

**SGN**  
Your gas. Our network.



# Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance Annual Report 2024

Supporting vulnerable customers to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably

# How to use this report

Clicking on a link highlighted in **underlined bold** will take you through to another section in this report or our website for more information.

From this page, you can navigate to a particular section in the report by using the quick links in our contents list.

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## Meet our partners →

We hope you'll use our report to learn more about the portfolio of support services offered by our partners and funded by our VCMA programme.

We invite you to explore opportunities for collaboration between your organisations and engage with our growing Safe & Warm partnership network.

# Who we are

We manage the network that distributes natural and green gas to six million homes and businesses across Scotland and the south of England.

We serve our communities by keeping everyone safe and warm.

Our 4,600 colleagues keep gas flowing safely and reliably to our customers, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our communities are as diverse as the geography we cover, from the rural Scottish Highlands to coastal Kent and encompassing inner cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and south London. We have some of the most deprived populations of any gas network, with some of the most affluent areas in the country located alongside areas of highest deprivation.

We're trusted to walk through the doors of around 300,000 homes each year as we respond to gas emergencies and upgrade our network. In doing so, we enter the homes of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.


We never want to walk away from a customer in need. Our people take great pride in going above and beyond to look after customers, whatever their circumstances.

Delivering exceptional customer service is in our DNA.

## Our performance



**8 years running**  
as the number one gas network  
for customer satisfaction



**9.42 / 10**  
Priority Services Register  
customer satisfaction score



**17 award wins**  
for supporting  
vulnerable customers

# What is the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance?

The Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) is a funding mechanism for Britain's gas networks to support vulnerable customers and raise awareness of carbon monoxide between 2021 and 2026.

In developing our five-year business plan for the Ofgem price control period RIIO-GD2, we – and Britain's three other gas networks – carried out extensive stakeholder and customer engagement.

Through this engagement, we recognised the critical role that the gas networks can play in supporting our customers above and beyond our licence obligations.

Within our business plan, we committed to making a positive impact on society by supporting vulnerable communities and delivering excellent service. To deliver on this commitment, we developed our five-year vulnerability and carbon monoxide strategy.

For RIIO-GD2, Ofgem introduced the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance, a Use It or Lose It allowance, which transparently allocates funding to spend on projects which can support vulnerable customers or raise awareness of carbon monoxide (CO). Within the allowance, we're able to dedicate 25% or more to initiatives delivered in partnership with other gas networks.

All projects that are delivered through VCMA allowances must align to our vulnerability strategy, meet clear governance criteria and provide a positive social return for our customers.

Through this report, you will see how we've maximised the VCMA allowance to deliver against our vulnerability strategy, working alongside trusted partners to support our most vulnerable customers this year.



For more information about VCMA governance, please visit [Ofgem's website](#)



This report details all the programmes we're delivering, including those in partnership with other gas distribution networks (GDNs).



You can find full details of our joint-GDN programme portfolio in our [annual collaborative report](#).

# Welcome to our VCMA annual report

For many of our customers the past 12 months have continued to be incredibly challenging. In the shadow of the cost-of-living crisis, thousands of households find themselves facing unmanageable energy debt. Millions of households struggle to afford household essentials including energy, with National Energy Action (NEA) reporting over 6 million households in fuel poverty and a record 4.3 million children in poverty.

The stark reality for many families is starting the month with less money than they need to meet their basic household expenses.

Our network and our people play a key role in keeping customers up and down the country safe and warm. We're trusted to enter customers' homes at a time when they need us most, often in an emergency.

What I've witnessed among our team is a truly embedded culture of never walking away from a customer in need.

Collaborating with our community partners ensures our vulnerable customers get the help they need to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. We look for opportunities to alleviate the underlying causes of fuel poverty, ease financial pressures and improve people's health and wellbeing. We're not just helping people in crisis now, we're building skills and capacity within our programmes to leave a positive legacy for our customers and partners for years to come.

We've achieved a considerable maturity in the delivery of our vulnerability strategy this year, which in turn has amplified the benefits for our customers.

Together with our extensive network of Safe & Warm community partners, we've directly supported 232,847 vulnerable households maintain a safe and warm home during the past 12 months. That takes us to a total of 403,717 households supported over the course of our VCMA programme to date.

