

VCMA

Vulnerability and
Carbon Monoxide
Allowance



Annual Showcase Report

2024

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Overview

On 18 July 2024, Northern Gas Networks (NGN) hosted the annual Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Showcase, in conjunction with the other three Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) – Cadent, SGN and Wales & West Utilities. Delivery of the event was led by Northern Gas Networks (NGN), supported by EQ Communications and National Energy Action (NEA). The aim of the Showcase was to demonstrate how the GDNs have utilised their VCMA funding over the past 12 months, to support customers in vulnerable situations.

The event comprised a series of multimedia presentations from all four GDNs and a variety of partners, covering the four VCMA key themes: **Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability, Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness, Supporting Priority Customers and Services Beyond the Meter.**

Each of the four sessions closed with a feedback opportunity for attendees via a series of electronic votes, and a short Q&A session. The event also included a Q&A panel session with representatives from each GDN, as well as Ofgem and NEA. A fifth session looked ahead to the future, and the event closed with a wrap up and reflections from NGN.

This executive summary gives an overview of the sessions delivered and key feedback gathered from stakeholders in attendance. A full version of the report is also available.

Pillar	Lead GDN	Partner(s)
Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability	NGN	Fuel Bank Foundation; NEA
CO Awareness	SGN	Bonanza Creative; Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Supporting Priority Customers	Cadent	The Carents Room; Maggie's; Kidney Care UK
Services Beyond the Meter	WWU	NSPCC

The event also comprised a Q&A panel session with representatives from each GDN, as well as Ofgem and National Energy Action. The event closed with a wrap up and reflections from Northern Gas Networks, the lead GDN for this year’s Showcase.

Attendance

315 stakeholders joined the event, across the entire Showcase, representing 166 organisations. Peak viewership was **268**. Majority of stakeholders **(59%) were present for over four hours** of the session, and **283 unique respondents** participated in the voting across the Showcase – indicating that **90% of stakeholders provided their views through the voting sessions**.

The majority of attendees represented charities (63% in total), with 12% of attendees representing utilities. The remaining stakeholders were made up of businesses, local authorities, emergency services, community groups and academia.

Stakeholders were asked when registering to indicate which GDN served themselves or their organisation. The results indicate a relatively even spread of attendance across the GDNs' network areas. It should be noted that each GDN serves different sized populations, so equal representation was not expected.

At the start of the event, stakeholders were asked to vote on general questions around challenges and priorities. The most frequent responses relating to current challenges for people needing support were cost of living, debt and poverty. These were followed closely by mental health, communication, isolation, health and low income. The main priority for organisations was to help address fuel poverty. This was followed closely by income maximisation and vulnerability.

Cadent	31%
NGN	20%
SGN	27%
WWU	17%
N/A / none of the above	10%
Don't know	7%

The four GDN, covering England, Scotland and Wales, have a licence condition (determined by the regulator, Ofgem) to attend gas emergencies, replace ageing metal pipe infrastructure, and connect/disconnect customers to and from the gas network. Through this work, they see first-hand the struggles that their customers and communities are facing. It's the GDNs' moral duty to provide support and help where they can. The VCMA has been a great enabler to co-creating many ambitious and impactful projects for customers who need their help the most.

Collaboration and partnership work is fundamental to the work that GDNs do, and throughout this report, you'll be hearing about many projects and partnerships that are delivering meaningful and much needed support.

Executive Summary

Session 1:

Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability

Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability is the first of the four themes under VCMA. This has been an extremely important theme for VCMA projects this year, after the networks received a large uplift in their allowances. Through this work, GDNs created programmes that support customers to achieve affordable warmth. The GDNs have seen a huge increase in households struggling to afford energy and other essential living costs, and the collaborative projects are designed to address this by reaching those who need it most.

Key achievements April 2021 to March 2024

- Average SROI generated - £10.20 through 11 projects
- 258,820 households supported (collaborative reach GD2 to date)
- Challenges and learning - addressing extent of affordability issues/accessibility to support

[Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability VCMA Showcase video 2024](#)

Projects showcased under this theme

- Fuel Bank Foundation – National Collaborative Partnership
- Citizens Advice National Partnership – Energy Safeguarding and CO Safety Partnership
- NEA - Warm Homes, Healthy Futures

Feedback overview

- **64%** of stakeholders agreed that they felt the gas networks are undertaking the right activities around fuel poverty and energy affordability and **22%** strongly agreed
- **68%** of stakeholders agreed that GDNs are well placed to be providing support to customers to address fuel poverty and energy affordability and **16%** strongly agreed

- Stakeholders told us that the **main gaps in the activities** we are undertaking in the area of fuel poverty and energy affordability are around **fuel debt** and **boiler maintenance/repairs**
- When asked about their view of the current landscape in terms of customer affordability of essential items/household costs, **69%** of stakeholders said, **'much worse'**

Session 2:

CO Awareness

Our CO Awareness programmes are designed to help raise awareness of the dangers of CO, remind people how to stay safe and help communities understand the impact CO can have on different vulnerabilities and age groups. The GDNs have invested in 14 dedicated collaborative CO projects and most of the VCMA portfolio has embedded CO awareness sessions into delivery.

Key achievements April 2021 to March 2024

- Average SROI generated £19.71 through 14 projects
- 7.8 million households supported with CO messaging (collaborative reach GD2 to date)
- 263,642 CO alarms distributed collaboratively
- 471,434 CO awareness sessions
- Pre-score before CO awareness session – 6.19
- Post-score after CO awareness session – 8.63

[CO Awareness VCMA Showcase video 2024 with Eleven Miles](#)

Projects showcased under this theme

- Eleven Miles – 23/24 Collaborative GDN Winter & Summer Awareness Campaigns
- Bonanza Creative
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)

- Preventing Harm from Environmental Exposure to Carbon Monoxide (PHECO) – E-Learning for Health
- Gas Safe Charity – Think CO app

Feedback overview

- **58%** of stakeholders agreed that they felt the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of CO awareness and **25%** strongly agreed
- Gaps in the activities we are undertaking in the area of CO were identified by stakeholders as **private landlords and replacing old boilers/appliances**
- **75%** of stakeholders agreed that GDNs are working with the right organisations on CO safety and **16%** strongly agreed
- Stakeholders told us that we should look to do **more work with charities** to support CO awareness
- **67%** of stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that they have noticed an increase in CO awareness in their organisation or among the people they support in the past three years

Session 3:

Supporting Priority Customers

Some of our customers need more help than others to stay safe and warm at home. By registering eligible households on the Priority Services Register (PSR), we are able to make sure the most vulnerable members of our community are known to their utility companies and proactively offered support. Some communities find it more challenging to access help without trusted support and are more impacted by living in a cold and unsafe home.

Key achievements April 2021 to March 2024

- Average SROI generated – £20.53 through nine projects
- Over 500,000 households supported (collaborative reach GD2 to date)
- Signed 163,518 customers up to the PSR collaboratively

[Supporting Priority Customers VCMA Showcase video 2024](#)

Projects showcased under this theme

- Strata Nostra – The Carer's Room
- Maggie's – National Collaborative Partnership

- Kidney Care UK – Safe and Warm National Collaborative Partnership

Feedback overview

- **85% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed** that the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of supporting priority customers
- Stakeholders identified gaps within the areas of **digital exclusion, working with local charities, sharing information and language barriers**
- Stakeholders told us that other priority customer groups they would like to see us support in future are **dementia, care leavers, single parents, elderly and unpaid carers**

Session 4:

Services Beyond the Meter

As gas distributors, we're committed to keeping our customers safe and warm. We all recognise that, for some customers, it's not possible to maintain a safe and warm home without extra help from us. With direct support, we're able to help vulnerable households as we go about our operational activities.

Key achievements April 2021 to March 2024

- 1,331 repairs & replacements carried out collaboratively
- 26,824 – total interventions collaboratively

[Services Beyond the Meter Showcase video 2024](#)

Projects showcased under this theme

- Care & Repair Services including servicing, repair and replacement of gas appliances and CO investigations (CMDDA1 procedures)
- NSPCC – National Collaborative Partnership

Feedback overview

- **95% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed** that the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of services beyond the meter
- Stakeholders identified gaps in **servicing**
- **49% strongly disagreed** that GDNs should just be providing last resort support for the most vulnerable rather than taking a more proactive role to reach more customers, while **35% disagreed**

- **100% of stakeholders (82 respondents) agreed** that GDNs should be pushing to amend the criteria to help those not on means tested benefits
- **84% either agreed or strongly agreed** that GDNs should be looking to partner with other organisations to improve safeguarding for adults as well as children

Look back to year 3

A short video was played to stakeholders demonstrating the hard work that has been undertaken by each GDN within the past year.

[Review of the year video VCMA Showcase 2024](#)

Session 5:

Looking to the Future (GD3)

Reflections on the day and look ahead – David McCrone, Head of Price Control Operations Policy, Ofgem, delivered an overview of VCMA and his reflections during the past 12 months. David also presented feedback from the day and provided us a glimpse of what to expect in GD3.

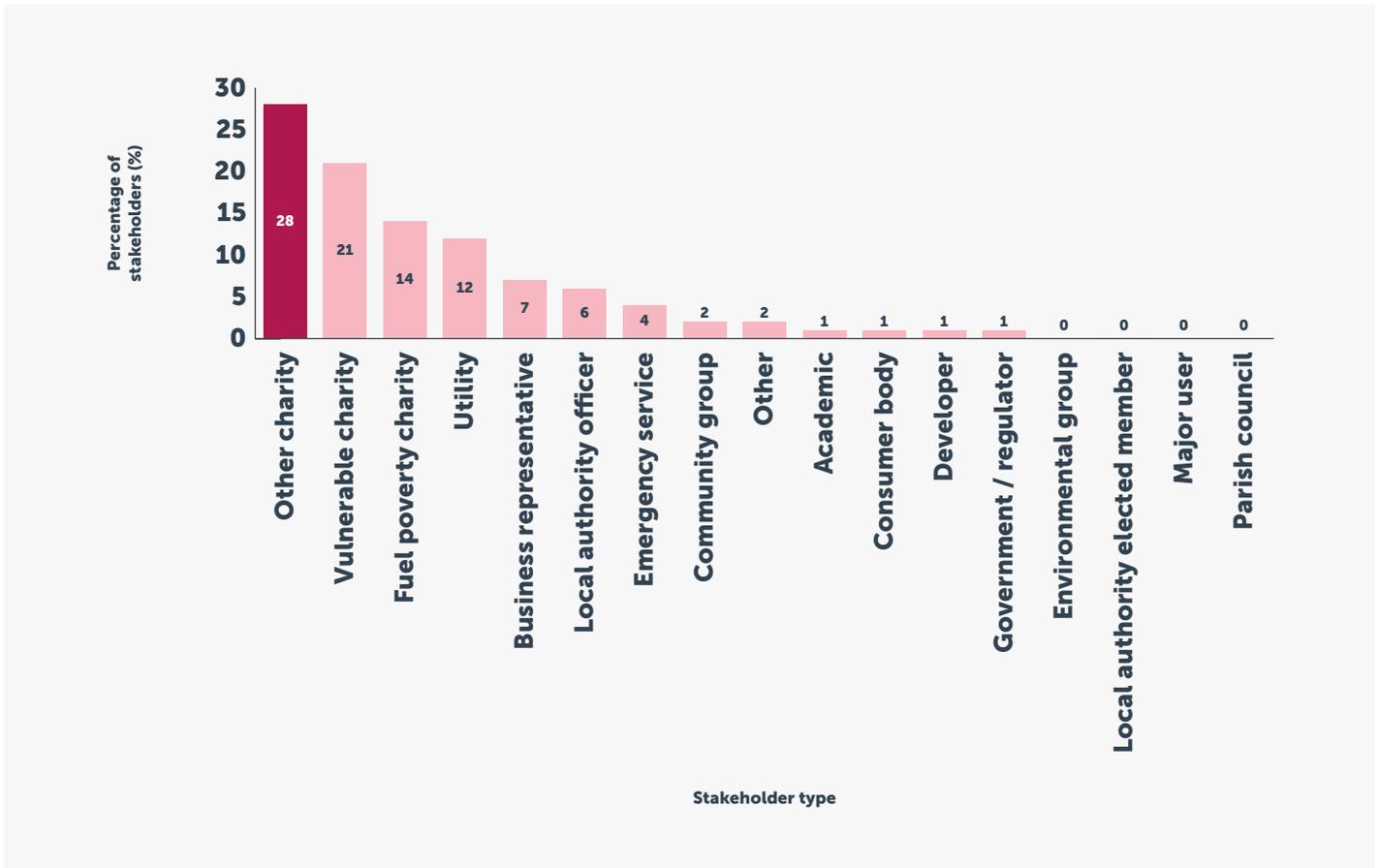
Eileen Brown, Customer Experience Director, NGN, spoke about what we envisage GD3 to look like. It was acknowledged that together with our partners we are seeing an ever-increasing need amongst our customers and communities. We know that our customers will need us to work hard to support them, and we will have continued focus on supporting customers in fuel poverty, as well as continuing to support health-based partnerships. GDNs will continue to maximise the opportunity that we have, to provide our customers with the help and support they need. This also applies to the fair and just transition to Net Zero and understanding the role GDNs have to play.

Introductory Session

Over the course of the VCMA Showcase, Slido voting was used to gather feedback from stakeholders. Questions as detailed below:

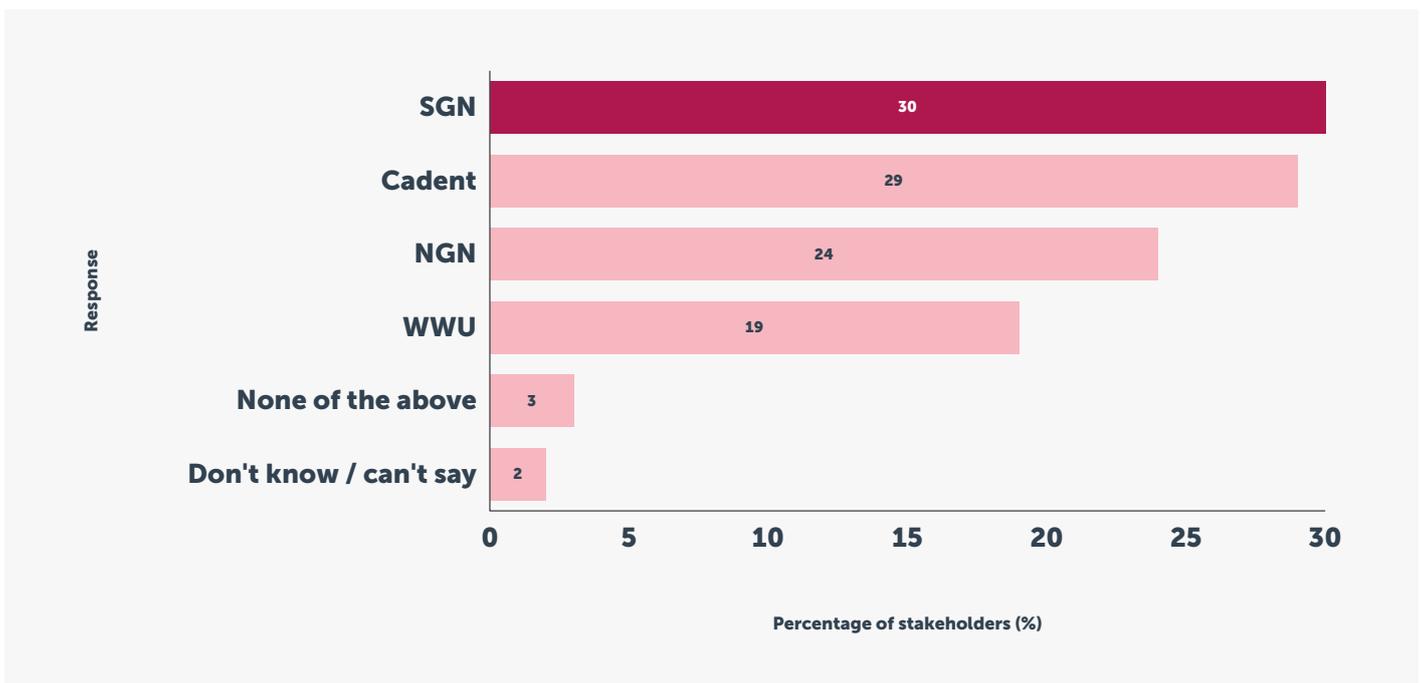
Electronic voting sessions:

1. What type of stakeholder are you?



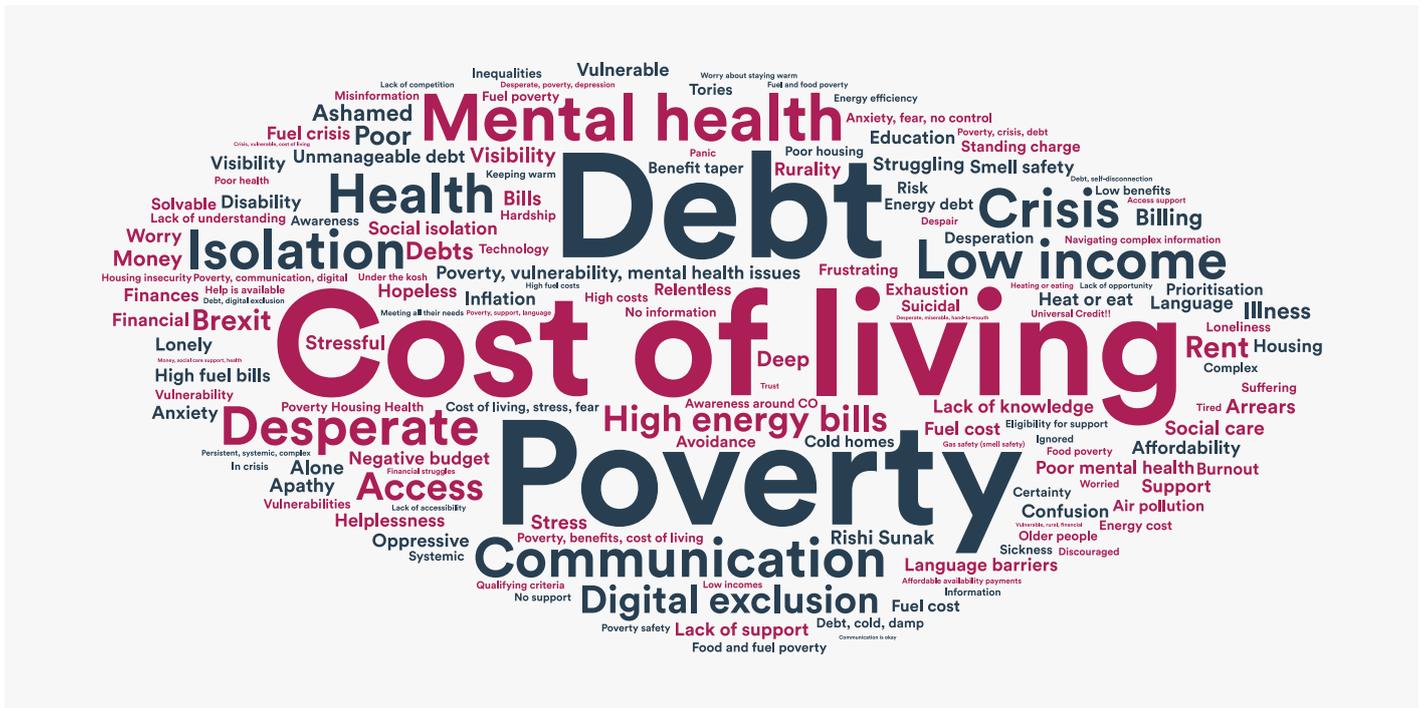
169 responses received

2. Which Gas Distribution Network are you served by?



169 responses received

3. What three words would you use to describe the challenges facing the people you support right now?



364 responses received. Stakeholders could submit multiple responses.

Responses receiving multiple votes (top 15)	Count
Cost of living	44
Debt	32
Poverty	28
Mental Health	17
Communication	10
Isolation	7
Health	7
Low income	6
Desperate	5
Crisis	5
Digital exclusion	5
Access	4
High energy bills	4
Poverty, vulnerability, mental health issues	4
Affordability	4



Session 1: **Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability**

Session 1:

Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability

Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability is the first of our four themes under VCMA. This has been an extremely important theme for VCMA projects this year, after the networks received a large uplift in their allowances.

Through this work, GDNs created programmes that support customers to achieve affordable warmth. This can be a really big challenge, especially given the current economic landscape which affects their customers. The GDNs have seen a huge increase in households struggling to afford energy and other essential living costs, and the collaborative projects are designed to address this by reaching those who need it most.

A short video which explains this work in more detail was presented to stakeholders. Please see link below to view the full video:

[Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability VCMA Showcase video 2024](#)

Key achievements RIIO-GD2 to March 2024: (RIIO-GD2 is the price control for the gas distribution network, where network companies take gas from the transmission network and deliver it at safe, lower pressures to homes and businesses. The price control runs for five years, from 2021–2026)

- Average SROI generated – £10.20 through 11 projects
- 258,820 households supported (collaborative reach GD2 to date)
- Challenges and learning – addressing extent of affordability issues/accessibility to support

Matt Cole, Head of Fuel Bank Foundation, provided an overview of the collaborative VCMA project that is currently being funded by all four GDNs. The Fuel Bank Foundation is committed to providing same or next-day emergency fuel vouchers for people struggling to top up their prepayment energy meters. The charity works with its network of trusted community partners to get help to those who need it, including local authorities, housing associations, food banks and local debt support charities.

In the 12 months before receiving a fuel voucher...

51% were choosing between food and energy at least once a week

75% were rationing heating and/or hot water at least once a week

But those with a critical need for energy were more likely to be trading off food for warmth and power daily.

Citizens Advice National Partnership – Energy Safeguarding and CO Safety Partnership

A national, collaborative project with Citizens Advice is ongoing and has been since January 2022. All GDNs work with Citizens Advice – whether this be as part of the national collaboration or individually. Some GDNs have formed relationships with local offices, to reflect the needs of their individual networks and local communities.

