

# Cross sector infrastructure interactions

Annual Report 2020





# Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Our Performance	7
3.0	Connections	13
4.0	Incidents and Major Projects	15
5.0	Listening to customers and other stakeholders	18
6.0	Good practice	19
7.0	Further information	20
8.0	Recent Interaction Case Studies	21





## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1. Wales & West Utilities

Every day our skilled and dedicated colleagues do their very best to keep our 7.5 million customers safe and warm, with a gas network they can rely on and a level of service they can trust.

We don't sell gas; instead we use our extensive network of pipes to transport gas to homes and businesses throughout Wales and the South West of England. We respond to gas emergencies, and we invest £2 million every day across our network, connecting new properties and upgrading old metal pipes to new long-lasting plastic pipes, to make sure the communities we serve receive a safe and reliable gas supply for generations to come.

It's a vital service, and one we are extremely proud to deliver.

We supply 2.5 million customer meter points on behalf of gas shippers. Our network consists of 2,500 km of high-pressure pipes known as the Local Transmission System (LTS) operating at pressures between 7-70barg, and 31,000 km of distribution pipes that transport gas to homes and businesses operating at pressures up to 7barg.

In addition, there are around 4,000 above ground installations which control pressures or allow inspection and maintenance of our pipelines.

Our company priorities and values play a central role in guiding our key business decisions and are reflected in our day to day work.

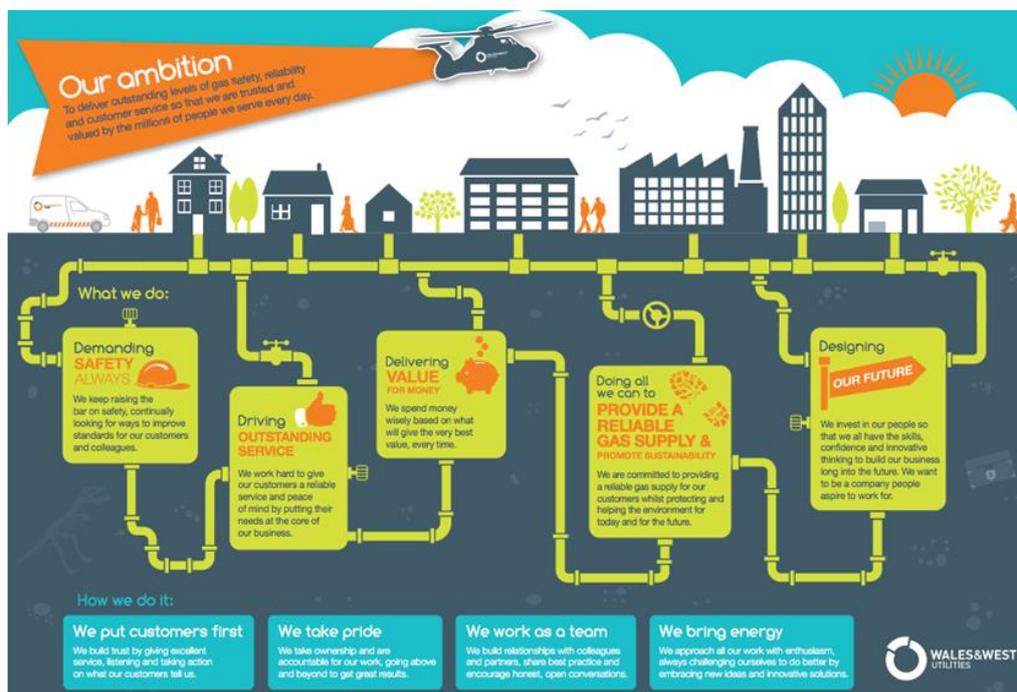
This report details how we have supported economic growth in our region and the safety of third parties through efficient engagement, sharing of data between relevant approved parties and delivery of works





## 1.2. The way we do things

Our company ambition, priorities and values play a central role in guiding our key business decisions and are reflected in our day to day work.



