Start Date: August 2026

PEA reference: PCG-Collab-018a

Royal British Legion

Warmth for Veterans

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







UK GAS DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS

Contents

Contents 2

Problem(s) 4

Scope and objectives 5

Project design engagement 6

How VCMA funding complements or supplements BAU activities 7

Outcomes, associated actions and success criteria 7

Potential for new learning 9

Aligning with and supporting wider vulnerability approaches 9

Monitoring and evaluation 10

Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations, including NPV 10

Internal governance and project management evidence 11

Eligibility Criteria 12

Project registration table

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Project summary</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project title</td><td>Warmth for Veterans</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategic area</td><td>Supporting Priority Customer Groups</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lead partner name</td><td>Royal British Legion (RBL)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lead GDN(s)</td><td>Cadent</td></tr>
<tr><td>Funding GDN(s)</td><td>Cadent, NGN, SGN & WWU</td></tr>
<tr><td>New/Updated
(indicate as appropriate)</td><td>New</td></tr>
<tr><td>Collaborative VCMA Projects
Specific role(s) of GDN(s) participating in a collaborative VCMA Project</td><td>Cadent - Lead
NGN, SGN and WWU – delivery</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date of PEA submission</td><td>July 2026</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project start and end date</td><td>August 2026 – July 2028</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project location</td><td>England, Scotland and Wales</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sectors involved
(include only those involved)</td><td>Gas Distribution Network
Charitable Organisation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Project contact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name</td><td>Phil Burrows</td></tr>
<tr><td>Contact details</td><td>Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Project partners and third parties involved</td></tr>
<tr><td>Organisation name</td><td>Role</td></tr>
<tr><td>RBL</td><td>Lead delivery partner</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Costs and funding</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total cost (£k)</td><td>£330,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total VCMA funding required (£k</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>GDN</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Funding</th></tr>
<tr><td>Cadent</td><td>45.4545%</td><td>£150,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>NGN</td><td>15.1515%</td><td>£50,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>SGN</td><td>24.2424%</td><td>£80,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>WWU</td><td>15.1515%</td><td>£50,000.00</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>100%</td><td>£330,000.00</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total BAU vulnerability and CO safety activity baseline allowance funding by activity (£k)</td><td>N/A</td></tr>
</table>

Problem(s)

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

The armed forces community face a range of significant and unique challenges. These include high risk mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, alongside difficulties transitioning to civilian life and increased risk of social isolation. Serving personnel, veterans, and their families often experience financial instability, career disruption, and housing insecurity due to frequent relocation and periods of service-related uncertainty. As a result, mainstream support services frequently struggle to meet the specific and complex needs of this community effectively.

Veterans struggle with poverty due to abrupt shifts from structured military environments to independent civilian life, challenges in translating specialized skills, and delayed disability or pension support. Research has shown that they struggle with interface first processes and require in person support to navigate DWP systems to apply for benefits including universal credit.[1] This can create a level of distrust in the system and without in person intervention they may not proceed with an application. These factors put them at higher risk of fuel poverty if they are unable to access the required support.

The armed forces community is known to be particularly proud and private, especially when it comes to personal finances. Many individuals have spent much of their working lives in service, where income, accommodation, and utilities were often structured and managed on their behalf. As a result, when transitioning into civilian life, some veterans and their families can struggle to understand where and how to seek financial or energy related advice or may feel reluctant to ask for help at all. This can increase the risk of fuel poverty, energy debt, and disengagement from essential support services.

In addition, a significant proportion of this community lives with the long-term impacts of trauma and poor mental health, often linked to operational experiences, bereavement, injury, or prolonged periods of stress. These challenges can create substantial barriers to engagement, particularly with organisations that are unfamiliar with the armed forces culture or the complexity of service-related needs. While some individuals may receive income or welfare advice from generalist charities, those services often cannot provide the specialist understanding or trauma-informed support that is crucial for effective engagement with this community.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) is uniquely positioned to bridge this gap. They have dedicated specialist teams who understand the lived experiences of serving personnel, veterans, and their families, and who are equipped to provide holistic, tailored support. Crucially, RBL is widely trusted within the armed forces community, often serving as the first and only point of contact when individuals seek help. By partnering with RBL, the GDNs can ensure that vital information on gas safety, carbon monoxide (CO) awareness, Priority Service Registration (PSR), energy efficiency, and income maximisation is delivered through a trusted channel, in a way that is sensitive, accessible, and appropriate to the needs of this audience.

This partnership approach not only improves reach into a community that is otherwise difficult to engage but also ensures that energy related advice is embedded within wider, person-centred support. By strengthening collaboration with RBL, the GDNs can help reduce risk, improve safety, and

[1] https://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2025.2530874

enhance financial resilience for armed forces families, while reinforcing their commitment to supporting vulnerable and seldom heard communities across their networks.

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.