Key achievements:

- £2,081,545 collaborative investment
- 18,730 customers reached

An example of where a local relationship has been established, to target the needs of a specific community, is NGN's project with Citizens Advice Bradford, which is a new project for VCMA Year 3.

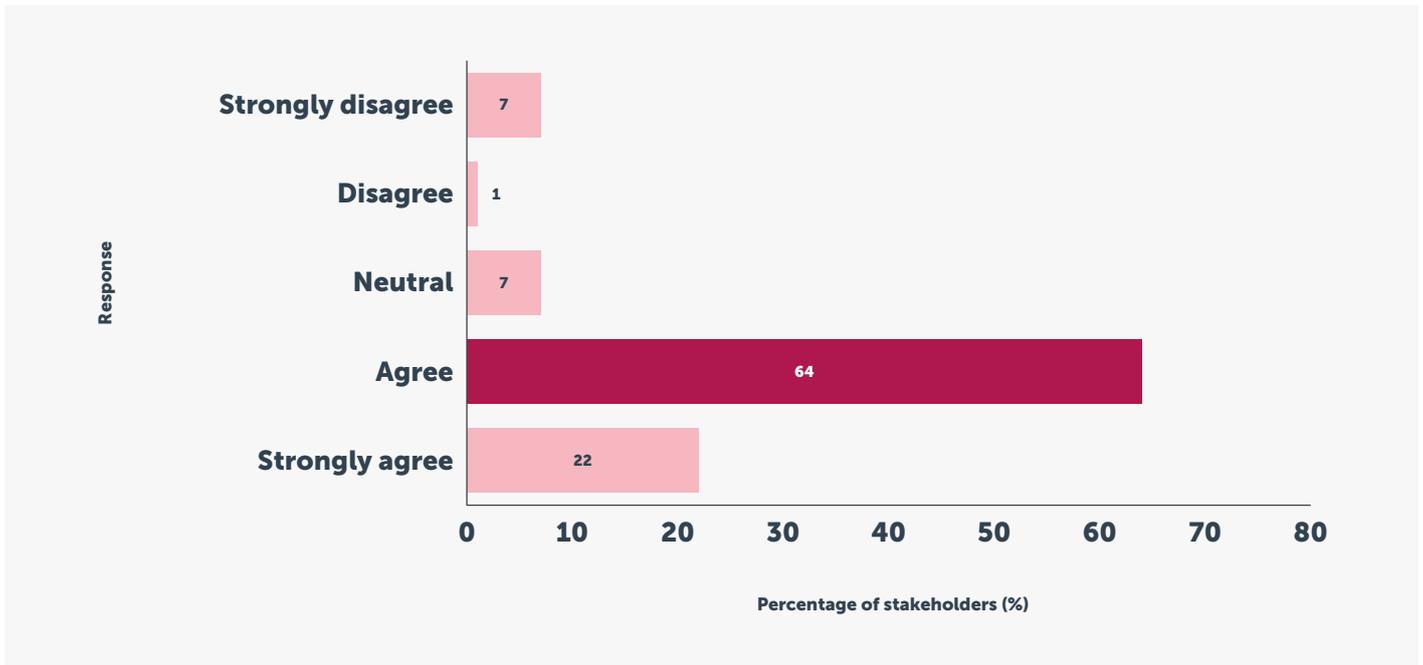
Look ahead

Danielle Butler, Project Development Manager, presented the Warm Homes, Healthy Futures project with NEA that all four GDNs are involved in. This project is the most ambitious to date, with a collaborative investment of £12,174,000. The project aims to:

- Target those suffering consequences of cold, damp homes
- Focus on reaching those in the most deprived communities across GB
- Work with public, primary, acute health (social care) bodies
- Provide direct access to people who should be on our radar (and registers)

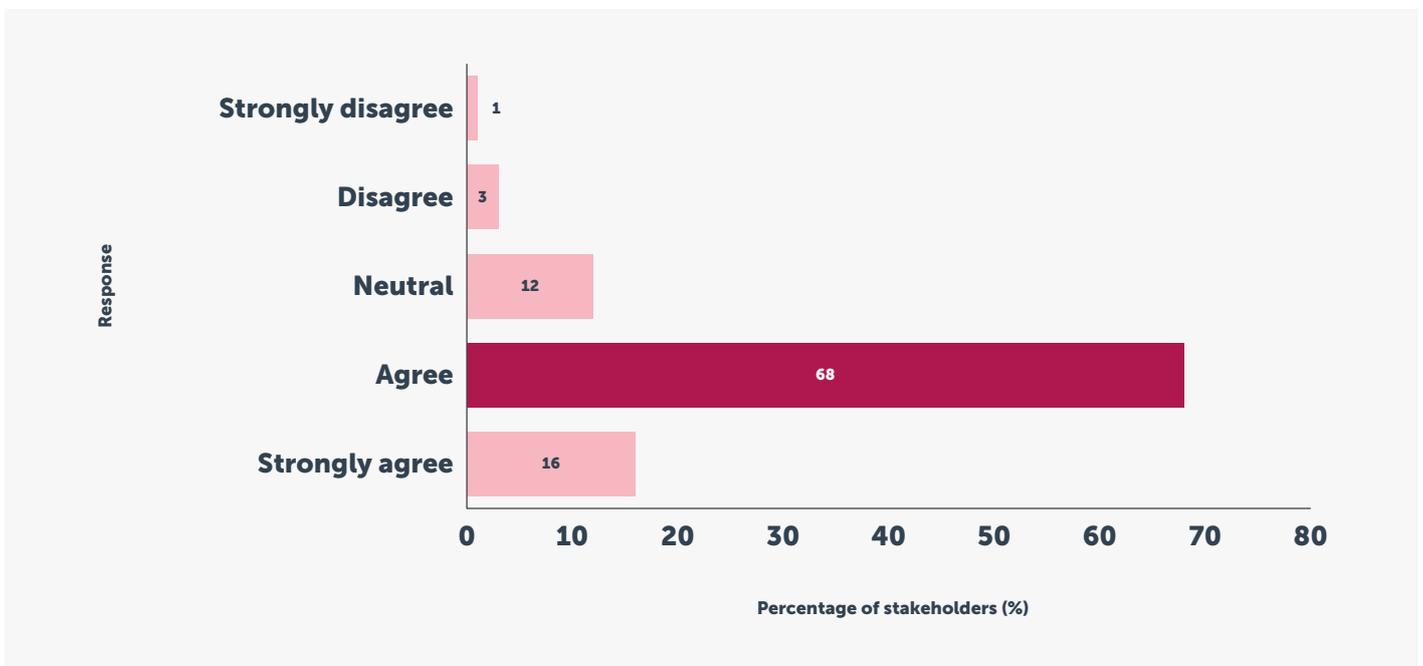
Electronic feedback session:

1. Do you currently feel the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of fuel poverty and energy affordability?



142 responses received

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "GDNs" are well placed to be providing support to customers to address fuel poverty and energy affordability.



137 responses received



Session 2: CO Awareness

Session 2: CO Awareness

Our (CO) Awareness programmes are designed to help raise awareness of the dangers of CO, remind people how to stay safe and help communities understand the impact CO can have on different vulnerabilities and age groups. We've invested in 14 dedicated collaborative CO projects and most of our VCMA portfolio has embedded CO awareness sessions into delivery.

A short video which explains this work in more detail was presented to stakeholders. Please see link below to view the full video:

[CO Awareness VCMA Showcase video 2024](#)

Key achievements RIIO-GD2 to March 2024:

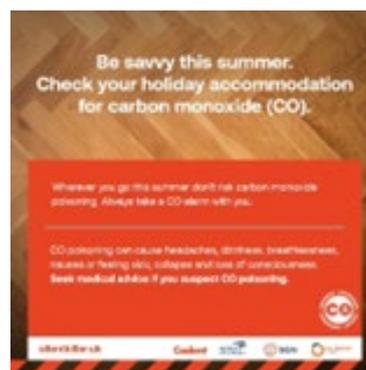
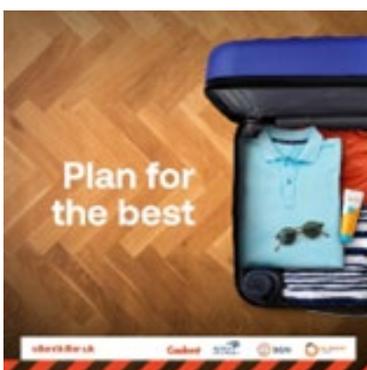
- Average SROI generated – £19.71 through 14 projects
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- Pre-score before CO awareness session – 6.19
- Post-score after CO awareness session – 8.63

23/24 Collaborative GDN winter & summer awareness campaigns – Eleven Miles

£1,000,000 collaborative investment from April 2023 to March 2026.

This campaign has built upon the learning of previous joint awareness campaign activities. This campaign includes seasonal messaging, which enables clear safety guidance based on seasonal risks. It is a multichannel campaign and accessible by design to maximise reach and information retention. The GDNs apply a 3% 'engagement rate' to campaign activity, which is based on assumed engagement retention of messaging. With this in mind, the project has reached over 29 million customers to date. There are six seasonal campaigns over the remainder of GD2, allowing ongoing review and learning to be applied.

Tom Huber, Operations Manager, Bonanza Creative, showcased the project SGN and NGN collaborate on, which is focused on educating children. 68,857 children were reached in the 23/24 financial year, with even further reach achieved by children speaking to their families about CO.



Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS)

Natalie Waters, Partnerships Officer, Dorset & Wiltshire FRS, presented on the project they have in collaboration with SGN and WWU. They work with SGN and WWU to provide CO alarms and advice to vulnerable households across Dorset and Wiltshire. This partnership provides both standard and deaf-alert alarms, with 7,674 installed since the partnership began in 2022 (standard + deaf-alert). Safe & Well Advisors install CO alarms during visits and provide information to residents about the risks of CO. The partnership is key in helping to keep vulnerable residents safe in their homes.

All four GDNs also install locking cooker valves for residents who need additional protection when using gas cookers. This is a safety valve that can be installed in the homes of customers who live with, for example, Dementia and memory loss.

Look ahead

Preventing Harm from Environmental Exposure to Carbon Monoxide (PHECO) – E-Learning for Health

Dan Edwards, Social Impact Programme Lead, SGN, provided an overview of the E-Learning for Health project, which all four GDNs are funding. Working with Independent Performance in Practice (IPIP), the aim is to integrate high quality, evidence-based resources into E-Learning for Healthcare (elfh) which has over 2 million users. 429,329 people will be reached, with over 48,000 healthcare professionals trained.

Four modules being created:

- CO awareness for healthcare professionals
- CO risk and support during pregnancy
- CO risk and support for older people
- Medical examiners

Think CO app

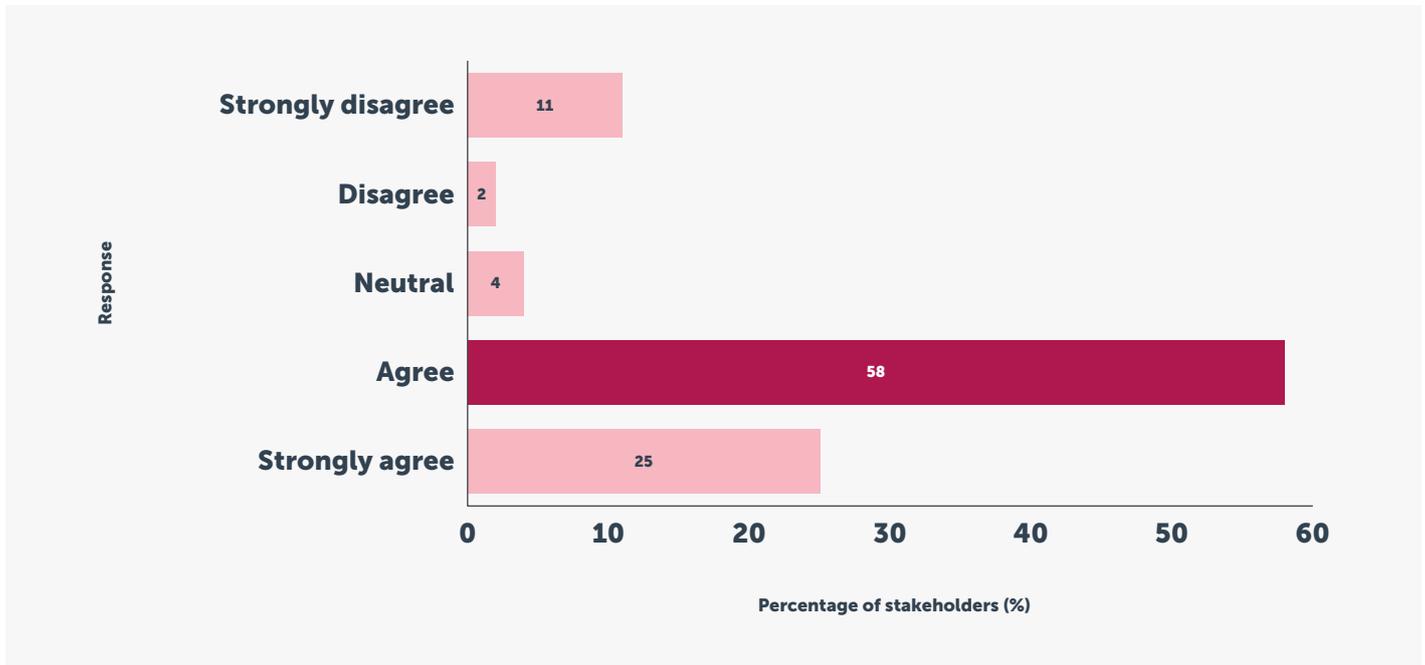
Linda Spence, Vulnerability Manager, SGN, provided an overview of the Think CO app, which all four GDNs have invested in to enable the Gas Safe Charity to create and develop. The app is targeted at third sector organisations where there is a knowledge and skills gap around CO safety.

The Think CO app will help frontline workers and volunteers identify potential CO risks and provide CO safety information to vulnerable households, increasing CO awareness and reducing the risk of CO harm.

To register your interest in the Think CO app, find out more about the Think CO e-learning course, online workshops, or other opportunities to educate yourself on CO, please contact the Think CO team at: ThinkCO@gassafecharity.org.uk

Electronic feedback session:

1. Do you currently feel the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of CO awareness?



120 responses received

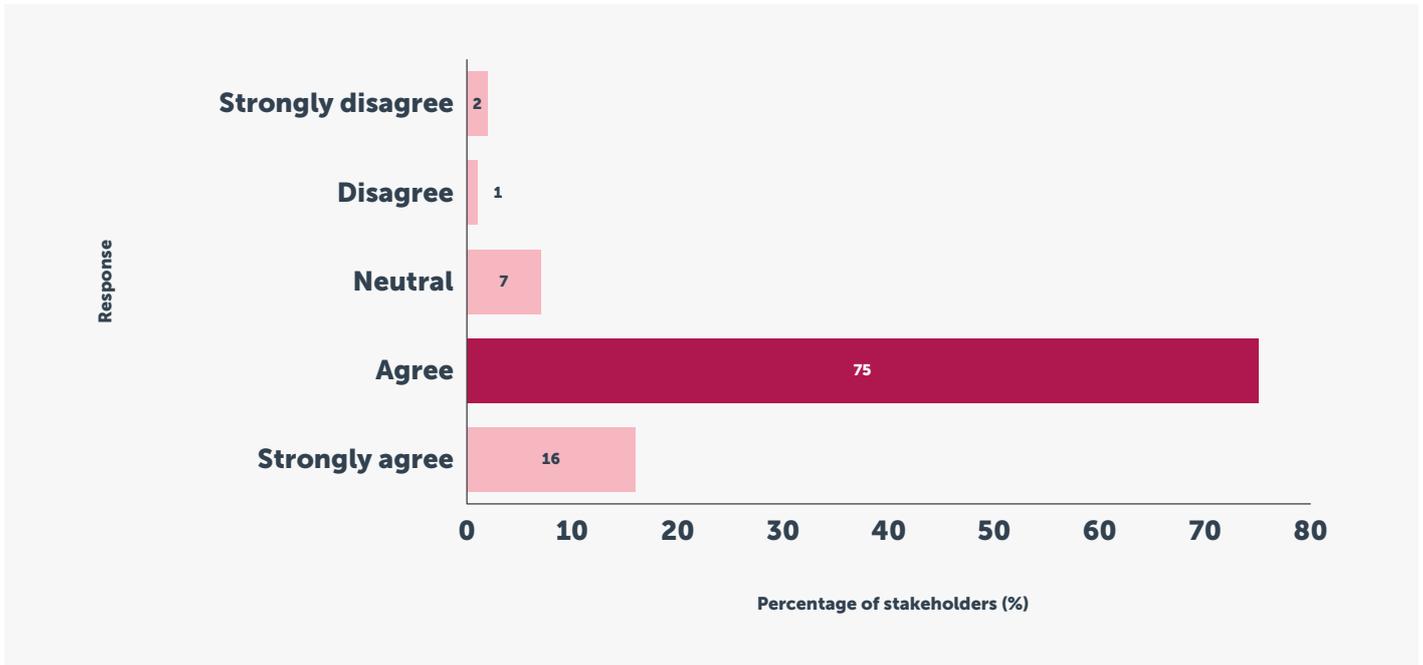
2. What are the gaps (if any) in the activities we are undertaking in the area of CO awareness?



43 responses received

Responses receiving multiple votes	Count
Private landlords	2

3. How do you feel about the following statement: "GDNs are working with the right organisations on CO safety."



106 responses received

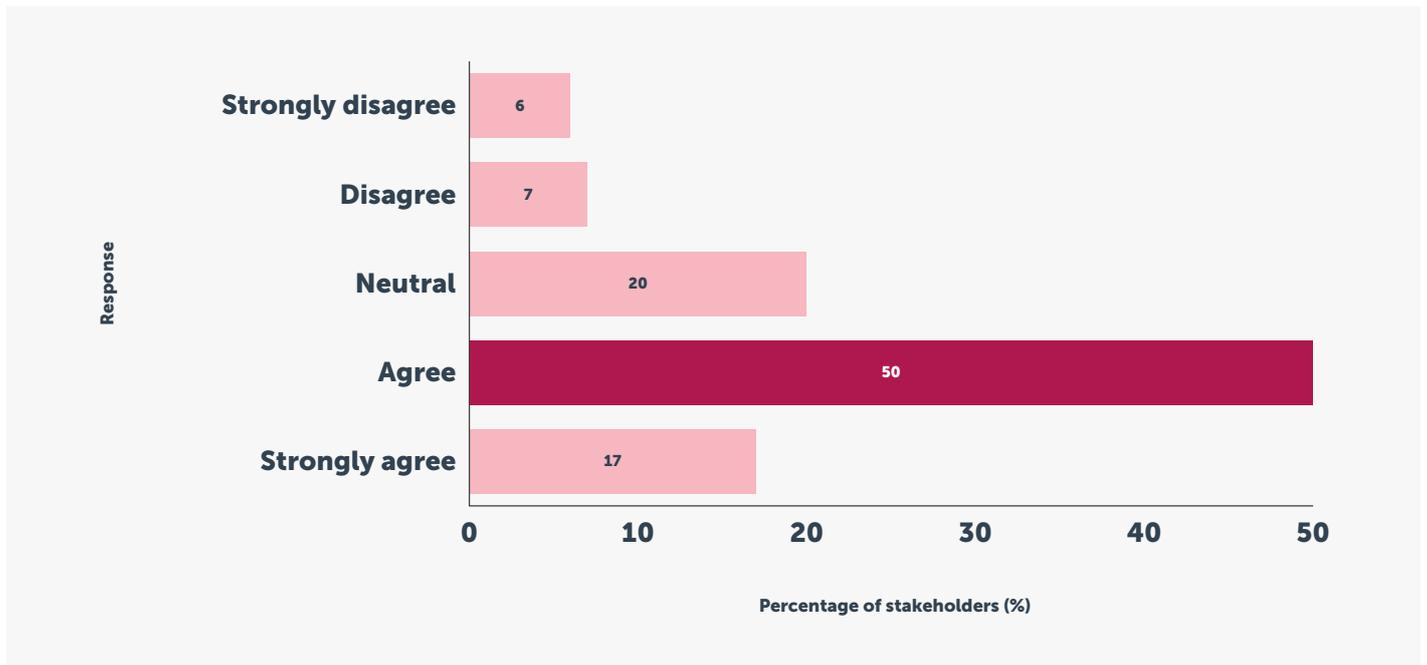
4. Please suggest any other organisations we should look to work with in the future:



120 responses received

Responses receiving multiple votes	Count
Local charities	7
Private landlords	2
Smaller local charities	2
Emergency services	2
Smaller charities	2

5. How do you feel about the following statement: "I have noticed an increase in CO awareness in my organisation or among the people I support in the past three years?"



108 responses received



Session 3: **Supporting** **Priority Customers**

Session 3:

Supporting Priority Customers

Phil Burrows, Head of Customer Vulnerability, Cadent, introduced this section of the Showcase. Some of our customers need more help than others to stay safe and warm at home. By registering eligible households on the Priority Services Register (PSR), we are able to make sure the most vulnerable members of our community are known to their utility companies and proactively offered support. Some communities find it more challenging to access help without trusted support and are more impacted by living in a cold and unsafe home.

A short video which explains this work in more detail was presented to stakeholders. Please see link below to view the full video:

[Supporting Priority Customers VCMA Showcase video 2024](#)

Key achievements RIIO-GD2 to March 2024:

- Average SROI generated – £20.53 through nine projects
- Over 500,000 households supported (collaborative reach GD2 to date)
- Signed 163,518 customers up to the PSR collaboratively

The Carents Room

Dr Jackie Gray, Founder, The Carents Room, provided an overview of the collaborative project NGN and Cadent fund. NGN lead on this project, which aims to reach 1 million Carents (carers or parents) in the UK. There are currently an estimated 5 million Carents nationally.

Carents are the largest group of unpaid carers, and this number is growing rapidly in the face of our ageing population. The Carents Room is an interactive website for carents that can be accessed anywhere in the UK for instant online support.

During the remainder of GD2, NGN and Cadent have committed to extending this project and Phase 2 has now commenced delivery.

