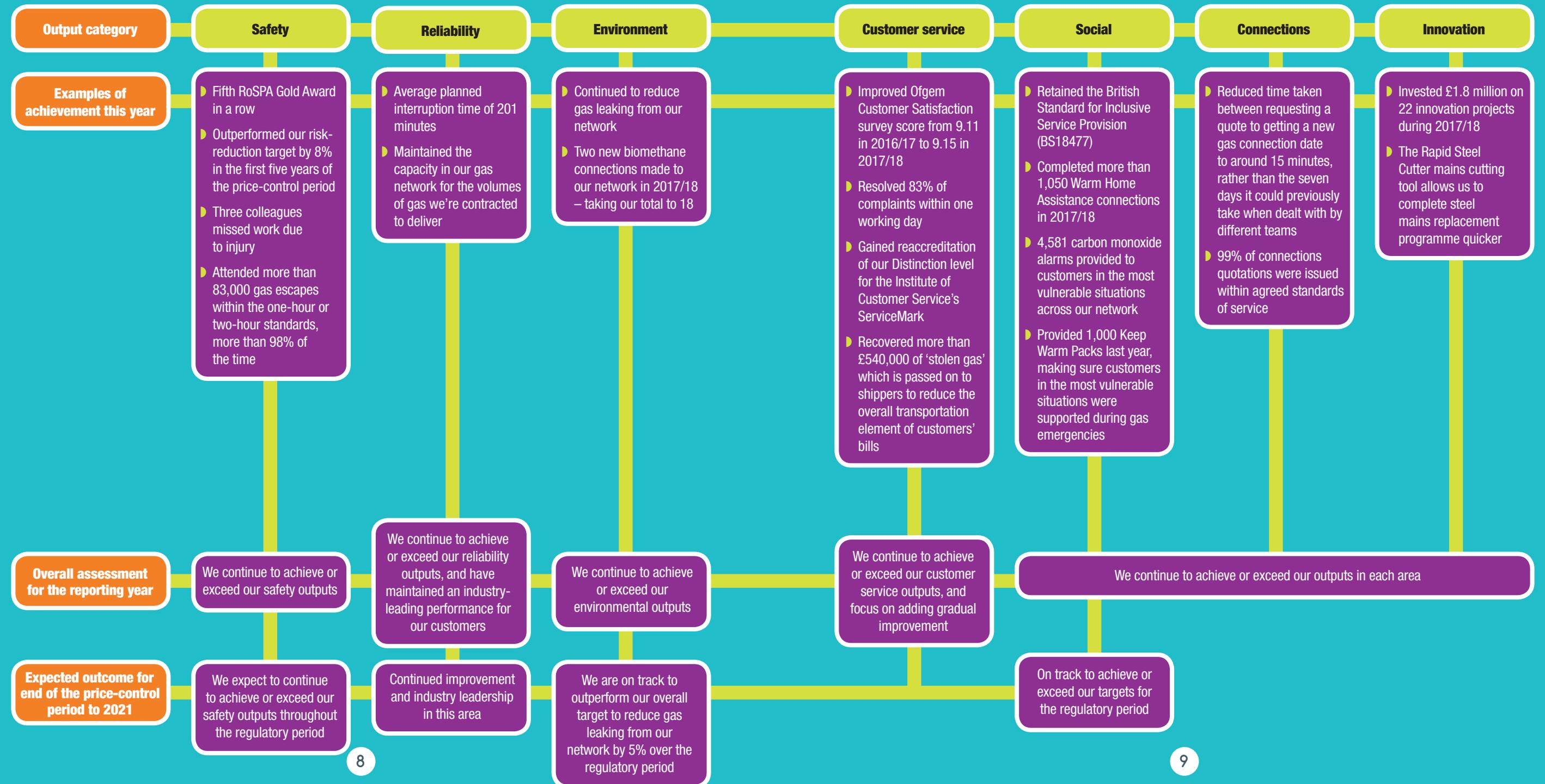
**98%** GAS EMERGENCY CALL-OUTS ATTENDED WITHIN 1 HOUR

**23** APPRENTICES RECRUITED

**538** colleagues upskilled

MORE THAN **418km** OF MAIN REPLACED

# PERFORMANCE ACROSS REGULATED OUTPUT CATEGORIES



# 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 2017/18, 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.



# DESIGNING OUR FUTURE

**WE'LL CONTINUE** to invest in our people and engage with policymakers so we have the skills, confidence and innovative thinking to build our business long into the future.