Cadent delivered a successful two-year partnership with the RBL from 2024 to 2026. The partnership demonstrated clear value by enabling targeted engagement with the armed forces community through a trusted and well-established organisation. Building on this proven model, the Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) now seek to expand the offer, widening access to support and advice around CO awareness, the PSR support, energy efficiency and income maximisation across all of the GDN's networks.

This project will focus on supporting individuals in the most vulnerable situations within the armed forces community, including serving personnel, veterans, and their families.

Working collaboratively with participating GDNs, RBL will support the armed forces community and their families by delivering specialist support through its Benefits, Debt and Money Advice (BDMA) team. This team has specialist knowledge of the armed forces community and is experienced in providing trauma-informed, culturally aware support tailored to their specific needs.

The BDMA team will provide tailored, one-to-one support and advice by:

- Offering individual sessions to assess needs and identify appropriate support.
- Providing support with debt issues, including negotiating with creditors and arranging affordable repayment plans where required.
- Referring individuals to other relevant RBL services, ensuring a holistic and joined up support offer.
- Carrying out full benefit checks to highlight benefits individuals may be entitled to but not currently claiming and support individuals through the application process.

In addition, awareness of CO, PSR, and energy efficiency will be included in their offer at no additional cost to the partners as RBL will utilise their social media and magazine to enhance the reach. Ensuring messages reach a wide audience within the armed forces community in a trusted and accessible way.

Project objectives:

- To support armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families to maximise household income by identifying unclaimed benefit entitlements, providing debt advice, and supporting sustainable repayment arrangements where required.
- To provide personalised, one-to-one support through RBL's specialist advice services, recognising the impact of service-related trauma, mental health challenges, and the unique cultural factors affecting this community.
- To engage individuals who are unlikely to seek help from mainstream services due to pride, privacy, or past service experiences, ensuring support reaches those most at risk of financial hardship, fuel poverty, or disengagement.

- To increase awareness of energy efficiency measures and practical energy saving tips through the RBL trusted media channels, helping households reduce energy consumption and manage costs more effectively.
- To raise awareness of the PSR among members in the most vulnerable situations through the RBL trusted media channels.
- To increase awareness and understanding of CO risks, signs, and symptoms, and promote safe behaviours in the home, helping to reduce the likelihood of CO related harm within the armed forces community through the RBL trusted media channels.

Project design engagement

This must detail;

- *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, 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.*

Through collaboration with RBL, we also identified that members of the armed forces community can be at increased risk of financial hardship. Factors such as service-related injury or ill health, reduced income following transition to civilian life, and difficulties navigating complex support and benefits systems can contribute to this vulnerability. RBL advisers play a vital role in helping individuals understand the financial support and benefits they may be entitled to and in supporting them through the application and claims process.

In response, we have worked in partnership with RBL to design a project that meaningfully addresses the needs of veterans and their families. As subject matter experts for the armed forces community, RBL's insight has been fundamental in shaping the scope of the project, ensuring it is person-centred, responsive to lived experience, and maximises the benefit delivered to end users.

Between June 2024 and March 2026, the project delivered strong and consistent impact across all key areas, exceeding its target deliverables.

RBL raised awareness of the Priority Services Register among 456,000 people across the network through their media channels. In addition, 907 individuals were supported to access benefits and grants they were entitled to, resulting in £3,002,398 in financial gains.

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 GDNs 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 under-served 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.

VCMA funding for this project is designed to complement and enhance existing BAU activities, rather than duplicate them, by enabling a more tailored and specialist approach aligned to the needs of the armed forces community.

While GDNs already deliver CO awareness and promote the PSR as part of their core responsibilities, this project extends those activities through the RBL, a trusted organisation with unique access to and understanding of the armed forces community. VCMA funding enables the provision of more in-depth, specialist advice, particularly regarding CO signs, symptoms, and risk mitigation, delivered in a way that is trauma-informed and culturally appropriate capabilities that fall outside the standard remit of GDN frontline operations.

In addition, although PSR awareness and registrations are embedded within BAU processes, the project recognises that individuals within the armed forces community may not engage with, or be aware of, GDN-led services due to factors such as trust, cultural identity, and previous service experience. By working through RBL, VCMA funding enables these existing services to be delivered through a trusted and familiar channel, significantly improving engagement and ensuring that vulnerable individuals are more effectively identified and supported.

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.

RBL and the GDNs will carry out monthly reporting reviews on measurable outcomes against targets to ensure successful delivery. Quarterly reviews will provide the opportunity for more in-depth analysis and the ability to highlight insights and learnings to share, as well as identify any risks and requirement for any associated actions to mitigate these.