The platform offers Carents:

- A digital one stop shop
- Recognition & identity
- Tailored information
- Fact checked content
- Navigation & signposting
- Connection & community
- Free and available 24/7
- UK wide

Maggie's

Adam Feder, Head of Corporate Partnerships, Maggie's, provided an overview of the project that all four GDNs fund. The project upskills Maggie's Benefits Advisors to support clients with conversations around a number of areas. These include energy safeguarding, PSR awareness and registration, CO awareness and access to free CO alarms for those who are unable to afford them. It also includes the provision of guidance on energy usage and efficiency. These additional support services complement Maggie's existing service around delivering money, benefits, and welfare advice.

Year 1 has been about embedding the partnership, as well as the Benefits Advisors raising awareness of support being available from energy networks for the first time:

- 10,492 sessions delivered
- £23m in financial gain
- For the first time Maggie's is raising awareness of PSR, with 800 PSR conversations

Kidney Care UK (KCUK) – Safe and Warm: Providing a Critical Lifeline to Dialysis Patients Across the UK



Laurie Cuthbert, Director of Fundraising, Marketing & Communications, Kidney Care UK, delivered a presentation of the VCMA collaborative project which all four GDNs support.

The Safe and Warm project will directly support 8,867 patients in more than 120 renal units across Scotland, North West, North East, Southern and South West England. The project will also provide a freephone support line to more than 8,000 patients. The project will deliver a Net Present Value of £41m over the next five years with an SROI of £16.45.

This project will help KCUK to understand the specific challenges facing people with kidney failure, who rely on dialysis to stay alive and need to be in a warm, dry house but face increased costs and reduced income. It also provides an opportunity for GDNs to further engage with kidney patients to understand how they are impacted by our business as usual street works and mains replacement programme, allowing consideration to be given to making adaptations to our services.

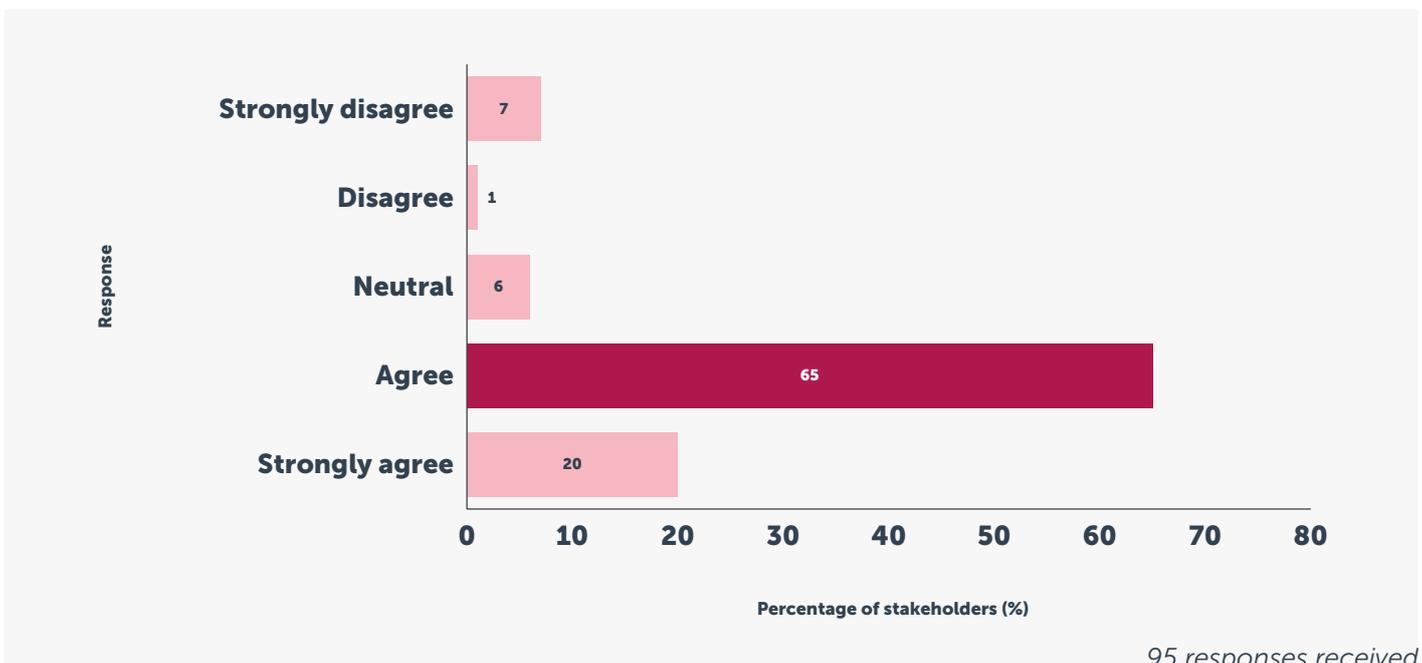
Five key regions have been identified in each GDN area, focusing on those with high deprivation, low social mobility, and high prevalence of kidney disease in patients requiring dialysis to stay alive. These are Scotland, Southern England, North West England, North East England and South West England.

A video from KCUK was also shown to stakeholders on the day. A link to the video is below:

<https://youtu.be/ZUDrZwuOI3c?si=jEVbuq0kvFTylZjW>

Electronic feedback session:

1. Do you currently feel the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of supporting priority customers?



4. What do you need from us to be able to promote the work we do with organisations (like Carents and Maggie's) within your own organisation?



64 responses received

Responses receiving multiple votes	Count
Funding	2



Session 4:
Services
Beyond the Meter

Session 4:

Services Beyond the Meter

Sophie Shorney, VCMA Manager, WWU, introduced this next section in the VCMA Showcase. As gas distributors, we're committed to keeping our customers safe and warm. We all recognise that, for some customers, it's not possible to maintain a safe and warm home without extra help from us. With direct support, we're able to help vulnerable households as we go about our operational activities.

A short video which explains this work in more detail was presented to stakeholders. Please see link below to view the full video:

[Services Beyond the Meter Showcase video 2024](#)

Key achievements

- 1,331 repairs & replacements carried out collaboratively
- 26,824 – total interventions collaboratively

Rachele Verdini, VCMA Project Coordinator, WWU, presented on our primary roles as GDNs. We all have a licence obligation to:

- Provide a safe and reliable gas network
- Operate the National Gas Emergency service – 0800 111 999
- Respond to uncontrolled gas escapes within 1 hour (target - 97%)
- Use trained and competent engineers
- Where gas is leaking, make safe
- Where CO is reported or suspected, make safe
- Provide alternative heating, cooking, hot water facilities to PSR customers

Care & Repair Services

All four GDNs have a shared commitment to support eligible homes by:

- Undertaking proactive gas safety checks and servicing
- Not leaving customers without support following a gas escape or CO alert

- Supporting the customer to get a landlord or other third party to act quickly and resolve issues that are their responsibility
- Funding the repair or replacement of gas appliances
- Training and equipping engineers to undertake CO investigations (CMDDA1 procedures)
- Delivering services through GDN engineers supported by Gas Safe Registered engineers
- Safeguarding services – spotting signs of neglect or abuse with processes in place to report to the relevant agency
- Share best practice, learning and procedures

NSPCC – Collaborative GDN Project

Tess O'Callaghan, Associate Head of Commercial Strategy, NSPCC, provided an overview of the collaborative GDN project.

Why we're working together

Every month, gas engineers across our networks are presented with situations where children may be at risk of harm, but they lack the knowledge and confidence on how to report their concerns. Last year, the NSPCC Helpline responded to 85,000 reports of concerns for a child's welfare from members of the public. At its peak, the number of contacts increased by 48% compared with pre-lockdown levels. The Helpline provides individuals with advice and support, and can act on their behalf if they have concerns about a child who is either being abused or is at risk of abuse. However, awareness of the NSPCC Helpline in the gas industry is low. It's vital that every employee, wherever they are in our networks, can contact the service to share their concerns. Collective action is required to make sure every child and family has a safe place they call home, and through this collaborative project, we can work together to keep children safe from harm.

This project aims to raise awareness of the NSPCC Helpline and share techniques on how to spot potential child mistreatment through delivering "It's Your Call" training to GDN colleagues and contractors.

How we're working together

We will also support UK families who are in, or at risk of being in, fuel poverty, by providing access to expert information on energy efficiency, income maximisation and CO risks. This will be achieved through the wide reach of the NSPCC's Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) programme and its integration into various services and tools. The NSPCC will also share this information via a separate Wales delivery partner.

In addition to increasing awareness on the dangers of CO, signs, symptoms and preventative measures, free CO alarms will be provided to 'at risk' families being supported. This provision will be for those who are unable to purchase an alarm through their own means. It will provide 18,635 of our colleagues with access to training to increase their awareness on spotting the signs of child neglect and/or abuse. This will be done via the NSPCC e-learning course to recognise and report signs of possible abuse and neglect, giving our colleagues the confidence to report instances of concern, which will ultimately provide greater support to children and families across all networks.

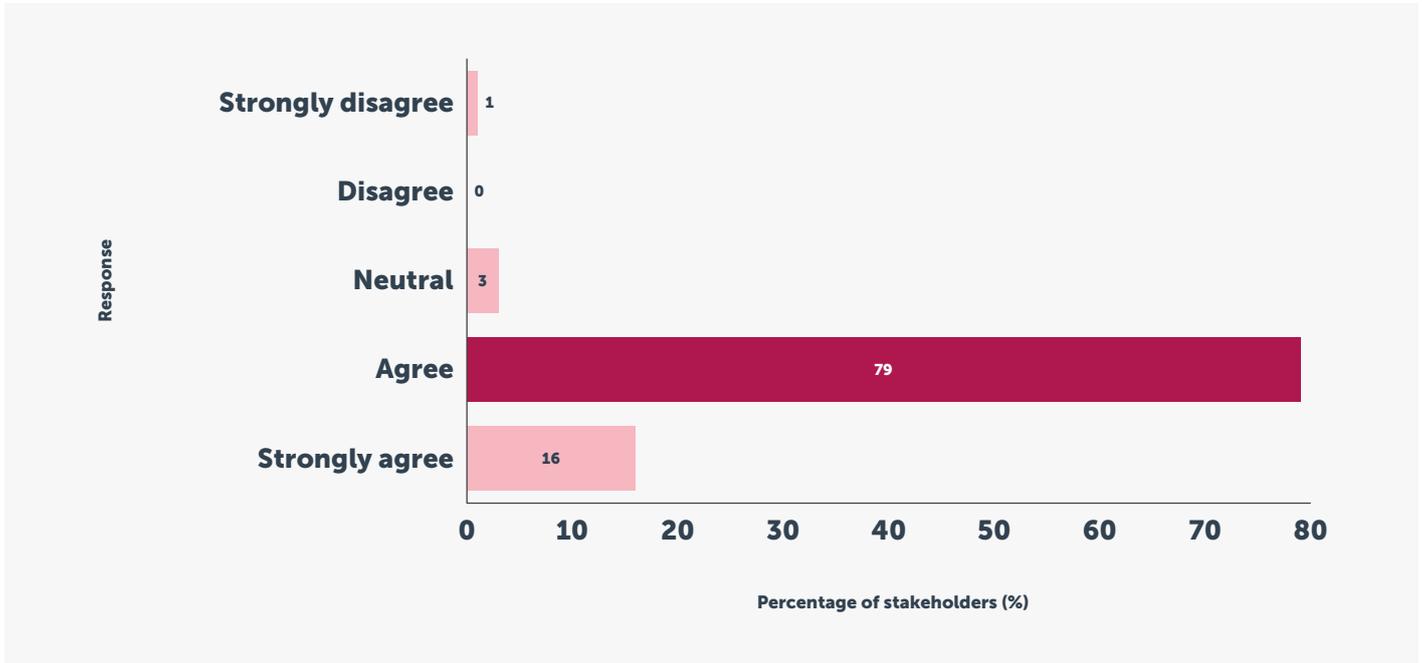
It's Your Call e-learning

- 15-minute course for those visiting customers' homes
- Develop knowledge and confidence to spot the signs of abuse and neglect and know how to take action
- Project developed in response to growing number of concerns flagged by engineers
- To date – 938 frontline workers trained
- Delivered staged cohorts vs. mandatory for all frontline staff
- Pre & post survey data monitor effectiveness – 94.9% felt confident to spot the signs, 94.7% felt confident to report concerns
- 30 contacts received to NSPCC Helpline, 60% resulted in a new referral to children's services
- Most common theme was neglect



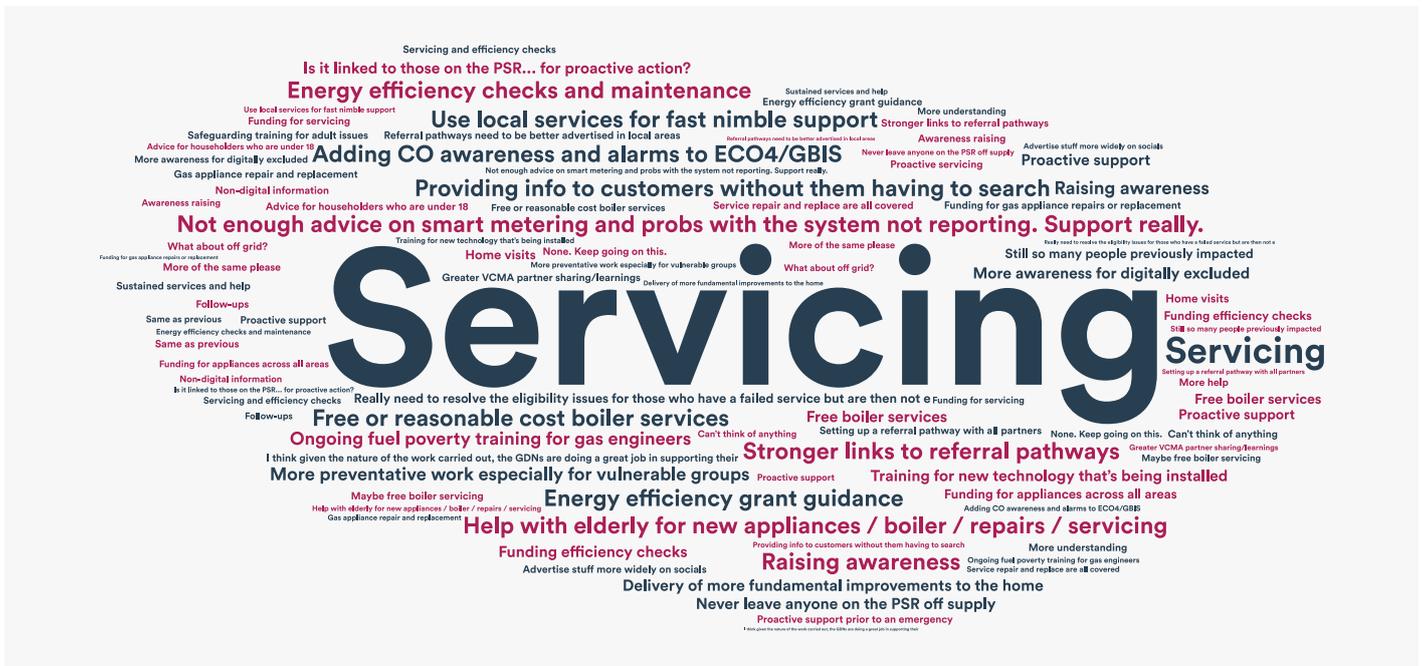
Electronic feedback session:

1. Do you currently feel the gas networks are undertaking the right activities in the area of services beyond the meter?



86 responses received

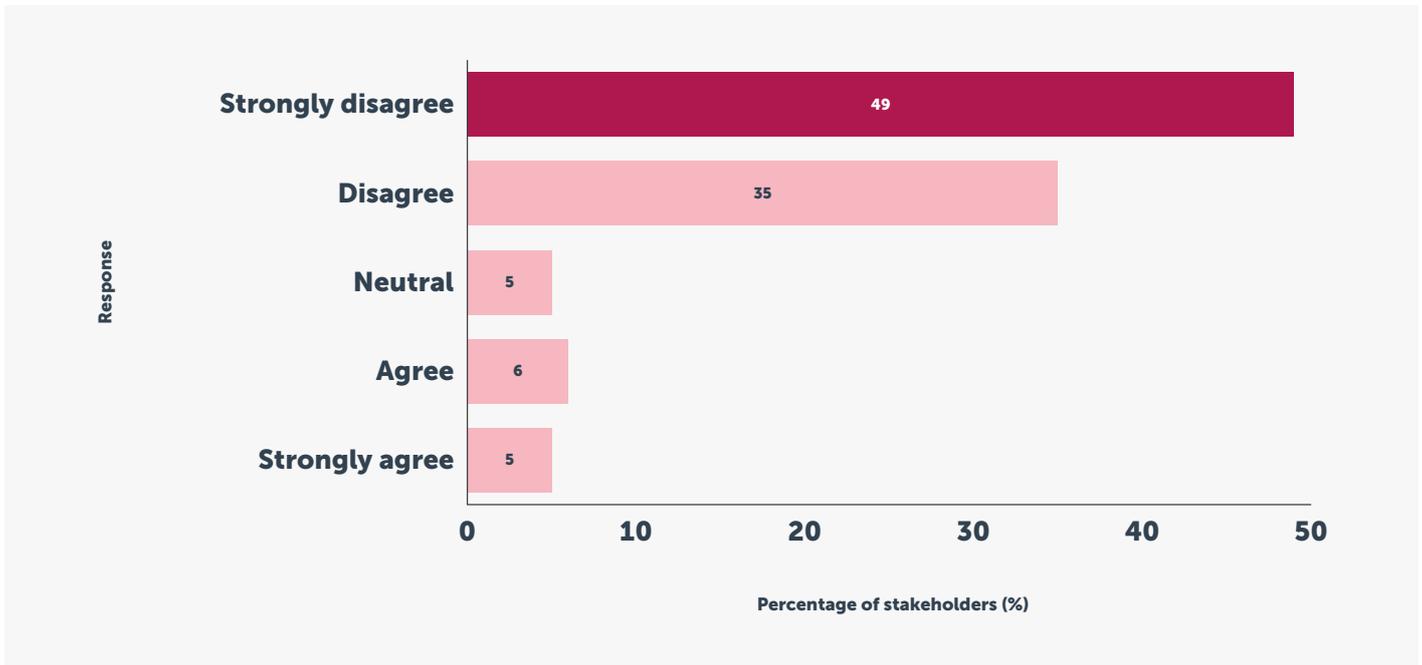
2. What are the gaps (if any) in the activities we are undertaking in the area of services beyond the meter?



52 responses received

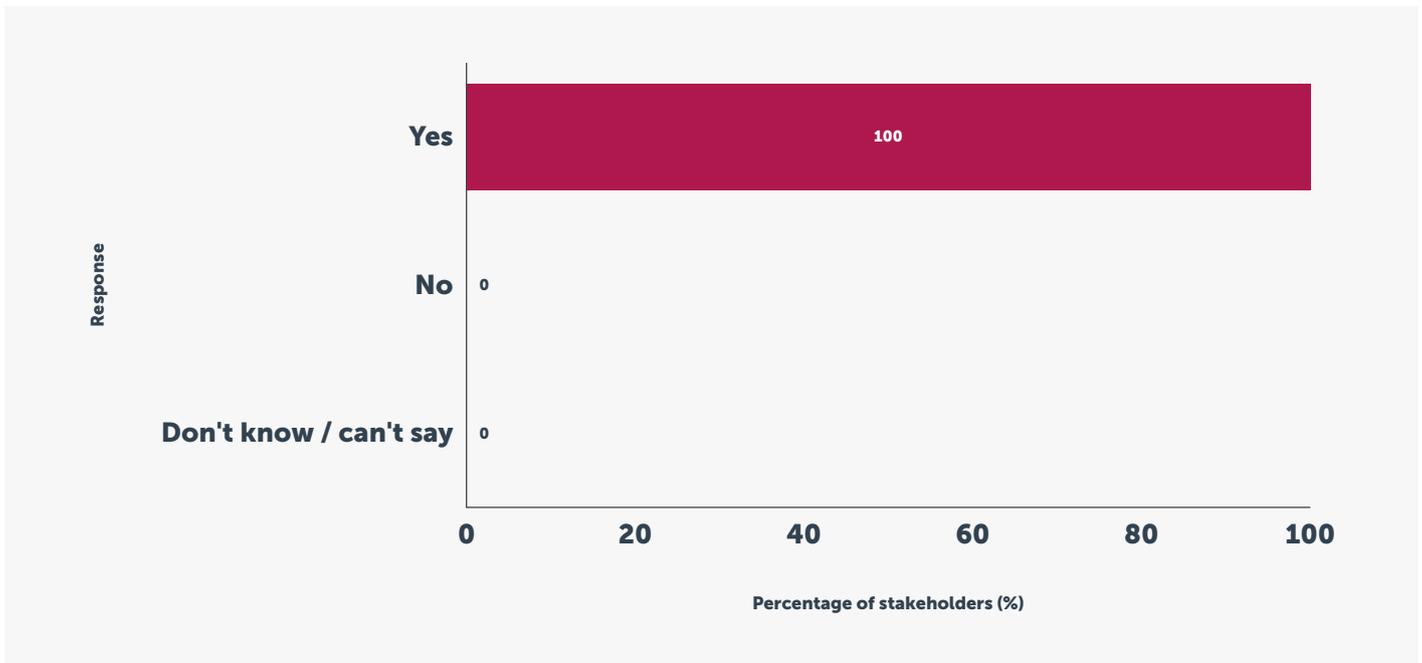
Responses receiving multiple votes	Count
Servicing	2

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The GDNs should just be providing last resort support for the most vulnerable rather than taking a more proactive role to reach more customers (which would invest more of the fund)."



