

WALES & WEST UTILITIES

# Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

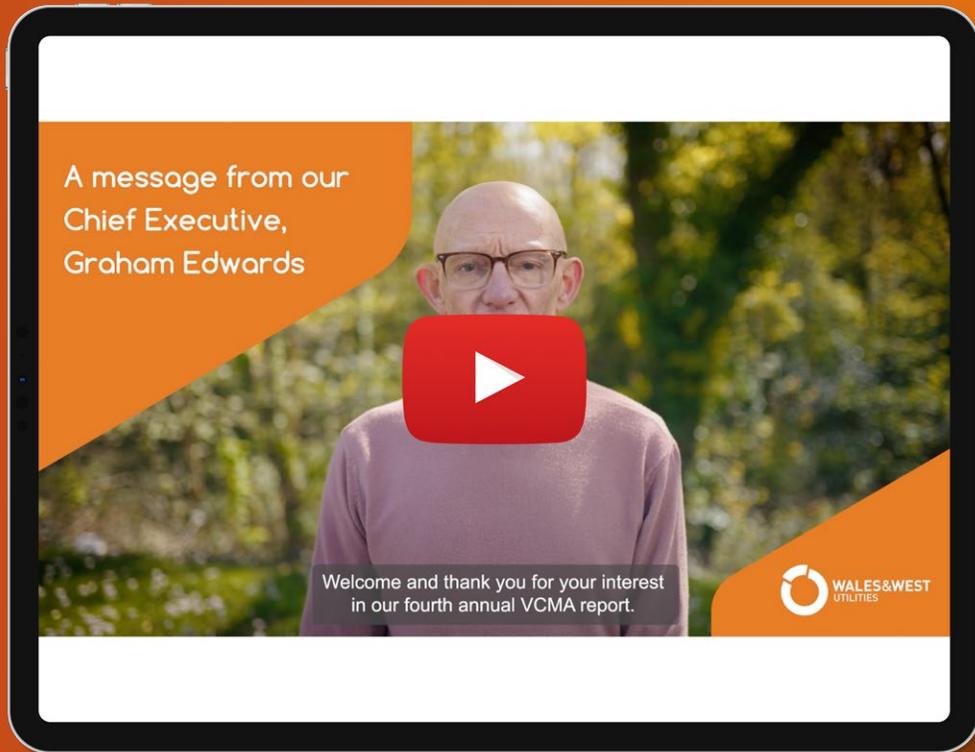
Annual Report  
2024-25



# Welcome

Welcome to our fourth annual VCMA Report.

In this video, our Chief Executive Officer, Graham Edwards, shares how we continue to support customers experiencing or at risk of fuel poverty and the vital role our partnerships play in making a difference.



Graham Edwards, CEO



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## How to use our interactive report

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# Helpful terms

These are some key terms you'll see in our report. In case you haven't encountered them before, we've added explanations.

VCMA	<b>Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance.</b>
RIIO-GD2	This describes the price control period from 2021–2026, relating to how Ofgem divides funding for GDNs to carry out their work in five-year cycles. It stands for <b>Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs</b> . GD2 represents the second gas distribution period since the current system was introduced.
RIIO-GD3	As above, and this describes the price control period from 2026–2031.
GDN	<b>Gas Distribution Networks</b> are the companies like us, that are responsible for transporting gas to homes and businesses and looking after the gas pipelines.
Ofgem	Ofgem is the UK government <b>Office of Gas and Electricity Markets</b> . Their role is to protect consumers by working to deliver a greener, fairer energy system. They set the rules and regulations for GDNs and allocate funding.
UIOLI	The <b>'Use It or Lose It'</b> classification, means that if we don't spend this allowance on VCMA projects, unused funding is returned to all customers.
FPNES	The <b>Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme</b> is delivered by the GDNs in partnership with other organisations to help tackle fuel poverty, by supporting off-grid, fuel poor households to connect to the gas network.
PSR	The <b>Priority Services Register</b> is held by energy and water companies to aid identification of customers' additional needs and the support they may require.
Fuel Poverty	Homes in fuel poverty pay a disproportional amount of their household income on heating their home (different definitions in England and Wales).
CO	<b>Carbon Monoxide</b> is a poisonous gas released when fuels like wood, gas, coal, and oil burn incompletely. Known as the silent killer, it is highly toxic yet due to being colourless, odourless, and tasteless it can be inhaled without detection.
SROI	<b>Social Return on Investment</b> is a framework for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value than money alone. It seeks to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve wellbeing by including social, environmental and economic costs and benefits.
LCV	<b>Locking Cooker Valves</b> are safety devices fitted to a gas cooker pipework that prevents the gas supply from being turned on when locked. This feature helps ensure that vulnerable individuals, such as those with dementia or neurological differences, do not unintentionally turn on or leave the cooker on, which can be a significant safety risk.
Stakeholders	These are any interested parties, for example UK, Welsh or Local governments, consumer groups, charities or environmental groups that need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to be informed by our business and/or</li><li>• have an influence on the delivery of our operations and/or</li><li>• have an impact on decisions affecting our business.</li></ul>

# Introducing VCMA

## What is VCMA and how does it help communities?

The Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) is one of the funds we are allocated to carry out our work as a Gas Distribution Network (GDN). Our central role as a GDN is to safely transport gas to homes and businesses across our region, and in doing so we interact with many households every day, encountering situations of hardship first-hand.

**Recognising the important position that all GDNs hold within our communities, and in response to feedback from key stakeholders, our regulator Ofgem made the VCMA available from April 2021.**

The purpose of this fund is to enable the GDNs to go beyond their daily responsibilities, offering additional services and initiatives that support vulnerable customers and communities both within our network and across the UK. VCMA funded projects focus on assisting those experiencing fuel poverty and vulnerability, while also promoting carbon monoxide safety for all our customers.

### **Supporting projects that create meaningful and lasting change, brings the following benefits:**

- Many individuals are unaware that support exists or struggle to access it, leaving them vulnerable. Through trusted partnerships, those vulnerable people are reached, and this fund connects them with the help they need, offering protection, education, and practical assistance.
- Without this funding, many of these life-changing projects simply wouldn't exist, leaving gaps in support that could significantly affect health and overall wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable communities.
- By bridging these gaps, it creates safer, more resilient communities where no one is left behind.
- Raises the awareness of the risks of carbon monoxide (CO) and actions to be taken saving lives and serious injury.

Examples of projects funded through the VCMA include larger projects with organisations such as [Warm Wales](#) and [Care & Repair Cymru](#), alongside smaller grassroots projects such as [Advocates and Angels](#). Details of all our VCMA projects can be found in the tables under each pillar later in the report.

# VCMA funding key facts

Introducing VCMA

A total of  
**£60m**  
of VCMA funding  
was allocated for the  
GDNs use during  
**2021-2026**

At WWU, we were originally allocated just under a **12%** share  
which is **£7m**<sup>1</sup> reflecting our proportion of UK households connected to the gas network.

In July 2023,  
**£111m**

of funding was redirected from the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES)<sup>2</sup>, increasing the original GDN allowance from £60m to

**£171m**

Our share was

**£13m**<sup>3</sup>

bringing our total to

**£20m**<sup>4</sup>

The allowance is classed as 'Use It or Lose It' (UIOLI) which means that if we don't spend it on VCMA projects, unused funding is returned to all customers.

Ofgem detail the eligibility criteria for VCMA projects in their [governance document](#), in addition to the requirements for registering projects, for annual reporting, and for a compulsory annual showcase event.

<sup>1</sup> Allowance in 2018-19 prices – 2024-25 prices with inflation are £8.7m.

<sup>2</sup> You can read more about the redirection of the FPNES in our 2023-24 VCMA Report [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Allowance in 2018-19 prices – 2024-25 prices with inflation are £17.2m.

<sup>4</sup> Allowance in 2018-19 prices – 2024-25 prices with inflation are £25.9m.

At least **25%** of an individual GDN allowance must be spent on projects that reach a UK-wide footprint and are carried out in collaboration with one or more of the other GDNs.

The remaining **75%** of each GDN allowance is to be spent on network-specific projects that provide localised support.

# What qualifies as a VCMA project?

## Updates to the governance document

### Introducing VCMA

Ofgem specify the following criteria in their governance document, to describe what qualifies a VCMA project:

- Have defined outcomes and associated actions
- Go beyond activities funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government funding
- Have a positive, or a forecast positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) in one of the following ways:
  1. Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations and relate to energy safeguarding
  2. Provide awareness of the dangers of CO
  3. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO.

In addition to the criteria above, the governance document also sets out the eligibility criteria for projects aimed at providing support for gas appliance servicing, repairs, and replacements, as well as collaborative initiatives, project registration, and reporting obligations.

Following discussions and feedback from the 2024 annual VCMA showcase event, the GDNs, with the support of key stakeholders, initiated a review of the VCMA governance document. In November 2024, Ofgem launched a consultation on proposed revisions, focusing on expanding eligibility criteria for VCMA projects related to the servicing, repair, and replacement of essential gas appliances.

The consultation sought to provide GDNs with greater flexibility in supporting vulnerable consumers who were not in receipt of means tested benefits, particularly those of low-income households or those with vulnerable occupants. Recognising this risk, key stakeholders contributed valuable feedback, which helped shape the revised governance released in January 2025, ensuring that a broader range of individuals including those with serious health conditions can access the help they need.

# Our commitments

## Making a positive impact

This section demonstrates how we've helped communities by highlighting key figures and achievements. You'll find the commitments we made in our RIIO-GD2 business plan, alongside our achievements since this funding initiative began in 2021.

### RIIO-GD2 Commitments and Achievements to date

#### What we committed to:

1. Investing **£750,000** per annum to identify vulnerable customers and reduce the risk of CO
2. Funding first time gas connections via our Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES), delivering at least **2,500** new connections
3. Helping at least **1,200** homes per year with fuel poverty and energy efficiency support
4. Maintaining our Institute of Customer Service (ICS) accreditation and British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision
5. Increasing our customer satisfaction scores
6. Signing **12,000** people up to the Priority Services Register (PSR) per year and campaigning for one PSR for all utility services
7. Reaching **250,000** homes each year with CO awareness messaging
8. Issuing **5,000** free CO alarms to the most vulnerable homes
9. Expanding our schools programme, with a target of **4,000** pupils each year

#### What we've achieved since 2021:

-  Invested **£5.2m** per annum. We have been able to support more organisations through the VCMA allowance
-  Funded **1,534** FPNES connections
-  Directly reached **208,465** individuals (over 88,000 homes) with fuel poverty, energy efficiency support services
-  Maintained our ICS ServiceMark accreditation with distinction status  
Achieved re-accreditation against British Standard BS ISO22458 Vulnerable Customers
-  Increased customer satisfaction scores to 9.26/10 (with priority customers at 9.42/10)
-  Signed **55,293** customers up to the PSR
-  Reached **2.7m individuals (over 1.1m homes)** with CO awareness messaging
-  Issued **27,877** CO alarms
-  Grown our schools programme, reaching more than **24,000** young people to date