## Leading the way to decarbonise heat

### Freedom to solve the energy trilemma

With the full support of stakeholders, we're helping solve the energy trilemma of delivering an affordable, secure and low-carbon energy system.

We're working on the Flexible Residential Energy Efficiency, Demand Optimisation & Management (Freedom) project<sup>2</sup> with a range of partners that will help us design a future energy system for all – especially customers in vulnerable situations.



Based in Bridgend, Freedom is studying houses that have a standard gas boiler, an air source heat pump and a smart controller to decide the cheapest, most energy efficient heat source at any given time.

Trial results have shown how these systems can decarbonise domestic heat by using renewable gas and electricity at the lowest possible cost for consumers. Freedom could already benefit customers in off-gas-grid areas who pay more for their heat, would provide financial savings now and be future ready for smart control and 'heat as a service'.

We've shared the results with a range stakeholders, including policymakers, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and fuel poverty charity National Energy Action (NEA), which was pleased we investigated a solution that had the least impact on the customer, especially those in the most vulnerable situations.

*Having seen a demonstration of the Freedom project, I believe hybrid heating systems are one of the sustainable tools available for decarbonising domestic heating.*  
NEA's Technical Development Manager

### Forecasting the future

We have had to change the way we calculate long-term forecasts as the energy mix becomes more complex.

The previous process relied on a number of predictable variables, but that has changed, so we needed to introduce a new way of working out what future energy needs look like. As well as renewable energy and peaking plants, we're taking into account the likelihood of more gas and electric vehicles being used in future, which could place more demands on our capacity.

We're now working to redesign our forecasting model to see what our capacity, storage and compression requirements will be in future. We'll be working with other Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) to gather more information and get a more consistent view. This collaboration will help prove our model works and demonstrates our joined-up approach to future energy requirements.



## Creating the workforce of the future

### Prioritising skills

Skills investment is a high priority for stakeholders, who want to see our safety standards and skill levels are maintained and improved.

Being a member of our sector skills council – Energy & Utility Skills – means we can measure ourselves against industry standards and share learning and best practice. We've worked with them to support local initiatives such as helping those 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET).

We removed the requirements for academic achievements from our apprenticeship programme where possible. As a result, nearly 20% of our applicants in 2017 came from groups who would have previously been ineligible – one of the reasons we were awarded the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Wales' Best Apprenticeship Programme Award in October 2017. We recruited 23 apprentices in 2017, taking our total to 159 recruits.

Our training puts customers at the heart of everything and our stakeholders want us to do all we can to help and advise customers. So we have trained more than 230 emergency engineers in Smart Metering techniques so all our customer-facing colleagues can now better identify and resolve meter issues.

### Silver standard

We wanted to gain Investors in People (IiP) accreditation to see how we measure up against industry standards – and achieved silver on our first attempt.

Only 5% of companies achieve this award first time. It's testament to our ambition of becoming an employer of choice and will help us continually improve.

Not only that, Institute of Customer Service research shows there's a link between employee engagement and customer satisfaction, so this will ultimately help us deliver better customer service too.

## A clear focus on innovation

Innovation is a key stakeholder priority, so we strive to introduce new ways of working across our network to improve customer experience and reduce costs.

### Damage limitation

Highways authorities told us our reinstatements were causing scarring to roads. We incur fines for the damage and have to re-lay road surfaces, at more expense and disruption. We've introduced plastic protective barriers for our equipment and trialled the solution in Gloucester until August 2018. Early feedback is encouraging and UK Power Networks has asked us to share our solution.

### Where theory meets practice

By linking with academia, we better understand university thinking and help them keep up to date. We worked with Cardiff University on its Energy Networks and Systems course. Also, one of its lecturers spent time at our offices researching a Springer Guide on the future of energy published in July 2018.