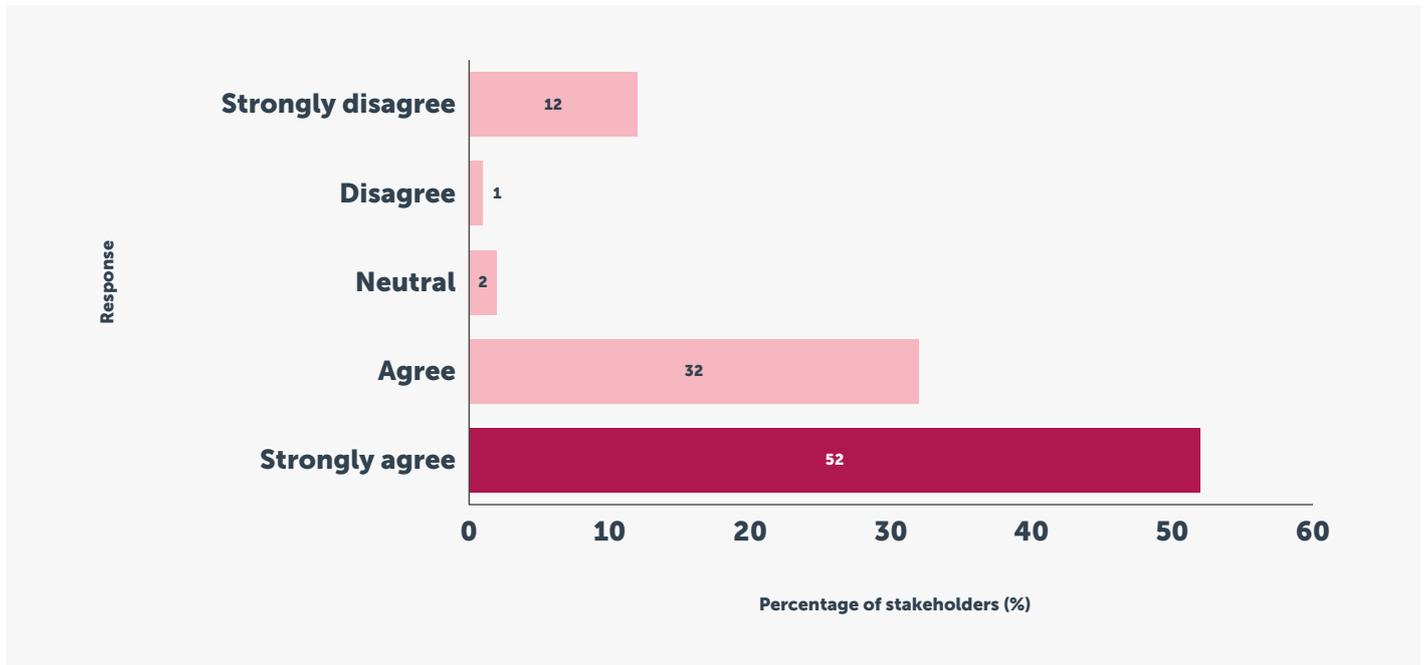
82 responses received

4. Should the GDNs be pushing to amend the criteria to help those not on means tested benefits?



85 responses received

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The GDNs should be looking to partner with other organisations to improve safeguarding for adults as well as children."



84 responses received

Look back to year 3

Please see below link to a short video which shows you all the hard work from each GDN within the past year.

[Review of the year video VCMA Showcase 2024](#)



Session 5: Looking to the Future (GD3)

Session 5: Looking to the Future (GD3)

Reflections on the day and look ahead

David McCrone, Head of Price Control Operations Policy, Ofgem, delivered an overview of VCMA and his reflections during the past 12 months. David also presented feedback from the day and provided us a glimpse of what to expect in GD3.

Panel Q&A sections

Ref:	Question	Asked by	Response	Answered by
44	We are grateful to Ofgem for the VCMA. But isn't HSE responsible for safety? With regard to testing for CO, also RIO 1 and 2 and now with RIO 3, has or will Ofgem consult with HSE as we think both organisations should do under the MOU?	Stephanie Trotter	Hi Stephanie, HSE has the primary responsibility for enforcing safety regulations like the GSMR. But we continue to work closely with them, including on the Cross-Government Group on Gas Safety and CO. Thanks for the feedback on the VCMA and we have committed to that in our SSMD, although with details to be worked on over the next 12-18 months.	David McCrone (Ofgem)
45	How do we ensure that the network of partners is leveraged, so that customers have access to the relevant partners and programmes for support.	Christine	live answered	Q&A panel
46	Is there any chance of addressing the misalignment of eligibility criteria for appliance servicing and repairs and replacements within GD2? Many very vulnerable people are currently at risk of being left in the cold if we wait until GD3 for this to be resolved.	Nicky Swetnam	Since the showcase event we have had further conversations with Ofgem to highlight the current issues of customers not being able to access support through schemes such as ECO or NEST, and the GDNs also being unable to support as the customer is not on benefits. Ofgem have asked for some further detail and will respond to the GDNs by the end of August.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
47	Does the panel have hopes that GB Energy could assist with the generation of cheaper energy to support programmes and pull people out of longer-term fuel poverty.	David Mackay	Initial investment will hopefully lead to lower energy prices and better energy security over time. Cost of energy is a key factor in tackling fuel poverty but one the GDNs have minimal control over - we will continue to support customers in tariff switching and improving the energy efficiency of their homes as well as their own behaviours to minimise energy usage.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)

<p>48</p>	<p>I may have missed this already, but is there a group for partners? As a charity that delivers information on the PSR, prevents fuel poverty and crisis, and addresses CO poisoning, it would be helpful to connect with other organisations that might be delivering services to other hard-to-reach customers.</p>	<p>Lee Gray (The Royal Association for Deaf people)</p>	<p>The GDNs have separate networking channels through which to connect partners. For those who have given consent to share contact information, the attendee contact list has been distributed to all attendees.</p>	<p>Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)</p>
<p>49</p>	<p>Thanks for an excellent session. What are your key requirements of partner agencies in the year ahead (e.g. shaping the "no one left behind" agenda)? Secondly, how can you facilitate more cross-partner best practice sharing, particularly for partners that are achieving a higher SROI than others delivering seemingly similar services?</p>	<p>Alex Wilkes (YES Energy Solutions CIC)</p>	<p>Partnerships will be key to us finding and supporting customers who are most at risk of being left behind in the UK energy transition. The GDNs are working up business plans but ensuring the Gas and Electric networks are giving customers consistent messages seems key if trust is to be created.</p> <p>In terms of SROI, some projects have higher delivery costs per household than others, especially where a person with multi-complex needs is being helped whereas the outcomes are similar. All GDNs are now working with their partners as a collective with best practice sessions being held. How projects are scoped and reported is part of this to ensure the SROI is fully reflective of what is being achieved through the investment.</p>	<p>Nigel Winnan (WWU)</p>
<p>50</p>	<p>Given how impactful and important we can see these partnerships are, why would Ofgem have as part of their mindset that they expect the funding to reduce rather than at least retain the same level of funding to help turn off the tap rather than be reactive to the flood as it has been in recent years. There will always be vulnerable customers, no matter how well the economy is doing.</p>	<p>Anonymous</p>	<p>Ofgem's role is to ensure that the GDNs are funded for services that they are best placed to provide, and to keep customers' bills low. The GDNs will all be making their case in their December 2024 Business plans for continued investment in the VCMA services as we move into RIIO GD3 as stakeholders and data tells us the need to support customers with multiple vulnerabilities who are in or close to fuel poverty is not a problem that is going to go away over the next 10 years.</p>	<p>Nigel Winnan (WWU)</p>

51	Could you use some of our established partners to work with and identify smaller local groups and let them do the hand-holding? Where the reporting etc. is already established and being done, like Citizens Advice for example?	A Mackie	The GDNs are close to allocating their remaining funding for the RIIO GD2 period. Look at each GDN website's VCMA pages to find the contact email / phone number and let us know what your proposals are in more detail.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
52	Do you describe 'partner' as an organisation funded by the funds from Ofgem through VCMA? Do you have any partners who represent survivors/victims/families of those exposed to Carbon Monoxide poisoning?	Stephanie Trotter	Yes, I was referring to partners in that context but think the GDNs would be more qualified to say whether a particular group is represented.	David McCrone (Ofgem)
53	Although there is always more that can be done, I think we need to recognise and applaud the great work that the GDNs have done not just in funding but in establishing and maintaining good interagency work in regions. My question is how can we/anyone get the energy suppliers to start doing anything like the work that the GDN are leading on. Can the GDN bring them together?	Ian Bartlett	Ofgem and Ofwat are very focused on supporting vulnerable customers at the moment. Ofgem are also reviewing their Vulnerability Strategy. These forums provide opportunities for the wider gas and electricity industry (and water) to come together to look at aligning services and funding.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
54	What will happen to the charities that rely on VCMA funding if Ofgem reduces it?	Amanda Jayne Jones	The GDNs are all very aware of the risks and impact on organisations we work with. We are keeping them informed on the progress of the Ofgem consultations and decisions. The recent Ofgem Sector Specific Methodology Decision looks to support VCMA into RIIO GD3 but with a lower level of funding. Each GDN needs to make its case for the need for funding and why it is well placed to deliver those services. We will then need to work with each charity to assess their projects, if they are still needed, and what could be achieved with different levels of funding. Communication is key to the organisations planning and transition from GD2 into GD3.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)

55	Is there any chance of addressing the misalignment of eligibility criteria for appliance servicing and repairs and replacements within GD2? Many very vulnerable people are currently at risk of being left in the cold if we wait until GD3 for this to be resolved.	Nicky Swetnam	Hi Nicky, I'd be interested in understanding a bit more about any potential misalignment. Happy to pick this up separately if you want to get in touch via vcma@ofgem.gov.uk	David McCrone (Ofgem)
56	When will the new price cap be shared?	Anonymous	I understand it will be 27 August	Matt Copeland (NEA)
57	In our community, we do not often see such support or portals. How has or is the BME inclusion for those experiencing digital exclusion?	Robert (EER CIC)	Our projects should be reaching a wide geography and demographic, but our funding doesn't allow us to be active in every community. Whilst some projects do require customers to be online or to phone a helpline, many work with trusted partners in the communities to identify people who need support. Many projects will also run drop-in events or distribute information by post or information in community centres, doctors etc.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
58	How best to ensure collaborative working across partners when many organisations are delivering very similar projects, most offering basic energy advice via telephone & a few delivering more comprehensive home visits? Whilst it's great to have more VCMA funding, I feel there has been a lack of communication, research & strategic planning before funding has been allocated to projects & areas. It can be challenging for delivery partners & confusing for customers who may engage with one service but be unaware of more holistic programmes that may be able to better support people. It's a reality that we as delivery partners need to meet our targets etc, this is becoming more difficult as multiple orgs offer similar services etc.	Simon (Groundwork, Green Doctor)	The GDNs are looking to create a suite of projects that work at national and local levels that reach a wide geographical area focusing on those areas with greatest need, and that reach a wide range of vulnerabilities. The nature of how projects evolve over time means there can be some risk of overlap. By getting partners together we can get them working together to jointly support customers or cross refer when something is outside their remit or skill set.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)

59	How do we use the evidence collated through all the VCMA programmes to influence future Gov and Regulatory policy?	Christine	Ofgem are reviewing their vulnerability strategy so the feedback we get from stakeholders will help to influence that. We also work closely with Citizens Advice Policy team and NEA who have Ofgem's and government contacts and our evidence adds weight to their lobbying for wider government support in supporting customers to be able to heat their home safely.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
60	Where Energy Companies have made large profits, could this or part of be re-directed into additional Energy Company Hardship Funds or open up Qualifying criteria for existing Funds?	Nicole MacMichael	The idea of something like a windfall tax on energy company profits is a matter for government. However, there is already a mechanism where Ofgem can take enforcement action against companies which are in breach of their obligations. This can result in a fine or voluntary redress payments (where Ofgem comes to an arrangement with a company to make payments that will directly benefit consumers, such as those made to Ofgem's Voluntary Redress Fund).	David McCrone (Ofgem)

Future look (GD3)

Eileen Brown, Customer Experience Director, NGN, spoke about what we envision GD3 to look like. We recognise that the cost-of-living crisis does not have a defined start and end. While less is being mentioned of it through general news channels, together with our partners we are seeing an ever-increasing need amongst our customers and communities. More people than ever are contacting national partners such as Citizens Advice and NEA for support, and we know that customers are asking for face-to-face services that diminished during and post-COVID. As we face into GD3, we know that our customers will need us to work hard to support them, and we will have continued focus on supporting customers in fuel poverty, as well as continuing to support health-based partnerships.

We understand our strength as a convener of partners and services, and we'll continue to maximise the opportunity that we have to provide our customers with the help and support they need from their first contact with us, either through our day-to-day operational activities, or through our network of partner organisations.

We also understand the role we have to play in the fair and just transition to Net Zero. In reality, many of the customers that we work with each day are having to focus on their immediate health and well-being, and don't have the luxury of thinking about the future. For these customers, we need to walk with them, making small, incremental changes and importantly, building trust with the energy sector, to ease that future transition. Our customers need to feel that we are working with them, rather than doing things to them. Often, the most practical and immediate actions we can take are to keep them safe with the energy equipment that they have, either by repairing/replacing existing gas appliances, or by educating them about CO. We need to protect our most in-need customers from being forgotten about during the energy transition, and make sure they have access to the right services and support. But again, this is only possible if we work together as an industry and with our network of amazing partners.

Electronic feedback session:

1. Are there any other things we should be focusing on for the next few years (the remainder of RIIO-GD2: today to April 2026)?



79 responses received

Responses receiving multiple votes	Count
Rural areas	2

5. How would you rank our focus areas in terms of importance for you or your organisation?



78 responses received



Question & Answer Sessions



Question & Answer Sessions

Questions asked by participants are listed within the document below in the order that they were asked during each section of the Showcase event.

Questions asked at sign-up

Ref:	Question	Asked by	Response	Answered by
1	Is it possible for energy companies to donate a percentage of their energy for those in need to be stored in batteries for those households on maybe economy 7 or 10?	Robert Thairu	This would be a question for the DNOs (Electricity networks) and Energy Suppliers.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
2	What is the criteria for being considered for funding future projects and can this form part of wider cost-of-living support?	Michelle O'Neil	Each GDN has a VCMA section on their websites which will contain information about how to put forward ideas, and the VCMA Guidance, as agreed with Ofgem.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)

Theme 1 Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability

Ref:	Question	Asked by	Response	Answered by
3	The debt I am seeing is much bigger than before. Debts can be £6000, £4000 and there are no grant funds to cover that. So many people are in a deficit budget, and they can barely afford actual usage never mind paying off the debt. The loss of the Scottish Government HHA grant scheme has left a huge hole in the grant options. Having clients on dual fuel accounts sometimes prevents applications for grants as the overall energy debt is too large.	Anonymous	GDNs are aware of the massive impact of debt for households struggling to afford energy. VCMA projects can also provide debt advice, which can help to look at other options and debt solutions beyond energy grants specifically.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
4	Our biggest challenge is securing long-term funding for staffing as well as measures like gas boiler repair and replacements. Are there any known funding pots we could tap into? We work in a small team in a local authority but do not have core funding; we have relied on the household support scheme for the last 3 years, but this is now ending.	Anonymous	We would be open to a conversation about the potential of being involved with the Warm Homes, Healthy Futures programme. Please feel free to contact me at danielle.butler@nea.org.uk . Thanks.	Danielle Butler (NEA)

5	Can the energy advisers in clinical settings order a test of the air in the home and emissions from appliances for Carbon Monoxide? Can GPs please order such a test? Because at the moment the algorithm for GPs on CO does not do this. It's not necessarily the dirty looking appliance that's emitting CO. CO can cause illness leading to loss of job and poverty.	Stephanie Trotter	We would be open to a conversation about the potential of this under the Warm Homes, Healthy Futures programme. Please feel free to contact me danielle.butler@nea.org.uk. Thanks.	Danielle Butler (NEA)
6	Hi Matt. Are you interested in onboarding more partners to generate exchange referrals? I'd be interested in seeing whether our services could work together. Thanks.	Andy Harrison (Groundwork) (he/ him)	Hi Andy - do get in touch and we can chat! matthew@fuelbankfoundation.org. Or Laura@fuelbankfoundation.org. Thanks. Matt	Matthew Cole (Fuel Bank Foundation)
7	Are customers limited or restricted to how many times they can access crisis payments from the Fuel Bank Foundation?	Julia Dwyer (Cadent Foundation)	Hi Julia and thanks for the query. Our partners make referrals to Fuel Bank when they find somebody in fuel crisis. We then validate and verify this referral to ensure we are happy to help. And so, some folk will be helped only once, and some will be helped a number of times. We consciously don't talk about or have restrictions or limits since they can be interpreted as targets for eligibility which we want to avoid. In the same way you can go to A&E once or ten times, i.e. when help is needed. Hope this helps. Do get in touch if you want to know more! matthew or laura @ fuelbankfoundation.org.	Matthew Cole (Fuel Bank Foundation)
8	How can we all help the FBF to persuade government not to charge prepayment meters £313 more per year?	Stephanie Trotter	Thanks Stephanie. We continue to push to ensure that policy recognises that people who prepay pay so much more over winter - £313 more last winter - and that many many people as a result underheat their homes in peak winter or have (sometimes dangerous) coping strategies. I know that this is something you are so passionate about - the risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning from some of these coping strategies is high. @Matt	Matthew Cole (Fuel Bank Foundation)

9	<p>Question for Laura - what's the best route for instigating a conversation across the GDNs about the potential for national collaborative partnerships? We're a national charity delivering various projects through the VCMA, but we'd welcome conversations about more strategic programmes that have the potential to deliver more ambitious outcomes for customers in need. Thanks.</p>	Anonymous	<p>Thanks for your question. A large part of our current VCMA collaborative allowance is already committed but we are always willing to hear about new opportunities that may address gaps in delivery, if not now, in our next VCMA period from 2026. Please contact us at vcma@northerngas.co.uk to discuss. It would be great to have a conversation.</p>	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
10	<p>Re CAB - CO alarms will save lives, but they are not health monitors. People need a service and chimney sweep plus a CO alarm as an extra safeguard. Do the GDNs use funds to do this, and can they obtain the funds for this?</p>	Stephanie Trotter	<p>The CO element of the CA project provides advice regarding the importance of servicing, chimney sweeping etc. We can offer some servicing through VCMA, within strict eligibility criteria. There will be more information on this during the Services Beyond the Meter session later.</p>	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
11	<p>Hi Matt, I just wanted to ask what area do you cover? Thanks</p>	Katrina	<p>From Shetland to the tip of Cornwall and from Derry Londonderry to Hull ... and all points in between! Get in touch if you fancy a chat about partnering. Matthew or Laura @ fuelbankfoundation.org</p>	Matthew Cole (Fuel Bank Foundation)
12	<p>These numbers are impressive, but sometimes it feels like the focus is on the big numbers, which can become an exercise in targeting "low hanging fruit." I'm curious if the data has been examined to identify those who are most at risk and hardest to reach. For instance, how many people who were in a fuel crisis have become homeless, and what percentage of those were on the PSR? or, how many people have been hospitalized due to attempted suicide or have committed suicide while in fuel poverty or on the PSR? Or how many people who have been hospitalised due to poor respiratory health were on the PSR?</p> <p>These are difficult subjects, but by examining these stark realities, we can better understand the true impact, rather than just focusing on the large numbers of people "supported." Thoughts?</p>	Lee Gray	<p>Thanks for your question Lee, I know we touched upon this in the live Q&A, but you may gain greater insight through our collaborative and individual GDN annual VCMA reports. You should have received this with your joining information.</p>	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)

13	As a charity that reaches out to a small but highly vulnerable people, we can struggle to show the SROI due to the current way that these things are calculated, which seems to focus on large numbers. "How many people will sign up"	Lee Gray	We accept that SROI value does not always demonstrate the true impact of support on an individual level, therefore we are always keen to gather case studies and further insights from partners to evidence and understand this.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
14	Hi Laura, the Green Doctors have been delivering the Warm Homes Healthy People Programme since 2016 in collaboration with other core partners. Last year we delivered 2210 interventions & saved over £360, 000 in advice only support. I'm wondering what CA Bradford do when a customer requires a home visit rather than just a telephone call, say for damp, mould issues or many other issues that need a home visit? We haven't yet received any referrals from CA Bradford & I'm concerned that many residents are missing out on a more comprehensive energy advice service.	Simon (Groundwork, Green Doctor)	Hi Simon, great to have you in attendance. The Bradford CA project is still quite new, but we'd be keen to link you up with them to discuss this.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
15	Hi, customers who wish to have their pre-payment removed are charged a huge amount of money or some are told this is not possible, any information on this?	Jan Taylor	GDNs would advise anyone having issues with this to seek advice from a trusted advice organisation such as some of those mentioned in today's showcase.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
16	Hi Danielle. Are you able to share the geographical areas where the Warm Homes Healthy Futures programme will be operating if these are known please?	Anonymous	Hi there, this will be announced very soon and we're looking forward to sharing details. If you'd like to chat about potential work in your area, then please do get in touch: danielle.butler@nea.org.uk	Danielle Butler (NEA)
17	Greener energy - can you help people with new gas boilers instead of heat pumps?	Anonymous	We can support this to some extent through VCMA. This is only in certain circumstances and there is strict eligibility criteria. We will talk about this more during the Services Beyond the Meter session later.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)

18	Can GDN's help people who are not traditionally eligible for support, so many are in private rented or mortgage properties and do work, are you speaking to Ofgem about this?	Anonymous	We are aware that many households are just about managing, and many (such as those you have mentioned) may fall through the gaps for funded schemes. Advice funded through VCMA is open to all, but there are some restrictions on what we can support with in terms of individual grants and eligibility for measures. As GDNs, we try to highlight issues such as this through our conversations with Ofgem to influence change.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
19	Question for Danielle: Labour has promised to double expenditure on energy efficiency programmes. What opportunities do you think this might provide for targeting people with cold/damp-related ill health and what reforms to current programmes are needed to achieve this?	William Baker (Fuel Poverty Research Network)	Thanks William, great question. Double the investment will obviously mean a lot more opportunities. We see there being clear opportunities to link increased EE funding with Labour's aspirations on public health/prevention and to ensure it is meeting both fuel poverty and NHS Goals. At the moment though, we need to understand what the increased funding is, then we'll have a much better idea of what the opportunities are. For Warm Homes, Healthy Futures, this has the potential to provide avenues to link households to additional and essential support to improve the thermal performance of their homes through measures.	Danielle Butler (NEA)
20	Is the free installation of heat pumps in this country with government schemes a mass experiment on the poorest in society to see if heat pumps are a valid option for this country with varying temperatures across the UK?	Anonymous	GDNs would always advise households to seek advice from a trusted advice organisation in order to discuss their individual needs. We endeavour to support vulnerable households to achieve a fair and just transition to net zero and recognise that heat pumps are not always a suitable solution for all households.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
21	With so much domestic energy debt being repaid through prepayment meters how important is it for UK Gov to address the ramping of energy? £3.3bn of debt and arrears, having increased dramatically over the last two years. Surely if the debt is addressed then households going off supply would be greatly reduced	Frazer (Energy Action Scotland)	Hi Frazer - I worry too about the debt that isn't recognised - ie energy bills paid to avoid further action or PPM installation. This isn't recognised as energy debt, but some will be sat elsewhere - be it on a credit card or via an illegal money lender etc. The true energy debt figure will be much much more. @Matt Cole.	Matthew Cole (Fuel Bank Foundation)