## 1.3. Our obligations

We produce a Safety Case to demonstrate compliance with the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (GS(M)R). This is supported by a set of Plant Protection Management procedures and work instructions which are designed to ensure compliance with the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991, Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015, and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) publication HS(G)47 'Avoiding Danger from Underground Services'.

We have obligations under the Gas Act and our Gas Transporters Licence to provide quotations where it is reasonable to do so, and the New Roads





and Streets Works Act sets out the circumstances in which diversionary works may be required to apparatus we own.

## 1.4. Putting Customers first

During 2020 we continued to promote the DIG (Dial, Investigate, Go Ahead) plant protection safety message, as well as continuing to issue our safety business cards:





We work with customers to complete site surveys where their enquiry relates to higher risk assets: all work near any asset operating at 2barg and above should have a site visit prior to work commencing on site. The plans and information provided to third parties requires customers to call at least 10 days ahead of any works to arrange a site visit. However, a more reactive service is provided for unplanned emergency works.

Where our assets are likely to be impacted by third party works, physical protection may need to be installed on site, such as a concrete slab to protect our network. In 2020, 7 such measures were required, and discussions have been held regarding an additional 12 sites.

Where a pipe or asset cannot be protected, and the customer wishes to proceed with the works, the pipe will require an alteration or diversion. In 2020 there were 649 diversion requests. When fully investigated, 261 diversions quotes were issued with 94 projects accepted and 70 projects completed in the year.

We are proud that we take a proactive approach with customers and other stakeholders. We provide Geographic Information System (GIS) shapefiles to local authorities as part of their planning processes and work with other utilities and developers presenting at their safety days on the risks and controls required when working near our assets.

## 1.5. Planning Consultation

We continually engage with the 42 local authorities in our geographical area on local development plan consultations. These take the form of consultation responses and workshops to review the potential impact on our assets.

In addition, our planners attend local authority coordination meetings to minimise the impact of our works on the communities that we serve.





## 2.0 Our Performance

### 2.1. Working with third parties

This section details our performance in working with third parties during 2020. Our mapping performance standards are:

Team	Enquiry type / service	Standard of Service	Regulatory/ voluntary	Cost of service
Plant Protection	Initial enquiry for plans	10 working days	Voluntary	Free – except for £36+VAT* for companies who charge their customers for the service

\* Price increased to £45+VAT from April 6 2021

The continual increase in enquires is reflective of our mapping data transition to LinesearchbeforeUdig (LSBUD) in 2018 and an increased number of new developments including new highways, housing, commercial and other developments, as well as an increase in energy generation projects.

### 2.2. Plant protection enquiries

	2020	2019	2018	2017
Number of written enquiries	26,944	24,100	23,000	20,000
Average days to respond	1	2	5	3
% responded within 10 days	96.3%	97.5%	94.1%	98.42
Self-serve via website/LSBUD*	578,176	519,291	300,000	300,000
Number of approved users to self-serve*	19,841	9,163	750	750

\* The self-serve information now includes LSBUD data applicable from December 2018. The ability for customers to self-serve via the website was removed in 2019, following the transition to LSBUD





## 2.3. Site visits

*Published SLA: 10 days*

	2020	2019	2018
<b>Number of site visits</b>	3,585	3,686	2,978
<b>LTS network</b>	757	784	783
<b>Intermediate pressure</b>	807	828	642
<b>Medium pressure</b>	2008	2063	1539
<b>Low pressure</b>	13	11	14
<b>% responded to within 10 days</b>	74%	76%	78%
<b>Average time to complete surveys on site</b>	10	10	9

Despite more plans being issued through LSBUD searches, and over 62,000 work proposals being reviewed by the Plant Protection Team, there was a 2.75% decrease in the number of site visits raised during 2020 compared to 2019. This was attributed to the impact of COVID-19 and the social distance restrictions that were enforced during lockdown periods, which resulted in less opportunities to complete visits during peak times of the pandemic. During this period, there was also a reduction in the number operational sites, which was an additional factor that contributed to a reduction in completed site visits. For those sites that were able to continue operating during this peak, a thorough review of their Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMs) was undertaken, with additional mitigation measures added to account for a site visit not taking place. In some instances where more complex work was being proposed, virtual meetings were held to discuss methodology and our requirements prior to commencement.