I'm humbled by the dedication of our people and partners to support our most vulnerable communities. Over the coming pages, I hope you will get a sense of the admiration I have for the relentless efforts of our people and partners to help those most in need.

While this is an opportunity for us to report on the annual progress of our strategy, I invite you to also use this report to learn more about our Safe & Warm partnership network and the services we collectively provide to the vulnerable communities we all support.

Mark Wild OBE FREng  
Chief Executive Officer



“

I'm humbled by the dedication of our people and partners to support our most vulnerable communities.


”

# How we're making the difference for vulnerable households

Our vulnerability strategy spans five years of the RII0-GD2 price control, with this being the third year of our programme delivery. We're proud to have supported more vulnerable customers to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably than ever before.



**403,717**  
Households we've helped maintain a safe and warm home since April 2021



**765,122**  
Unique support services we've delivered with our partners



**£34.8m+**  
Achieved in social value for our vulnerable customers



We've delivered energy advice:

**72,081**  
personalised one-to-one advice sessions

**520,322**  
people reached with light touch energy advice



We've trained **1,419** community frontline workers in energy safeguarding



We've registered **59,880** customers for the Priority Services Register



We've increased household incomes:

**139,521**  
debt and benefits advice sessions

**68,572**  
food and fuel crisis vouchers

We've built a network of **110** Safe & Warm community partners



Our engineers have installed:

**2,359**  
fuel poor gas connections

**610**  
locking cooker valves



We've protected customers from carbon monoxide harm:



**164,895**  
CO safety sessions

**29,891**  
CO alarms in homes

**\*62,475,210**  
households educated on carbon monoxide

\*includes direct support and marketing reach within our network areas



# Investing in our communities

The VCMA is a £60m Use it or Lose it allowance, apportioned across all four of Britain's gas networks based on the number of customers connected to our networks.

We were assigned £16.3 million to spend on VCMA initiatives between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2026, with £5.03m designated for supporting our customers in Scotland and £11.23m for our customers in the south of England. With this funding, we committed to support 250,000 of our vulnerable customers to use energy safely, affordably and efficiently.

## Additional funding

Over the past three years, there has been a reduced demand for fuel poor households to connect to the gas network supported by funding from the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES). Significant UK Government policy shifts on how to address net zero ambitions have impacted our ability as gas networks to support fuel poor households through FPNES.

Although the FPNES is still an effective way to support households in fuel poverty, the demand is less than the allocated allowances.

In response, following extensive engagement, a formal decision was made in October 2023 to repurpose 70% of the FPNES funds into the VCMA to provide immediate help to households in fuel poverty. The original £60m allowance - distributed between all gas networks - has now increased to £171m.

For us, our initial £16.3m allowance has been revised to £46.45m which equates to an additional £9.3m for our Scotland network and £20.9m for our Southern network. This additional funding is enabling us to provide immediate support for households in crisis.

With the new allocation being confirmed mid-way through our reporting year, we've revised our spend profile for the remaining years accordingly, mapped to our updated vulnerability strategy. With this, we've also revised our strategic ambition to now support 500,000 vulnerable households use energy safely, affordably and efficiently by March 2026.

