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PEA reference: PCG-Collab-017a

Alzheimer's Society



Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)



Contents

Contents2

Project registration table3

Problem (s).....5

Scope and objectives5

Why the project is being funded through the VCMA.....7

How VCMA funding complements or supplements BAU activities.....7

Outcomes, associated actions and success criteria8

Potential for new learning 10

Aligning with and supporting wider vulnerability approaches 11

Monitoring and evaluation 12

Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations, including NPV 13

Internal governance and project management evidence 13

Eligibility Criteria 15

Project registration table

Project summary										
Project title	Alzheimer's Society									
Strategic area	Supporting Priority Customer Groups									
Lead partner name	Alzheimer's Society									
Lead GDN(s)	Cadent									
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent, NGN and WWU									
New/Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New									
Collaborative VCMA Projects Specific role(s) of GDN(s) participating in a collaborative VCMA Project	Cadent lead SGN-Southern - delivery Wales & West Utilities (WWU) - delivery									
Date of PEA submission	March 2026									
Project start and end date	April 2026 – March 2028									
Project location	England and Wales									
Project contact										
Name	Phil Burrows									
Contact details.	Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com									
Project partners and third parties involved										
Organisation name	Role									
Alzheimer's Society	Lead delivery partner									
Costs and funding										
Total cost (£k)	£1,120,000.00									
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	<table> <tr> <td>Cadent</td> <td>£660,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SGN Southern</td> <td>£200,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>£260,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£1,120,000.00</td> </tr> </table>		Cadent	£660,000.00	SGN Southern	£200,000.00	WWU	£260,000.00	Total	£1,120,000.00
Cadent	£660,000.00									
SGN Southern	£200,000.00									
WWU	£260,000.00									
Total	£1,120,000.00									
Total BAU vulnerability and CO safety activity baseline allowance funding by activity (£k)										

Problem(s)

This section needs to outline the problem(s) which is/are being addressed by the VCMA project.

The GDN's collaborative vulnerability strategy is focused on keeping customers safe and warm, strengthening access to energy, safeguarding, raising awareness of Priority Services Register (PSR) & carbon monoxide (CO), and supporting households who may be at risk of being left behind in the transition to net zero.

Dementia is a progressive and life-changing condition caused by diseases that damage the brain. It gradually erodes a person's memory, identity, and ability to live independently. As the greatest health¹ and social care challenge of our time, it affects 59% of the UK population either directly or through someone they know.

One of the most significant issues experienced by people with dementia is the impact of rising energy costs. Many individuals spend an average of 22 hours per day at home, which naturally increases household energy consumption and financial pressure

²During the two-year project, it is estimated that 350,400 people will develop dementia, and around one million people in the UK are currently living with dementia, many of whom spend up to 22 hours a day in their own homes. As a result, they often incur high heating costs to remain safe and comfortable. The confusion and memory loss associated with dementia can increase the risk of energy mismanagement, overconsumption, and financial hardship, as well as heighten vulnerability to carbon monoxide and other safety risks.

Individuals living with dementia are automatically eligible for the PSR, which ensures they receive tailored support and additional protection during a gas emergency or supply interruption. Raising awareness of the PSR within this community is essential to improving safety, reducing risk, and ensuring that vulnerable customers receive the assistance they are entitled to.

It is equally important that people with dementia, and those who support them, are aware of safety interventions such as Locking Cooker Valves. These devices provide a simple but effective safeguard for individuals who may be at heightened risk of accidental harm when using a gas cooker. By enabling carers to control gas flow while still allowing cold use of the appliance, Locking Cooker Valves help people with dementia maintain greater independence and continue living safely in their own homes for longer.

¹ [Facts for the media about dementia | Alzheimer's Society](#)

² [Facts for the media about dementia | Alzheimer's Society](#)

Scope and objectives

Outline the scope and objectives of the VCMA project linked to the problem statement above. This should be clearly defined including the benefits which would directly impact customers on the participating GDNs' network(s), and where the benefits of the VCMA Projects lie.

Building on the accomplishments and insights gained from the initial Alzheimer's Society project, the GDNs have committed to investing again in the next phase of delivery. This subsequent phase will retain the key components of the original initiative while expanding its reach to individuals and families in Scotland later in 2026.

To address the heightened vulnerability experienced by people living with dementia, including increased risks around energy affordability, overconsumption, and safety, this project will deliver a targeted package of support designed to improve outcomes for customers who are most at risk. In line with the VCMA strategy, the programme focuses on delivering measurable social value, reducing the likelihood of energy-related harm, and strengthening awareness of the PSR across hard-to-reach and underserved communities.