We are committed to continue with our proactive approach to damage prevention, by reducing the risk to our network, through greater interaction with customers. Following the lifting of the lockdown restrictions, we issued visits for those sites where virtual meetings were held regarding more complex enquiries, to ensure that the works had been completed in accordance to the agreed RAMs. In addition, we issued a series of press

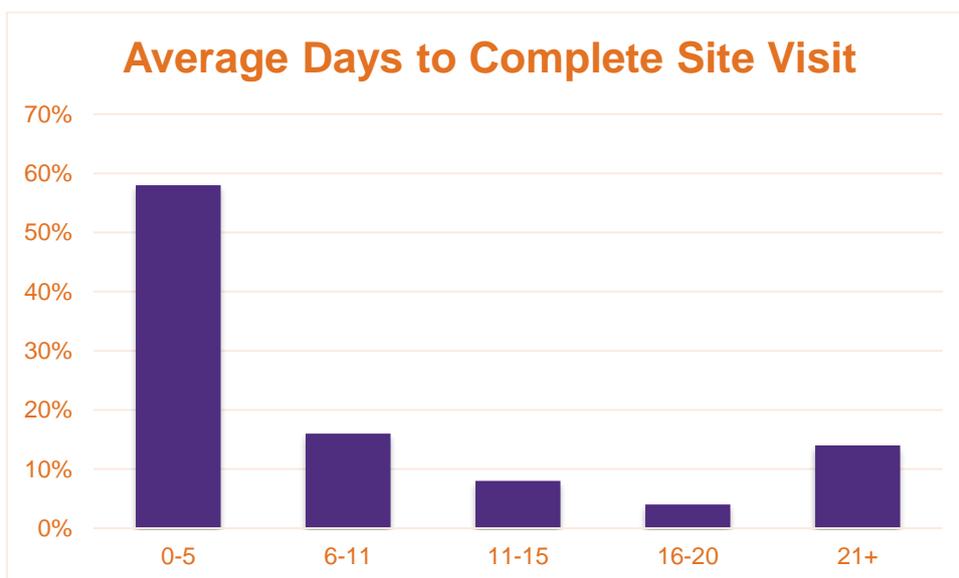




releases through LSBUD and local media channels to remind contractors/groundworkers of the importance of remobilising on site safely, and to continue following the necessary procedures for safe digging.

The average number of days is higher than 10 days as customers may not be ready on site or require multiple visits during their project. We record the number of days from the date of contact to the completion of the final site survey record.

The graph below shows the profile of timescale for site visits:



239 jobs were visited on the same day as the contact in response to unplanned works. The longest duration of 166 days was for a site with a six-month duration and works in proximity to medium pressure mains.

In 795 cases, it was agreed with the customer that works could proceed without a site survey as the works location and safety controls were adequate on site as to reduce the risk to a minimal level.





## 2.4. Aerial Surveillance

Area	Pressure	Desk assessment	Site visit	Total	Immediate
Wales & West Utilities	HP	217	935	1152	39
Wales & West Utilities	IP	84	253	337	20
<b>Total</b>		301	1,205	1,489	59

During 2020, we continued to complete aerial surveillance of all >7bar pipelines and critical 2-7 bar pipelines, every two weeks in line with T/PM/MAINT/5 – Maintenance of Steel Pipelines and Associated Installations Operating Above 2 Barg. The surveys were undertaken to report any ground activities that might affect the integrity of the pipeline. Ground activity, including mechanical excavation, within the area of interest (35m either side of a pipeline) or the Right of Way (10m either side of the pipeline), was reported and investigated, with follow up site visits raised to assess the impact of the work, if required.