### Our revised five-year funding

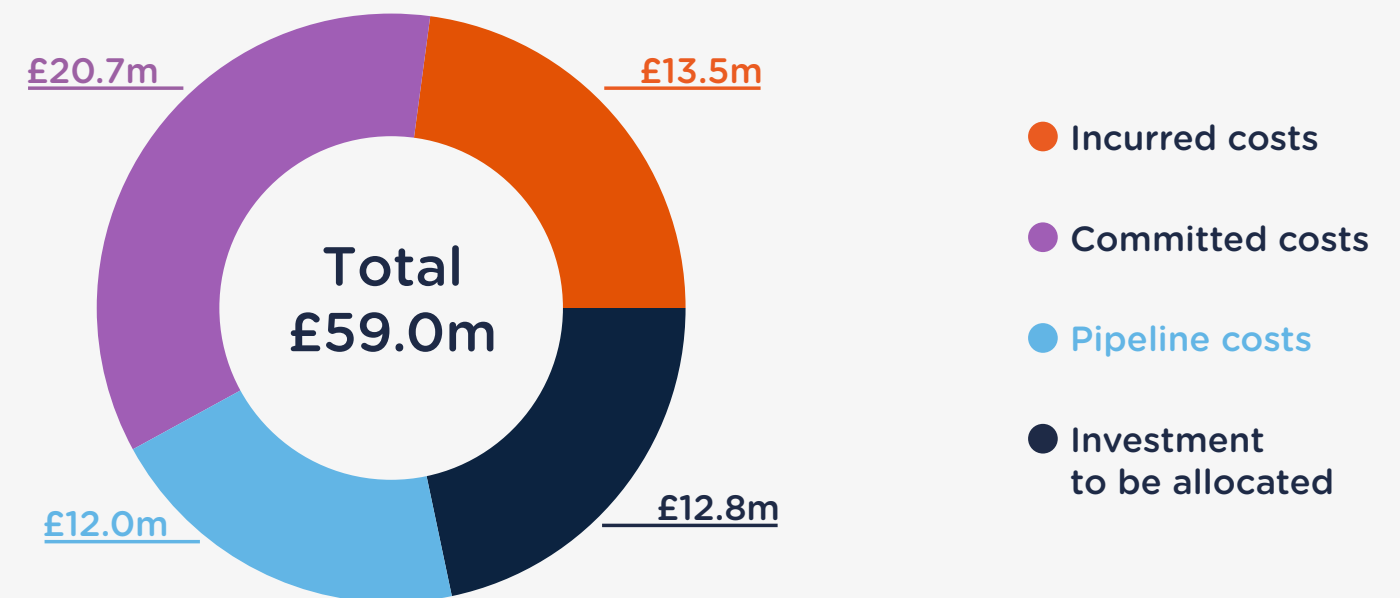


## Investment overview

At the end of our third reporting year, we have directly funded projects to the value of £13.5m (£11.2m in 2018/19 prices) and committed a further £20.7m (£16m in 2018/19 prices) to approved project activity for future years. We have £12m (£9.3m in 2018/19 prices) of costs ringfenced for projects currently in the pipeline and a further £12.8m (£9.9m in 2018/19 prices) remaining to be allocated to programmes over the final two years of the price control.

Full details of our spend, both for projects specific to our network areas and our joint-GDN projects, can be found from [page 20](#) onwards.

### Investment summary 2021-24



# Strategy into delivery

Our five-year vulnerability support strategy guides how we deliver on our strategic ambition to support at least 500,000 vulnerable households, using the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) funding to help us achieve this commitment.

In the third year of delivering our vulnerability support strategy, we've considerably expanded the breadth of our support while focusing on those most in need – vulnerable households in genuine and urgent energy crisis.

Beyond responding to households in immediate need, we've embedded and established more longer-term interventions to help customers maintain a safe and warm home. In designing these programmes, we're ensuring our activity leaves a positive legacy that outlives both our programmes and the VCMA funding.

At the end of March 2024, we now have 89 approved energy safeguarding and carbon monoxide awareness initiatives in place with national, regional and grassroots community organisations across Scotland and the south of England.

## Households facing financial crisis

In each year of our vulnerability strategy delivery to date, we've needed to adapt our approach to the changing socioeconomic landscape. In just three years, our communities have been thrust through a pandemic, the doubling of energy costs and a cost-of-living crisis.

We've seen increasing systemic debt. Families up and down the country are starting the month with very little in their pockets. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) reports that 12 million people in the UK were in absolute poverty after housing costs in 2022-23, including 3.6 million children.

When it comes to energy, a huge amount of energy debt has accumulated over the past three years. Citizens Advice reported that 7.8 million people borrowed money to pay for their energy bills in the first six months of 2023, with one in four reporting that their energy bill is the essential cost they are most worried about.

## An agile approach to support those most in need

This year, we revised our strategic ambition to support our vulnerable customers, doubling our previous commitment. We will now support more than 500,000 vulnerable households to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably by 2026.

Over the past three years, we've progressed from identifying the most vulnerable groups and mobilising our programme in year one to building on our first year's learning and broadening our partnership network in year two.


As we've moved through year three, we're now delivering a mature and refined strategy, supported by our long-term community partners and stakeholders. We see this maturity of delivery reflected in the marked increase in households we've supported year-on-year.



