

Wales & West Utilities Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Registration Form

Information required	Description
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Address	Wales & West House, Spooner Close, Celtic Springs, Coedkernew, Newport, NP10 8FZ
Project title	Prosiect Sero Net Gwynedd (Project Net Zero Gwynedd)
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£100,000
Problem	<p>In April 2022, figures published show almost 200,000 households in Wales (14%) were living in fuel poverty in October 2021. A further 153,000 households were at risk of fuel poverty.</p> <p>These figures are stark and worrying; they show the depth of the energy crisis before the winter started and before the domestic energy cap was raised by 54% in April. We are in the midst of an unprecedented cost of living crisis, which is being driven by runaway energy prices. The war in Ukraine has deepened the crisis.</p> <p>The introduction of the new energy cap in April 2022 risked plunging tens of thousands more people into energy insecurity, fuel poverty and vulnerability. On top of soaring energy prices, households must also pay increased standing charges on their domestic energy bills and people in Wales are among the hardest hit. The highest increases in the UK are in North Wales, with standing charges increasing by 102%. These additional costs have a disproportionately negative effect on lower income households and those on pre-payment meters.</p> <p>There are people and families who are afraid to turn their heating on and other families who face the awful choice between heating and eating.</p>

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If we use the 2021 modelled estimates of fuel poverty, and revise them to take account of fuel prices – electricity, mains gas and heating oil – from 1 April 2022, and assuming all households are on the new price cap, we can estimate:

- Up to 45% (614,000) of all households could be in fuel poverty following the price cap increase in April 2022
- Up to 8% (115,000) of all households could be in severe fuel poverty
- Up to 15% (201,000) of all households could be at risk of falling into fuel poverty.

Although these are just estimates, these figures underline, once again, the need for urgent action to alleviate the financial pain and worry being experienced by families and households all over Wales.

Wales has some of the oldest and least efficient houses in Western Europe and around 155,000 (14% of) Welsh homes are in fuel poverty; potentially even higher figures, due to the economic impact of Covid-19.

More than 66,000 households in Wales have fallen behind on their energy bills since the start of the pandemic, according to Citizens Advice, and disabled people are four times more likely to be in debt.

Vulnerable people living in cold homes have a higher chance of serious illness or death, according to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, and are at greater risk of heart attack, stroke, respiratory problems, influenza, depression, and falls.

Gas properties

The most popular central heating option in Gwynedd is gas, like in much of North Wales and the UK. Gas heated homes represent 47.60% of all households in the country. Carbon monoxide is known as the 'silent killer' because you can't see it, smell it or taste it. With the cost of living increasing and less disposable income, many households (private owners / renters) will not be able to replace older, inefficient gas boilers and cookers due to the cost. These gas appliances could cause carbon

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	<p>monoxide poisoning to members of the household and already vulnerable individuals.</p>
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p>The VCMA funding will build upon the success of Adra’s Prosiect Sero Net Gwynedd project. Energy focused community-based enterprises have already established a trusting relationship with their communities, and they are in a unique position to maintain and develop those links to further connect with target audiences. Energy Wardens have been recruited and already provide services (both one on one and in groups) which include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising awareness on the benefits of energy conservation • providing direct “easy wins” and practical support to reduce unsustainable fuel use • sharing good practice with other communities that need to improve their capacity to act • providing advice and support to households, enabling them to reduce energy consumption • explaining bills and tariffs • Installing energy saving measures • Providing support with grants such as Warm Wales, ECO4 and NEST • Help changing boiler settings • Referring to other agencies who can advise and support on fuel debts <p>The Community Hubs that have already been identified across Gwynedd will provide place-based opportunities to engage with local householders on a group basis. Small groups of 5-10 people at a time will develop their awareness and understanding of clean technology options and their suitability for domestic application as well as carbon monoxide awareness.</p> <p>The Energy Wardens will also offer services to target awareness of and safety against CO, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering and installing carbon monoxide alarms to customers as well as communicating the benefits of the alarms • Raising awareness of the symptoms of CO poisoning

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing customers of who is most at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning • Providing consumer awareness of gas safety risks, the dangers of CO and the problems caused by illegal, unqualified gas fitters <p>Providing awareness material on behalf of Wales and West Utilities.</p>
<p>Expected outcomes and the associated actions.</p>	<p>Wales & West Utilities will fund this project at a cost of £100,000 for a 2-year period. We anticipate at least 2,000 interactions with evidence of social and financial benefits experienced, between Energy Wardens and clients.</p> <p>Using the experience of their Community Energy Partners, their Energy Warden will be able to directly support vulnerable people (within their homes or community hubs) with access to practical advice on the dangers of CO and how to mitigate these, as well as energy advice that improves their financial independence, their health and wellbeing, and increases their confidence to manage their household utility costs.</p> <p>We expect that the Energy Warden:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is qualified to provide the relevant information on energy efficiency and savings as well as carbon monoxide awareness information by working in partnership with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai to identify relevant training courses • Will provide support to customers in vulnerable situations including fuel poverty • Provide awareness on the dangers of CO • Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO • To be fully aware of grants available such as Warm Wales, ECO4 and NEST • To be able to refer customers to other agencies who can advise and support on fuel debts <p>We expect customers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be supported and as a result will have a greater understanding of the importance of gas safety and the dangers associated with CO

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a greater understanding of how to save on energy consumption, reduce bills and will be supported • Benefit from receiving materials such as LED light bulbs, draft excluders, radflex as well as CO alarms and instructions on how to use it • Be provided energy and CO safety literature to help them better understand how to use energy safely, efficiently, and affordably • Feel safer at home – feeling better that the whole family is safe • Have increased confidence to know what to do when in danger <p>Associated Actions</p> <p>To monitor the success and outcomes of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly project team meeting will take place • Risks will be monitored and mitigated • Lessons learnt will be captured as the project progresses • Communication plan will be developed and updated with new activity • A short questionnaire will take place with the customer during the first visit. The Energy Warden can re-visit at an agreed time to re-ask the questionnaire in order to measure the social value / impact of the service provided <p>Work closely with partners</p>
Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations	We have taken the forecast support measures from Adra and used as the input to our SROI model. The output shows a £15.72 net benefit per £1 invested.
Project Partners and third parties involved	This project will be delivered through a partnership of Wales & West Utilities and Adra , a Social Housing Landlord based in Gwynedd.
VCMA Project start and end date	Project Start: 01/01/2023 Project End: 31/01/2025
Geographical area	The community-based activities will be delivered within post-industrial areas in rural Gwynedd. Bethesda, Llanberis, Caernarfon and Penygroes are located within the Arfon district of Gwynedd, whilst Blaenau Ffestiniog is in Meirionnydd and Pen Llyn is at the most western tip of Dwyfor.

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Please return all completed forms to: VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk

For further information on the VCMA please use the below link to the Ofgem guidance document:

[Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance \(VCMA\) Governance Document | Ofgem](#)