## 2.5. Diversions

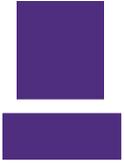
SLA 30 working days

	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>Number of diversions enquiries</b>	490	649	616	575
<b>Quotes issued</b>	261	308	264	249
<b>Diversions accepted</b>	94	121	111	100
<b>Diversions completed</b>	70	74	79	88
<b>Average days to issue a quotation</b>	18	10	18	13
<b>% quotes issued within 30 working days</b>	88%	94%	57%	94.38%
<b>Average time from acceptance to completion</b>	77 days	64 days	99 days	125 days
<b>Shortest timescale</b>	8 days	9 days	3 days	2 days
<b>Longest timescale</b>	223 days	191 days	229 days	453 days

We usually cite a 180 days lead time for diversions to allow for efficient planning of resources and ordering of materials. We are generally able to meet the customer's timescales for their developments and the average time reflects the customers acceptance of works in line with the 180 days lead time. Again, some projects will require multiple visits with on-site durations of up to 6 months.

During 2020 we completed many major diversions projects across our network. These have included a 200mm IP steel diversion along at Old Torrington Road Barnstaple and a 250mm PE MP diversion in Llanfair Road, Abergele, to accommodate new housing developments.





The High-Pressure team have completed the following pipeline projects:

- A30 Carland Cross to Chiverton Cross Road upgrade scheme

Several road schemes and developments are in the detailed planning stage in the South West of England and Wales and are at the initial enquiry stages.





## 3.0 Connections

### 3.1. Future of Energy

We are facilitating the entry of green gases into our network. These green gases are carbon neutral and therefore contribute towards the UK carbon reduction targets.

	Enquiry Type	Total No. of enquiries	Standard of Service	Regulatory / Voluntary	Performance
<b>Biomethane</b>	Initial Enquiry	12	15 working days	Vol	100%
<b>Biomethane</b>	Capacity Study	4	30 working days	Vol	100%

We did not connect any additional biomethane plants during 2020, with total number of biomethane connection to our network remaining at 19. We facilitated the connection of five new gas fired power stations to our network, with four connections being completed by Utility Infrastructure Providers and one by our Connections team. This increased the total number of power station connections across our network to 41.

### 3.2. Connections Performance

Our connections business deals with new connections, alterations to existing services, and isolations of supplies.

During 2020 we dealt with 15,796 requests for quotations and an additional 4,500 initial enquiries. Customer used our website self-service tools to generate 2,715 quotations, pay for the works and to book provisional dates.

Quotations were issued within the timescales required under the Gas (Standards of Performance) Regulations in 99.7% of cases. The accepted jobs were planned within the prescribed timescales in 99.11% of cases and work completed on site by the agreed 'gas on' date in 95.28% of cases. For the small percentage of cases that did not meet our performance standards, we paid over £57,000 to customers in accordance with our standards of service obligations.





We have supported several large connections projects during 2020, from carrying out new installation works to existing housing to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty, through to new non-domestic supplies supporting the UK's energy target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. We have connected two instant start gas fired power stations and received acceptances for 7 further schemes, which are designed to meet the electrical network's demands when renewable energy sources are unavailable.

### 3.3. Complaints

All complaints are dealt with via our published complaints procedure. Alongside customer satisfaction surveys, these provide valuable information on how we are performing and where our processes and staff need to be developed.

In 2020 we dealt with 86% of complaints within one day of receiving them with 97.99% being closed within 31 days. There were no findings by the Ombudsman against us in 2020.





## 4.0 Incidents and Major Projects

### 4.1. Incidents

We have a dedicated Plant Protection Team at our head office in Newport that is primarily focused on the plant protection service where they not only forecast workload but also develop robust procedures to respond to business-as-usual enquiries, major projects and incidents.

During 2020, there were short periods of time when the service had to take account of other business requirements. This included the national load shedding exercise 'Baltic' which took one resource for one day in September. The impact on customers of the plant protection service during these periods was minimal. For the third year running, we were able to achieve a 100% success rate for sites contacted during the exercise, with all sites confirming that gas could be turned off. A post exercise report issued by the Network Emergency Coordinator concluded that appropriate assurances were given that the industry can effectively respond to protect the public and the gas network.