Key outcomes expected from this project:

The table below shows a forecast of reach via RBL's various communication channels over two-years:

CADENT	Conversations	Social media	Legion Magazine
Income maximisation support	820		
Energy awareness		1,195,344	
PSR awareness			139,457
CO awareness		1,195,344	

SGN	Conversations	Social media	Legion Magazine
Income maximisation support	437		
Energy awareness		649,706	
PSR awareness			75,799
CO awareness		649,706	
NGN	**Conversations**	**Social media**	**Legion Magazine**
Income maximisation support	273		
Energy awareness		277,356	
PSR awareness			32,358
CO awareness		277,356	
WWU	**Conversations**	**Social media**	**Legion Magazine**
Income maximisation support	273		
Energy awareness		277,594	
PSR awareness			32,386
CO awareness		277,594	

Total Reach	Conversations	Social media	Legion Magazine
Income maximisation support	1803		
Energy awareness		2,400,000	
PSR awareness			280,000
CO awareness		2,400,000	

Annual Reach	Conversations	Social media	Legion Magazine
Income maximisation support	902		
Energy awareness		1,200,000	
PSR awareness			140,000
CO awareness		1,200,000	

Success Criteria

The Collaborative project will be delivered in partnership with RBL and aims to reach 2.68m individuals through various channels with CO, energy efficiency & PSR awareness and a direct reach of 1,803 individuals with 121 conversations.

The success of the project will be measured by meeting the agreed targets and assessing the project's impact on individuals from the Armed Forces community by reviewing case studies.

1. Strengthened Financial Resilience

- Number of individuals receiving income maximisation advice
- Successful identification of additional benefits and financial support, helping individuals achieve greater financial security
- Alleviation of debt as a result of intervention with creditors providing greater financial security, improving mental health and providing advice on how to prevent this issue recurring.

2. Improved Safety and Reduced Vulnerability

- Increased CO awareness

3. Increased PSR Registrations

- Percentage of eligible people registering after engagement with a social media post or the Legion Magazine, showing improved access to priority support during outages and planned works.

4. Effective Partnership Working

- Strong collaboration between GDNs and RBL, evidenced through:
- Regular information sharing.
- Better understanding of the community.

Potential for new learning

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

Members of the armed forces community often do not self-identify as being in a vulnerable situation which presents a significant challenge in ensuring that appropriate support reaches those most in need. Through this project, there is an opportunity to deepen understanding of how vulnerability can be recognised using non-traditional indicators, such as transition to civilian life including managing finances and debt, experiences of trauma, and social isolation. It will also highlight the important role that specialist organisations, such as the Royal British Legion, play in identifying and responding to complex and often hidden needs. In doing so, the project will generate valuable insight into how proactive identification methods and referral pathways can be strengthened to ensure earlier and more effective intervention.

RBL has also played a central role in regional partner and stakeholder events across the networks, consistently attending with a spirit of collaboration that encourages the exchange of best practice at both national and regional levels. This openness has strengthened the programme's design, broadened its reach, and ensured that the support offered is grounded in the lived experience of the communities we collectively serve.

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.

The partnership with RBL has been built on a strong foundation of data, insight and frontline experience through GD2, which has helped shape the training and ongoing services provided.

[2]The armed forces community experience situations of multiple, overlapping forms of vulnerability and can fall across a wide range of recognised vulnerability categories, including health and wellbeing, life events, financial hardship, resilience, and social support. This is widely acknowledged by government, regulators, and specialist organisations working with serving personnel, veterans, and their families. Factors such as service-related physical and mental health conditions, repeated

[2] definition of vulnerability - Google Search

relocation, transition to civilian life, bereavement, and financial complexity can combine to significantly increase risk and reduce individuals' ability to engage with support.

A key principle consistently highlighted across national vulnerability strategies and best practice frameworks is the importance of proactively identifying vulnerability and intervening early, rather than relying on individuals to self-identify or seek help at a point of crisis. Early recognition and timely support can prevent escalation, reduce harm, and improve long-term outcomes, particularly for those who may be reluctant to disclose personal circumstances or ask for assistance.

This project directly supports that approach. By working in partnership with the RBL the GDNs are embedding proactive identification and early intervention within a trusted, specialist support pathway. The project focuses on engaging individuals before issues escalate helping them understand and access the PSR, raising awareness of CO, and supporting income maximisation and financial stability.

By aligning energy safety, financial resilience, and personalised support within a wider vulnerability framework, the project reflects a person centred, preventative model of support. It ensures that members of the armed forces community receive the right help at the right time, through an organisation they trust.

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.

RBL 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 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 £16.84 for every £1 spent.

Social value measurement

Total cost*	£324,306.02
Total gross present value	£5,733,034.34
Net Present Value (NPV)	£5,408,728.33
SROI	£16.68

*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 need and stakeholder expectations, safeguarding the effective and responsible use of VCMA funds. Cadent has worked closely with the other GDNs and RBL 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	Mary O'Shaughnessy – Safeguarding Specialist	08/06/26
NGN	Laura Ratcliffe – Head of Social Strategy	01/09/26
SGN	Maureen McIntosh – Director of Customer Services	18/08/26
WWU	Gwyn Thomas- Communications & Customer Senior Manager	21/08/26

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