#### Key

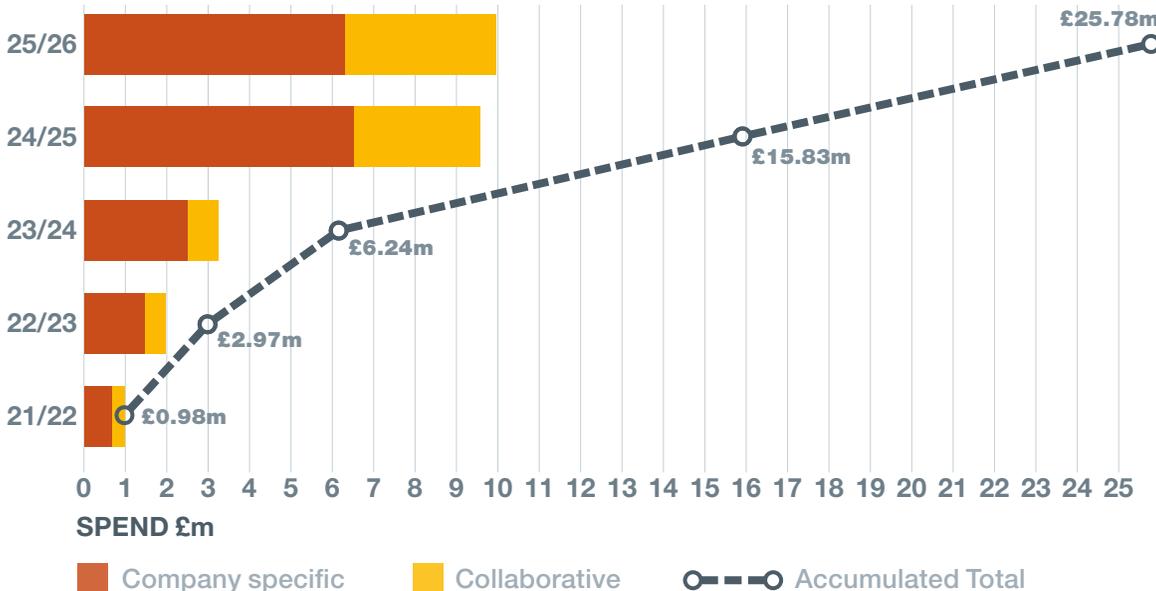
-  = Behind target
-  = At risk
-  = On target

# VCMA investment

We have fully allocated our VCMA allowance for the RIIO-GD2 period. In collaboration with trusted partner organisations, we have implemented Fuel Poor and CO initiatives across our network and beyond.

Here is a year-by-year summary of our VCMA investment:

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Total
<b>Company specific</b>	£733,524	£1,483,752	£2,594,395	£6,405,151	£6,263,645	£17,480,478
<b>Collaborative</b>	£250,721	£508,191	£671,532	£3,177,777	£3,694,476	£8,302,698
<b>Total</b>	<b>£984,245</b>	<b>£1,991,943</b>	<b>£3,265,927</b>	<b>£9,582,928</b>	<b>£9,958,121</b>	<b>£25,783,166</b>



## Introducing VCMA

Our investments have funded the following total number of projects to date:

**42** Company Specific projects

**35** collaborative projects

These projects have resulted in financial savings of **£32m** for customers, in addition to the added value, measured by SROI.

**£11.22**   
Avg forecast SROI for WWU specific projects

**£14.17**   
Avg forecast SROI for WWU and collaborative projects

Our collaborative investment accounts for

**32%**

of our total expenditure so far, guided by regional stakeholders to ensure that the projects we support have a strong presence in our region and align with the goals of our [Consumer Vulnerability Strategy](#).

Almost half – **45%**

of the projects within our VCMA portfolio are delivered in collaboration with at least one other GDN.



To enhance the insights provided here, this report should be read alongside the [collaborative VCMA report](#), as it explores the collective efforts of GDNs across a broader UK footprint.

# Year 4 delivery update (2024-25)

In the fourth year of delivery, we significantly increased our VCMA investment, allocating **£9.58m** driven by the repurposing of the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES).

This was a **193% rise** compared to 2023-24.

This enhanced funding has enabled us to support more individuals than ever before, further extending our reach to the most vulnerable communities across our project portfolio. Through strengthened and expanded community relationships, we have fostered an environment where people feel psychologically safe to discuss their situations, helping to break down barriers and reduce the stigma associated with reaching out for support. We have seen a notable increase in people seeking assistance, with more individuals sharing their personal circumstances and expressing their needs, particularly in relation to financial and health support.

## Introducing VCMA

This year, we have remained committed to developing projects that directly address the impact of living in a cold, damp home on an individual's health. We have expanded and scaled-up initiatives that reach and support the most vulnerable communities we serve; while ensuring we have the necessary resources to effectively manage the increased project oversight and reporting requirements resulting from the reallocation of FPNES.

Invested **£9.58m** in VCMA projects



**229,105** People reached directly



**2.3m** People reached through campaigns



**£14.4m** Savings for our customers



**36** LCV installations



**15,392** PSR sign ups



**5,152** CO alarms issued



**157** Accessible CO alarms



**9,895** CO Awareness surveys with results showing an average increased awareness among participants of 64.33%



**53** In flight VCMA Projects





# VCMA in practice Our mission statement

Our aim is to establish a strong and well-balanced portfolio of VCMA projects, delivering crucial support to the most vulnerable in our communities through fuel poverty and carbon monoxide safety initiatives. We have achieved this – and will continue to do so – by partnering with trusted organisations within our network and collaborating with other gas networks. Our business priorities and values provide the framework for translating principles into meaningful action.

# Project delivery: From idea to evaluation



## VCMA in practice

### 1. Idea generation and submission

We welcome project proposals from potential partners, whether existing partners or new. Ideas can be submitted in the following ways:

- Directly via email
- Proposed additions to an in-progress project
- Through our procurement notice, which is part of the process we follow when planning to buy goods, services or works
- Via industry working groups such as the VCMA Steering Group, CO Steering Group, Services Beyond the Meter Steering Group, and the Monthly GDN Best Practice Working Group.

### 2. Scoping and selection

We review proposals in line with eligibility criteria and our VCMA strategy, making sure that ideas are supported by stakeholders and align with one of our four key pillars – which we detail later in this report.

### 3. Idea presentation and sign off

When presenting VCMA project ideas to us, proposers must include:

- A Social Return on Investment (SROI) forecast
- Budget allocation review
- Completed supporting documents shared with various internal steering groups, committees, and our Executive Team.

### 4. Refinement

Plans for VCMA projects are refined in collaboration with potential partner organisations and finalised together ready for delivery, including the setting up of legal and financial documents.

## 5. Launch

Once projects have passed our Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA), we register them on our dedicated database. We then deliver onboarding sessions directly to partners and keep in touch with internal and/or external communication(s).

## 6. Delivery

Tracking of project information must take place alongside project delivery, with the recording of project benefits, outcomes and learning.

## 7. Closedown and evaluation

At the project closedown stage, we validate outcomes and share information, including learning and how this can inform future projects.

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# Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy

We have recently published our latest [Consumer Vulnerability Strategy](#) which incorporates our VCMA strategy, which has been developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and literature reviews.

This strategy builds upon and integrates both our previous Vulnerability Strategy, and our Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Strategy from RII0-GD2. To shape our approach, we gathered insights through various engagement methods, including:

- **Deliberative sessions with our Citizens Panel**
- **Hybrid workshops with regional stakeholders, such as charities and housing associations**



- **Regular discussions with key partners, including Care & Repair Cymru, SCOPE and National Energy Action**
- **In-depth qualitative research with consumers in vulnerable situations**
- **Participation in key all-party groups, including the All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG) and the Welsh Government Fuel Poverty Group**
- **Engagement in industry events focused on vulnerability and debt-related issues.**

Additionally, we have reinforced this strategy with secondary research and literature reviews, incorporating insights from Ofgem’s Consumer Vulnerability Strategy. Through this comprehensive approach, we remain committed to effectively supporting those in need.

A well-defined Consumer Vulnerability Strategy is crucial to the success of our RIIO-GD3 submission, providing clear direction and a structured narrative for our actions, initiatives, and activities. It serves as a focal point for colleagues and partners to align their efforts, ensuring that we deliver the support our priority customers need in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Our goal is to ensure our strategy remains effective, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable communities across our network. Therefore, we are committed to ongoing engagement with stakeholders, incorporating their feedback to refine and evolve our strategy annually as we transition into the next price control period and beyond. We will also look to align to the [Ofgem Consumer Vulnerability Strategy](#).

We have continued the method from previous reports, of aligning our projects to four key strategic pillars:



Fuel Poverty  
and Energy  
Affordability



Services  
Beyond  
the Meter



Supporting  
Priority Customer  
Groups

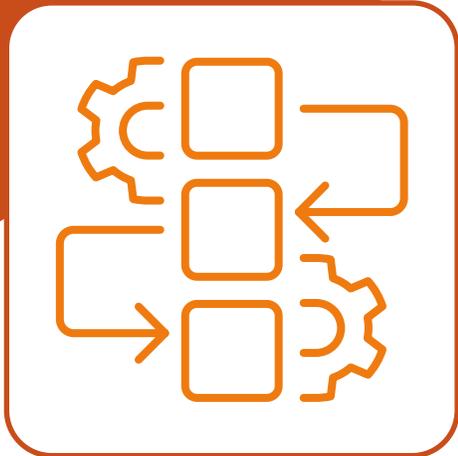


Carbon  
Monoxide  
Awareness

This strategy also complements the key principles outlined in our [2023 Sustainability Strategy](#), which has a long-term plan extending to 2050. In this, we benchmarked our commitments and ambitions to assess our industry position and identify areas for improvement. The insights and contributions of both internal and external stakeholders have been instrumental in shaping this strategy.

# Strategic Alignment

During our project selection process and delivery we align with the following six important features of our VCMA Strategy, to make sure we're being consistent and thorough in our support.



1.

**PSR needs-codes:** By aligning with the codes that categorise customers who require additional support, we ensure individuals receive the targeted help they need.

2.

**Geographical coverage:** Our broad range of partnerships extends the geographical reach of our projects, and we are always looking for ways to grow our reach.

3.

**Strategic key pillars:** To drive impactful change, all of our VCMA work is underpinned by our four key pillars.

4.

**Data-driven approach:** Equipping us to help those most in need, we consult a wide range of data from the Office of National Statistics through to Citizens Advice.

5.

**Fuel poverty and CO focus:** Addressing critical issues, we have multiple measures in place to support customers experiencing fuel poverty and to protect everyone in our communities from the dangers of CO.

6.

**Supporting disadvantaged communities:** Bridging gaps in assistance, we are committed to going the extra mile for the most vulnerable in our communities.



# How we work with partners

Our trusted and well-established partners play a vital role in connecting with the communities we serve, making strong partnerships essential to the success of our projects. These close collaborations bring the following benefits:

- Their deep-rooted knowledge and understanding of local challenges enables partner organisations to build trust and provide tailored support that resonates with individuals in need.
- As these organisations are already well established, community members are likely to be receptive to their help, which enables meaningful engagement and lasting impact.
- Beyond their local expertise, our partners leverage data-driven insights to develop highly effective and responsive projects. By analysing key metrics, community feedback, and regional trends, they identify pressing needs and gaps in services. This results in more targeted interventions, optimised resources and increased benefits for vulnerable groups.



Key stakeholders have recognised and reinforced the importance of this collaborative approach, shaping our project investment strategy and guiding the direction of our initiatives.