Theme 2 CO Awareness

Ref:	Question	Asked by	Response	Answered by
22	Is there anywhere to signpost clients to for free CO monitors for their homes?	jgeoghegan	live answered	Dan Edwards (SGN)
23	Hi Tom, what areas does Bonanza cover?	Robyn Capewell (South Tyneside Homes)	Hi Robyn, Bonanza operates throughout mainland UK. Wales & West Utilities have recently started running their own programme in their regions; however, we have covered these previously. We engage with any mainland UK school and find the most feasible way to present the content so that we can share this important message to all. Please reach out if you would like more information.	Tom Huber (Bonanza)
24	Are the Carbon Monoxide (this leaflet may save your life) leaflets available in any other languages than English?	Rae Porter	Hi Rae We have a dedicated CO safety leaflet which is available in English and 11 other languages. You can find all of these at the bottom of the CO page on the SGN website: www.sgn.co.uk/carbonmonoxide .	Dan Edwards (SGN)
25	Natalie - I am sure you are doing good work on raising awareness on CO but how can you check whether or not someone is safe from CO, except by using equipment to test for CO?	Stephanie Trotter	The FRSs would not get into the realms of full testing for CO. If called to a CO emergency FRSs would ventilate and evacuate the property and call the National Gas Emergency number for a GDN to attend. FRS teams carrying out home fire safety visits would only look for the obvious visual signs of CO or listen for indicators from the occupants and provide CO awareness for those occupants on the signs, symptoms, and mitigations.	Dan Edwards + Natalie Waters (Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Rescue Service)
26	How can an energy adviser get the locking cooker safety valves installed into their client's home if the need has been noted. I work in the West End of Newcastle. Thank you	Meg	Hi Meg, further details on this and referrals can be made through our NGN website at https://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/locking-cooker-valve/	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)

27	I work for Fifth Sense, the Charity supporting people with smell and taste disorders. We work with Cadent to raise awareness of smell safety along with CO monitors and locking cooker valves. Would it be possible to have a conversation about the work we do and how we could link in with the Fire Services to raise energy smell safety awareness?	Helen Rhodes (Fifth Sense)	Hi Helen, absolutely, more than happy to have a chat. My email is natalie.waters@dwfrs.org.uk - if you would like to send me an email, we can arrange a time to have a chat.	Natalie Waters (Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Rescue Service)
28	Re all who fit CO alarms - are all the CO alarms fitted or handed out to EN BS 50291 and bought direct from the manufacturers or from a reputable retailer? i.e. NOT from the Internet in case they are not really to EN 50291.	Stephanie Trotter	All alarms provided by GDNs, or our partners meet the BS EN 50291 standard and are purchased either directly from the manufacturer, or a reputable retailer. All GDNs run tender events to buy alarms to the correct standard from reputable suppliers whilst obtaining the best possible unit cost	Dan Edwards (SGN) Nigel Winnan (WWU)
29	Are the CO resources translated in Pashto and Dari available publicly?	Megan Blyth (CSE)	Hi Megan Yes of course, you can access the leaflet in all 11 languages at the bottom of the SGN Carbon Monoxide webpage - www.sgn.co.uk/carbonmonoxide	Dan Edwards (SGN)
30	Can we have the link to get the CO info in other languages as have just looked at Dorset and Wiltshire website and not easy to find. thanks	Julia Folland	https://www.dwfire.org.uk/safety/safety-at-home/carbon-monoxide/carbon-monoxide-safety-leaflets/	Natalie Waters (Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Rescue Service)
31	All clients in tenancies CO monitor should be supplied by landlords in Scotland	Anonymous	Thank you, the legislation is the same for other areas too, although unfortunately we sometimes find that CO alarms have not been supplied. We use the CO awareness within VCMA projects to raise awareness of this so that tenants know their rights in relation to this.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
32	We're currently working in partnership with Leeds Public Health on an Indoor Air Quality project which uses a combination of sensors & home visits to detect multiple sources of air pollution such as VOC's, PM's, NO2, asbestos, mould spores, cleaning products etc. as well as CO. It would be great if we were able to widen the scope of the CO raising awareness campaign to include these other serious indoor home pollutants.	Simon (Groundwork, Green Doctor)	This would fall outside the current VCMA eligibility but is something to consider as we move into our next price control. A working central heating system certainly helps to reduce the risk of damp and mould.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)

Theme 3 Supporting Priority Customers

Ref:	Question	Asked by	Response	Answered by
33	Hi Adam, given the enhanced health risks that cancer sufferers face, I'm wondering what you do when a person/family have damp, mould issues in the home? We find that approx. 30-40% of the vulnerable people we support with home visits have damp, mould issues.	Simon (Groundwork, Green Doctor)	Hi Simon, that's a good question - I know it varies from centre to centre, but I will find out some more details. Drop me a note on adam.feder@maggies.org if you'd like to hear more on that point.	Adam Feder (Maggie's)
34	Can local authorities access VCMA project funding or is it primarily aimed at charities?	Anonymous	We can fund local authorities; we have some specific roles that we support already with various LAs. We'd want to be sure that it is not something that can/should be funded through LA funding though.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)

Theme 4 Services Beyond the Meter

Ref:	Question	Asked by	Response	Answered by
35	The feedback on the need for gas boiler repairs or funding replacements was evident in the feedback earlier. To prevent recurring crises or enduring fuel poverty, the value of reducing energy demand and improving the energy efficiency and fabric performance of the home is critical. National Grid have previously funded such programmes and we would be delighted to discuss this further with the GDNs, as a means of delivering long-term benefits of the VCMA funding.	Paul Williams	<p>Hi Paul, as a charity, we have a white goods scheme and emergency grants scheme that funds repairs and replacements for boilers (among many, many other types of support). Having a safe and warm home is so critical to being well and feeling in control.</p> <p>We are working with more than 20 electricity, water and gas utility suppliers to increasingly join all of the provisions available from their side and our side to make gaining access to these different provisions as easy as possible.</p> <p>GDN response: We are currently liaising with Ofgem over the eligibility criteria for repair and replacement of gas appliances. In the meantime, it would be good to understand more about how your scheme worked.</p>	<p>Laurie Cuthbert (Kidney Care UK)</p> <p>Nigel Winnan (WWU)</p>

36	Do the GDNs agree that this video by Wales & West about condemning appliances showed a dangerous situation? After that I found it a bit confusing. It seemed that after that condemnation I thought by W & W we then saw Cadent going out and testing all appliances for CO. Do the GDNs agree that there should be a legal duty on the GDNs to test for CO?	Stephanie Trotter	Hi Stephanie, this was a collaborative video for demonstration purposes to highlight the fact that we are all delivering through services beyond the meter, whether this is done directly or through third party organisations. This is why you would have seen representation from WWU and Cadent engineers in the video. As gas networks we all follow the relevant safety processes when we are called out to a suspected CO situation and are exploring best practice and learning through the additional services such as CMDDA1 to go above and beyond for our customers in this space.	Sophie Shorney (WWU)
37a	Should we really be waiting until there is an absolute failure of a gas appliance before stepping in to support people. A regularly serviced appliance is less likely to suffer a catastrophic failure, but low-income vulnerable households are unlikely to have service plans in place. Support should be as proactively excellent as it is reactive.	Frazer (Energy Action Scotland)	Thanks for your comments. GDNs agree with your concerns Frazer. I believe Rachele has just touched upon the restrictions around this under current VCMA funding in her presentation. We will also have a voting question on this matter shortly to support our conversations with Ofgem on this subject.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
37b	Thanks Laura, worth pressing for change at least ahead of a future VCMA beyond 2026. Having interventions directed by the situation and circumstances of people rather than their home and its appliances will improve outcomes.	Frazer (Energy Action Scotland)		
38	NSPCC is obviously doing great work. Sadly, I find teaching employees to visit homes how to 'spot CO signs in the homes they visit' does concern us. This is a phrase I've heard a lot today. I do understand that signs are used but the whole problem with CO is that CO can't be sensed using human senses!	Stephanie Trotter	Hi Stephanie, there is no doubt that CO can't be sensed by human senses, however the signs of CO being present can and this is what we train our partners to look for as they are not engineers. Things like sooting around the appliance, excessive condensation and poor ventilation are signs and will allow onward referral by our partners to experts (GDNs)	Phil Burrows (Cadent)

39	Tess - would the It's your call e-learning course be suitable for Energy Advisers who carry out home visits?	Nicky Swetnam	Absolutely, the course is ideal for anyone who visits customers' homes. It's also been used by contact centres to help raise awareness on the phones. Do get in touch if you'd like more information from us.	Tess O'Callaghan (NSPCC)
40	Love the running written transcript. Will it be possible to receive it at some stage?	Stephanie Trotter	The transcript for the Showcase is available by request by emailing contact@vcma showcase.co.uk	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)
41	Tess, are the different e-learning courses, incl prices, outlined on the NSPCC website at all?	Anonymous	Yes, all our courses can be found here. Ranging from eLearning course through to 2-day Designated Safeguarding Officer courses. We'd like to offer GDN networks and partners a discount, so do contact me directly so that I can support you. https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training	Tess O'Callaghan (NSPCC)
42	Would the organisations have the capacity to handle an increase if the GDNs increased the amount it invested in projects?	Anonymous	Many of the GDN projects with partners have scope to expand if more funding was available. This would usually mean additional resources to pick up a wider geographical area. However, some projects have a natural cap in terms of the number of people who can be reached.	Nigel Winnan (WWU)
43	Thank you Phil. But with CO being a deadly gas of which less than 2% of CO in the air can kill in less than three minutes and CO not being able to be sensed using human senses, shouldn't at least testing for CO be undertaken by all GDNs as a legal duty free whenever practicable? Obviously the GDNs would need more funding to do this. CO-Gas Safety would obviously support the GDNs to do this - although we can't guarantee that government, Ofgem or HSE would take much notice of our support sadly! But we'd try very hard to get you that funding.	Stephanie Trotter	Agree - this is something that would need to be taken forward by government, HSE and Ofgem.	Laura Ratcliffe (NGN)

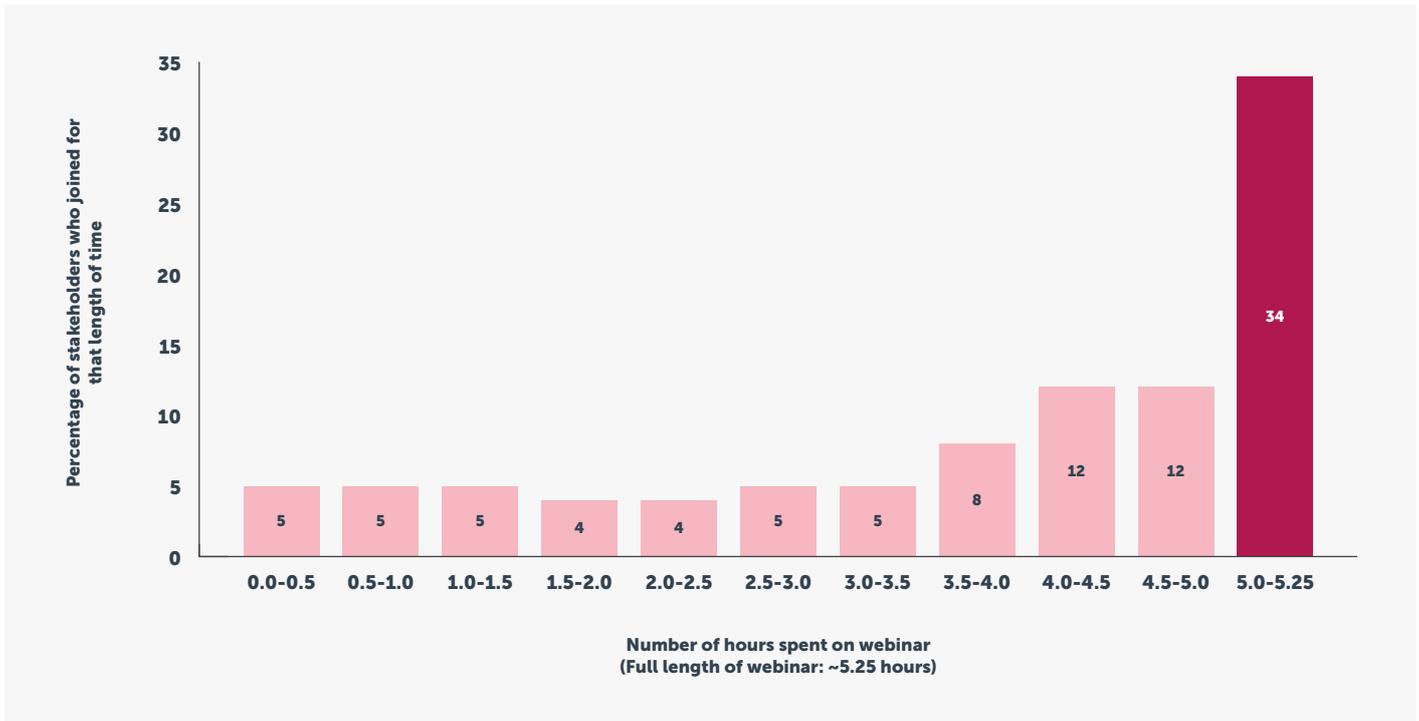


Assessment of the Success of the Showcase

Assessment of the Success of the Showcase

The chart below shows attendee retention rates across the Showcase, which was 5.25 hours in length. A majority of stakeholders (59%) were present for over 4 hours of the session. The

highest proportion of stakeholders (34%) stayed for between 5 and 5.25 hours, which comprised 95-100% of the event length. The median stakeholder joined for 4.18 hours in total.



Stakeholder participation in electronic voting was also high. There were 283 unique respondents across the Showcase, indicating that 90% of stakeholders provided their views through the voting sessions. Individual electronic voting sessions received fewer votes in general, but this is likely owing to stakeholders only choosing to respond to questions they felt qualified to answer. For example, whilst only 85 votes were received for Session 4’s question on means tested benefits, the final session’s questions received in excess of 140 votes.

- 87% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt they had sufficient opportunity to provide their views, whether through the question sessions, or through the voting
- 98% agreed or strongly agreed that they covered the right topics

Learnings and recommendations

NGN and EQ Communications wrote a series of learnings from the Showcase, and recommendations for future events such as these.

Stakeholder feedback

- Stakeholders on average had an event satisfaction of 8.55 / 10, where 10 indicated "very satisfied"
- Stakeholders rated the event content 8.68 / 10, where 10 indicated "very good"
- The external partners who presented on the day were rated as 8.47 / 10, where 10 indicated "very good"

Planning and preparation

- The GDNs, as well as NEA, were all able to invite key stakeholders to the Showcase, resulting in a relatively even spread of attendance across the GDNs' network areas
- Timed run-throughs for presenters worked well to ensure good timekeeping and confidence for presenters on the day

- Some speakers enabled their webcams when not presenting, meaning they appeared, briefly, alongside those presenting. A "behind the scenes" WhatsApp group was vital to ensure smooth running on the day and helped to quickly identify and respond to any minor issues arising, e.g. additional live cameras or mics
- Working group meetings did not always have representatives from all parties
 - **Recommendation** – ensure that all members of working group have awareness of all meetings taking place and adequate time to arrange alternative representation if required
- A dedicated email inbox was provided for stakeholders' questions ahead of the Showcase, alongside a landline number
- Two partners shared responsibility for separate delivery areas of the Showcase event
 - **Recommendation** – where working with multiple partners, ensure that roles are clearly defined to avoid confusion
- There were a number of social media posts prior to the Showcase event, but it was felt that this could have been better prepared in the weeks leading up to the event
 - **Recommendation** – Consider social media strategy within planning stages
- Some learnings from previous Showcases were not carried forward to 2024, including having a list of presenters and panel members displayed on the RSVP page for the Showcase, and speaker briefings for the panel section
 - **Recommendation** – Ensure previous learnings are captured and addressed

Presentations

- Each GDN presented a topic session comprising an introduction, video, presentations from a number of partners and a dedicated feedback session. Each of these sessions were uniform in terms of format, length and tone, despite being organised by entirely different companies
- The event showcased amazing work. Having partners present live for their VCMA-funded projects was positive, and well received by the audience. The content was informative, moving and inspirational
- Each session closed with a feedback session, including electronic voting and Q&A. Each GDN worked with EQ to identify topic-appropriate voting questions and exemplar Q&A questions. High engagement with over 100 questions submitted via Q&A, while 90% of stakeholders provided their views through the voting sessions
 - **Recommendation** – Limit questions during electronic voting sessions to ensure time for dialogue during Q&A feedback
- The branded slide deck with themes/layout for each section helped to separate the sections, and incorporated the design of the collaborative report
- A series of high-quality videos were professionally produced, representing all GDNs and demonstrating strong collaboration. The videos helped to break up presentations and avoid online fatigue
- Partners also requested inclusion of their own videos, which was also well received by the audience

General format/delivery

- Splitting the event into section with the four VCMA themes worked well
- A live, human-typed transcript was provided throughout for those with accessibility issues. The live transcript was successful; however, when activated, it diverted the user to a different screen meaning that presenters could not be viewed simultaneously
 - **Recommendation** – Test technology to rectify any potential issues before live event
- Facilitation support from NEA was well delivered and kept the event focused but also relaxed and engaging
- The event ran to time. No presentations, feedback sessions or otherwise were cut from the agenda. The event's format of sessions in series meant all stakeholders were able to attend all parts of the Showcase, rather than having to choose discrete sessions to attend. The first "welcome and housekeeping" session ran around 5 minutes over time, which was accounted for across the following two sessions
 - **Recommendation** – more time to be scheduled for section to test electronic voting for participants as this took longer than expected/scheduled during live event
- The live Q&A function allowed GDNs and their partners to respond to stakeholders writing in with their concerns throughout the Showcase. Approximately 66% of stakeholders' questions were responded to in this manner, not accounting for those that were then posed to the panel(s) by NEA during the feedback sessions

- Stakeholders were able to talk in a casual setting during the lunch break's "networking" session, through a number of topic-specific breakout groups. Due to Zoom licensing issues, the networking session start time was delayed by over 10 minutes and was only utilised by a small number of participants. Several participants exchanged details during the event via the Q&A facility, which demonstrates that there was an appetite for networking during the event
 - **Recommendation** – test networking methods before the day of the Showcase
- The Zoom link used to host the event failed unexpectedly later in the day due to a technical issue (participants rejoined but at a reduced rate). The speakers during this section handled the interruption well to get the event back on track quickly
- 509 stakeholders registered to attend and 315 joined the event, indicating a turnout rate of 62%
- No stakeholders reported technical issues with incoming sound or video – whether of presenters or the videos - through Zoom, the dedicated event mailbox, or through calls to EQ's landline



Appendix 1: Attendees

Appendix 1:

Attendees

A total of 315 stakeholders joined across the Showcase, representing 166 organisations. The organisations represented across the day are shown below:

Ace Place	Cheshire West Voluntary Action
Age Concern Tyneside South	Children 1st
Age Cymru	Children's Hospice Across Scotland
Age Cymru Powys	Citizens Advice Bureau
Age Scotland	Citizens Advice Copeland
Age UK	Citizens Advice Coventry
Age UK Cheshire	Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts
Age UK North Tyneside	Citizens Advice East Suffolk
Age UK Oxfordshire	Citizens Advice Leeds
ALLenergy	Citizens Advice Manchester
Apogee	Citizens Advice Northumberland
Auriga Services	Citizens Advice Renfrewshire
Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	Citizens Advice Scotland
Bilton Hall Community Trust	Citizens Advice SORT Group
Bournemouth Foodbank	Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire
Brandwalk	Citizens Advice West Dunbartonshire
Bridgend Care and Repair	Cleveland Fire Brigade
Broxbourne Borough Council	CO-Gas Safety, Carbon Monoxide & Gas Safety Society
Budget Energy	Communitas Energy CIC
Budget Energy LTD	Community Action Northumberland
BUUK Infrastructure	Coram's Fields
Cadent	Dagcas
Cadent Foundation	DIAL LEEDS
CAHN	East Suffolk Council
Care & Repair Cardiff and The Vale	Exeter Community Energy
Care & Repair Cymru	EER CIC
Carer Support Wiltshire	ElectraLink
Carers Outreach Service	Electricity North West
Carers Trust	Energy Action Scotland
Centre for Sustainable Energy	Energy Innovation Centre
Changeworks	Energy Saving Trust
Charis	Evouchers
Charity Action Hampshire	Fazakerley Community Federation

Fifth Sense
FireAngel
First Love Foundation
Gas Safe Charity
Glasgow's Golden Generation
Global Prepaid Solutions Limited
Greater Manchester Fire Rescue Service
Greener Kirkcaldy
Groundwork Greater Manchester
Groundwork UK
Groundwork West Midlands
Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland
Healthy Homes Solutions
Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust
Herefordshire Council
Home Energy Scotland
Home Group Ltd
Homeglow Products Ltd
Home-Start UK
Hope 4 U Limited
Hyde Bangladesh Welfare Association
Improving Performance in Practice
Inclusion Chronicles
Islington Council / SHINE
LAB
Leicester City Council
Leicestershire County Council
Lifeskills
Live Inclusive
Local Services 2 You Ltd
Marches Energy Agency
Marie Curie
Meadows Advice Group
Mencap
Mental Health UK
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Mind
MS Society
National Energy Action
National Energy Foundation
Newcastle City Council
NGN
NGN ISG
Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Northern Gas Networks
Northern Cancer Voices
Northern Powergrid
NSPCC
Ofgem
Partnerships for Good
Plymouth Energy Community
Policy Connect
Portsmouth City Council
Redcar Baptist Church Centre for Warmth
Reflect Digital
Riverside Group Ltd
Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland)
Scope
Scottish Water
SearchNewcastle
Sefton Council
Severn Wye
Severn Wye Energy Agency
SGN Independent Stakeholder Group
Shelter
Shelter Cymru
Sia Partners
Sirio Strategies
Skewb
Skills 4 Work Gateshead
South Tees NHS Trust
South Tyneside Homes
South Wales Fire Service
St John Ambulance
Status Education CIC
Stockton and District Advice and Information Service
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