**fast facts**

- Led an industry-first project on potential solutions to decarbonising heat
- Changed the way we calculate long-term forecasts for gas
- Recruited 23 new apprentices

# DRIVING OUTSTANDING SERVICE



**WE'RE DELIVERING** world-class levels of service for our customers and protecting the most vulnerable among them.

## Partnerships hold the key

### Shared-value partnerships drive better service

Working with partners who share our values is crucial to providing great customer service and focusing on those in vulnerable situations, something our regional stakeholders and Critical Friends Panel told us is important.

Partner organisations can help people we'd normally have difficulty reaching to:

- stay safe if their gas, electricity or water services are interrupted
- gain access to debt and energy tariff-switching services
- source funding for new household appliances, including gas boilers.

We encourage our partners to promote the support we offer by providing them with training in a range of services and measures. These include carbon monoxide awareness and alarms, Priority Services Register (PSR) referrals, Locking Cooker Valve installation and free Warm Home Assistance gas connections.

Graham Edwards, Chief Executive, says: "We need to focus on doing our job as a gas network and

work with better-placed organisations to help us provide the above-and-beyond services our customers expect.

"Real partnerships deliver positive outcomes for our shared customers, support our partner organisations – often through cross-referrals – and make clear business sense for us thanks to efficient and effective delivery."

Our partners benefit by increasing the services they offer their clients and by demonstrating how well they are working with the private sector and other charitable and government services.

### FSB partnership is the business

In 2017/18, we formed a new partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), which supports around 25,000 local businesses we consider hard-to-reach stakeholders.



Key to this partnership is that we let them know about our work plans as early as possible so they can share information with their members, which has proven particularly popular.

It's also opened up opportunities for collaboration with small business entrepreneurs to help us address industry innovation challenges. Not only that, we'll be supporting FSB members with procurement advice on supplying large businesses – something we hope will help them overcome reported difficulties accessing the energy industry supply chain.

### Caring in our community

Following the success of our Fuel Poor Reduction Hubs in 2016/17, we launched the Community Energy Champions (CEC) project alongside our fuel poor partner, Warm Wales, reflecting the shift in stakeholder focus to prioritise people in vulnerable situations.

The champions offer a range of advice on debt and benefit, home and personal safety, tariff switching, energy efficiency and health and wellbeing. They find hard-to-reach, vulnerable and fuel-poor households by using Foundation Data for Robust Energy Strategies (Fresh) mapping, which uses data on poor health, poverty, poor housing and over-65s.

We've targeted three different approaches in south Wales, north Wales and Cornwall, working with key support services in local authorities and helping lift people out of fuel poverty. In future, we'll be trialling telephone referrals through organisations such as Citizens Advice and the Centre for Sustainable Energy.



Stakeholders at our Stronger Together conference told us about the importance of increasing the number of people on the PSR and regional stakeholders suggested an online form.

We've increased the number of people on the PSR by using targeted social media, online forms and our partnerships. As a result, we had **more than 3,500 referrals** in 2017/18, a **62% increase** on 2016/17.

**25%** PSR referrals from partners – **559%** increase on 2016/17

Facebook social media targeting achieved

**296** referrals

**We were the first network** to get data-sharing agreements with an electricity Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and a water company for PSR referrals. We've shared this agreement template and our partnership process with the Safeguarding Customer Working Group.

Now all DNOs will data share with water companies in their area, helping increase the number referred to the PSR and making it an easier experience for customers.

# DRIVING OUTSTANDING SERVICE



## Accessible communications

Making sure our information is accessible to everyone, especially customers in vulnerable situations, is important to us and our stakeholders.

So we use plain English principles in our customer communications, have made our website easier to

navigate and introduced a new tool – Recite Me – which reads selected sections of our website, including pdfs, out loud. We’ve also introduced hyperlinks on our website to organisations that offer additional support services.

## Communication, communication, communication

### CSOs boost customer dialogue

Following a successful trial in 2015/16, we introduced Customer Support Officers (CSOs) to improve communication during gas pipe replacement work, something stakeholders said we needed to improve.