## Strategic Alignment

Following the successful launch of our VCMA Partners Network Event in 2024, this engagement activity is now an integral part of our business-as-usual, which we host twice a year. By bringing together trusted organisations within our project portfolio, we enhance coordination between services and maximise the impact of our initiatives. Through in-person conversations and presentations, partners can share best practice, build relationships and explore new ways of working together. Recent focuses have included the transition to net zero for vulnerable customers, and initiatives that could be developed to bring the wider energy industry together and create a 'one stop shop' for communities.

The VCMA Partners Network remains a vital platform for shaping future initiatives, driving collaboration, and delivering lasting benefits for vulnerable customers.

“

*Yesterday, I had the absolute privilege of attending a conference hosted by our incredible funders WWU, and honestly, I'm still buzzing from it! It wasn't just another event. No, this was something truly special.*

*Picture a room filled with big-idea people – the kind of people who inspire you to think bigger, dream bolder and actually believe in the power of change. It was all about empowerment, resilience and partnership.*

*And can we talk about the vibe? Collaboration was everywhere. Like, seriously. It was the spine of every single moment, every single conversation. It wasn't about duplication or working in silos. It was about different expertise, but all working towards the same goal: a better, brighter future for those we're here to serve.*

*Thank you for creating a space where ideas flow freely and collaboration comes first. Thank you for making room for us to bring our voices to the table, and most of all, thank you for believing in the power of working together.* ”



“

*Here's to more days like yesterday and more partnerships that turn big ideas into real, lasting impact. Because when we come together, we're unstoppable.* ”

# Our Independent Stakeholder Group

## Strategic Alignment

Our Independent Stakeholder Group (ISG) continues to play a vital role in shaping our strategy and approach, bringing together experts from both the private and public sectors to challenge, refine, and guide our activities across the business. Their collective knowledge and industry expertise ensure we remain responsive to emerging opportunities, evolving risks, and best practices within the energy sector.

### During this reporting period, our ISG has:

- Provided challenge during the development of our RIIO GD3 Business Plan
- Given external context to the real challenges faced by those in fuel poverty and experiencing physical and mental health challenges, with regard to energy and the wider cost of living
- Undertaken specific challenge and review of our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy
- Encouraged us to formally develop our Social Promise as a responsible business
- Continued to ask for updates on our planning for RIIO GD3, and our progress implementing the service updates we identified in our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy.

“ The cost of living crisis has had a devastating effect on millions of households and Wales & West Utilities have played a critical role in supporting the most vulnerable. As an ISG member I have seen first hand how the Company is providing extensive direct support, raising awareness and working with a wide range of partners to implement effective interventions for disadvantaged people. We are looking forward to seeing the implementation of their RIIO-GD3 strategy over the next five-year price review period and the positive impact it plans to bring across the communities it serves. ”

Christine Tate, SCOPE



# 2024-25 Stakeholder engagement and research

## Strategic Alignment

We have a comprehensive and ongoing stakeholder engagement programme that keeps us focused on the key priorities for communities across Wales and the south-west of England.

In addition to our ISG, we have a number of stakeholder groups and panels along with a literature review; all of which is instrumental in providing feedback and shaping future strategies and approaches. We engage with stakeholders in multiple ways including face-to-face sessions and online events as follows:

- **Regional Stakeholder Workshops**
- **Citizens Panel**
- **VCMA partnership forums**
- **APPCOG membership**
- **Welsh Government Fuel Poverty advisory group**
- **Partnership events (NEA, Scope, Utility Week)**
- **GDN workgroups and steering groups**
- **VCMA Showcase Event**
- **Customer Journey Mapping**
- **Priority Customer Research by Mindset**



Below are some of the key challenges raised by stakeholders regarding our VCMA, along with the actions we have taken to respond to the challenges:

## Strategic Alignment



### You said:

*The combination of record high energy prices and the wider cost of living crisis has led to record energy debt but also other debt such as housing arrears – support will therefore be required for many years.*

### We did:

Ensured we made the case in our Business Plan for a similar level of funding to support customers in RIIO-GD3 as we have in RIIO-GD2.

### You said:

*An aging population with a range of complex health conditions means GDNs will need to provide more support to more homes in the future.*

### We did:

We led the GDN proposal to Ofgem to review the VCMA governance; with revised guidance issued in Jan 2025 to allow us to support homes on low incomes and with serious health conditions as well as those on means tested benefits.

### You said:

*Customers left unsupported if not on means tested benefits if their gas appliance breaks down.*

### We did:

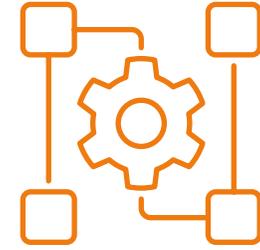
Filled gaps in VCMA project provision by developing new projects in Cornwall and Devon; and expanded provision in Wales to cover all areas connected to gas.



# Outcomes, benefits and lessons learned

While the facts and figures featured earlier in the report are an essential part of understanding the impact of our VCMA initiatives, here we're focusing on the qualitative findings as an introduction to the next section. There, we'll explore our case studies, which will shine a light on some of the real stories of individuals in the communities we serve. In our key learnings, we recognise how the understanding we've gained to date will feed into enhancing future project delivery.

## Strategic Alignment

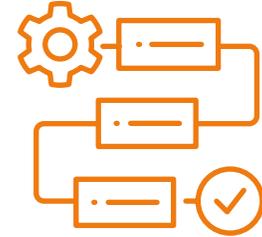


### Outcomes:

- While SROI is a valuable metric for measuring impact, it's the lived experiences of those directly benefiting from projects that truly bring the value of our projects to life. Personal stories add depth, emotion, and authenticity, illustrating the meaningful difference these initiatives make. Our belief in the importance of recognising and documenting real life impacts is shared by our stakeholders, who understand that qualitative insights – alongside quantitative data – are essential in capturing the full scope of a project's success.
- Targeted interventions delivered by our partners are enabling vulnerable communities to access vital support, leading to warmer homes and improved health and wellbeing. These efforts help reduce cold-related illnesses and the negative impacts of cold, damp living conditions, as well as improving awareness of CO risks and enhancing safety.

### Benefits:

- Projects deliver long lasting, life changing and impactful outcomes to those most in need. This includes support to manage chronic illnesses, life-saving gas safety information, and support for people experiencing mental health issues.
- Demand for these services is increasing rapidly as trust and engagement grow within communities, encouraging more households to reach out for support.
- The outstanding work of our partners and colleagues has been recognised both internally and externally, earning nominations and shortlisting at prestigious awards, such as the Utility Week Awards, and Business Charity Awards. These accolades are a testament to their commitment to drive meaningful change and deliver lasting benefits to the communities we support.



**Key Learning:**

- **Rising demand for support:** The need for assistance continues to grow, which highlights the importance of provision, the need to expand resources, and the call for refining delivery approaches.
- **Value vs. cost of handheld support:** While personalised, hands-on assistance remains the most effective method of delivery, it is also the most costly. Balancing impact with sustainability is essential for long-term success.
- **Strength in trusted partnerships:** Working through established, trusted organisations and existing routes to engagement is crucial for reducing the reliance on community members having capacity to identify their own needs. This also makes sure tailored support reaches those who need it most.
- **Collaboration across gas networks:** Our ongoing cooperation with other gas networks – guided by core principles and regional needs – is strengthening collective efforts to provide targeted support.
- **Quicker responses through the VCMA:** The VCMA framework has enabled gas networks to respond swiftly to crises through partnership working. This ability to quickly mobilise and address societal challenges sets GDNs apart from retailers, avoiding prolonged delays in customers having access to support.
- **Sustained high demand:** The significant need for services reinforces the necessity of continuing the VCMA initiative into RIIO-GD3 to maintain effective, responsive support for vulnerable communities.





## Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability

Many households face significant financial pressures, often forced to make difficult choices between heating their homes, paying essential bills, or purchasing food. We designed our fuel poverty and energy affordability projects to provide critical support to customers struggling with rising energy costs. The increasing cost of living has placed further strain on vulnerable communities, making affordable energy access and the support our projects provide more urgent than ever.

Through these programmes, we offer expert guidance, financial assistance, and practical energy-saving solutions to help customers manage their bills and

improve their quality of life. By ensuring that support is accessible and tailored, we help those facing the greatest challenges to stay warm and secure in their homes.

Collaboration is key to delivering meaningful impact. By engaging with policymakers, industry leaders, and community partners, we shape initiatives that effectively reach those most in need. Strengthening these partnerships enhances service delivery, and drives sustainable, long-term improvements for vulnerable households across our network and beyond.

### Key Stats 2024-25

£4.2m

Invested in company specific projects

£1.5m

Invested on collaborative projects

£5.7m

Total investment for Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability projects

£13.25

Average forecast SROI

124,855

People reached directly

£7.4m

Financial savings

*It is not easy supporting people in crisis, and organisations need to work together to give holistic support. WWU support this way of working through VCMA, which is invaluable to help make a difference to people's lives. We are extremely grateful to receive this funding to continue our vital work.*

**Lisa Evans, CSE**

## CASE STUDY 1

Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability



# Action in Caerau & Ely (ACE) – The Hafan Project

## Project at a glance

**Investment:** £49,989.50

**Forecast SROI:** £23.38/£1

**Duration:** Jul 24 - Mar 26

**Status:** In-Progress

## Achievements

Reached **765** individuals

Savings of **£962,914**

Delivered **95** energy advice drop-in sessions

## Need

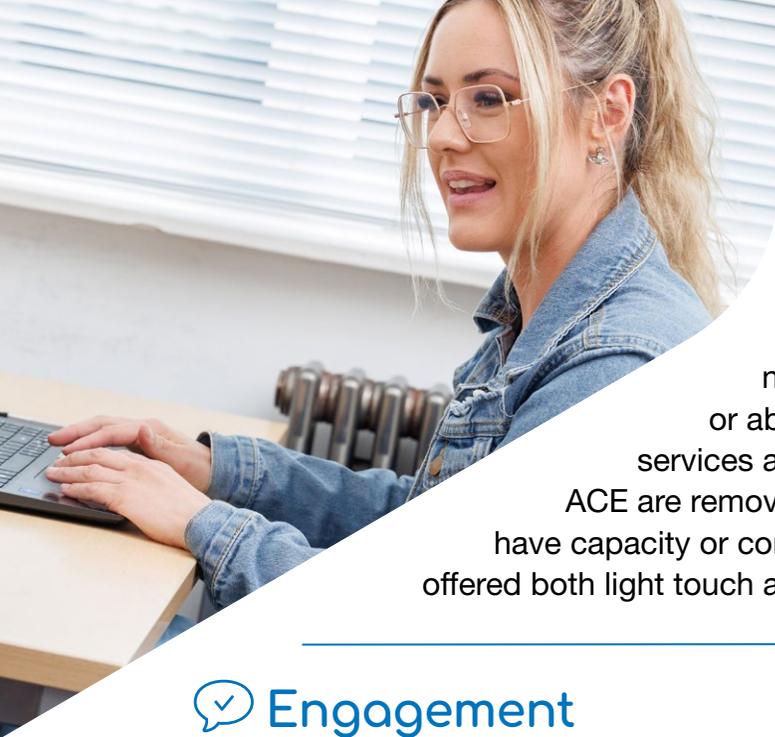
Since Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, Action in Caerau & Ely (ACE) has seen a significant increase in demand for crisis support. At this community developed charity, their daily support sessions prior to 2022 saw around 12 people per week. Since then, this figure has more than doubled with 40-50 people per week now seeking support with emergency fuel and food vouchers. These interactions often lead to staff identifying underlying issues that may require onward referrals. Through their work supporting the communities of Cardiff, ACE has recognised that many vulnerable community members struggle to leave their homes or engage with the project due to illness, disability, or other barriers – and are therefore unable to access these vital support services.