Sunderland City Council

Surrey County Council

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

Sustainability First

The Alliance

The Carents Room

The Hope Foundation

The Royal Association for Deaf People

The Scouts Association

The Social Brokers CIC

The Wise Group

Together for Short Lives

Trafford Veterans CIC

United Utilities

Vyntelligence

Wales & West Utilities

Warm Wales

Warmworks

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Warwickshire Rural Community Council

WWU

YES Energy Solutions CIC

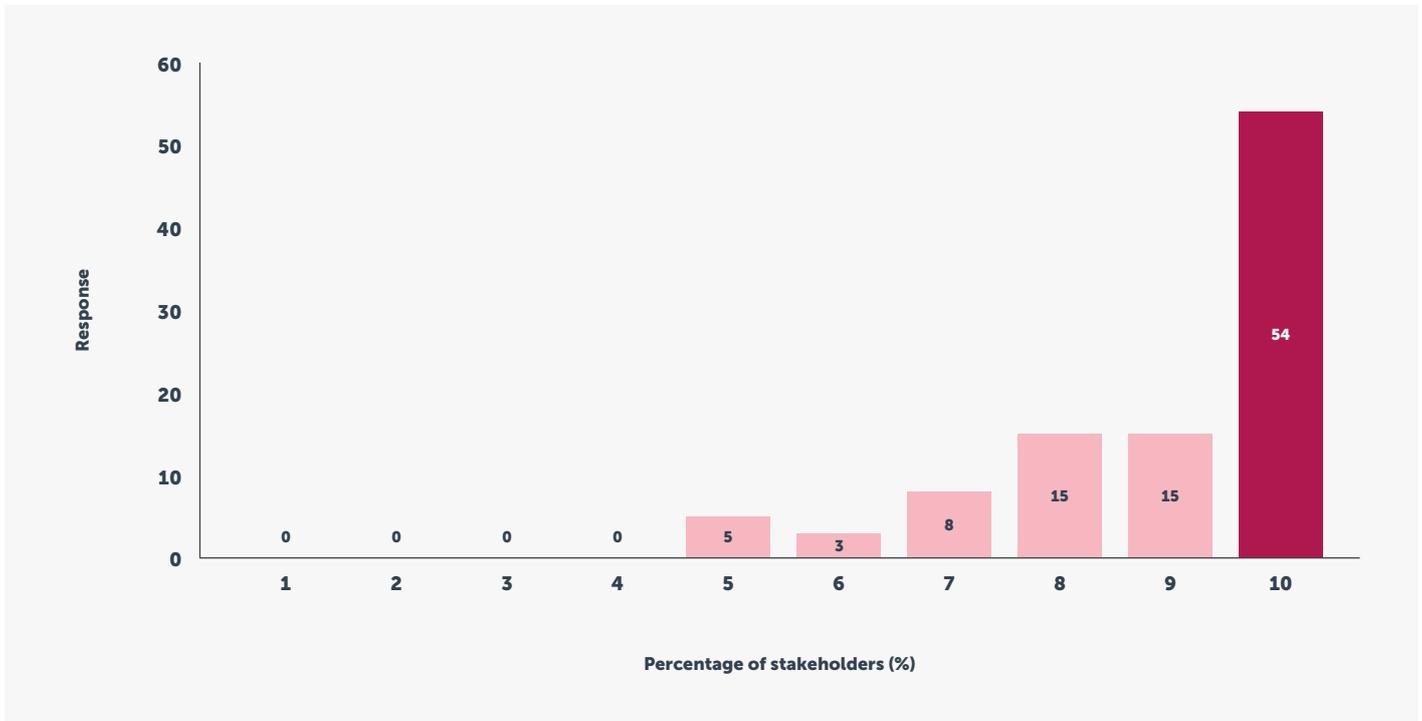
YMCA England & Wales



Appendix 2: Feedback Forms

Appendix 2: Feedback Forms

1. Overall, how satisfied were you with the event?

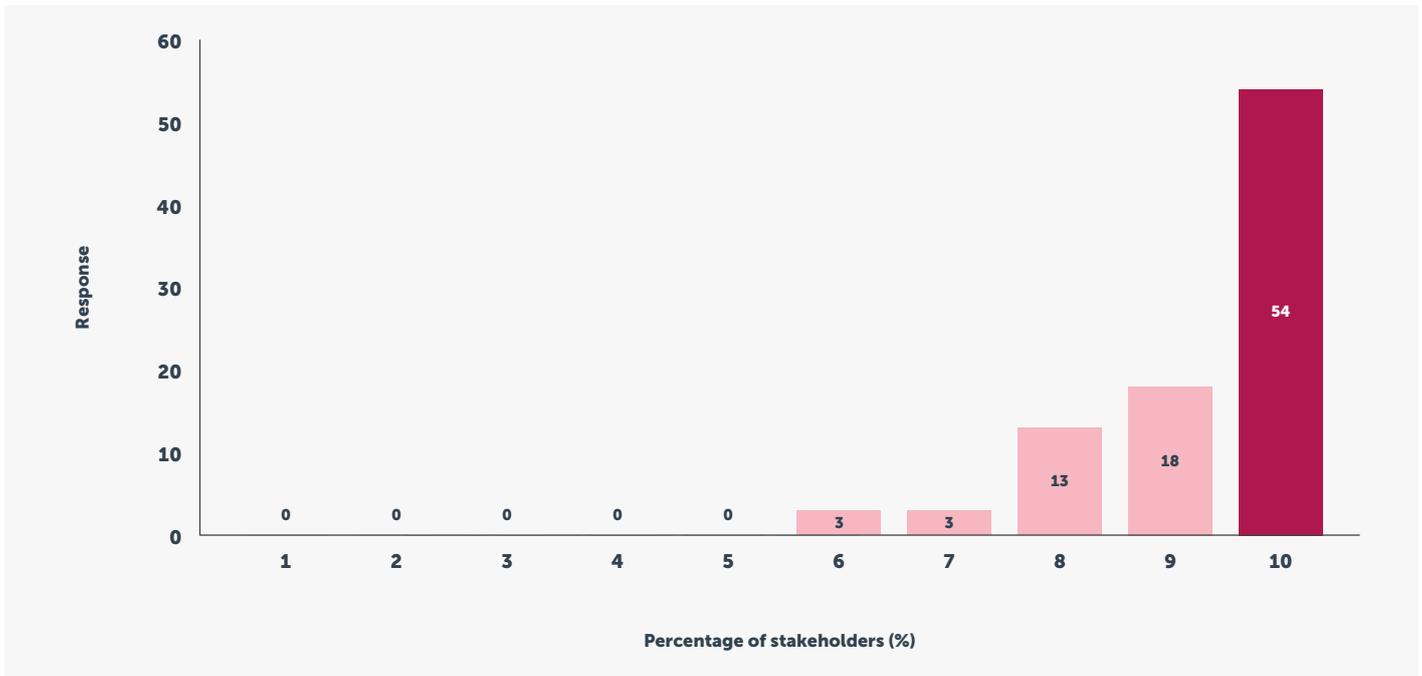


Average: 8.55 / 10

- There was a good range of presentations by a variety of partners. It was good to hear from Ofgem and to know that at least one representative was listening to what was being said and hearing the frontline worker feedback via Slido.
- Format was great especially breaking it up with the questions and Slido use.
- It ran well and was informative, good to hear about all the projects.
- The CO story very clear and how the GDN's are managing to help vulnerable customers.
- Was very interesting, I did enjoy it very much.
- The event was very well organised and run, a lot of information was covered with the time available.
- The partner work showcased was thought-provoking and we decided to reach out to many of them to help our community.
- Great event.
- Informative.
- Very professional, and informative.
- Really informative and also inspiring to see the work being done.
- Good overall, just more interaction from attendees would have been useful.
- It was nice to hear what is happening e.g. new initiatives and from the organisations being supported by the VCMA. However it did feel a little repetitive at times and some of the speakers were not particularly engaging (they were reading from a script).
- Great to see the range of projects supported by GDNs in partnership.
- Content was brilliant and a great range of speakers.

- Overall it was a really useful day - lots of information shared and great to hear about the various projects.
- It's a long event and only skims the surface of the massive amount of the work the GDNs and other organisations are undertaking. Perhaps you could consider for next time splitting into subject matter topics that take place concurrently, which could then allow a little more within each topic but where the audience doesn't need to attend the whole lot?
- This was my first event and I really enjoyed it. It was very impressive to hear all the great collaborations and partnerships.
- Great event, strong focus on the collaborative aspect which has been missing in the past. Lots to learn and lots to love. Great chairing throughout and I really liked all of the videos - so powerful.
- Shame there weren't more people at the networking sessions.
- Some interesting content but too long a day to be sat in a webinar. Ideally it should have been no more than a half day - both in terms of accessibility and capacity demands on charities.
- It was good, it would have been good to have a organisation speak from London area with any challenges they have faced.
- Great informative and interactive sessions.
- Well structured and informative.
- Very worthwhile.
- Good event, well organised with interesting content, just quite long!
- Went very smoothly. Very good speakers.
- Very well delivered, really engaging.
- Very engaging.

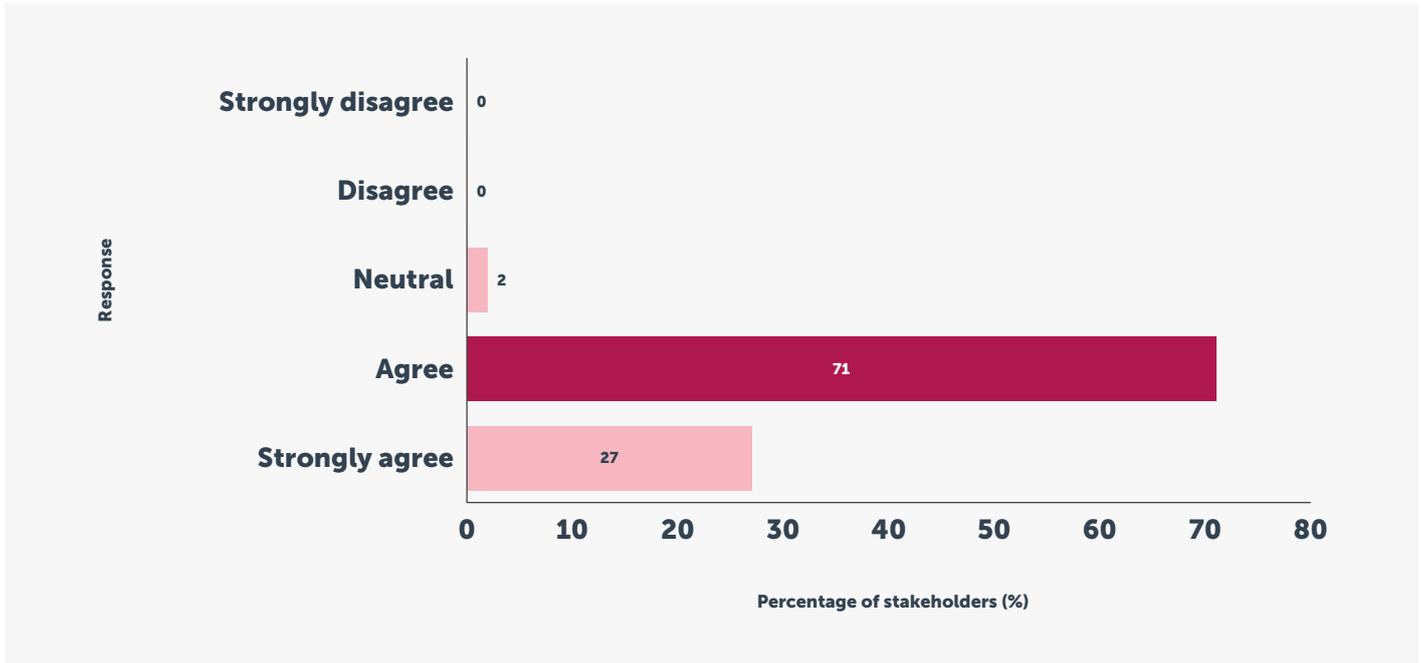
2. How would you rate the event content?



Average: 8.68 / 10

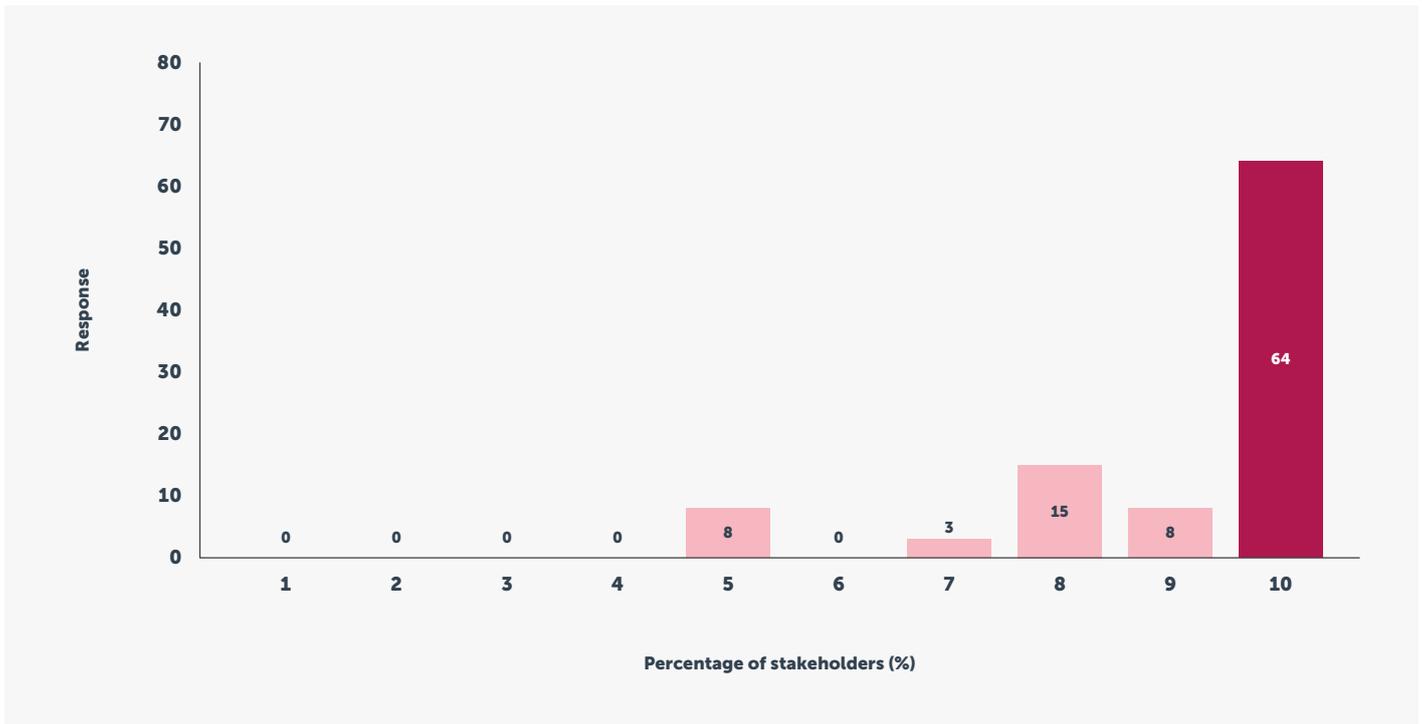
- Excellent talks and information; especially hearing from Ofgem and seeing their buy-in.
- Varied content, strong evidence of the wide range of projects that are delivering real benefits to customers.
- Great range of speakers and different partners representing the charity sector. The case studies provided by partners and GDNs were great and show the breadth of the work being delivered.
- Overall good & relevant, though I thought there was too much focus on the NEA & Citizens Advice projects which deliver a limited telephone advice service.
- A long event - but worth it.
- I learnt so much from all the presenters, if anything it was a bit overwhelming! So much going on.
- I really liked the breakout rooms to network - never long enough though.
- Good, clear.
- Interesting information shared with a wide number of partners.
- Interesting presentations and a lot of relevant information provided to those on the call.
- Clear - visionary - authentic.
- Enjoyed hearing all about how the VCMA has funded various projects.
- 10/10.
- Although I have been an energy advisor for a number of years it was good to learn more about the specific needs of certain client groups, for example the requirements of kidney dialysis and the sad story of two failed transplant operations and how this relates to energy need and income max.
- Good mix and length of presentations and panel Q&As.
- Great presentations on projects and the future look was helpful, although detail was limited in terms of the forward-looking info. At times I think there was a lot to take in - a few more breaks might have been helpful to avoid reducing the content but allow more time to absorb the info.
- Very good.
- Would be good to hear about smaller groups and charities and how they are supporting residents, not just national orgs.
- Some interesting case studies.
- Really good content and facilitation.
- I would have liked to have showcased our work with Cadent.
- Very thought-provoking.
- Great to hear from the partners.

3. Did we cover the right topics for you?



- I think the issues of poverty, the cost-of-living crisis all overlap into fuel poverty.
- Really like the partners' presentations.
- Agree but maybe shorter next time.
- Enjoyed hearing from the projects and great to have a vague sense of the future of the VCMA.
- I know it's VCMA, but is there too much emphasis on the single topic of CO when the 'V' topic has such a greater breadth?
- Would be good to hear more about infrastructure changes and how these will affect fuel poor/vulnerable.

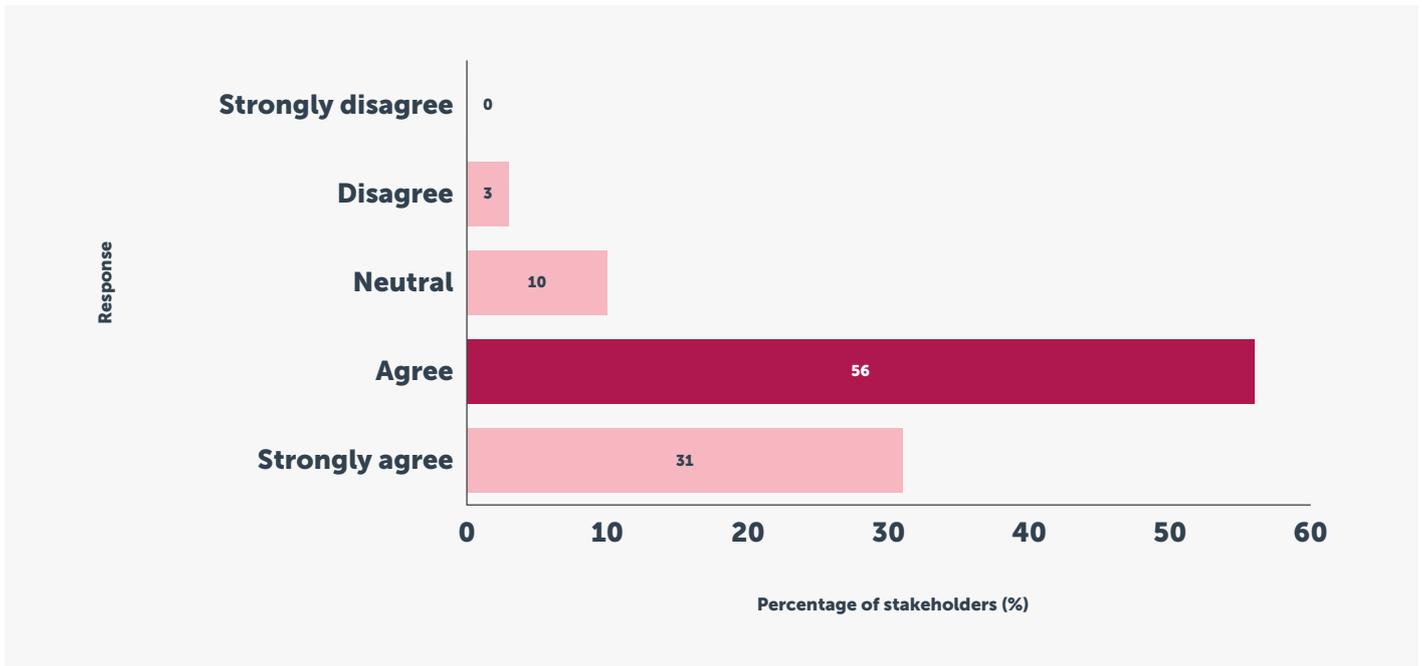
4. How would you rate the external guest speakers?



Average: 8.47 / 10

- Everyone spoke very well, and provided engaging presentations that covered a lot of important work.
- Excellent range of projects with selfless individuals at the helm.
- Excellent, again very informative and professional. Really learned a lot.
- Good, but would have been beneficial to have a wider more diverse panel that represented the many other attending organisations.
- Professional.
- There was very little from Wales included, and so the voice of all organisations from Wales was lost.
- Very knowledgeable and enjoyed hearing about other projects.
- Very interesting to hear the fantastic work that is going on across the country with the support of the VCMA. It was so inspiring (in the face of adversity) to hear what great things are being done to really make a difference. It made me feel proud to be part of such a great effort to make things better.
- External speakers were good.
- Some really inspiring project presentations.
- Great to hear about these organisations.
- Really engaging guest speakers; felt a little let down by Ofgem, but otherwise engaging/informative.

5. Did you feel you had sufficient opportunity to provide your views, whether through the question sessions, or through the voting?