### What we mean by households supported

When reporting on the number of households we support each year, we consider households where we've handheld customers through a service. These figures don't include 'light touch energy advice' including literature, self-service or event attendance where we've reached over 520,000 people since April 2021. We also have not included our marketing and CO awareness campaigns where we promote the Priority Services Register, winter resilience messaging and ways to stay safe from CO harm. This year alone, we've reached an additional 232,847 households through these methods.

Increase in numbers of households supported each year

 = 10,000





# Strategy into delivery

## Targeting our support

While the scale of our commitment has increased this year, we continue to apply our three-tier cost-to-serve framework. This allows us to drive outcomes based on need, and concentrate our activity on the customers who need it most.

Tier one interventions encompass our deepest level of support, such as funding appliance repairs and replacement. While tier two initiatives have a lower cost-to-serve, these interventions tackle individual and complex customer needs with measures such as energy debt support, benefit checks, emergency fuel vouchers and eligibility assessments for energy efficiency schemes.

At the lowest cost-to-serve, our tier three activity centres on self-serve initiatives and information sharing to reach larger audiences, for example, our programme with the Scouts and our new self-service energy advice tool designed in partnership with Energy Savings Trust.

Recognising the impact of tier two interventions on those struggling to afford to maintain a safe and warm home, we've almost doubled our activity at this level this year.

We've reached 96,382 households with a tier two intervention this year, helping them navigate the complexity of available support schemes and benefits. We've helped 14,831 households access energy efficiency advice schemes and supported 51,132 households with DWP benefits checks.

## Our pyramid framework enables a tiered cost-to-serve approach to support over five years

### Tier 1

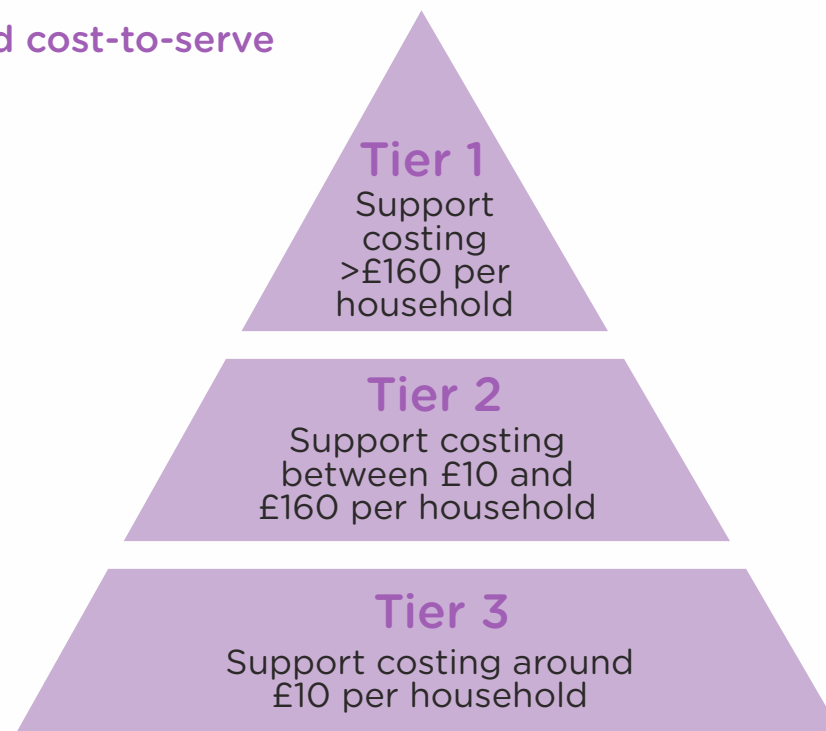
15,000 customers  
eg funding appliance repairs

### Tier 2

200,000 customers  
eg funding an energy adviser visit

### Tier 3

285,000 customers eg triage, identification and support service



# Expert insight to guide our strategy

Our industry-first Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Steering Group (VSG) remains key to ensuring we're able to deliver a robust and considered vulnerability support programme this year. These committed vulnerability and gas safety experts continue to guide us in delivery of our strategy, as they have done since the development of our initial RIIO-GD2 business plan.