## Approach

ACE innovated to address this problem by adapting the way they support community members in food and fuel poverty crisis to align with their successful social prescribing project. This service sees referrals coming directly from primary health care settings, such as GPs, where vulnerable individuals are more likely to attend, enabling their needs to be identified and help to be put in place. ACE provide targeted advice to those who are struggling with financial issues and have increased vulnerability due to health conditions, which are exacerbated by cold, damp homes. In addition, ACE deliver outreach sessions within GP surgeries during asthma and flu clinics, to reach those who suffer with respiratory conditions. In these settings, ACE provide light-touch energy advice, fuel vouchers, PSR sign-ups, and onward referrals for more in-depth support.





## Impact

By using their well-established social prescribing service to target those hardest to reach in the community, ACE will ensure that no one is left behind through lack of engagement or ability to access services. Their work to align services and collaborate with health organisations means ACE are removing barriers so even those people who don't have capacity or confidence to ask for help, will be identified and offered both light touch and in-depth support.

## Engagement

Through their approach of social prescribing, ACE have found that many individuals do not directly access support without additional engagement, or referral through services that they are already connected with such as primary health care. They have also found there are often underlying issues around housing, a key factor being a lack of financial resources which makes it harder for people to afford to stay warm and heat their homes sufficiently. This is particularly the case for those who have chronic physical and mental health difficulties.

## Learning

Ongoing monitoring of the financial and wellbeing impacts on the local community, produces a range of qualitative and quantitative data. ACE will measure the level of impact by using feedback from The Cardiff and Vale University health board secure feedback system, and the Warwick-Edinburgh mental wellbeing scale which records scores before and after engagement with the project. In addition, their own case management system captures case studies and client testimonials.

With the VCMA funding provided by WWU, ACE have increased their advisor capacity to match community need. The workload of these advisors will be monitored throughout the project to help determine capacity and future need, as well as being key to assessing their impact.

*/// I came in to see my doctor, I have COPD. I have my electricity on a monthly direct debit, but my gas is on a (prepay) meter. During the winter, I get so worried about having to put more in it, and I can't afford it, so I'm cold. I got a (fuel) voucher from the lady in the doctors for my gas, and then she rang me a few days later and we applied for PIP. I tried to get it before, but they said no. The lady did it all for me and I didn't even have to go for an (assessment) appointment or anything. When winter comes, this will make such a difference and I'm thinking that I can now put my gas, the same as my electricity, so I pay by direct debit and don't run out. ///*

### **ACE Client Feedback**

## CASE STUDY 2

Fuel Poverty and  
Energy Affordability



# Money Ready (formerly MyBnk) – Tackling Fuel Poverty through Financial Education

## Project at a glance

**Investment:** £495,478

**Forecast SROI:** £11.78/£1

**Duration:** Jan 24 - Mar 26

**Status:** In-Progress

## Achievements

Reached **1,865** young people aged 7-16

Reached **317** young adults 16-25

Delivered **494** hours of financial education

## Need

98% of lower income households in Wales are in fuel poverty, and young people who are entering independent living for the first time – particularly care leavers and those not in education, employment, or training – are disproportionately affected. This is set against a wider context in which 34% of all children in Wales are living in poverty. Poverty has severe consequences on a child's education, health, and wellbeing, leading to long-term effects such as lower job prospects and persistent mental and physical health issues. By providing a targeted financial education programme, these young people will be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to manage their finances effectively, improve their economic stability, and ultimately enhance their quality of life.



## Approach

The project will see registered charity Money Ready (formerly called MyBnk) deliver over 1,400 hours of financial and energy education to young people aged 7 to 37 across the WWU network, including primary and secondary schools and young adult learners. The initiative aims to educate individuals on efficient energy use and behavioural change, with the Young Adults programme for those aged 16 plus shown to have improvements in wellbeing, life satisfaction, and reduced debt levels. The Young Adults course includes practical tasks like reading energy meters, signing up for the Priority Services Register, understanding energy tariffs, and gas safety. Participants completing the Young Adults (for ages 16 plus) programme will also be eligible for Level 1 qualifications in Personal Money Management. Primary children will receive take-home packs promoting energy efficiency and safety messaging, which can be shared with family and friends, while secondary students will have the option of completing additional energy modules. This comprehensive approach ensures young people receive essential financial and energy education, for long-term positive impacts.



## Impact

Together our partnership will empower children and young people by giving them the skills, confidence and knowledge to be more money and energy efficient. By establishing positive money and energy habits from as young as age 7 in primary schools, this project will have a broader social impact as we support and empower young people to break the cycle of debt in some of the most deprived areas we serve.

## Engagement

Research by Money Ready indicates that young people from deprived backgrounds benefit significantly from financial education, showing greater increases in confidence and knowledge compared to their affluent peers. The studies also show that young people, such as care leavers or those not in education that are entering independent living, often lack a financial safety net. Without specialised financial education tailored to their needs, they are more likely to fall into debt, with 64% of care leavers experiencing debt in 2022<sup>1</sup>.

## Learning

Money Ready captures impact with feedback from learners, host organisations, and their own expert trainers. All learners are asked to complete a post-delivery survey, followed up with interviews. To ensure a well-rounded perspective, host organisations provide survey feedback, which is further enriched by regular input from their expert trainers.

Money Ready continues to explore opportunities to work collaboratively with other organisations including young peoples' services, educational settings and housing providers, to build upon their own knowledge and the successes of the project. All learnings will be incorporated into future delivery, both within our WWU project and as part of the collaborative GDN project which focuses on primary school children.

*As a young person with very limited finance knowledge, I was terrified to go into the adult world, not even knowing how to budget, never mind paying rent and water bills. Financial education is so important to living independently, and it's especially hard living as a young adult when you don't know anything.*

*Thank you, Money Ready, I had a blast, and I definitely know more than I did then.*

**Aimee age 20, Money Ready Young Adult programme attendee**

## CASE STUDY 3

Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability



# Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) – PEC Home Hub

## Project at a glance

**Investment:** £999,752

**Forecast SROI:** £15.70/£1

**Duration:** Apr 24 - Mar 26

**Status:** In-Progress

## Achievements

Supported **12,388** individuals

Savings of **£329,569**

**168** individuals received fuel poverty first aid training

## Need

Plymouth is experiencing a huge increase in the need for support to address the impacts of fuel poverty. The city not only has some of the poorest communities in England, but families are living in ageing housing with issues compounded by high energy prices, the cost-of-living crisis, and the expense of heating sub-standard homes. The physical and mental health impacts of these cold, damp homes are significant and a major contributor to the severe health inequalities that exist between Plymouth's wealthiest and most deprived communities.

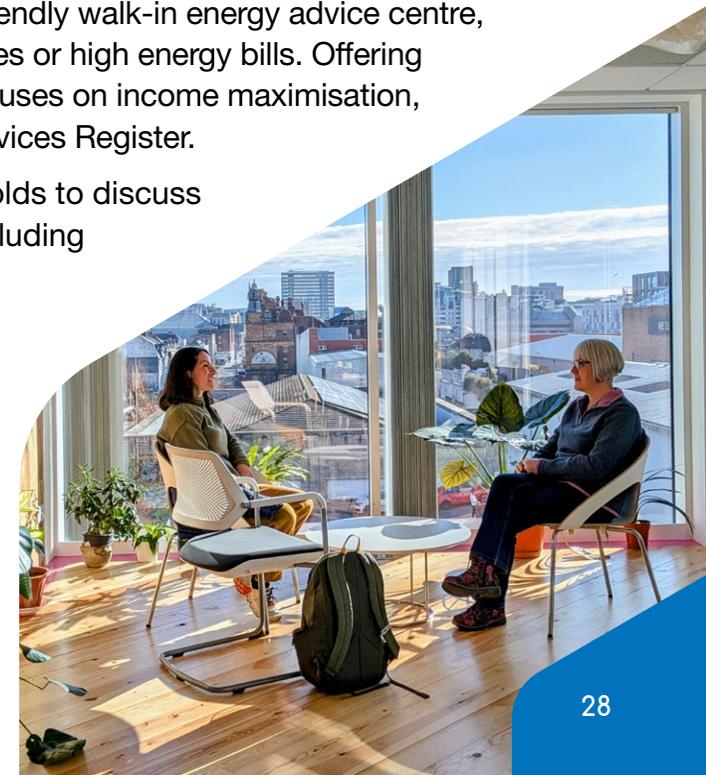


**Plymouth Energy**  
**COMMUNITY™**

## Approach

Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) have taken a four-point approach to local energy support which aims to tackle vulnerability to fuel poverty at a range of levels.

1. **PEC Home Hub:** A brand new environmentally friendly walk-in energy advice centre, assisting residents experiencing cold, damp homes or high energy bills. Offering face-to-face advice and phone support which focuses on income maximisation, supplier mediation, and access to the Priority Services Register.
2. **Home Visits:** PEC Energy Advisors visit households to discuss energy efficiency and address energy issues, including checks for carbon monoxide alarms and raising awareness of safety.
3. **Embedded Energy Advice Specialists:** work with the local health and social care provider to support vulnerable residents.
4. **Fuel Poverty First Aid Training:** The Hub provide free fuel poverty first aid training for frontline workers from referring organisations, enabling them to better support their clients.





## Impact

Due to the enhanced support PEC is now able to offer as a result of our VCMA funding, the project is significantly improving the lives of residents by providing streamlined support, reducing the need to access multiple services, and offering faster interventions for cold, damp, and inefficient homes. Residents are reporting better physical and mental health as well as increased confidence managing their energy use. Those who have accessed the support services are saying they feel more optimistic about controlling bills in the future.

The project has set up an accessible Home Energy Hub for the city, uniting energy interventions with healthcare services. It has also created a single point of contact to help prevent excess winter deaths, ensuring a more effective support plan by integrating care, health, and housing considerations.

## Engagement

Prior to the launch of this project, PEC were able to test their approach through collaboration with another (temporary) centre in the city. While PEC's energy advice services are well embedded in local support systems, they witnessed a consistent need, passion, and interest in a collaborative community space for collective action on domestic energy, energy issues and the climate.

*/// I was £500 overdrawn, had no food and no money, and could not afford the £6 per day it cost to heat my flat. Having PEC come to my home was brilliant as I could not afford the bus to meet them, and I could not walk that far due to COPD. I am so, so grateful for the brilliant service I have been given, which has changed my life. ///*

### **PEC home visit Client Feedback**

## Learning

As well as the financial benefits to residents and carbon savings from small and large energy efficiency measures, PEC collect data on tenancy status, home condition, heating systems, as well as sensitive information on health, age, income, and household composition, all of which can be evaluated to determine which demographics or social groups are most in need. Case studies and client testimonials will further enhance our understanding of need, enabling us to plan, reflect, and adapt future delivery based on trends and feedback.





Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<p><b>Warm Wales – Healthy homes, healthy people</b>                      Delivering energy efficiency and fuel poverty programmes; this Wales-wide project provides support with accessing unclaimed benefits and maximising income for households in fuel poverty, making the link between health and social prescribing.</p>	2024	2026	£19.76	£2,314,275		
<p><b>Centre For Sustainable Energy (CSE) – WHAM: Warm homes, advice and money</b>                      Providing advice and support to vulnerable households by tackling all the causes of fuel poverty. The help delivered by WHAM includes improving financial skills and understanding, and making homes warmer by tackling houses with damp and mould.</p>	2024	2026	£10.74	£1,055,264		
<p><b>MoneyReady (formerly MyBnk) – Tackling fuel poverty through financial education</b>                      This project delivers financial and energy education to young people across Wales and the south-west of England.</p>	2024	2026	£11.78	£495,478		
<p><b>Exeter Community Energy (ECOE) – Healthy homes for wellbeing</b>                      By providing expert and in-depth one-to-one advice and practical support for low income and vulnerable households, this project aims to improve energy efficiency, behaviour and understanding in order to combat fuel poverty.</p>	2024	2026	£2.86	£992,000		
<p><b>PEC Trust – PEC home hub</b>                      Through a home hub; energy advice calls; home visits; and fuel poverty first aid training for frontline workers, this project supports vulnerable people in the Plymouth area.</p>	2024	2026	£15.70	£999,752		
<p><b>YES Energy Solutions – A holistic, wrap-around, energy advice service</b>                      With a tiered advice service for fuel-poor householders, support includes signposting people to essential services and to funding opportunities that can deliver property improvements.</p>	2024	2026	£21.29	£492,820		
<p><b>ACE – Action in Caerau &amp; Ely – The Hafan project</b>                      Support includes: face-to-face advice sessions with vulnerable households; home visits to assess energy usage, efficiency, behaviour and home safety; income maximisation through benefit entitlement checks, and signposting to the PSR.</p>	2024	2026	£23.38	£49,990		

CONTINUED

PROJECT STATUS KEY:



In Progress



Extended



Complete



Hyperlink



Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<p><b>Auriga Services – Somerset warm connections advices service</b>                      This money-advice project builds on and enhances existing partnerships in Somerset, to support vulnerable communities with fuel poverty and energy efficiency services - including income maximisation and benefits guidance.</p>	2024	2026	£0.79	£414,000		
<p><b>National Energy Foundation (NEF) – Better housing, better health: Fuel poverty support</b>                      Delivering vital fuel poverty advice and long-term intervention, this project makes sure that households in need receive tailored support to improve their circumstances, enhance the warmth in their home, and promote overall wellbeing.</p>	2024	2026	£12.15	£306,010		
<p><b>Home Start Cymru – Supporting Wales’ most vulnerable families: via improved wellbeing, financial security and safety at home</b>                      The aims of this project are to alleviate financial hardship of families supported across Wales; to address the health and wellbeing risks of fuel poverty; to raise awareness of carbon monoxide, and to improve parental mental health and family wellbeing.</p>	2025	2026	£15.98	£49,747		
<p><b>Healthy Homes Solutions (HHS) – Vulnerability registration service</b>                      A self-registration service that provides information on the PSR, grant checks and other information that helps to identify why a person may be feeling vulnerable.</p>	2024	2026	£6.63	£1,000,495		
<p><b>Shelter Cymru – Preventing homelessness</b>                      Through expert in-house debt and benefits advice, this project helps people maximise their income, build financial resilience and stay in a safe home.</p>	2023	2025	£43.60	£100,000		
<p><b>BCB – Winter warm support: Supporting vulnerable people in warm spaces</b>                      Providing winter warm packs to customers within our network.</p>	2023	2026	£5.08	£405,755		
<p><b>Warm Wales – Healthy homes, healthy people: Energy efficiency and fuel poverty programmes</b>                      This is a national project covering our WWU regions that aims to provide holistic support – including help for households in fuel poverty to access unclaimed benefits and maximise income.</p>	2021	2025	£10.00	£1,254,000		

CONTINUED

PROJECT STATUS KEY:



In Progress



Extended



Complete



Hyperlink



Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<p><b>Frame Ltd – Fuel poverty and CO awareness project</b>                      These community-led support services are focused on raising awareness of energy efficiency, the PSR, and the dangers of CO, while helping carers to access relevant benefits and maximise their incomes.</p>	2022	2026	£9.21	£111,095		
<p><b>Centre Sustainable Energy (CSE) – Heat ability</b>                      Targeted support services for disabled and low income households, focused on raising awareness of energy efficiency, the PSR, and the dangers of CO, while helping carers to access relevant benefits and maximise their incomes.</p>	2022	2026	£41.58	£100,000		
<p><b>Adra – Prosiect sero net Gwynedd (Project net zero Gwynedd)</b>                      Targeted support services for rural communities in North Wales, delivered by energy wardens.</p>	2023	2026	£15.72	£100,000		
<p><b>Hope4U/Newquay Food Bank – Newquay crisis support</b>                      Newquay foodbank refer their service users to Hope4U, where they can receive in-depth support to access unclaimed benefits, hardship grants, and support to maximise their income.</p>	2022	2026	£5.65	£97,000		
<p><b>WWU, National Grid, Bristol Water &amp; University of the west of England – Resource West</b>                      This project brings local utility companies together to provide single consistent messages about how to make savings, and how to get help to do so. Their purpose is to encourage the public to save money and help protect the environment by reducing energy and water consumption while maintaining warm homes.</p>	2022	2026	£3.00	£9,950		

CONTINUED





Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<p><b>Citizens Advice National – Energy safeguarding and CO safety partnership 23/24 – 25/26</b>                      This project assesses the impact of an 'Energy and CO Safety pack' for at-risk customers; offering alarms, safety guides, and energy-saving advice, while providing tailored support to help vulnerable households stay safe and warm.</p>	2023	2026	£5.54	£675,575		
<p><b>MoneyReady (formerly MyBnk) – Financial inclusion and energy safeguarding: Schools programme</b>                      Delivering financial education to primary-age children through MyBnk; with a dedicated module on energy safety, usage, and efficiency. Designed to foster a lasting partnership with tangible outcomes.</p>	2022	2025	£15.53	£43,605		
<p><b>National Energy Action (NEA) – Warm homes, healthy futures</b>                      Evidence-based initiative linking health professionals and public health bodies to energy advice and specialist services, to tackle health inequalities and fuel poverty together.</p>	2024	2026	£2.66	£1,408,193		
<p><b>Fuel Bank Foundation Extension – Fuel crisis support</b>                      Providing direct financial aid and practical support to help vulnerable households stay safe and warm, identified through community partners or direct funding referrals.</p>	2024	2026	£2.88	£115,664		
<p><b>Severn Wye Energy – Reach out: Energy support</b>                      Designed to reach those 'slipping through the net' of conventional support by providing fuel poverty and energy efficiency services including income maximisation and behavioural changes around energy usage.</p>	2024	2026	£12.36	£1,108,000		
<p><b>Shelter – Working together: To prevent homelessness and to support people to thrive in their home environment</b>                      Targeted to prevent homelessness among fuel poor communities; the project offers support services that are tailored, in-depth, and delivered through a suite of activities.</p>	2024	2025	£42.83	£180,015		
<p><b>IE Hub – Income and expenditure hub: Support for customers in vulnerable circumstances and financial difficulties</b>                      Facilitates access to an expert, online tool that enables vulnerable communities to check benefit entitlement, specialised support and financial management.</p>	2024	2026	£4.73	£86,046		

CONTINUED

PROJECT STATUS KEY:



In Progress



Extended



Complete



Hyperlink



Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>Fuel Bank Foundation – Fuel crisis support</b> Providing direct financial aid and practical support to help vulnerable households stay safe and warm.	2022	2026	£5.95	£57,832		
<b>NEA and Wise Group – Warm and safe homes: National extension 2023-2025</b> Providing support to fuel poor communities through a wide range of services that include energy efficiency advice, and income maximisation.	2023	2025	£3.20	£72,893		
<b>Citizens Advice National – Energy safeguarding and CO safety partnership 2022-23</b> Offering expert debt and benefits advice to boost income, strengthen financial resilience, and ensure safe housing. Also assessing the impact of 'Energy and CO Safety packs' for at-risk households, providing alarms, safety guides, and energy-saving support.	2022	2023	£5.76	£288,725		





## Supporting Priority Customer Groups

Our projects dedicated to supporting priority customer groups make sure that customers who are eligible for the Priority Services Register (PSR) receive accessible, hands-on support to stay safe and warm at home. Living in unsuitable conditions can worsen existing medical conditions, particularly for vulnerable individuals. That's why we've designed our projects to address the critical link between cold, damp homes and poor health. These communities often face complex challenges, making tailored assistance essential in addressing their needs.

Through engagement with on-the-ground delivery partners, we've gained valuable insights into the most effective methods of support, with handheld, face-to-face assistance

proving to be the most impactful. This makes sure vulnerable customers receive support they otherwise wouldn't have known was available or how to access, and what's more it is tailored and personalised to improve their quality of life. While crucial and proven, this approach is time-intensive, requiring dedicated resources to maximise its reach and effectiveness.

Supporting priority customer groups remains a key focus for us at WWU, strengthened by research and stakeholder collaboration. This year, we've expanded partnerships and initiatives to enhance our ability to reach those most in need, alongside adapting our approach based on lived experiences.

### Key Stats 2024-25

£1.4m

Invested in company specific projects

£1.5m

Invested on collaborative projects

£2.9m

Total investment for Supporting Priority Customer Groups

£16.93

Average forecast SROI

48,172

People reached directly

£6.8m

Financial savings

*/// The importance of this support cannot be overstated: these projects have made genuinely transformational outcomes a reality for our vulnerable community. Challenged by deprivation and isolation, this support is a lifeline for thousands of people living with kidney failure. ///*

**Sarah Oakley, Kidney Care UK**

CASE STUDY 4  
Supporting Priority  
Customer Groups



## Mind – Cost of Living Emergency Charitable Response

### Project at a glance

**Investment:** £492,543

**Forecast SROI:** £0.14/£1

**Duration:** Sep 24 - Mar 26

**Status:** In-Progress

### Achievements

Supported **1,732** individuals

**247** individuals received mental health training

**84** individuals supported with hardship grants

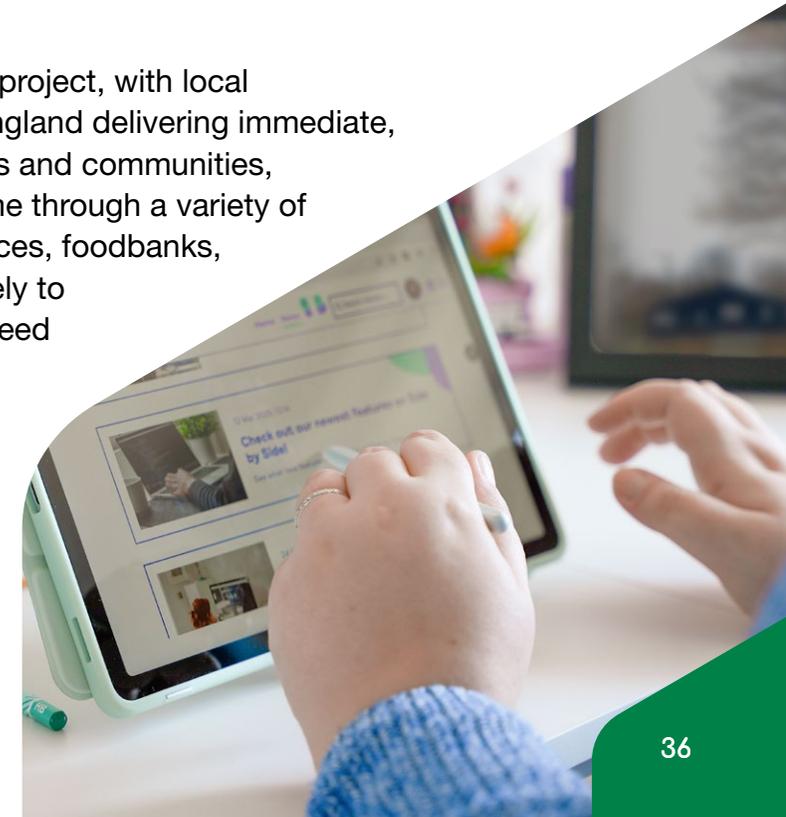
### Need

Research commissioned by Mind highlights a strong link between financial struggles and mental health, and both have been significantly affected by the multiple crises of recent years – for example the cost-of-living crisis and COVID. People with mental health issues are eight times more likely to experience suicidal thoughts due to rising costs, while those with long-term mental health conditions are over nine times more likely to struggle with financial management compared to those without. For individuals facing fuel poverty or mental health challenges, the cost-of-living crisis remains a pressing issue, as prices continue to rise for essential needs such as food, housing, and utilities.