Working collaboratively with the participating GDNs, Alzheimer's Society will support dementia patients and families by funding dementia advisors.

The Community Dementia Advisors (CDAs) will provide tailored support and guidance to people living with dementia and their families by:

- Delivering focused sessions on energy efficiency, gas safety, carbon monoxide awareness, and the PSR at dementia cafés.
- Offering personalised benefits and energy advice in the home where required.
- Providing direct guidance on PSR eligibility and registration.
- Sharing key safety and safeguarding messages across social media platforms.
- Offering face-to-face support to families navigating the challenges and complexities associated with dementia.
- Working with Energy Project Plus to undertake bespoke training that enhances CDA skills and confidence in delivering advice on energy efficiency, CO safety, and the PSR.

VCMA funding will be used to:

- Increase the capacity of the Dementia Advice Team to meet rising demand.
- Upskill and train Community Dementia Advisor (CDAs) including phonline advisors, in energy safeguarding, carbon monoxide awareness, and benefits assessments.
- Provide tailored advice on benefit entitlement to maximise household income.
- Raise awareness of carbon monoxide risks and mitigation.

- Promote the benefits of registering on the Priority Services Register.
- Deliver basic energy efficiency advice to support vulnerable households.
- Offer free gas safety checks for eligible households where applicable.
- Provide access to the Locking Cooker Valve (LCV) where appropriate to support safety and independence in the home.

Project Objectives

1. Increase access to dementia specific support relating to energy safeguarding by expanding the capacity of the CDA team to reach more families across the region.
2. Improve the knowledge, confidence, and capability of CDAs by delivering bespoke training on energy efficiency, carbon monoxide awareness, benefits assessments, and the PSR safeguarding.
3. Enhance safety and wellbeing for people living with dementia through tailored advice delivered at dementia cafés, in the home, and via the helpline.
4. Increase awareness and uptake of the PSR among people living with dementia and their carers, ensuring more vulnerable households receive essential protections during planned and unplanned interruptions.
5. Support income maximisation for households affected by dementia by providing benefits checks and personalised welfare entitlement advice.
6. Reduce the risk of CO exposure by raising awareness and promoting the correct use of CO alarms and safety behaviours.
7. Improve energy efficiency behaviours in vulnerable homes through targeted advice that supports reduced energy consumption and improved comfort.
8. Enhance home safety for eligible households by offering free gas safety checks and facilitating access to Locking Cooker Valve where appropriate.
9. Strengthen community engagement and awareness by sharing key safeguarding and safety messages across social media and community channels.
10. Provide holistic, face-to-face support to families navigating dementia, ensuring they receive guidance that addresses both dementia related and energy related vulnerabilities.

Project design engagement

Targeting vulnerability support: This must describe how the GDN(s) identified the vulnerability need being addressed through the VCMA project, including the use of consumer research, stakeholder engagement, and data and technology.

Evidence of stakeholder and/or customer support: Information regarding all stakeholder and/or customer engagement which has contributed to the development of the VCMA Project.

Stakeholder project design input: How stakeholders were actively involved in the project design, and how their input and feedback were incorporated to shape the project design. Where stakeholders disagree about the project design, justification must be provided for why the current project design is deemed preferable.

The GDNs work closely with a wide range of charities and partner organisations to identify and support individuals who may be particularly vulnerable during a gas outage. With dementia prevalence continuing to rise, it became evident that people living with dementia need to be proactively identified by GDNs and encouraged to join the PSR so that appropriate support can be provided during unplanned interruptions.

Following two years of collaboration with Alzheimer's Society, we also identified that people affected by dementia are at heightened risk of financial hardship, often due to increased energy usage, reduced income, and challenges navigating the benefits system. Dementia Advisors play a critical role in helping individuals understand the benefits they are entitled to and supporting them through the claims process.

We have therefore worked in partnership with Alzheimer's Society to design a project that meaningfully addresses the needs of people living with dementia. As subject matter experts, their insight has been essential in shaping the scope, ensuring the project is person-centred, and maximising the benefit delivered to end users.

Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

This should include an explanation of why the VCMA project meets the VCMA eligibility criteria, and how it aligns with the GDN's VCMA collaborative strategy.

This project meets this eligibility criteria, as the project aligns with the GDN's collaborative vulnerability strategy, in which we have a clear ambition to keep our communities safe and warm, and to support those most in need by helping vulnerable households not just today but as we invest in a green energy future.