Average: 8.47 / 10

- Would have been useful to have a more direct Q & A session rather than the chat & voting system which didn't capture many important points.
- Liked the survey Slido.
- The voting was good, but I wonder if there is a way to make it anonymous/not show the % until it is closed? Seeing the way others voted may have influenced the outcomes somewhat, and people may not have been as honest as they'd have liked.
- And I like that if I have any further questions, I know I can contact the Wales & West team direct and they will be amazingly helpful.
- Slido was good but not a lot of times for question.
- Would be good if networking session was slightly longer. However this was mainly due to technical difficulties.
- It would have been helpful for people who voted strongly disagree on any of the statements to have a space to elaborate - would have been interesting to have a sense of their views.
- As above, would have been good to have had more people to talk to at the networking sessions.
- My QR code wouldn't work unfortunately.
- I missed out on the networking.

6. What were your views on the platform used for the meeting, voting, and networking?

- Good, but there were IT issues.
- Yes.
- Great - Slido is good for keeping attention.
- All worked well for me.
- Yes.
- All worked without any issues (one drop-out issue, but it was quickly resolved).
- It was a good platform to use.
- Was happy with the platform used for all that went on.
- Easy to use and clear.
- It worked well, I didn't attend the network session over lunch so couldn't fully comment on that.
- All fine.
- Very good.
- The Slido was a great addition and the videos provided life.
- Slido.
- Positive.
- Great, very clear.
- I thought the platform worked well as did the voting system. I didn't take part in the networking as I needed a break from the computer.
- I got thrown out a couple of times with messages saying that someone had restarted the meeting but it was no problem logging back in.
- Yes.
- Zoom & Slido both work well in online events.
- Thought it was a good mix of speakers and opportunity to answer questions.
- Very easy.
- Seemed OK. No strong opinion either way.
- Not much opportunity for networking as such.
- Worked well apart from the blip near the end. Slido easy enough to use.
- Worked well apart from one small hiccup where I got kicked out.
- All good.
- Meeting and voting platforms were fine. I couldn't get into the networking session.
- I didn't receive the joining instructions and I wasn't able to access the lunchtime breakout sessions. So a few technical issues.
- Some.
- Slido worked well. The only issue was when we were kicked out of Zoom in the afternoon but it worked well otherwise.
- It worked well.
- All worked well.
- All fine.
- Worked well.
- Very useful.
- Slido worked really well.
- Good apart from the technical issues.
- Good I like Slido.
- Very Good.

7. Is there anything you think could be improved / changed for future events?

- A focus is needed around gas smell safety and the need for gas monitors to keep people safe if they have smell disorders, it's more common than you may realise.
- A list of attendees beforehand so if we see anyone missing who we think should be attending we can pass invite on.
- Fewer presentations! It can be a lot when the whole day is ppts, it becomes more difficult to concentrate and engage. Possible breakout rooms/off-mute sessions might have made it more engaging, though appreciate the challenge with the number of attendees.
- Follow up contacts for signposting.
- I think the networking broke down, but not sure how useful it would have been in this format as I know I needed a break from my screen to get some food too.
- In person.
- In person would be good as found it difficult online for such a long event.
- It was challenging to keep up with the Q&A thread as responses didn't stay in order - it would be great to have an overview of questions and corresponding answers shared if possible. And as mentioned above, some more breaks would have been very helpful as it felt like quite a long session with a lot of rich detail to absorb.
- It would be nice to do this in person so you can meet some of the others organisations, doing a similar project.
- Less focus on the NEA & Citizens Advice & more representation from other organisations.
- Longer question and answer session.
- Lunch at 12:30.
- Maybe allow people to speak a couple of times during the event rather than right at the end. The Slido and chat worked well but people like to talk so including them earlier may enrich what was already a great day.
- Maybe an earlier additional tea break, and longer networking sessions, and extend until 4pm?
- Might be beneficial to reduce to half a day, perhaps by just showcasing a single project example under key themes rather than multiple, and then maybe directing the audience to written case studies if they're interested in finding out more?
- More from Ofgem; really interesting to hear their perspective. More from the heads of the GDN's - again, really interesting to hear their perspective.
- Perhaps a shorter day, with a chance to network throughout the day? It was not clear who else was on the call so it may be useful to know who is in attendance.
- Possibly if they have any info on when future funding is available or registration to be included in any future communications re funding opportunities.
- See earlier comment. Maybe even break it down to do over a couple of days so less intense for a single day?
- Sending out a brochure with all the partners, details and what they do, where they operate and how we could work in partnership.
- Shorter and less presentations - more of a panel discussion potentially with shorter speaker slots - more time for engagement from audience.
- Shorter session length.
- The format and content were good. Possibly could have been shorter as I was unable to attend the latter stages, but appreciate there is so much to cover.
- There was a lot of content and was flagging by lunchtime. Maybe one more comfort break? Maybe have hybrid of in person and virtual?
- Was very long and although very interesting, maybe a couple of short comfort breaks built in.
- Would love for it to be an in-person event.

8. Do you have any other comments on the event itself?

- A good range of content, topics and speakers, thank you.
- Excellent well done everyone.
- Fantastic, informative event and very well organised. Congratulations on the great work you have accomplished and for future success with collaboration and continuity.
- It was varied, interesting and inspiring and I'm so glad that our agency has been included in the VCMA offer as it really is great.
- Looking forward to next year's!
- Really enjoyed the content. Thank you.
- Really enjoyed the event, it was so professional and informative; I learned a lot. Big thank you!
- Really good event. Thank you.
- Really well thought out and put together.
- Thank you for a very well-organised and informative event.
- Thank you for your combined efforts and support.
- The event was amazing - it's given me and my org a new set of tools and visions to run with - well done.
- The questions asked in the feedback sessions were quite repetitive, and so it was hard to differentiate the questions so my answers were largely similar as I did not realise the question had changed topic in some cases!
- The technology and issues around that was a bit disappointing and it was distracting having new speakers pop up when others were talking. Also being kicked out of the event and then it took me 5 mins to get back in was frustrating.
- Very engaging - well done and thank you.
- Very good.
- You could see a lot of hard work went into the event. Well done to all involved.



Appendix 3: Word Cloud Responses

Appendix 2:

Word Cloud Responses

What three words would you use to describe the challenges facing the people you support right now?

Response	Count
Cost of living	44
Debt	32
Poverty	28
Mental health	17
Communication	10
Isolation	7
Health	7
Low income	6
Desperate	5
Crisis	5
Digital exclusion	5
Access	4
High energy bills	4
Poverty, vulnerability, mental health issues	4
Affordability	4
Heat or eat	3
Smell safety	3
Support	3
Lack of support	3
Education	3
Vulnerable	3
Fuel cost	3
Unmanageable debt	3
Finances	3
Confusion	3
Financial	3
Disability	2
Lonely	2
Social isolation	2
Helplessness	2
Inflation	2
Lack of knowledge	2
Language	2
Language barriers	2
Poor mental health	2
High fuel bills	2
Housing	2
Fuel crisis	2
Negative budget	2
Poverty, benefits, cost of living	2
High costs	2

Response	Count
Technology	2
Complex	2
Suffering	1
Inequalities	1
Poverty, communication, digital	1
Poor health	1
In crisis	1
Tired	1
Worried	1
Ignored	1
Panic	1
Despair	1
Information	1
Navigating complex information	1
Poverty Housing Health	1
Anxiety, fear, no control	1
Ashamed	1
Food and fuel poverty	1
Loneliness	1
Rishi Sunak	1
Social care	1
Apathy	1
Standing charge	1
Tories	1
Frustrating	1
Oppressive	1
Cost of living, stress, fear	1
Desperation	1
Lack of understanding	1
Prioritisation	1
Risk	1
Air pollution	1
Awareness around CO	1
Debt, cold, damp	1
Benefit taper	1
Suicidal	1
Struggling	1
Vulnerability	1
Hopeless	1
Visibility	1
Billing	1

Response	Count
Avoidance	1
Desperate, poverty, depression	1
Poor housing	1
Brexit	1
Exhaustion	1
No information	1
Qualifying criteria	1
Visibility	1
Help is available	1
Rent	1
Meeting all their needs	1
Persistent, systemic, complex	1
Worry about staying warm	1
Eligibility for support	1
Cold homes	1
Energy efficiency	1
Relentless	1
Fuel cost	1
Housing insecurity	1
Arrears	1
Bills	1
Money	1
Affordable availability payments	1
Anxiety	1
Debts	1
Lack of accessibility	1
Poor	1
Poverty, crisis, debt	1
Stressful	1
Energy cost	1
Food poverty	1
Fuel poverty	1
Illness	1
Keeping warm	1
Lack of competition	1
Misinformation	1

Response	Count
Vulnerabilities	1
Fuel and food poverty	1
Lack of opportunity	1
Trust	1
Awareness	1
Universal Credit!!	1
Discouraged	1
Sickness	1
Alone	1
Poverty safety	1
Rurality	1
Worry	1
Gas safety (smell safety)	1
Low benefits	1
Money, social care support, health	1
Crisis, vulnerable, cost of living	1
Burnout	1
Debt, self-disconnection	1
Poverty, support, language	1
Stress	1
Desperate, miserable, hand-to-mouth	1
Hardship	1
Heating or eating	1
No support	1
High fuel costs	1
Under the kosh	1
Access support	1
Low incomes	1
Debt, digital exclusion	1
Financial struggles	1
Vulnerable, rural, financial	1
Deep	1
Solvable	1
Systemic	1
Communication is okay	1

What are the priorities for your organisation right now?

Response	Count	Response	Count
Fuel poverty	3	Sustainability	1
Income maximisation	2	Gas boilers	1
Vulnerable	2	UC migration	1
Winter	2	Energy advice	1
Securing funding	2	Inform about help in other areas such as energy advice to encourage people to attend for treatment	1
Funding	2	Reaching different communities	1
Housing	2	Support and share information with vulnerable customers	1
Helping the office grid people	1	Tackling social isolation	1
Income max	1	Viable funding mechanisms	1
Long-term over short-term support	1	Budgeting	1
Preparing for a fair and just transition	1	Access to support, working with partnerships	1
Identifying support for heating repairs	1	Continuity of service - funding which is stable	1
Identifying and supporting vulnerable clients	1	Closing the inequality gap in accessing end of life care	1
Understanding changes and gaps in statutory services	1	Income maximisation so bills can be paid, caring for the carer, debt relief	1
Help those who need assistance and support and empower those who can help themselves	1	Providing the advice and guidance that unpaid carers need to make their life a little easier	1
Keeping people connected	1	Supporting people out of crisis	1
Providing accessible information	1	Recruiting more advisors	1
Support	1	Preventing CO poisoning	1
Keeping children safe and supporting parents with financial worries	1	Targeted outreach	1
Changing behaviours	1	Getting winter ready	1
Gas safety	1	Affordable warmth	1
People who don't receive benefits	1	Holistic energy advice support	1
All are vulnerable to CO	1	Sustained funding	1
In-depth holistic support	1	Energy debt solution	1
Health and safety in homes	1	Relational mentoring	1
Leaving no one behind	1	Safer homes	1
Maximising impact of VCMA funding	1	Better start in life	1
The rise in SEND	1	Holistic help for vulnerable children and families	1
Cost-of-living crisis, CO awareness	1	Persuading HSE, Ofgem and GDNs that testing for CO is key to improving health	1
Fairness for disabled people	1	Engagement	1
Retrofit	1	Supporting debt	1
Holistic communication	1	Vulnerable	1
Connecting with more people	1	Priority services sign-ups	1
Tackling inequalities/identifying those families that need support	1	Education on options	1
Young families	1	Smell safety and vulnerable people	1
Helping residents access services	1	To help those most vulnerable in our communities	1
Expanding our services	1	Winter 2024 Making help easy to access	1
Raise deaf awareness	1	Inclusivity	1
Support for vulnerable people	1	Assisting clients with debts, managing bills and preparing for long-term assurance	1
Payment plans	1	Holistic support	1
Bridging the gap. Supporting people facing food and fuel poverty. Mental health, social isolation.	1	How to collaborate with other fuel poverty organisations who are funded to deliver similar projects in the same region	1
In-depth support	1		
Reducing digital exclusion related to poverty	1		
Developing new services	1		

Response	Count
Domestic retrofit	1
Affordably warm householders in energy efficient homes	1
All over support	1
Supporting a just transition to net zero	1
Awareness	1
Connecting people to support available to them	1
Reducing inequalities	1
Solutions	1
Gas boilers	1
Home repairs	1
Children's rights to feel safe, food and heating	1
Helping remove the need for heat or eat in Winter 24	1
Stabilising funding	1
Successful engaging with customers	1
Education	1
End-to-end support	1
Fuel poverty	1
Income maximisation	1
Home energy visits	1
Renewable energy	1
To ensure our vulnerability and fuel poor initiative gets to all residents who need it most	1
Break down communication barriers	1
Campaigning for lower-cost energy	1
Community involvement, reducing isolation	1
Damp and mould	1
Older people's health	1
Securing long-term funding for the future	1
Summer holidays	1
Supporting youth and communities in a holistic way	1
Holistic service	1
Tackling fuel poverty and ensuring residents are looked after	1
Addressing carer poverty	1
Getting long-term funding	1
Pushing for change	1
Health support	1
Widening access	1
Housing	1
Availability	1
Community safety	1
Help and support most vulnerable communities	1
Maximise income	1
Support the vulnerable	1
To help as many vulnerable households	1
CO awareness	1
Support households out of energy debt	1

Response	Count
Accessing funding to sustain delivery of programmes	1
Ask how we can help	1
Safety	1
Show help is available	1
Supporting a just transition to decarbonisation	1
Affordable warmth	1
Reaching those in crisis	1
Support people with deprivation	1
Supporting vulnerable clients	1
Increasing awareness of people's rights	1
Funding security to support local people	1
Supporting older people to be as safe and well as they can be	1
Whole family support	1
Child poverty	1
Getting support out to the community	1
Helping those most vulnerable	1
Identify vulnerable people	1
Social collaboration	1
To inform deaf people about support available	1
Supporting with debt	1
Better health and housing	1
Making sure no cluster is left behind	1
RTS switch off awareness and support	1
Reaching to the vulnerable/isolated	1
Share information	1
Tackling inequalities	1
Clients' engagement	1
Fuel poverty support	1
Growing our service to meet demand	1
Health and financial wellbeing support	1
Sustainable solutions	1
Welfare benefits take-up, specifically Universal Credit issues	1
Debt reduction	1
Energy help	1
Reduce fuel poverty	1
Supporting our vulnerable customer	1
Vulnerable people	1
Deliver sustainable change for people	1
Help as many people as possible	1
Prepare for winter	1
Improve life chances	1
Information	1
Keeping the support going and reaching the most vulnerable	1
Low-carbon technologies	1
Maximising impact	1

Response	Count	Response	Count
Supporting just energy transition	1	Carbon reduction	1
Access	1	Getting the word out there	1
Helping more people	1	Support more people	1
Meeting demand	1	Finding someone that replaces gas boilers!!	1
Promoting our scheme before winter	1	Holistic approach	1
Long-term certainty	1	Preparing for the oncoming winter	1
Supporting those that are most vulnerable	1	Adequate housing	1
Cost of living	1	Antenatal and early years, cost-of-living support	1
Help and support	1	Dealing with people in crisis	1
Safety of young people	1	Access to support for basic needs	1
Winter 2024	1	Long-term funding	1
Ensuring safety in the home	1	Help the most vulnerable	1
Lift people out of fuel poverty	1	Targeting those who need us most	1
Net zero	1	Engagement	1
Reaching the most vulnerable	1	Improving mental health and wellbeing	1
To support our vulnerable residents in their homes	1	Winter 2024	1

Session 1: Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability

What are the gaps (if any) in the activities we are undertaking in the area of fuel poverty and energy affordability?

Response	Count
Boiler repairs	4
Fuel debt	2
Boiler maintenance	2
Boilers	2
Help with energy debt	2
Impact that cold homes have on child development outcomes/health. More data.	1
Insulation improvements	1
Supporting longer-term solutions by upgrading the energy efficiency of fuel-poor homes	1
Give customers the tools to recognise health issues	1
More funding	1
Bring together advisors to tackle solvable issues	1
Fuel debt - and debt in general as fuel debt doesn't sit in isolation	1
Better communication methods for vulnerable customers in need	1
Lobbying for same payments for prepayment meters. Testing for CO for all.	1
Allowing for 'flexibility' in vulnerable cases, where people don't qualify for other schemes.	1
Eco4 measures	1
Funding to do more of what we do	1
Help for off-gas properties	1
More services needed	1
Face-to-face support	1
Heating solution improvements, affordability	1
Window replacements. It's no point having new boilers otherwise.	1
Using third sector orgs with footprints in communities of deprivation to join the dots	1
People who don't claim benefits, or aren't receiving help, but are still struggling	1
Provide capital funding for gas boiler repairs or replacements	1
Funding/support for improvements in homes and new heating options	1
Linking with local authorities	1
Green energy	1
Giving gas boilers to people needing new gas boilers	1
Lack of cohesion in fuel poverty support	1
Planning for the future	1
Gas boiler replacement	1
Boilers, debt and smart meters	1
Energy efficiency upgrades	1
Ongoing support to repeat households (not always seeking reaching new households)	1
Energy debt	1
Face-to-face support in homes - efficiencies and debt	1

Response	Count
Communication with customers knowing where to go for help	1
Repairs	1
Supporting vulnerable customers with accessing and benefiting from low-carbon and smart measures (increasingly being installed in people's homes through various schemes and supplier offers)	1
Boilers/retrofit advice	1
Damp and moulds	1
Ensuring that support is linked back into the local area. Preventing repeat crises.	1
Schemes for home energy improvements	1
Better service and access to assistance in rural areas	1
Off grid	1
Debt advice	1
Boiler repairs for home owners	1
Funding for energy efficiency measures	1
Teaching children and uni students	1
Boiler repairs, helping with debt advice	1
Energy metering issues	1
Boiler repairs and replacement	1
Helping get homes fit for energy efficient heating	1
Supporting more communities who aren't agenda based, so are purely there to support customers, smaller charities instead of large charities	1
Always a need for more funding for advisors	1
No funding for gas boilers!!!	1
Short-term support is vital but long-term fuel support is needed	1
We didn't really get a view of what you're doing, just a sample, so can't say about gaps	1
Debt support	1
Possibly repairs	1
Supporting children with their educational outcomes	1
CO awareness	1
Standing charge	1
Debt	1
Free CO detectors without means testing	1
Thinking about low-carbon technologies and the role in energy security and cheaper energy bills in the future	1
Working with suppliers to reduce costs for customers	1
Funding improvement works directly	1
Support for long-term fabric measures and eco4	1
Greater coordination with fuel suppliers?	1
More holistic support	1
Maximising the efficient use of existing gas appliances for struggling households	1

Response	Count	Response	Count
Boiler and window replacements	1	Renewables	1
Funding energy efficiency measures	1	Rural poverty	1
Gas safe awareness	1	Support for heating repairs where other schemes (ECO) can't or won't help	1
More funding for home visits	1	New fuel options	1
Boilers repaired	1	Hydrogen	1
Home repairs	1	Old equipment swap out	1
Hoarding issues	1	Lack of support for major depressive disorder or bill payers e.g. direct to bill finance	1
Boiler help	1	Boiler support	1
More recognition of complex issues and the need for advocacy	1	More face-to-face support in the home with vulnerable people, not so much phone-based support	1
Boiler replacements and windows	1	Confusion over additional costs	1
Help with arrears and boiler repairs	1	Need more funds to make home improvements	1
One master PSR register	1	Not sure	1
Reaching those most difficult to reach	1	Help with gas arrears	1
Support those off grid?	1	Aligning service providers	1
Servicing	1	Boiler Repairs and Replacements	1
Pressure on energy companies to improve their communication and the way they deal with customers	1		

Session 2: CO Awareness

What are the gaps (if any) in the activities we are undertaking in the area of CO awareness?

Response	Count	Response	Count
Private landlords	2	Bluetooth alarms for the blind	1
Target the cities and towns with huge university populations	1	Letting partners know about new literature and campaigns	1
Better awareness on campsites	1	Lack of free CO alarms	1
Replacing old boilers/appliances	1	More CO monitors for local groups to give out	1
Specialist CO monitors for those with hearing and sight difficulties in Scotland as the regulations are different	1	Working with households not on gas network but with bottled gas	1
Older people	1	Looking into whether there are particular age ranges that should be targeted (from hospital admissions)	1
Research into low-level exposure to CO (i.e cars)	1	Education about differences between smoke and CO alarms	1
Harder-to-reach communities	1	Private landlords need to understand their legal obligations	1
Sending updated promotions for us to share or you would like us to share	1	Facilitating more best practice sessions or knowledge sharing about how to deliver advice in different settings	1
Those with sensory difficulties	1	Getting info to people who may be digitally excluded	1
Addressing people in rural areas/solid fuel CO awareness	1	More awareness in schools	1
Awareness of Safe and Well visits	1	Can't think of any	1
BSL resources i.e. video clips	1	Replacing old inefficient boilers	1
Prime time TV warnings that could also be put on social media	1	Servicing of boilers/appliances	1
Those that are more isolated or elderly	1	Working closer with DNOs and other partners	1
Language	1	Non-English speakers	1
Tv campaigns	1	Disability and learning	1
I feel in my area there are those hard to reach and need to be supported. Again digital exclusion.	1	Regional TV campaigns "national advert"	1
Training charities in CO awareness	1	Are resources in BSL available?	1
Digitally excluded	1	Reaching the very hard to reach	1
Sheltered accommodation	1	Reaching those with language barriers, i.e. BSL	1
More CO alarms needed to hand out to vulnerable people	1		

Please suggest any other organisations we should look to work with in the future:

Response	Count	Response	Count
Private landlords	2	Dementia charities	1
Smaller local charities	2	Gamification	1
Emergency services	2	Community energy groups	1
Smaller charities	2	Appliance manufacturers	1
National charity with local delivery	1	GP surgeries	1
Statutory services	1	Organisations working with the Deaf community	1
Small volunteer organisations	1	Should the alarms and CO safety info be given out when new gas appliances are bought and fitted?	1
Armed Forces	1	Charities that reach specific people	1
Haringey Go Green eco urban festival team. HMOs.	1	Health and social care	1
Religious groups	1	Local authority	1
Local authorities	1	Special assistance groups	1
Suffolk information partnerships (over 100 partnerships)	1	More with foodbanks	1
More with local health authorities	1	Social services	1
Local trusted orgs	1	Third sector orgs	1
Social Work. Private landlords. Food banks.	1	Gas safe contractors	1
Food banks	1	St John Ambulance	1
HAs and private landlords	1	Social housing landlords	1
In Huddersfield we have an anchor network so would be great to access that	1	Smaller community groups	1
Homeless charities	1	deafPlus	1
Libraries, especially volunteers who deliver books	1	HSE	1
Pharmacists	1	Ambulance services	1
Trussel Trust and foodbanks	1	Grassroots charities	1
Smaller charities who are battling for funding	1	None	1
Charities in their communities that operate/support people that speak in languages other than English	1		

Session 3: Supporting Priority Customers

What are the gaps (if any) in the activities we are undertaking in the area of supporting priority customers?