### Approach

Mind have taken a localised approach to this project, with local Minds across Wales and the south-west of England delivering immediate, flexible, and essential support to service users and communities, tailored to meet localised need. Referrals come through a variety of organisations, including local GPs, NHS services, foodbanks, and schools. Each local Mind works proactively to identify referral pathways, ensuring those in need receive the maximum support available.

Services delivered vary significantly depending on what best supports the local community, including in-person counselling for people who prefer a face-to-face option, and online or telephone services for isolated or rural communities.





## Impact

By tackling both mental health and fuel poverty together, the project can provide immediate relief from financial stress and emotional distress, fostering a sense of stability and hope. Beneficiaries may experience improved mental wellbeing, reduced anxiety, and a greater sense of confidence when dealing with their finances. In turn, the community benefits from a more resilient, healthier population, with individuals better equipped to contribute positively to society. This holistic support can pave the way for long-term social and economic improvements, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for those most in need.

## Engagement

Through consultation with the 24 local Minds, the charity identified this need for support to sustain and develop essential services for vulnerable people and communities. Across Wales and the south-west of England, there is a gap in mental health support for those experiencing

fuel poverty. However, through previous testing of grant funds, Mind understands the significant impact that national level funding can have on the communities reached by local Minds and puts this knowledge into action.

## Learning

Service users have the opportunity to feedback their experience of how the service has supported them and what they found to be positive. Mind will conduct two in-depth case studies with two of the local offices, as well as collecting quantitative and qualitative data from all offices, to demonstrate the impact of their activities on individuals and the wider community.

This vital feedback will allow Mind to adapt and evolve their approach to future initiatives, while still maintaining a model that is flexible and reflective of regional and localised need.

*/// We are incredibly grateful to Wales and West Utilities for your extraordinary funding. Your support of the Mind Federation has already made a remarkable difference to the mental health of people living in Wales and the south-west of England. Through your partnership, local Minds are providing vital programmes within local communities, helping people most affected by the cost-of-living crisis to access critical support. We cannot thank you enough for the difference you are making. It is only alongside partners like you that Mind is able to make such an essential impact within local communities, working to better support the nation's mental health. ///*

**Sarah Hughes, Mind CEO**

CASE STUDY 5  
Supporting Priority  
Customer Groups



## Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society – Community Connections

### Project at a glance

**Investment:** £213,734

**Forecast SROI:** £0.15/£1

**Duration:** Aug 24 - Mar 26

**Status:** In-Progress

### Achievements

Supported **358** individuals

Savings of **£47,174**

### Need

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating neurodegenerative condition where the immune system damages the protective layer around the nerves, causing problems with brain signals. In the UK, an estimated 150,000 people have MS, with over 7,000 new diagnoses annually. In Wales there are an estimated 6,111 people living with MS, and over 12,000 in south-west England. Symptoms can vary but often include mobility issues, vision impairment, pain, fatigue, bladder and bowel problems, and cognitive difficulties. MS is most common in people aged 20-50 and is lifelong and progressive, impacting quality of life, independence, and work ability. MS not only affects an individual, but also their families and loved ones who often become caregivers.



### Approach

The project aims are to connect people with and affected by MS across Wales and the south-west of England with services, activities and resources to enable them to manage their condition and improve their quality of life. The Community Connections project will build relationships with local service providers, helping beneficiaries access support and activities in their local areas, while strengthening their ties to the community. The project provides information and guidance on a range of subjects through one-to-one and group interventions, including advice about finances, cost of living related information, energy efficiency information, carbon monoxide awareness, and the Priority Services Register.

Additionally, the MS Society is providing awareness training sessions to partner organisations, to enhance their ability to support individuals with MS. Through onward referrals to local Citizens Advice services and other expert organisations, the project aims to address the needs of those living with MS, while also increasing awareness in the wider community and creating long-term lasting benefits for the MS community.



## Impact

Throughout the lifetime of the project, Community Connections aims to enhance the knowledge, skills, and confidence of people living with MS, enabling them to manage their condition effectively and become equal partners in their care. It will reduce loneliness and social isolation by fostering community connections that promote health, wellbeing and empowerment to access the financial support they require to keep safe and warm.

Through personalised assessments, information provision, webinars, and MS Awareness training, the project is establishing a community of organisations that have the knowledge to best meet the needs of those affected by MS. This is expanding support for both project recipients and service providers, creating long lasting relationships, and improved ways of working.

## Engagement

The MS Society held dedicated engagement events across Wales and the south-west of England to engage with and hear directly from the MS community. A key theme that emerged from those discussions was the need for information and guidance on what support is available locally, as well as the need to access a variety of services and support, including access to benefits advice and cost of living related help. MS Society also found that MS can have a long-term impact on loved ones, yet support for them is lacking, with 33% of respondents to a Friends and Family survey stating that they don't know how to get help to manage the impact of their loved one's MS on their own life. This engagement played a vital role in identifying the issues that need addressing, as well as contributing to how the project has been shaped.

## Learning

This service delivery model provides an opportunity to test and refine approaches, with key insights shaping the long-term development of services across the MS Society. The project will expand awareness of local support available to individuals affected by MS across Wales and south-west England, helping to identify service gaps and collaborate with others to address them. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will ensure effective project delivery, with findings shared more broadly – including with other charities that support people with neurological conditions. Regular meetings with the project steering group will provide a space to review challenges and successes, guiding future improvements and overall direction.

*Thanks again for your help. It's the best service I've had since I was diagnosed, and the small gesture of a follow-up email really helped.*

### **Community Connections Client Feedback**



## Company specific

## Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>Care &amp; Repair Cymru – Older not colder</b> Supporting the older people in our communities in Wales with targeted services that include income maximisation, and energy and debt advice.	2024	2026	£6.09	£1,355,000		
<b>MS Society – Community connections</b> The project will connect people with local services and activities, offering guidance on finances, energy, and safety through MS Society partnerships.	2024	2026	£0.15	£213,734		
<b>Mind – Cost of living emergency response</b> Designed to provide funding to local Mind organisations across Wales and the South West, to enhance support for service users and communities during the cost-of-living crisis.	2024	2026	£0.14	£492,543		
<b>Advocates &amp; Angels – Hospital to home confidence support</b> This project provides targeted messages to raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide, and signposts to the PSR.	2023	2026	£3.40	£89,000		
<b>Kidney Care UK – Auriga Services – Welsh Kidney Network – Vulnerable patients with kidney disease in Wales</b> Targeted support services for patients diagnosed with chronic kidney disease; focused on raising awareness of energy efficiency, the PSR, and the dangers of CO, while helping carers to access relevant benefits and maximise their incomes.	2023	2026	£8.87	£825,503		
<b>Maggies Cancer Trust – Reducing fuel poverty and maximising household income: For people with cancer and their carers across South Wales</b> Targeted support services for patients diagnosed with cancer; focused on raising awareness of energy efficiency, the PSR, and the dangers of CO, while helping carers to access relevant benefits and maximise their incomes.	2022	2026	£22.00	£292,874		
<b>Crunch – PSR Facebook campaign</b> A targeted social media campaign to raise awareness of and increase referrals to the PSR.	2022	2024	£50.22	£48,678		

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## Company specific

## Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>Care &amp; Repair – 70+</b> Delivering support to older people in our communities throughout Wales with in-depth, holistic support to access unclaimed benefits, maximise income, and access small-to-large energy efficiency measures.	2022	2023	£40.82	£85,000		
<b>Swansea Carers Centre – Swansea carers: Fuel poverty/income maximisation project</b> Targeted carer-specific support services; focused on raising awareness of energy efficiency, the PSR, and the dangers of CO, while helping carers to access relevant benefits and maximise their incomes.	2022	2024	£21.51	£59,980		
<b>Bridgend Carers – Welfare benefits advice service for unpaid carers and their families</b> Targeted carer-specific support services promoting energy efficiency, PSR awareness, and carbon monoxide safety, also helping carers to access relevant benefits and maximise household income.	2022	2024	£19.25	£50,000		
<b>Women Connect First – Advice and advocacy</b> Targeted support for BAME women's group in Cardiff, focused on energy efficiency and raising awareness of CO safety.	2022	2023	£5.10	£46,978		
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taff Council &amp; Partners – Lower Cynon pilot</b> A partnership led by RCTCBC and working with local community groups to raise awareness of CO safety.	2022	2022	£8.26	£28,150		

CONTINUED





Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>Kidney Care UK – Safe and warm: Providing a critical lifeline to dialysis patients across the UK</b> Support for chronic kidney disease patients; to promote energy efficiency, PSR awareness, and carbon monoxide safety, including maximising household income.	2024	2026	£16.45	£472,081		
<b>Carers Trust – Alleviating unpaid carers from fuel poverty</b> Tailored energy support from experts to help carers reduce costs, boost income, and stay safe through PSR referrals and CO awareness.	2024	2026	£42.03	£1,159,011		
<b>Mental Health UK – Energy safeguarding and tackling fuel poverty for people with mental health</b> Providing access to support services, to help people living with poor mental health remain safe and warm in their homes.	2024	2026	£9.07	£189,933		
<b>SCOPE – DES extension</b> Providing support and advice to raise awareness of CO dangers, and signpost to the PSR.	2024	2026	£7.03	£378,800		
<b>Age Collection Extension – Energy safeguarding partnership</b> An extension of support for older people to make sure they are safe and warm at home. Services are provided at a national and localised level to help tackle fuel poverty.	2024	2026	£26.12	£307,718		
<b>YMCA – Cost of living project</b> Designed to support vulnerable households with a single point of contact for independent, bespoke support, to help people keep their homes safe and warm for less.	2025	2026	£16.01	£316,800		
<b>RAD – Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD)</b> Targeted awareness raising of the PSR, while offering support and advice to deaf people in financial hardship, and increasing understanding of CO safety.	2025	2026	£8.20	£65,000		
<b>Alzheimer's Society</b> Tailored to making sure that people living with dementia can maintain a safe and warm home, with a range of bespoke support services designed to help tackle fuel poverty.	2025	2026	£2.71	£200,000		