Although we experienced some supply loss incidents during the year which required significant customer service and operational resources to resolve, there was a minimal impact on our plant protection service. A member of the team now supports the major incident customer advisory team to ensure that those who are more vulnerable are provided the support and care they need if they experience a loss of supply.

Where major projects are concerned, whether they are infrastructure developments of local, regional or national significance, we want to make sure interactions with us are as simple and as straightforward as they can be. Our team work hard to bring an efficient and cost-effective approach to infrastructure interactions.

### 4.2. Examples of Major Projects

Examples of major projects that we have had discussions regarding our network are:

- Cantref Mawr Development, Llanilid
- Llanfair DC, Ruthin
- Park Hall STOR, Oswestry





- Swainswick Gardens, Bath
- Dutchy of Cornwall, Nansledan Development, Newquay
- Cotswold Canal Regeneration Project, Stroud
- Power generation sites at Bradford Road, Melksham and Valley Road, Plymouth
- Railway bridge replacement at Gypsy Patch Lane, Stoke Gifford
- Biomethane sites
- Housing and commercial developments – protection of high-pressure main through the Pentrebane development
- Regeneration schemes.

While our interactions with the developers of major projects can, at times, be onerous, none of these had a significant impact on the service to the wider customer base.

### 4.3. Always more we can do

Despite the service we provide, we had 1378 instances of damage or related incidents caused to our assets in 2020, which was a reduction of 74 compared to data obtained for our 2019 report. All but 2 of these were to low and medium pressure pipelines, with 46% caused by mechanical excavators.

In 2020 we reported 6 incidents to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) process, which was the same figure reported in 2018.

As outlined in our 2019 report, we have continued to work in conjunction with our Corporate Affairs Team, to maintain our proactive approach to damage prevention. During 2020, we issued a number of press release statements across the construction industry to promote safe digging and contact with us before commencing works on site.

In addition to this, we have also used our membership with LSBUD to promote our safe digging message to a wider audience through their publications and newsletters. A case study demonstrating the impact of LSBUD and the importance of undertaking the necessary searches prior to





commencing, in relation to asset strike prevention was published within LSBUD's annual report – Digging Up Britain 2020. We also produced a press statement for their monthly newsletter following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Another Gas Distribution Network has confirmed that damage occurrence increased as contractors remobilised, and we were keen to remind stakeholders of the importance of continuing to follow the correct procedures when planning works.

Our ongoing aim is to keep the general public safe and drive down the number of unnecessary damage occurrences to our assets year on year.





## 5.0 Listening to customers and other stakeholders

A key focus is to continue to progress stakeholder engagement to continually improve plant protection and cross sector interactions. We currently have good contact information for landowners with local transmission pipelines running through their land but want to extend this to landowners with lower pressure tier information. We plan to remind them of the presence and location of plant on their land, safe working measures and remind them how to report issues with marker posts or damaged valve chambers.

Following on from our presentation at the LinesearchbeforeUdig Damage Prevention Conference in June 2019, we attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Damage Prevention Conference in November 2020. Due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was held virtually and provided an opportunity to obtain feedback of delegates present from over 80 companies. There was also a keynote speech from the organiser of the Annual US Excavation Safety Conference, to provide a perspective from the USA and what can be learnt from their approach to damage prevention.

In addition, we have continued to hold collaboration meetings with representatives from other GDN's including Cadent and Northern Gas Networks regarding the use of LSBUD data, and how this information can be used to help proactively reduce damages across the industry. These meetings have also aimed to identify a consistent approach to damage prevention, along with an opportunity to share best practice solutions and knowledge.

We participate in the gas transporter's panel which reviews trends in damage to pipes and we try to identify groups to target and educate in plant protection best practice as appropriate. As part of our 2021 approach, we will be looking to actively contact with these groups to offer support, with the aim of reducing the frequency of their damages, through engagement with us.





## 6.0 Good practice

We meet the good practice principles in all our infrastructure interactions, and example case studies of recent cross sector interactions are attached to demonstrate our clear process in dealing with cross sector interactions.