This project aligns with the following shared objectives of our collaborative vulnerability strategy:

- Help more vulnerable households access energy safeguarding services
- Reach communities underserved and most in need of trusted intermediaries to take up support services

How VCMA funding complements or supplements BAU activities

Where the VCMA Project is being delivered alongside a BAU vulnerability and/or CO safety activity or activities funded through the GDN's baseline allowance, the GDN must provide sufficient evidence that the VCMA Project complements or supplements the BAU activity or activities to prevent the risk of double funding.

This project requires a range of support from the VCMA, including enhanced CO awareness and PSR registrations. While these activities are part of our business-as-usual responsibilities, VCMA funding enables us to deliver a deeper level of specialist advice, particularly around CO signs, symptoms, and risk mitigation, that our core staff are not trained to provide.

GDNs also complete PSR registrations as part of BAU; however, individuals living with dementia often require additional time, tailored communication, and specialist support to ensure the process is safe, accessible, and effective. VCMA funding therefore allows us to meet these enhanced needs and provide the level of support required.

As a trusted organisation, the Alzheimer's Society is well placed to engage effectively with vulnerable individuals and refer eligible people for BAU-funded support. This includes access to Locking Cooker Valves and other measures that help maintain safety and independence in the home.

Outcomes, associated actions and success criteria

Details of the VCMA Project outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these, interim milestones and how the Funding Licensee will evaluate whether the project has been successful. Each action should have a proportion of the funding allocated.

The VCMA Alzheimer's Society collaborative project will be delivered in partnership with Alzheimer's Society and aims to support 11,312 unique individuals with carbon monoxide, energy efficiency, PSR and Income maximisation support across England and Wales.

The below table shows individual conversation reach per GDN per activity:

	26/27	27/28	Total
Cadent			
Carbon Monoxide	1,075	1,107	2,182
Energy Efficiency	1,505	1,550	3,055
PSR	1,720	1,772	3,492
Income Max	3,388	3,490	6,878
Wales and West			
Carbon Monoxide	1,041	1,072	2,113
Energy Efficiency	1,041	1,072	2,113
PSR	1,041	1,072	2,113
Income Max	1,596	1,644	3,240

SGN			
Carbon Monoxide	452	465	917
Energy Efficiency	452	465	917
PSR	452	465	917
Income Max	587	604	1,191

They will also reach 1,098,478 people via their various communication channels as below:

The table below shows a forecast of reach via Alzheimer's society's various communication channels.

		26/27	27/28	Total
Publications (Factsheets/publications)	Energy	9,971	9,971	19,942
	PSR	73,285	73,285	146,570
	Income	140,454	140,454	280,908
	TOTAL	223,710	223,710	447,420
Dementia Together	CO	2,800		2,800
	Energy	2,800		2,800
	PSR	2,800		2,800
	Income	2,800		2,800
	TOTAL	11,200		11,200
Social media	CO	15,000	15,000	30,000
	Energy	110,000	110,000	220,000
	PSR	110,000	110,000	220,000
	Income	15,000	15,000	30,000
	TOTAL	250,000	250,000	500,000
Newsletter	Energy	69,929		69,929
	PSR	69,929		69,929
	TOTAL	139,858		139,858
Totals	CO	17,800	15,000	32,800
	Energy	192,700	119,971	312,671
	PSR	256,014	183,285	439,299
	Income	158,254	155,454	313,708
	TOTAL	624,768	473,710	1,098,478

Success Criteria

The success of the project will be measured by reaching the targets agreed and accessing the impact of the project on individuals who are living with dementia by reviewing actual case studies.

1. Improved Safety and Reduced Vulnerability

- Increased CO awareness among people living with dementia and their carers.
- Number of CO safety conversations.

- Uptake of Cadent safeguarding services such as the Locking Cooker Valve and Easy Assist, demonstrating enhanced protection for vulnerable individuals.

2. Increased PSR Registrations

- Number of PSR registrations completed directly through dementia cafés and related activities.
- Percentage of eligible attendees registered, showing improved access to priority support during outages and planned works.

3. Strengthened Financial Resilience

- Number of individuals receiving income maximisation advice.
- Successful identification of additional benefits and financial support, helping attendees achieve greater financial security.
- Energy efficiency advice delivered, supporting reduced energy consumption and improved affordability.

4. Enhanced Alignment with NHS Dementia Pathways

- Demonstrated evidence that project activities support the NHS *Well Pathway for Dementia* objectives, specifically:
- Enabling people to live independently at home;
- Maintaining social connections through structured group activities;
- Improving access to specialist dementia friendly support within the community.