CONTINUED





Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>Crunch – PSR digital media campaign</b> A targeted and collaborative social media campaign to raise awareness of and increase referrals to the PSR.	2023	2026	£79.04	£60,000		
<b>SCOPE – Disability energy support</b> Support and advice to raise awareness of the dangers of CO, and signpost to the PSR.	2022	2026	£12.48	£27,759		
<b>Marie Curie – Energy safeguarding and tackling fuel poverty for terminally ill people</b> A targeted support service for patients and their families during end of life care. Focused on raising awareness of energy efficiency, the PSR, and the dangers of CO.	2022	2026	£12.22	£237,785		
<b>Age UK/Age Cymru/Age Scotland – Energy safeguarding partnership</b> Helping older adults to stay safe and warm at home, while providing advice on relevant benefits to maximise incomes, and signposting to the PSR.	2023	2026	£8.38	£46,011		
<b>Parsley Box/Latcham Direct Ltd – Parsley Box</b> Delivering easy-to-store microwave meals across the UK to a primary customer base of over 65s, and providing PSR details for sign up.	2023	2024	£20.90	£2,398		





## Services Beyond the Meter

**Going beyond standard operations, our programmes defined as Services Beyond the Meter provide direct operational assistance to the most vulnerable households identified through our work, helping people to stay both safe and warm in their homes.**

Under our licence obligations, we respond to gas emergency call-outs, including gas escapes and suspected carbon monoxide incidents. While we ensure internal pipework and appliances are safe, responsibility for repairs falls to the customer via a Gas Safe Registered (GSR) engineer, often leading to financial strain for vulnerable households. This can result in prolonged loss of heating, hot water, and cooking

facilities, making access to support critical.

Through the allowance, we partner with organisations who can support servicing, repair or replacement of gas appliances for eligible customers. We've also trained customer-facing teams to identify those in need, ensuring appropriate referrals.

To further support at-risk households, we've upskilled engineers to conduct enhanced carbon monoxide checks and are developing an in-house HyperCare team, that connects customers with additional tailored support.

### Key Stats 2024-25

**£224k**

Invested in company specific projects

**£30k**

Invested on collaborative projects

**£254k**

Total investment for Services Beyond the Meter

**£8.62**

Average forecast SROI

**6,643**

People reached directly

**20**

Appliances repaired

**12**

Appliances replaced

**9**

Additional safety checks



## Age UK South Gloucestershire – Improving Homes and Wellbeing

### Project at a glance

**Investment:** £41,508

**Forecast SROI:** £5.45/£1

**Duration:** Nov 24 - Mar 26

**Status:** In-Progress

### Achievements

Supported **369** individuals

Savings of **£131,973**

**14** boiler repairs

**84** individuals supported with proactive servicing

### Need

Fuel poverty severely impacts older people, increasing their risk of stroke, heart attack, and potentially worsening conditions such as cardiovascular disease and arthritis. With around one million older people already affected, rising energy costs could push a further 150,000 older people into fuel poverty. Age UK has identified that many older members of the community live in deteriorating homes and lack the finances, resources, or ability to manage repairs and upkeep of their home. What's more, Age UK South Gloucestershire reports that many clients do not understand the importance of carbon monoxide (CO) detection, and cannot afford to replace or repair old, unmaintained gas appliances, with many having no current gas safety certificates. Subsequently many older people are at significant risk of being left without heating or hot water, should their gas appliances stop working or, at worst, be condemned.



### Approach

Age UK South Gloucestershire is taking a three-pillar approach to help alleviate fuel poverty among the ageing population.

1. Their Improving Homes and Wellbeing team visit the homes of the most vulnerable elderly people in the community and, by working with local gas safe registered (GSR) engineers, can proactively carry out gas safety checks to make sure appliances are safe and fit for purpose.
2. In turn, the local GSRs will work closely with Fire & Rescue services who can offer 'slips, trips and falls' assessments where required.
3. Age UK South Gloucestershire is also working with third-party organisations to repair or replace any faulty or broken gas appliances within the eligibility criteria.

We are upskilling Age UK's dedicated Information and Advice officers to support customers with benefit entitlement checks, Priority Services Register (PSR) referrals, energy efficiency advice and carbon monoxide (CO) safety measures. In addition, all Age UK South

Gloucestershire staff will be upskilled with knowledge of the PSR, alongside signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide, to enable awareness raising within the wider community.

## Impact

Working in partnership with Age UK South Gloucestershire has provided a trusted route into the homes of some of the most vulnerable elderly people, who are often isolated with no family or friends to support them. The physical measures such as repairing and replacing faulty gas appliances, carrying out gas safety checks, and the provision of CO alarms provided by this project will positively impact the health and wellbeing of many older people in the south-west by ensuring no one is left in a cold, damp home or at risk of CO poisoning. In addition, the opportunities to talk with people in their homes is enabling discussions about gas safety measures and how and where individuals can access additional support.

## Engagement

Through our business planning for RII0-GD2, stakeholders and priority customer research highlighted that tackling fuel poverty is a key priority for us at WWU, alongside raising awareness of the PSR and CO dangers.

Our engagement with stakeholders like NEA, Citizens Advice, and various charities, supported by fuel poverty statistics, indicates that high inflation and rising energy prices have exacerbated fuel poverty, affecting more homes than ever. People are now limiting heating to unhealthy low levels or not using it at all, and appliances are not being serviced, leading to future safety risks. The crisis has also left many who have never needed help before unsure where to turn for advice.

Age UK research found that due to increased costs, over half of the surveyed individuals limit heating in their homes, one quarter had to choose between heating or eating, and 43% would be forced into debt or unable to afford their energy bills.

## Learning

This pilot project serves as an opportunity to test, learn, and refine our approaches to tackling this pressing issue of gas safety and energy cost impacts in the homes of older people.

At the end of the 12-months of delivery, we will carefully review the outcomes and successes to identify key lessons and best practices which will be integrated into future project delivery, with the aim of fostering further collaboration among local Age UK and Age Cymru branches. Learning will be published in any future project eligibility assessment documents which have been shaped by this project.

*“The support we are receiving from Wales & West Utilities is literally saving lives. We recently sent a gas safety engineer to an 82-year-old gentleman’s house who has breathing difficulties to replace his boiler, and the engineer said, “thank heavens the windows were broken as the boiler was pumping out carbon monoxide.”*

**Mark Flower, CEO Age UK,  
South Gloucestershire**



Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>National Energy Action (NEA) – Gas appliance referral scheme</b> Helping to repair or replace gas appliances for low income and fuel-poor households, following emergencies where they have been found faulty, or not fit for use.	2021	2026	£10.00	£786,000		
<b>Wales &amp; West Utilities – Locking cooker valves</b> Facilitating access to additional safety equipment for vulnerable customers enabling them to retain independence and keep safe and warm.	2021	2026	£14.00	£25,000		
<b>WWU (CO appliance training) – CMDDA1</b> Enabling access to additional CO safety checks for vulnerable customers through the support of upskilled WWU engineers.	2023	2026	N/A	£66,500		
<b>Age UK (South Gloucestershire) Pilot – Improving homes and wellbeing</b> A three-pillared approach to help alleviate fuel poverty and support older people through prevention, education and awareness, with a focus on proactive servicing.	2024	2026	£5.45	£41,508		

Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>NSPCC – Collaborative safeguarding and gas safety services</b> Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and their families. This will be delivered through three sub-projects focusing on safeguarding, eLearning and awareness.	2023	2025	£5.01	£59,554		





## Carbon Monoxide Awareness

**With the aim of educating communities about the dangers of CO, our carbon monoxide awareness programmes provide essential safety guidance – and highlight the impact on different age groups and vulnerable individuals. By increasing awareness, we empower people to take precautions and stay protected.**

As a gas distribution network, responding to gas emergencies—including suspected carbon monoxide exposure—is a key part of our daily operations. Raising awareness of CO dangers remains a top priority for us at WWU, with strong support from our stakeholders to make sure communities understand the risks and stay protected.

Our Gas Safety Ambassador programme is successfully engaging young people across our network through creative safety messaging. As the initiative continues to grow and evolve, we will continue to refine and expand its impact, incorporating new learning and opportunities to further strengthen awareness and education.

While the cost-of-living crisis continues to strain household budgets, servicing or replacing appliances often becomes a lower priority for low-income households. This increases the risk of carbon monoxide exposure, putting vulnerable individuals at greater risk.

### Key Stats 2024-25

£246k

Invested in company specific projects

£69k

Invested on collaborative projects

£315k

Total investment for Carbon Monoxide Awareness

55,571

People directly reached with CO awareness

5,152

CO alarms

£14.63

Average forecast SROI





## Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) – Carbon Monoxide Hub

### Project at a glance

**Investment:** £100,000

**Forecast SROI:** £2.88/£1

**Duration:** Jul 23 - Sep 25

**Status:** In-Progress

### Achievements

**50,048** unique viewers on the CO web hub

Reached over **1.28m** individuals

**57,920** video views

**103** pocket guide downloads

### Need

In this last decade, major changes have occurred in the way we live, work, and use our homes – with many of us now spending more time at home. This means that many people rely on their home heating appliances more than before – which doesn't come without its risks. Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning kills around 50 people a year in England and Wales with statistics showing that in 2024 there were more than 4,000 visits to A&E for treatment of CO poisoning. Research from the Gas Safe register has also found nearly 31% of people will skip booking their annual gas safety check due to the cost-of-living crisis, and with CO exposures more likely to occur in the home, people are at significant risk.



### Approach

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) is a leading voice in health and safety that allows them to raise awareness of carbon monoxide dangers through a dedicated CO hub. The hub is specifically aimed at families and tenants, and also landlords. In addition to the hub, RoSPA has launched a targeted communications campaign, leveraging their specialist network to influence organisations and employees through their memberships and award winners.

RoSPA's approach to this project is:

1. **Sell:** Position WWU and RoSPA as the go-to source for carbon monoxide advice.
2. **Serve:** Create a web hub to educate families, tenants, and landlords on managing carbon monoxide risks.
3. **Speak:** Produce and distribute relevant content that evolves based on user feedback.
4. **Save:** Change opinions and encourage spreading the message.
5. **Sizzle:** Achieve 30,000 views in the first 12 months, creating a positive online experience.

**GET IN  
THE KNOW  
ABOUT CO**  
CARBON MONOXIDE

### Impact

A gap was identified in existing CO resources for an information hub which can disseminate useful information to targeted audiences, using resources that are easily accessible, engaging and creative. This project aims to create an impartial hub that has the potential to be nationally recognised as the place to go for practical safety advice on CO. The hub not only benefits those most at risk of CO poisoning by driving behavioural change; it will also reach those who are in the best position to influence, advise and provide safer homes.

### Engagement

An understanding of target audiences, current attitudes, and behaviours were key to the successful launch and delivery of the CO hub. RoSPA engaged with communities, in addition to property landlords to gain further insight into the current landscape – research which informed the design of the hub and the awareness campaign.

Their insights revealed that 98% of UK adults had heard of and were able to correctly identify most sources of CO. However, there was a clear correlation between demographic profile and CO awareness, with younger adults and women displaying lower levels in knowledge.