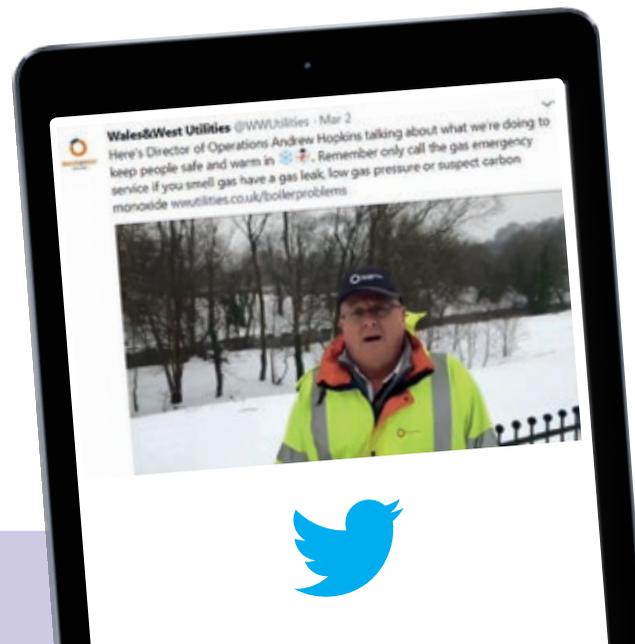
CSOs visit homes and businesses to talk to customers before projects start and find out about vulnerabilities and potential problems, such as holidays. They’re on site while we’re working and follow up with customers once we’ve completed. As a result, queries have reduced by 35% and complaints by 20%, showing this personal touch is paying dividends.

*I've been impressed with information I've been sent regarding your work [mains replacement]. I've also, on two occasions, phoned your Customer Support Officer and she's been very helpful and has, as promised, got back to me with the information I required more or less immediately on both occasions.*  
A Cardiff resident

their boilers weren’t working and, in total we received more than 6,700 calls – one every 16 seconds at its peak. So we created a social media plan to reach this wide audience quickly.

We contacted influential stakeholders such as Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to keep them up to date and ask them to share our status updates and created a short film to tell customers what to do if they suffered a loss of gas supply or suspected CO poisoning.

This film was viewed more than 48,000 times, though crucially, more than 99.99% of our customers saw no impact on their gas supply.



## Sharing best practice and collaboration

### Great customer service is in our culture

There has been no let-up in our efforts to continue delivering great customer service – one of our key business priorities and something stakeholders want us to maintain – in 2017/18.

As well as receiving a Distinction-level ServiceMark from the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) – one of only 13 organisations in the UK to achieve this – we also ran a Customer Service Conference with them. This aimed to help colleagues understand why great customer service is so important and to help us meet customers’ growing service expectations.

Not only that, during National Customer Service Week 2017, we ran a five-day internal communications campaign to reinforce the message that customer service is part of everyone’s role.



Taking part in the week gives us a real opportunity to continue raising our focus on customer service internally.

### Making the connections

Getting a new gas connection date now takes around 15 minutes since we introduced our new Customer Connections Advisor team.

The team, which handles the entire connection application process, is available at times customers really need – after the working day – and acts as a ‘one-stop connections shop’ so customers don’t have to deal with different departments.

Surveys had revealed customers wanted a better connections experience, and since we formed the team, the customer score for ‘time taken to receive a quotation’ has increased from 9.00 to 9.18 at the end of March 2018.

As a result, we’re looking to expand the team and introduce additional services, such as live chat, later this year.

### Executive-led calls resolve complaints quicker

Some 83% of complaints are resolved within 24 hours (up from 81% in 2016/17) since we introduced daily, executive-led customer complaint teleconferences.

First trialled in 2016/17, the daily phone calls have evolved into a sounding board for sharing best practice and give managers a useful perspective to help prevent complaints.

The approach has been so successful, we have shared it with other stakeholders, including Sovereign Housing, which wants to introduce a similar system.