5. Improved Participant Wellbeing and Engagement

- Positive participant and carer feedback on feeling safer, better supported, and more informed.
- Increased attendance and engagement at dementia cafés and associated Alzheimer's Society activities.
- Evidence that individuals feel more confident accessing support services and self-advocating.

6. Effective Partnership Working

Strong collaboration between GDNs, the Alzheimer's Society, and wider health and social care partners, evidenced through:

- Regular information sharing;
- Coordinated safeguarding referrals;

Potential for new learning

Provide details of what the GDN(s) expect(s) to learn and how the learning will be disseminated.

Over the past two years, the GDNs have recognised that people living with dementia require support that goes far beyond single-issue advice. Alzheimer's Society provides guidance across a wide range

of challenges faced by those affected, and demand for their services continues to rise in line with the increasing prevalence of dementia.

. Dementia Advisors carry out home visits and, through this project, have been trained to provide basic energy-saving advice to help individuals manage and reduce their usage.

These issues are not exclusive to people living in England and Wales and to ensure this support is offered to everyone who reaches out for support from Alzheimer's Society we are currently in discussions with Alzheimer's Scotland to co-design a programme for the community in Scotland. This removes a postcode lottery of support and standardises it across the UK.

Our intention is to continue to share insights from our partnership and actively seek opportunities to raise awareness of the support available and effective ways to engage those most in need. This includes hosting roundtables with charities to share their expertise and help inform a more coordinated approach to vulnerability.

Aligning with and supporting wider vulnerability approaches

Details of how the project supports or aligns with approaches to vulnerability taken by the wider energy industry, other utilities and/or consumer organisations; local, national or devolved governments; or evidence innovation or a gap in vulnerability support provision. For example, this could include evidence of collaboration beyond the VCMA, non-VCMA joint funding of the initiative, or identified gaps in the provision of vulnerability services which the project seeks to address. The GDN should show how the project fits within broader approaches to vulnerability.

Our dedicated, partnership-led programme with AS is supporting people living with dementia and their carers to manage their energy safeguarding needs, which aligns strongly with national and regulatory vulnerability frameworks across the UK. Its focus on early identification, personalised support, and coordinated delivery reflects Ofgem's Vulnerability Strategy, which emphasises recognising cognitive impairment as a key driver of vulnerability and ensuring tailored, accessible pathways into support. Embedding routine conversations about the Priority Services Register ensures households affected by dementia receive essential protections such as safety checks, communication support, and priority assistance during outages. The model also supports the ambitions of the Fuel Poverty Strategies for England and Wales, all of which call for targeted interventions for households with long-term health conditions, improved access to advice, and locally delivered, person-centred solutions that reduce the health risks of living in a cold home.

Alignment with NHS Guidance on Supporting People with Dementia.

³The NHS approach to supporting people living with dementia is founded on a person-centred, preventative, and collaborative model. It focuses on maintaining safety, dignity, and independence while reducing the risk of harm, neglect, or distress-. This includes:

- Proactive and personalised care planning

³ [Vulnerable People Strategy.pdf](#)

- Specialist staff training in dementia awareness
- Adaptation of environments and support to meet individual needs

Within the NHS ⁴*Well Pathway for Dementia*, there is a clear emphasis on enabling individuals to remain in their own homes, maintain social connections, and access community-based support, including memory cafés and other social activities.

How the Project Aligns with NHS Principles

The Alzheimer's Society delivers dementia cafés and a wide range of support activities within the community. Through this project, these sessions are used as a platform to:

- Provide CO safety awareness.
- Promote and support PSR awareness and registrations.
- Deliver tailored energy efficiency advice.
- Offer income maximisation support to ensure individuals receive eligible benefits.
- Promote GDN safeguarding interventions such as the Locking Cooker Valve and Easy Assist services.

Evidence of Alignment

By integrating CO safety education, PSR support, financial resilience guidance, and additional safeguarding interventions into existing dementia support environments, this project directly reflects the NHS priority to:

- Support independent living.
- Reduce vulnerability and risk of harm.
- Improve access to specialist, person-centred support.
- Strengthen community-based wellbeing pathways.

This demonstrates strong and clear alignment with NHS dementia care guidelines and the wider objectives of the NHS Well Pathway for Dementia.

Monitoring and evaluation

Details of how the GDNs will work with their project partners to monitor the impact of the VCMA project and evaluate its effectiveness and success.

This project features co-designed success criteria underpinning its Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework, with clear reporting and insight requirements from mobilisation through to delivery.