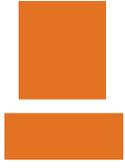
We continue to push our year-round plant protection campaign, DIG: giving developers three simple steps to stay safe (Dial, Investigate, Go ahead). The impact of COVID-19 was evident, with an increase in LSBUD searches across our network during the peak lockdown periods. The Plant Protection Team continued to respond accordingly to searches that potentially affected our pipelines, with response times remaining consistent throughout these peak periods.

The Plant Protection Team (part of the Business Services Directorate) holds bi-monthly meetings with Asset Management and Health, Safety & Environment Directorate where issues relating to infrastructure interaction, projects and incidents are discussed and an action log is maintained to ensure relevant owners are identified and actions closed.

As an LSBUD member, we also hold a position on their Governance Board Group which held two meetings during 2020. The aim of the Governance Board Group is to assist LSBUD in keeping people and its members assets safe, by helping ensure that the service is used to the highest possible level across the industry by all stakeholders. The group also provide a key stakeholder forum to promote the sharing of best practices, along with providing a direction for LSBUD through a close working relationship with their Managing Director Richard Broome, who sits on this group.

In conjunction with our Innovation Team, we have also identified possible trial locations across our network, where a shallow mains pipeline can be protected by the use of Plastic Protection Boards. These plastic boards can be used for pipelines operating up to 2bar, as an alternative to a more expensive pipeline diversion or additional permanent protection measure. This will allow customers and/or landowners to complete proposed work in areas where these boards can be installed, with reduced lead time and potential overall project cost. These trial locations are still being confirmed to ensure they meet the required criteria for the boards to be safely installed, with proposals for installations during 2021.





## 7.0 Further information



**Website:** [www.wutilities.co.uk/services/dial-before-you-dig/](http://www.wutilities.co.uk/services/dial-before-you-dig/)

**Published number:** 02920 278912





## 8.0 Recent Interaction Case Studies

### 8.1. Case Study 1: Cantref Mawr Development, Llanilid

- Following proposals for a new 5,000 house and multiple commercial property development, collaborative meetings were held throughout 2020 between Wales & West Utilities and Persimmon Homes regarding site proposals due to the presence of High and Low pressure pipelines within the site boundary and the existing agreements in place for their protection.
- Persimmon were looking for early engagement with us regarding the required protection of the assets and/or diversion of the pipelines. Persimmon needed to reach a resolution to enable the site design to be finalised and to obtain the required planning permission for the development.
- It was identified that each of our pipelines within the site boundary were subject to existing easement agreements, which enable the landowners to request their removal at our expense with a 12-month notice period. Persimmon were keen to develop their site around the existing HP pressure pipeline, to avoid the delays involved with HP pressure diversion work.
- As a result, we subsequently agreed to divert our existing 18" low pressure pipeline to allow for the development of houses within the site boundary. At the same time, an agreed was reached for our HP pipeline to remain within the site boundary and remain protected through continued engagement between Wales & West Utilities and Persimmon Homes.
- For more information visit <https://www.persimmonhomes.com/news-article/show-home-launched-at-llanilid-development-25547>





## 8.2. Case Study 2: Awel-y-mor Offshore Wind farm

- Awel y Mor Offshore Wind Farm is project under development by RWE Renewables in the Irish Sea off the North Wales Coast. The project is an extension to the existing Gwynt Y Mor Offshore Wind Farm, following an initial habitats assessment by The Crown Estate.
- The full design and consenting process is currently within the initial stages and will include a comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement programme. This process is expected to take up to five years to complete, with construction commencing thereafter. The Wind Farm is expected to become fully operational by 2030.
- Following initial searches, RWE have identified several locations where their proposed infrastructure will interact with our High and Intermediate pressure pipelines, and collaborative meetings have been held to discuss these proposals and our requirements. All meetings have been held at nil cost, to ensure that a mutually agreed design can be achieved.
- We have provided our safety guidance information which is documented within WW/SP/SSW/22 – Safe working in the vicinity of pipelines and associated installations operating above 2barg – requirements for third parties and are continuing to working closely with RWE throughout the design stage of their project.
- For more information visit [Offshore Wind Farm North Wales - Awel Y Mor](#)