84% of landlords surveyed say that they are knowledgeable about CO; however, 31% have never sought information about CO safety. Only two thirds were able to recognise all potential sources and fewer than half recognised the signs of CO presence in a home.

### Learning

The outcomes from the campaign will help to inform who is most engaged with carbon monoxide information, while user data from the hub will help colleagues to adapt and evolve the content so that it remains appropriate for those audiences most likely to access it.

The project, although specific to WWU, has the scope to be rolled out on a national level and its application could be used more widely in other carbon monoxide awareness raising activities used by all Gas Distribution Networks.

*As an evidence-based charity committed to creating an accident-free world, RoSPA's partnership with Wales & West Utilities enabled us to accomplish two life-saving pieces of work. Firstly, we developed a series of unique insights into people's understanding of carbon monoxide safety. Secondly, with expert input from WWU, we created new, user-friendly resources to address a significant gap in safety advice and guidance.*

**Steve Cole, Director of Policy and Impact, RoSPA**



## Company specific

## Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>DangerPoint – CO heroes</b> Specialist support targeted at raising the awareness of the dangers of CO for children, using life-like settings.	2021	2026	£5.51	£32,017		
<b>Care &amp; Repair – Managing better with CO monitors</b> Supporting older people in our communities in Wales; with targeted support aiming to raise awareness of the PSR, of CO safety, and to provide free CO monitors where appropriate.	2022	2026	£13.00	£200,000		
<b>Wales &amp; West Utilities – CO alarms</b> Various programmes focused on providing free CO alarms to the most vulnerable in our network, and raising awareness of the dangers of CO.	2021	2026	£1.07	£457,560		
<b>RoSPA – Carbon monoxide hub</b> Raising awareness of the dangers of CO through the creation of a CO hub; alongside a targeted communications campaign to promote and signpost to these resources.	2023	2025	£2.88	£100,000		
<b>Life Skills Bristol – Adults with learning difficulties and special educational needs programmes</b> Specialist support targeted at raising awareness of the dangers of CO for adults and children with learning difficulties, using life-like settings.	2021	2026	£5.51	£82,500		
<b>Wales &amp; West Utilities – Gas safety ambassadors</b> A programme delivered by our colleagues, to raise awareness of the dangers of CO throughout primary schools in our WWU regions.	2022	2026	£2.71	£37,770		
<b>Heavenly – Game Over campaign</b> Designed to reach young people aged 16–25 with CO awareness messaging, through the proven route of the Game Over creative campaign run by Heavenly Media.	2021	2022	£4.09	£30,000		
<b>South Wales Fire &amp; Rescue – CO alarms for the profoundly deaf</b> Supporting households where profoundly deaf occupants reside, by providing specialist CO alarms, wearable tech, and assessing the impact of the equipment.	2022	2023	£0.13	£5,000		

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Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>Improving Performance in Practice (iPiP) – Preventing harm from environmental exposure to carbon monoxide (PHECO): E-learning for health</b> An educational module to help a broad range of health and social care staff better understand the harm caused by exposure to CO, how to identify those at risk, and how to protect them from harm.	2024	2026	£18.63	£22,081		
<b>Eleven Miles – Collaborative GDN winter and summer awareness campaigns</b> Targeted collaborative social media campaign to raise awareness of CO and the PSR.	2023	2026	£120.42	£115,664		
<b>Gas Safe Charity – Think CO app development</b> A targeted project to identify potential CO risks and provide CO safety information to vulnerable households. Helping to increase CO awareness and reduce the risk of CO harm.	2023	2026	£0.51	£4,953		
<b>EGNIDA – Raising CO awareness using augmented reality</b> Targeted at university students to raise awareness of CO dangers and prevention, to protect themselves and others.	2023	2026	£3.51	£20,000		
<b>Scouts – Badge sponsorship</b> Empowering young people through a collaborative project to raise awareness of CO dangers and prevention, to protect themselves and others. The project extension also includes activities designed to educate about energy efficiency.	2021	2026	£1.81	£60,145		
<b>SCOPE – CO research engaging the disabled community</b> Support and advice to raise awareness of the dangers of CO, and signpost to the PSR.	2023	2023	£1.82	£3,539		
<b>Heavenly / Campus – Game Over carbon monoxide: Young persons awareness campaign</b> Engaging young people with CO awareness messaging through a creative campaign.	2022	2023	£12.84	£46,366		
<b>Policy Connect (APPCOG) – CO awareness week: Autumn campaign</b> A seasonal targeted campaign to raise awareness of CO and the PSR.	2022	2022	£24.86	£2,313		

CONTINUED





Company specific

Collaborative

Delivery partner(s) – Project title – Description	Start date	End date	Forecast SROI	WWU committed spend	Status	Link
<b>J Seven Media (AKA Coast Procurement Ltd) – CO winter awareness campaign: 2021-22</b> A seasonal targeted campaign to raise awareness of CO and the PSR.	2021	2022	£39.30	£44,151		
<b>Policy Connect (APPCOG) – CO alarms save lives (Safe 4 summer)</b> A seasonal targeted campaign to raise awareness of CO and the PSR.	2022	2022	£34.51	£5,783		
<b>Bonanza Creative – Carbon monoxide schools education</b> Engaging young students through a collaborative campaign that promotes carbon monoxide safety awareness in schools.	2022	2022	£1.56	£13,810		
<b>Bonanza Creative – Carbon monoxide schools education: Year 2</b> Engaging young students through a collaborative campaign that promotes carbon monoxide safety awareness in schools.	2022	2023	£2.35	£53,060		
<b>Improving Performance in Practice (iPiP) – Identifying and protecting pregnant women from CO exposure</b> A targeted collaborative survey study which directly monitors the homes of the pregnant women who are participating. The aim is to better understand the prevalence of exposure, how such exposure occurs, and to provide awareness of CO.	2021	2023	£0.02	£28,913		
<b>SP Energy Networks (SPEN) – SPEN priority services register &amp; carbon monoxide awareness pilot</b> Raising awareness of CO safety, and reducing CO-related harm for customers.	2022	2022	£13.18	£895		



# The future of VCMA and support for those most in need

## Our Focus in Year 5

The following priorities will shape the final phase of our delivery, to ensure impactful, sustainable solutions for those who need them most.

- **VCMA expansion**

We have launched new projects to address gaps in mental health support, which will start delivering in the final year of RIIO-GD2 in partnership with Mind and Alzheimer's Society. By partnering with Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) and National Energy Foundation (NEF) in Devon and Cornwall, we will also be expanding the geographical areas where we deliver our projects.

- **Services Beyond the Meter**

By establishing a new GDN working group, we will share best practices and optimise funding impact, ensuring effective support for customers with broken gas appliances.

- **Collaboration with DNOs**

With the aim of achieving greater integration and impact, we will initiate engagement with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to explore joint projects in RIIO-GD3 and align efforts with RIIO-ED3 where possible.

- **FPNES scheme management**

Ahead of the FPNES scheme closure in March 2026, we have planned a proactive approach to managing its shut down, which will deliver a smooth transition and continued support for vulnerable customers.

- **Strengthening collaboration and applying key learning**

We will continue to focus on refining our approach based on valuable insights



The future of VCMA and support for those most in need

gained in each project we deliver. By integrating key learning, the support for vulnerable customers will continue to be enhanced, ensuring services are both impactful and sustainable. Deepening collaboration among gas networks is essential to maximise impact. By working together, we can share expertise, streamline efforts, and ensure that vulnerable communities receive the support they need. A united approach allows us to enhance efficiency, drive innovation, and create sustainable solutions that benefit those most at risk.

- **ISO22458 standard retention**

As part of our ongoing dedication to delivering high-quality support services, we will maintain the ISO22458 Vulnerable Customer Standard and Kitemark, with the goal of achieving full re-accreditation by BSI in November 2025.

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## RIIO-GD3 and beyond

We published our Business Plan for RIIO-GD3 in December 2024 and now await draft and final determinations from Ofgem to confirm our level of funding.

As the UK transitions to low-carbon energy, collaboration across the wider energy industry is essential to making sure that vulnerable customers are included and can benefit equally from cleaner energy solutions. We are committed to working closely with stakeholders and partners to support a just Net Zero energy transition, with focus on those most at risk of being left behind.

We will continue to engage on this topic alongside making sure that services are accessible and information is available to support and meet the needs of vulnerable customers. This provision will include aftercare, and use of low carbon technologies.

With the ambition of delivering lasting benefits for households while contributing to net-zero goals, we aim to align our projects with



clean energy initiatives. By exploring sustainable solutions, we intend to enhance energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and create resilient communities equipped for the future.

Through strategic partnerships, we aim to unite organisations across the energy sector, sharing expertise, insights, and best practices to enhance accessibility, affordability, and sustainability for all customers. By leveraging our engineering workforce and the trusted relationships we've built, we will ensure a joined-up approach that helps customers access cleaner energy solutions while supporting the health and wellbeing of communities.

Our shared vision is one of warm, safe, and energy-efficient homes for everyone, and, through collaborative action, we will strengthen our collective impact to shape a future that works for all.

# How to work with us

Do you have an idea for a collaboration with us?

Do you have a vision for ways we could partner with your organisation?

We're always looking for new ideas that align with our VCMA strategy and aims.

## Get in touch

If you think you have something of interest, please read our report section above page 16 – **How we work with partners**. If you're ready, submit your idea to us for review using one of the options below.

You can also sign up to our newsletter for further information and read Ofgem's VCMA Governance for a full look at the funding criteria and approach to projects.

1. Propose a project via our application form

[Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Application Form](#)

2. Email your ideas to:

[VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk)

3. Sign up to our stakeholder newsletter for news and opportunities

[Stay in touch](#)

4. Read Ofgem's VCMA Governance

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



# Final word from our partners

“ Our partnership with the VCMA has been invaluable in launching our Community Connections service, helping us reach and support people affected by MS across Wales and the South West. Together, we’re reducing isolation and empowering MS communities with meaningful, localised support, tailored to their needs. ”

Leila Middlehurst-Evans, MS Society

“ Working with the WWU team has been outstanding – their support has helped us improve the platform, SROI, and reach even more vulnerable residents with vital referrals and support. ”

Derek Owens, HHS

“ Our transformative partnership with WWU supports vulnerable households with holistic advice across energy, income, resilience, and safety, co-designing impactful programmes that make a lasting difference on fuel poverty – with average savings of more than £500 per customer supported. ”

Alex Wilkes, YES Energy Solutions

“ Our partnership has ensured all of our housing advisers identify and act on debt management and income maximisation opportunities – whilst also sharing vital information about fuel safety and support that is available. Together we are ensuring that some of the most vulnerable people across Wales are managing to keep warm and safe homes. ”

Bryony Lewis,  
Shelter Cymru

“ Wales and West Utilities are such understanding, flexible partners. Your support means we can help vulnerable residents today, while building resilience, courage and skills needed for a fair energy future. ”

Clare Mains, PEC

“ The VCMA has given Warm Wales the ability to grow its support for vulnerable households through innovative affordable warmth and income maximisation provision. This partnership, at the forefront of work to alleviate fuel poverty, has made a real impact to lives of struggling communities. ”

Jonathan Cosson, Warm Wales

“ This project has been life-changing for so many older people – helping them feel heard, supported, and less alone. Thanks to this funding, we’ve delivered vital information and advice to people who might otherwise have missed out. ”

Gavin Thomas, Age Cymru

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