Response	Count	Response	Count
Digital exclusion	3	Target Areas of high deprivation	1
Local charities	2	Raising aware of smell gas safety for people who have smell disorders and providing gas monitors as well as CO monitors	1
Sharing information	2	Eco grant support for very vulnerable households	1
Language barriers	2	People where landlords pay the rent	1
Easily available resources in a range of formats (BSL, Easy Read)	1	Recognition that some people need far more intensive support. Longer case times, more personal approach. In-person work. Long case work.	1
Sharing registers with other organisations	1	Older people get forgotten	1
Visiting people in their own home	1	Important to support charities but is energy at the heart?	1
Integration of local and national	1	Hard-to-reach communities	1
Unclear what is on offer nationally/regionally	1	People who have not struggled before cost of living that don't access traditional support, don't see themselves as vulnerable.	1
There's still an issue with vulnerable residents not knowing what the PSR is... greater education? National comms?	1	National charities to link in more with local on-the-ground support	1
Greater collaboration between partners	1		
Home visits for advice, referrals and instal of small measures	1		
Language barrier	1		

Response	Count	Response	Count
Accessibility for BSL users, also Deaf community who do not use BSL	1	Speaking up for those that can't support themselves	1
Immigrant and refugee charities	1	Coordination with other orgs like water companies	1
Linking up follow-up support for those on the PSR	1	Reaching those that don't have access to sign up online	1
Big money for big charities, less for smaller ones that are much more in touch	1	Having vulnerable people support contact numbers for suppliers	1
Carers	1	Home visits are necessary	1
Support for mental health	1	Big money going into some charities	1
Local charities to raise awareness for professional development	1	Consistency in process for CO alarms and PSR	1
BSL resources	1	Grassroots charities	1
Young people from low-income families	1	Isolated people without families or digital awareness	1
Enable partners to focus on their core expertise, bringing them together in an ecosystem of partners	1	More information sharing for digitally excluded	1
People still aren't aware of the service, more national promotions	1	Sharing of information with other agencies. Putting in referrals.	1
There will always something missed. Can't help everyone but good to help so many	1	Tech literacy	1
Grass roots	1	Home visits	1
Being on the par is all very well. But we find on a daily basis it does not mean they get the help they should	1	Non-digital information - newspaper ads etc.	1
Excluded communities	1	Supporting the digitally disengaged	1
Making sure the most vulnerable are supported	1	Mental health	1
Mental health	1	Easier access to register	1
Carers	1	More projects supporting ethnic minorities	1
Longer-term support	1	Deafblind disability	
		Supporting local charities not just national	

Are there any other priority customer groups that you would like to see us support in future?

Response	Count	Response	Count
Dementia	4	Mental health	1
Care leavers	3	Park homes, static homes	1
Single parents	2	People with smell disorders	1
Elderly	2	Working families	1
Unpaid carers	2	Single-parent household	1
Asylum seekers and refugees	1	Those with new tech	1
Transitional moments in people's lives. Bereavement, new long-term health diagnoses.	1	Rare illness groups	1
Kinship carers	1	Deaf people who cannot use modern technology to correspond	1
Vulnerable families	1	Sheltered accommodation	1
Ethnic minorities	1	The families and communities of those children in alternative provisions	1
Low-income working households	1	Park homes	1
Asylum seekers	1	At risk of homelessness/vulnerably housed	1
Grief	1	More support with profoundly deaf people. It's a struggle to get support for them from the GDNs.	1
Low-income households	1	The young	1
Refugees/asylum seekers	1	Mental health groups	1
Groups where ROI is inevitably low	1	Working on low income	1
Low income	1	Payday loan residents	1
Low pay, home owners	1	Neurodiverse, e.g. ADHD, autistic	1
Immigrants and refugees	1		

Response	Count
Working people who still can't afford basic needs	1
Child in poverty/low-income households	1
People in rented accommodation	1
People with sight loss i.e. macular degeneration	1
Single-person household	1
Sheltered housing residents	1
Special needs	1
Tenants who have their energy bills included in their rent	1
Those who never go to all the usual agencies	1
Mental health groups	1
Parkinson's	1

Response	Count
Deaf people/BSL community	1
Homeless	1
Homeowners that have lived in their homes for 40, 50 years - homes in disrepair	1
Low-income pensioners	1
Social housing tenants	1
Travellers	1
Deaf and blind	1
Working poor	1
Stroke	1
Single-person households	1

What do you need from us to be able to promote the work we do with organisations (like Carents and Maggies) within your own organisation?

Response	Count
Funding	2
Link all local services together	1
Funding for home visits to help digitally-excluded clients	1
Physical materials	1
A website or app with all organisations listed for referring and signposting	1
more materials to share	1
Using HFSC to put in referrals to fire services	1
Attend charity events e.g. conferences	1
Referral route, information condense	1
Social media	1
Access to fliers/leaflets and websites. Communication. Referral forms. Named contact to speak to for questions.	1
Digital links we can share via our website	1
Second Welsh language resources, it's a national language but so much is only in English/global languages	1
Consider social benefit over Return on Investment figure occasionally	1
Digital and paper resources	1
Direct contact to set up referral pathways	1
Pool charity days and seconder staff to community/charity partners	1
Digital sharing portal	1
Newsletter	1
Further funding from all GDNs to support our work	1
Sharing communication	1
Leaflets	1
Contacts	1
Easy referral links	1
Central resource guide for us to access for all partners	1

Response	Count
Partner sessions	1
Information, leaflets, funding	1
Free CO alarms	1
A guide to support available - referral link	1
Tailored messaging that uses accessible language	1
Speak at NEA conference!	1
More awareness of these amazing charities	1
Winter packs	1
Digital portal	1
Concise, informative A4 leaflet with referral route	1
Contacts, easy-to-understand info, referral processes	1
Information. I'd never heard of Carents before.	1
Content to share on intranets	1
Emails sent to all funded project leads on all other projects so we can all cross-refer	1
More communication around hardest to reach	1
Leaflets	1
Longer-term funding	1
Referral agreements with other charities and organisations	1
Updates via links to access and share	1
Social media messages to share	1
Print and digital resources	1
Bilingual material (Welsh)	1
Joined-up working	1
Video case studies are very impactful	1
Social media/traditional comms	1
A central referral portal	1
Digital resources	1
Info on projects and mapping	1
Videos to include in our training	1

Response	Count
Winter care packs to give to the most vulnerable	1
Understand us! No false referrals	1
Access to the at-risk registers and joint partnership working	1
Summary sheets of what they offer	1
Communication support, BSL options	1

Response	Count
Establish referral pathways not just signposting	1
Sharing of key contact info	1
Social media cards to share	1
Sharing of different ways of working	1
Links to share	1
Support	1

Session 4: Services Beyond the Meter

What are the gaps (if any) in the activities we are undertaking in the area of services beyond the meter?

Response	Count
Servicing	2
Not enough advice on smart metering and probs with the system not reporting. Support really.	1
Providing info to customers without them having to search	1
Stronger links to referral pathways	1
Adding CO awareness and alarms to ECO4/GBIS	1
Energy efficiency grant guidance	1
Free or reasonable cost boiler services	1
Raising awareness	1
Use local services for fast nimble support	1
Help with elderly for new appliances / boiler / repairs / servicing	1
Energy efficiency checks and maintenance	1
More preventative work especially for vulnerable groups	1
Ongoing fuel poverty training for gas engineers	1
Delivery of more fundamental improvements to the home	1
Training for new technology that's being installed	1
Is it linked to those on the PSR... for proactive action?	1
More awareness for digitally excluded	1
Never leave anyone on the PSR off supply	1
Free boiler services	1
Proactive support	1
Funding efficiency checks	1
Really need to resolve the eligibility issues for those who have a failed service but are then not eligible for repairs/replacement	1
Still so many people previously impacted	
Home visits	
Funding for appliances across all areas	

Response	Count
Referral pathways need to be better advertised in local areas	1
I think given the nature of the work carried out, the GDNs are doing a great job in supporting their partners	1
Greater VCMA partner sharing/learnings	1
Non-digital information	1
Awareness raising	1
Servicing and efficiency checks	1
Advertise stuff more widely on socials	1
Funding for servicing	1
Maybe free boiler servicing	1
Service repair and replace are all covered	1
Gas appliance repair and replacement	1
What about off grid?	1
Advice for householders who are under 18	1
More of the same please	1
Sustained services and help	1
Follow-ups	1
Proactive support	1
None. Keep going on this.	1
More understanding	1
Setting up a referral pathway with all partners	1
Can't think of anything	1
Same as previous	1
Funding for gas appliance repairs or replacement	1
Proactive support prior to an emergency	1
Safeguarding training for adult issues	1
Proactive servicing	1
More help	1

Session 5: Looking to the Future

Are there any other things we should be focusing on for the next few years (the remainder of RIIO-GD2: today - April 2026)?

Response	Count
Rural areas	2
Young families targeted help	1
Appreciation of time needed spent with individual cases/people	1
Enabling local communities	1
Net zero	1
Training and support for the hard to reach... support poor areas, disenfranchised	1
Focused on long-term impacts	1
Continue funding the small charities	1
Create awareness campaigns to normalise asking for help	1
Long-term funding solutions	1
Connecting generations for young people to support older gen	1
Communication suppliers have with their vulnerable customers	1
Teaching resilience	1
Continuity in sharing information and support with funding to enable local charities' involvement with the local communities	1
Root cause, not just a plaster over cracks	1
Partnerships, helping each other	1
Holistic support beyond fuel poverty	1
Digitally excluded	1
When projects have built up awareness in a community then it loses funding	1
Consumer protections for off-gas homes	1
Digital exclusion	1
Ensuring help can go out to the more rural communities to enable them to receive the same level of help as urban areas	1
Addressing route causes	1
Funding continuing	1
Adding more opportunities for funding smaller projects	1
More training for frontline community charity workers	1
Digitally-excluded people	1
What might be needed for transition to net zero work. To prepare for work on that in GD3.	1
Long-term solutions, not just initial crisis	1
Fuel poverty for those not on gas	1
Helping partners to connect with each other more - referral directory?	1
Digital inclusion	1
More case studies	1
Affordable warmth Accessible hub space Fuel poverty CO	1
Deal with causes not just symptoms	1
Make support easy to access	1

Response	Count
Gaps for those that are just over the financial threshold, facing a cliff edge of support	1
Fuel poverty	1
Considering the real meaning of the word vulnerability in the current climate - more people are vulnerable than ever before and its not always obvious	1
Accurate energy bills	1
Sustainability of existing services	1
Flexible eligibility so people don't miss out	1
Keep helping local community places	1
Direct routes to feedback to Ofgem on supplier issues	1
Continuation of great training	1
Discovery activity to inform GD3, where English isn't a first language, digitally-excluded and other disadvantaged people	1
Hard-to-reach groups	1
Long-term solutions not quick fixes	1
Getting more households onto the PSR	1
Keeping funding consistent	1
Hard-to-reach communities	1
Filling gaps to other funding streams	1
How do you prepare to tackle the previous issues that are just constantly being addressed but not solved	1
Sustainability of small projects	1
Causes of fuel poverty	1
Seaside towns	1
How to best work in collaboration without it turning into a 'competition'	1
More qualitative rather than all quantitative data	1
Continuing and increasing funding - especially longer-term funding so that projects can plan and be the most effective	1
Sharing the insights from projects with greatest SROI	1
The mention of support for a just transition is encouraging - this needs to be a focus going forward	1
Fuel poverty for rural homes or 'hard-to-reach' homes geographically	1
Reaching people who are not accessing traditional support services but are now impacted by fuel poverty	1
Carry on with all the good work you're doing, thank you	1
Helping towards affordable low-carbon heating options	1
Cost of fuel for everyone	1
Sustaining the partnerships we have built	1
Local grassroots projects to help people in crisis	1
Staff training to identify vulnerability	1

Response	Count
Improving homes	1
Funding for household repairs, not just heating repairs – e.g. broken windows	1
Education about resources and support available	1
Resolving the misalignment of eligibility criteria	1
Cost of living is not going away - continued investment and support needed	1

Response	Count
Hard-to-reach communities... identifying who and where	1
Supporting the tiny groups who may lose out as funding reduces	1
Rural fuel poverty	1
Root causes of fuel poverty	1

What three words would you use to describe the challenges you anticipate the people you support facing towards the end of the decade? (RIIO-GD3 period: April 2026 - March 2031)

Response	Count
Mental health	10
Debt	9
Poverty	9
Net zero	3
Impact on wellbeing	3
Digital exclusion	3
Cost of living	3
Technology changes	1
Lack of suitable housing with affordable heating	1
Retrofit	1
Poor mental health	1
Low income	1
Confusion	1
Homelessness	1
Trauma	1
Long-term debts	1
Funding	1
Affordability	1
Rising costs	1
Benefits advice	1
Debt advice	1
Low income, high bills	1
Instability without secured funding	1
Information, support, access	1
Social tariff	1
Crisis	1
Uncertainty	1
Elderly	1
Child poverty, eat or heat	1
Demand and capacity	1
Working families	1
Trust	1
Climate change	1
Costs, choice, inequality	1
Inflation	1
Reduced funding	1

Response	Count
Extending our reach when funding stops	1
Service cuts	1
Older people	1
Journey to energy transition	1
Being greener being the privilege of the wealthier	1
Anxiety	1
Net zero and not knowing how to use new tech	1
Affordable low-carbon alternatives	1
Child poverty	1
Funding for third sector	1
Decline in health	1
General health issues	1
Refugees	1
Net zero options	1
Supporting people into employment	1
Housing crisis	1
Mental health problems	1
Austerity	1
Government	1
Increased complexity of need	1
Same as now	1
Skills and training	1
Fuel debt	1
Net Zero, Cost of Living, Health	1
Isolation	1
Low home ownership	1
No changes	1
Affordability / repairs / debt	1
Language barrier	1
Loosing specialist practitioners due to funding	1
Distrust	1
Excluded	1
Left behind	1
Rise in demand for services	1
Debts	1
Not asking for help	1

Response	Count
Wellbeing	1
Help to use new technologies	1
Loss of funding	1
Access to overstretched services	1
Communication	1
Energy transition cost	1
Financial hardship	1
Funding to continue our work	1
Increased need, poverty	1

Response	Count
Mental health issues	1
Enduring debt	1
Lack of funding	1
Aging population	1
Complex cases	1
Dementia Affordability	1
Confusion about gas futures	1
Net zero debt	1
Continue funding small charities	1

What do you expect the priorities will be for your organisation towards the end of the decade? (RIIO-GD3 period: April 2026 - March 2031)

Response	Count
Funding	11
Income maximisation	2
Retrofit	2
Isolation	2
Fuel poverty	2
Continuation of supporting vulnerable families	1
Increase in demand	1
Warm homes	1
Benefits not keeping up with inflation	1
Simple guidance for new ways of heating your home	1
Hard-to-heat properties	1
Significant increase in demand	1
Competition for funding	1
Knowledge and skills to help people to understand and benefit from changes re net zero	1
Climate change events	1
Keeping face-to-face services not over phone or digital	1
Funding challenges and increased demand	1
Clear support pathway	1
Decarbonisation of PRS	1
Developing new services to meet demand	1
Improvement on buying appliances with better energy labels	1
Increase in demand for services with ageing population	1
Sustainability	1
Alternatives to more expensive appliances	1
Massive demand on third sector organisations	1
Sustainable funding which pays a decent wage to our teams	1
Funding to continue	1
Increased demand	1
Isolation, access to services, health, mental health	1
Decarbonisation for the poor	1

Response	Count
Mental health and peer support	1
Barriers to employment	1
Lack of funding for complex in-depth work. Everyone wants numbers and volumes.	1
Supporting complex cases where outcomes may not always be easy to show and report on	1
Continuing a holistic approach to supporting families who have children in palliative care	1
Housing	1
Retrofitting homes	1
Community engagement	1
Supporting people with complex health issues including mental health	1
Collaboration to achieve societal change	1
Rural inclusion	1
Education	1
Funding, long-term solutions	1
Increased demand on services	1
Sustainable funding	1
Funding cliff edges	1
Net zero confusion	1
Continued training and funding for grassroots charities	1
Having sustained funding	1
Moving beyond crisis management to longer-term solutions	1
Decarbonisation of housing stock	1
Resilient communities	1
Support our residents, increase our team to offer more visits to vulnerable residents	1
Evaluation	1
Low-carbon futures	1
Recruitment for net zero challenges	1
Enablement	1
Debt management	1
Lack of carers	1

Response	Count
Poverty	1
Funding being withdrawn	1
Standstill funding	1
Supporting a just transition	1
Funding. Off grid. Education.	1
Increase in service demand	1
More funding	1
Respond to housing crisis	1
Working within new funding restrictions	1
Funding and health inequalities	1
Sharing of resources	1
Striving for fairness and equality	1
Improve accessibility	1
Extend areas of need	1
Supporting people with their mental health	1
Managing rising costs	1
Keeping vulnerable people safe	1
To become more innovative & efficient	1
Funding	1
Tools	1
Income max	1
Supporting resilience	1
Tackling health inequalities	1
Child poverty	1
Improving homes	1
Affordable local solutions	1
Supporting digitally excluded with new technologies	1
Education for skills	1
Health declines	1
In-person support which needs to be ongoing	1

Response	Count
Empowerment	1
Debt, mental health issues, poverty	1
Supporting vulnerable people to understand decarbonisation and new tech	1
Access to services	1
Long-term funding	1
Reaching underserved communities	1
Sustainable funding, meeting more demand, supporting people transition to net zero	1
Coordinated approach to energy efficiency	1
Crisis support	1
Funding	1
More home fire safety visits	1
Inclusion	1
More technology training for staff	1
Promote independence	1
Free school meals	1
Income maximising	1
Income max	1
Holistic care	1
Certainty of funding	1
Homelessness	1
Reducing child poverty	1
Sustainable services and funding	1
End fuel poverty	1
Net zero	1
Lack of funding	1
Improve accessibility	1
Child poverty	1
Stable funding	1

Are there any other areas of focus that you feel will be important / we haven't mentioned in terms of our VCMA work in the next Business Plan period? (R110-GD3 period: April 2026 - March 2031)

Response	Count
Retrofitting	4
Proactive use of people registered on the PSR	1
Supporting policy calls around background issues that make customers vulnerable - don't be afraid of being political!	1
Identifying that not all households have the same needs. Housing etc.	1
Homeowner support	1
Fairer practices for all families to benefit from healthy living who are just out the cap	1
Develop gas monitors for GDNs to provide, similar to CO monitors	1
More education in schools	1
Pre-emergency help with maintenance etc.	1

Response	Count
Open channels like this where we can ask Ofgem questions direct	1
More engagement	1
One central PSR	1
Sharing of information so that multiple agencies aren't doing the same thing. Centralised.	1
Making sure people aren't left behind e.g. with time of day tariffs	1
Whole system solutions (e.g. overlap between boilers and heat pumps)	1
Traditional buildings and rural homes not financially penalised as we move forward with net zero	1
Renewable energy	1
PSR for all utilities	1

Response	Count
Collaboration	1
Working with Ofgem more closely to influence suppliers	1
Meaningful and better-quality insulation of homes	1
Hoarding and unsafe homes	1
Open forums with Ofgem and government	1
Collaboration with water networks and more collaboration across the UK with other power networks	1
Sharing of resources	1
Support for working families	1
Giving us direct links with Ofgem	1
Just transition and decarbonising housing	1
Lobbying/implementing a social energy tariff and changes to the standing charge for the most vulnerable	1
Decarbonisation for people who do not fit current eligibility	1
Insulation and other energy efficiency improvements	1
People with hoarding issues who have no access to heating and safety	1
Support for those struggling who don't qualify for benefits	1
Training for frontline staff re decarbonisation	1
Decarb and retrofit, but only where it suits the house *and* homeowner	1
GHG reporting	1
Support for customers with sensory needs	1
Help with home repairs to ensure new technologies can be suitable and maximised	1
Insulation of homes	1
Supporting businesses to provide appliances with better energy labels	1
Being able to be proactive instead of waiting on fixing things when they have happened	1
Convening the partners to engage together with govt and Ofgem	1
Retrofit in homes	1
Changing needs of existing beneficiaries	1
Focus on impact on individuals rather than volumes of reach	1

Response	Count
Support with retrofit	1
Earlier interventions	1
Mental health support	1
Old properties' energy efficiency not heat pumps	1
Using evidence to influence gov and regulatory policy	1
Engagement with fire services that are county council backed (lack of funding)	1
Support for those in low-paid work and no income-based benefits	1
Efficiency measures?	1
Sustainability of projects	1
Retrofitting	1
Funding towards insulation and home improvements	1
Decarbonisation	1
Hand-holding, eco4, end-to-end support for vulnerable residents	1
Supporting and educating refugees and asylum seekers in understanding our energy system	1
Getting people out of debt that has built up during the energy crisis	1
We need to improve homes	1
Working with those in work	1
Gas smell safety for people affected by smell disorders	1
Supporting decarbonisation of homes and a just transition	1
Decarbonisation planning	1
Help with new technologies and transitions to using energy effectively	1
Fabric improvements to homes	1
Prioritising help if the VCMA drops dramatically	1
Revisiting customers (not just finding new all the time)	1
Support towards low-carbon heating	1
Youth mental health	1
Mental health	1
Engagement with government - so much reliance on third sector and charities	1