**fast facts**

- Distinction-level ICS ServiceMark achieved
- PSR referrals increased by 62% during 2016/17
- Storm Emma/Beast from the East information film viewed more than 48,000 times
- Partnerships help people in vulnerable situations access debt and energy tariff-switching advice
- Tool introduced to make website accessible to all

# DEMANDING SAFETY ALWAYS



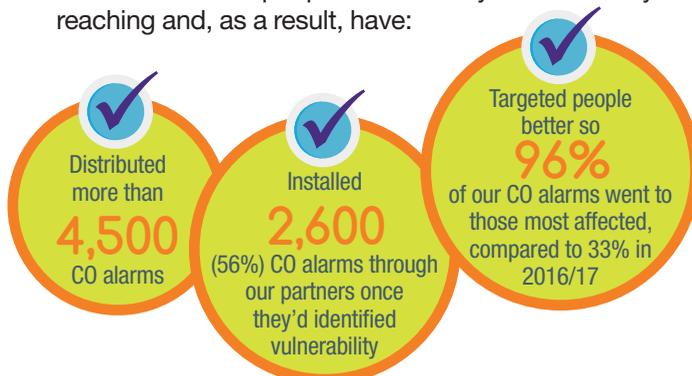
**WE KEEP** raising the bar on safety, continually looking for innovative ways to improve standards for our customers and colleagues.

## Focus on CO

### Raising awareness of carbon monoxide

Raising awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) is our stakeholders' top priority and they have frequently told us they want us to target awareness and install alarms to those most at risk.

We have partnered with other organisations to deliver CO awareness to people we'd usually have difficulty reaching and, as a result, have:



We always provide and promote the use of audible alarms certified to BS EN 50291 – as recommended by the HSE – and since early 2018, the alarms we issue can link to a smartphone app, giving clear, simple and accessible information on their operation and the presence of CO, which can be accessed by customers and engineers.



According to feedback from some customers, manufacturers' guides can be difficult to understand, so we designed a 'How to install a CO alarm' guide to make things easier. These are included with every alarm we issue and 100% said they found it useful.

Through our partnerships with safety centres Lifeskills and DangerPoint we've raised CO awareness to thousands of visitors during 2017/18, many of whom are schoolchildren, an at-risk group. Along with CO-safety messages and zones, they promote the Gas Distribution Network (GDN) CO Safety Competition, aimed at children aged 5-11.



We're delighted to report awareness of CO has increased by 38% and the likelihood people will take further action as a result is 97%.

### COdebreakers come of age

Chloe & Ben – The COdebreakers – were created to help us raise awareness of CO to a younger audience through an online game called 'Crack the COde'. They proved so popular, having been seen by more than 87,000 people during 2017/18, they have become the new faces of our CO campaigns and now feature on all our CO-related literature.



More than 590 people 'Cracked the COde' during 2017/18. We complemented 'Crack the COde' with three short animations targeting people at specific, relevant times of the year – such as holiday season when people are camping and using BBQs – to help spread awareness further. These animations<sup>3,4,5</sup> have been viewed more than 300,000 times.

### Gas Safety Ambassadors

Children are one of the groups most affected by CO and stakeholders want us to continue informing them of the dangers, so we've recruited 20 Gas Safety Ambassadors (GSAs), colleagues who volunteer to go into schools, and other groups such as Brownies to spread the CO safety message.

These CO awareness sessions are tailored for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children and we've reached

*Really positive, a good way of introducing the harmful nature of CO – a nice day of activities.*  
**Teacher, primary school**

more than 550 pupils since introduction in early 2018.

We also adopted the Safety Seymour initiative from Cadent in 2018, targeted at Year 2 pupils, and reached more than 90 children so far.



### Safety on record

Our safety record is outstanding, as shown by our winning more Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Awards than any other GDN. This year, our fifth award saw us achieve a higher standard and received a commendation from RoSPA at the Oil and Gas Sector Awards.

Colleague and stakeholder safety remains top of our agenda. Last year, we achieved accreditation for the first time in an audit for the international standard OHSAS 18001 for health and safety management systems. This audit examined all aspects of our health and safety management systems to make sure they're used throughout our operations. We also regularly meet trade union representatives, who we see as an extension of our Health and Safety team, to make sure of alignment with our safety culture.