Alzheimer's Society and the GDNs will continue to review monthly reports on measurable outcomes, collaborating to ensure successful delivery, while each quarter the core project team will come

⁴ [dementia-well-pathway.pdf](#)

together to share performance insights, highlights mitigations for any underperformance, and drive opportunities for continuous improvement.

We will report annually on partnership impact, sharing broadly via collaborative and company-specific reports to showcase outcomes and key learnings. Additionally, the CO and Vulnerability Working Groups provide performance updates to the National Delivery Group and National Steering Panel, with all GDNs disseminating results through their business governance processes, including Independent Steering Groups.

Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations, including NPV

Justify the scale of the VCMA project – including the scale of the investment relative to its potential benefits. As part of this, the Funding Licensee(s) should provide the SROI calculation, including NPV. Note: The value in numbers of the SROI and NPV must be provided, rather than confirmation of positive impact.

Together with the other Gas Distribution Networks we worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIRIO Strategies on the development of the Industry Standard Social Value Framework and supporting GDN Rulebook. We have used that GDN Rulebook to carry out an assessment of financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable households included in this partnership.

We’ve incorporated social value based on the deliverables and associated targets detailed above. Carrying out an assessment of these predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net Social Return on Investment of £26.48 for every £1 spent.

Social value measurement

Total cost*	£1,046,467.93
Total gross present value	£28,754,599.24
Net Present Value (NPV)	£27,708,131.31
SROI	£26.48

*Accounting for inflationary factors over the term of the project.

Internal governance and project management evidence

Provide a description of GDN(s) review of proposal and project sign off, with details on how the project will be managed.

Project management for this partnership will be led by Cadent with clear governance arrangements in place to monitor delivery, performance and risk throughout the duration of the project.

A structured contract framework will ensure that any material changes remain aligned with customer needs and stakeholder expectations, safeguarding the effective and responsible use of VCMA funds.

Cadent has worked closely with the other GDNs and Alzheimer's Society to co-design this partnership so that its ambition directly contributes to the GDN’s Collaborative Vulnerability Strategy, developed through the Vulnerability Working Group and overseen by the GDN Steering Group.

The PEA has been reviewed and approved through each network's internal governance processes and formally signed off by the relevant senior leaders.

GDN	Approver (Name and Role)	Date
Cadent	Phil Burrows, Head of Social Programmes	01/04/2026
SGN	Maureen McIntosh, Director of Customer Services	01/04/26
WWU	Rob Long, Chief Operating Officer	01/04/26

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No
Positive SROI	Have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculated in accordance with a model which the GDNs have developed and submitted to Ofgem including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project	Yes
Positive NPV	Have a positive, or a forecasted positive Net Present Value (NPV)	Yes
Support Criteria	Either: i. provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to Energy Safeguarding, or ii. provide support for those most at risk of being left behind in the transition to net zero, or iii. provide awareness of, and education on, the dangers of CO beyond the activities funded as business as usual (BAU) through baseline allowances, or iv. reduce the risk of harm caused by CO	Yes
Defined Outcomes	Have specific, measurable, and time-bound outcomes which align with relevant Consumer Vulnerability Strategy objectives to achieve the requirements set out in 'Support Criteria' above;	Yes
Beyond Other Funding	Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s), including baseline allowance funding, or required through licence obligations	Yes
Support or align	Support or align with approaches to vulnerability taken by the wider energy industry, other utilities and/or consumer organisations, and local, national and devolved government, or evidence innovation or a gap in vulnerability support provision;	Yes
No Other External Funding	Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding	Yes
BAU vulnerability and CO safety activities	Where a GDN's BAU vulnerability and CO safety activities are funded through baseline allowances, these are not suitable for funding through the VCMA. The GDN is permitted to use VCMA funds to supplement or complement its BAU activities, however, it must ensure that its reporting provides sufficient evidence to prevent double funding.	Yes

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No or N/A
Servicing must meet the following criteria:	Either: i. A GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition¹² that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or iii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes	N/A
Affordability	The household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria set out in the VCMA governance document	N/A
Funding	Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord and national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance servicing	N/A

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance repair and replacement

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No or N/A
Unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	Either: i. GDN has had to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has had to condemn unsafe pipework, or an essential gas appliance, following an essential gas appliance service (as described in 3.19 of the VCMA governance document)	N/A
Health condition	Either: i. The occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes and has a household income of £31,000 or below in 2025/26 prices, adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index with Housing costs (CPIH) 13, or ii. the household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria set out in Appendix 1 of the VCMA governance document	N/A
Funding	Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance repair or replacement.	N/A