A great example of this culture is our Road to Zero initiative, which has reduced cable strikes during our direct labour operations from 27 in 2016/17 to only 16 in 2017/18.



We also carry out awareness campaigns

to complement training, such as 'Be Winter Safe'. Winter conditions and increased workload makes accidents more likely, so we focus on seasonal hazards to maintain our high standards. From October 2017 to March 2018 (our winter period) we recorded just one lost time incident – showing how well the campaign is working.

### Incident support

We're building better relationships with local support networks to help customers in the event of a major incident.

In the area we serve, we've reviewed how we work with a number of local authority resilience forums – groups of agencies including the emergency services, NHS and the British Red Cross.



# DEMANDING SAFETY ALWAYS



Local resilience forums have different approaches, so it's important we understand how they work and tailor our responses accordingly to improve customer support in the event of an emergency.

An example of this in action was during a loss of gas supply in Tresillian, Cornwall. The local resilience forum was able to supplement our Priority Customers list with one from the NHS of people in vulnerable situations, which identified gaps in our data and meant we could prioritise households we wouldn't have known about otherwise.



*Thank you for making us aware of the situation... throughout this particular incident, we've been well informed and were able to inform our necessary partner agencies.*  
**A local resilience support officer**

## Keeping people safe

We held a Local Gas Supply Emergency (LGSE) workshop in 2017/18 to share best practice among the GDNs and other stakeholders to improve supply restoration processes in the event of a major incident.

Key findings were the importance of planning ahead and a fast mobilisation alert system. Attendees also shared best practice on stakeholder engagement and supporting customers in vulnerable situations.

We also led the industry on a major incident planning and testing exercise in May 2017, involving a simulated scenario where 65,000 consumers nationwide lost gas supply, something never attempted before on this scale.

Feedback from the exercise identified a number of areas for improvement, including how to make sure older, more vulnerable people had food and heating. We've since revised some of our procedures and are proposing partnering with agencies such as the British Red Cross to help better support priority customers.

We're also developing an app to give us quicker access to crucial information about people in vulnerable situations so we can respond quicker to their needs.

**fast facts**

- Fifth RoSPA Gold Award in a row – a GDN record
- 96% of alarms provided to those most affected by CO – an increase on 33% in 2016/17
- 2,600 CO alarms installed by our trusted partners

# PROVIDING A RELIABLE SUPPLY AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY



**WE ARE** committed to providing a reliable gas supply for our customers while protecting the environment now and in the future.

## Leading the charge to greener energy

### A pathway to the future

Solving the energy trilemma of ensuring a secure, affordable and sustainable future energy system is a challenge. And working with different stakeholders, we have discovered there is no single solution.

That's why we have created a model – 2050 Energy Pathfinder – which helps regions work out solutions to reduce their impact on the environment. It allows any energy scenario to be modelled and the results show the costs, carbon impact and any shortfall/surplus in heat and power supply.

Using it, we modelled the energy scenario to create a renewable Cornwall so we could evaluate the proposals in 2015, which showed using renewable energy to provide heat is too expensive for customers living in traditionally built homes.

Our 2050 Energy Pathfinder can help distribution and transmission network operators, system operators and local government plan their energy strategies, as part of long-term development planning.

It's unique in the energy sector and one of its designers, our Director of Asset Management, Safety and Environment Chris Clarke, was awarded the IGEM Gold medal for the tool's innovative and forward-thinking logic.

We're now working with the other Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) and Distribution Network Operators and plan to share our work on forecasting and future energy investment scenarios using 2050 Energy Pathfinder. Ultimately, we will be using it collaboratively with them to achieve a Green City Vision.

### Teaming up for greener gas

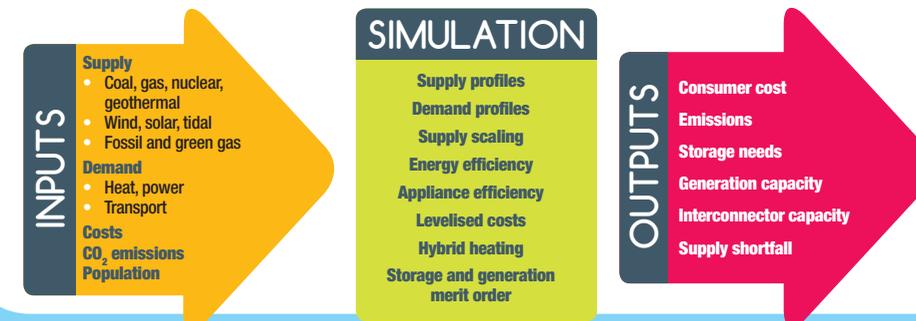
People want to see us bring more green gases into our network and our stakeholders have specifically asked us to remove the barriers to connection and make supplying greener gases cheaper and easier for producers.

So we've created a Green Gas team to help make that happen. The core team deals with inquiries from producers looking to connect, while other members look at the future for green and renewable gases and address the legal, financial and other barriers to bringing more green gases on to the network.

"In the past, we were seen as helpful but reactive," says Ian Marshall, Green Gas Manager at Wales & West Utilities. "Now we are taking a proactive approach, conducting more in-depth research,

promoting the importance of green gas and working with the industry to remove barriers."

Since launch, it's helped two more suppliers come on line, but that number is set to increase considerably. We now have 18 biomethane



plants connected to our network, with the capacity to inject 1.6 TWh – enough to power more than 126,000 homes.

*We've enjoyed working with Wales & West Utilities on biomethane connections – these projects have the lowest cost, least complexity and most capacity innovation in the GB market.*

**Managing Director of CNG Services**

### Peak practice

To support renewable electricity generation, such as wind and solar – which is often intermittent due to weather conditions – we've connected seven more small gas peaking plants.

These can generate between 16 and 40MW each to cover any gaps during power demand peaks, such as breakfast and dinner times. We now have 31 online, which can generate approximately a third of the power of Hinkley Point C.

But they can also have a significant impact on our operation and storage requirements, so to make sure supply is not compromised by their demands, we've updated a number of processes.

Among the changes are more liaison with plant operators, transient network analysis for all plants, Network Exit Agreements and quicker site flow data requirements. This new approach has been shared with other GDNs.

**fast facts**

New dedicated Green Gas team

Potential to power more than 126,000 homes with green gas

Seven more peaking plants connected taking our total to 31

## DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY



**WE WILL** continue to spend money wisely based on what will give the best value, every time.

### Driving quicker reinstatements

Customers have told us we should be quicker with reinstatements because they want access to their roads and driveways sooner, so we've introduced a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) for contractors.

We spoke to stakeholders in Wales and south west England to understand their priorities and they told us they wanted reinstatements to be faster but did not expect to pay more for that.

We then incentivised good performance for reinstatement time, communications and site tidiness, with contractors meeting or exceeding their targets receiving a bonus. We've since seen around 95% of reinstatements completed within 48 hours (GDN average is around 85%) – and a rise in those completed in 24 hours too.

### Stop, thief!

We recovered more than £540,000 from unregistered gas consumption in 2017/18, settling 44 cases and taking the total amount over the GD1 period to around £2 million.

That makes us the leading GDN at dealing with theft of gas. While important to us, it's even more so for our customers as ultimately money recovered goes back to them.

Sometimes cases involve domestic customers, some in vulnerable situations, so we're always sympathetic to individual needs.

Our experienced team aims to resolve cases amicably – all settlement amounts to date haven't required court action.



**fast facts**

95% of reinstatements completed in 48 hours v 85% GDN average

Recovered more than £540,000 of stolen gas

## FUTURE FOCUS

**OUR MAIN** areas of focus in the coming months are:

Engaging with and gaining feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and consumers to help us build our business plans for the next regulatory period from April 2021

Engaging with national stakeholders in collaboration with other gas networks

Review of our stakeholder engagement strategy

Continuing our political engagement programme, including an event at the Welsh Government celebrating our partnership successes

Disseminating our hybrid heating trial, Freedom, results and reviewing our environmental strategy and delivery programme

Revision of our priority customer strategy and initiatives in line with Sustainability First's *Energy for all – Innovate for all* report, with our partners

# NOTES



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