Our independent Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Steering group is chaired by Christine Tate, who has more than 30 years' experience in the energy industry. Christine is the Director of Partnerships for Good, supporting commercial, public sector and not for profit organisations to cultivate effective strategies and partnerships that engage vulnerable communities across the UK. It is Christine's third year in this role.



Despite energy bills falling, six million UK households are in fuel poverty, risen from 4.5 million in October 2021. The fuel poverty crisis is deepening with five million people living in homes with an energy debt and are at greater risk as a result of actions taken to reduce costs, including turning off the heating or skipping meals. Energy debt is a record high of £3.1bn and it is estimated five million people are in a negative budget.

SGN have responded at pace to the challenges, in a flexible and agile way, due to the robustness of the model that they have developed during GD2, the strength of their partnerships that they have built and the impacts that their initiatives are having.

They have wholeheartedly taken on board the steer that the VSG has brought with their specialist knowledge and insights on the changing needs of communities, fuel poor and vulnerable households.

I have been proud to Chair the VSG for another year, when SGN have played a pivotal role in addressing fuel poverty issues and supporting the most vulnerable during a very challenging year. Increasingly throughout GD2, the team has developed a cohesive strategy that is having a remarkable impact on the lives of vulnerable communities across the country.

By nurturing partnerships and creating effective support networks, it's clear that SGN is truly engaging and impacting the communities it serves.

**Christine Tate**  
Vulnerability and CO Steering Group Chair



During the past 12 months, the VSG has provided guidance to SGN in the following ways:

- Review of priority groups at greater risk of harm, those most impacted by the cost-of-living and energy crisis and the growing societal issues. Carers and those at risk of homelessness were identified as additional groups to be included.
- Provided guidance in optimising the effectiveness of the 'Safe & Warm Partnership Network.' This included supporting the pre-winter workshop, to share best practice and elevate the cross-referral system across partners, increasing outcomes for customers.
- In the update of SGN's vulnerability strategy and the revision of the FPNES targets, to repurpose 70% of FPNES funding.
- In the revision of SGN's GD2 commitments to support 500,000 vulnerable households, doubling the original commitments with the increased funding.
- In reviewing the SGN specific and GDN collaboration budgets and how they should be allocated to each of the thematic areas, based on ability to deliver ambitions and reach to those most in need.
- In the assessment of research activities to establish the overall impact of SGN's partnership work, beyond SROI. Ensuring the outcomes reflect both the short and long-term impact.
- In the preparation for GD3, the VSG has helped shaped SGN's early thinking in their potential long-term role in alleviating fuel poverty and ensuring no one is left behind in the transition to net zero.

## Meet our VSG



**Fiona Small**  
Founder and CEO,  
Young Mums  
Support Network



**Scott Darroch**  
Head of Strategic  
Communications and  
Engagement,  
Gas Safe Register



**Dr Lucy McTernan**  
Former Acting CEO,  
Scottish Council for  
Voluntary  
Organisations



**Danni Barnes**  
Director of  
Development and  
Partnerships,  
National Energy  
Action (NEA)



**John Downie**  
Senior Head of  
Policy & Insight,  
British Gas Energy  
Trust



**Rose Ann O'Shea**  
Independent  
Consultant,  
NHS



# Our Safe & Warm partnership network

We're continuing to build a network of expert community partners that can draw on each other's expertise and specialist services, whether that's supporting a geographical community or a particular vulnerability group.

Key to this is bringing partners together and creating new connections. Through collaboration, sharing best practice and adopting a whole household approach to supporting vulnerable customers, we're creating a legacy of support for customers now and into the future.

Our collective aim is simple, we want to unlock all the available routes to support and break down the barriers to vulnerable households maintaining a safe and warm home.

By coming together for in-person and virtual training and knowledge sharing sessions, we're building and strengthening relationships between organisations to increase opportunities to cross-refer vulnerable customers for the tailored support. Through pooling insights and resources, we're elevating the outcomes for the communities that we serve.

In what's still a challenging time for the third sector, we're proud to bring partners together and celebrate all they do for the most vulnerable members of society. This notion of celebration is reflected throughout our report this year, as we showcase the genuine and lasting impact we're having on our communities thanks to the dedication of our expert partners.

The organisation that opens the door may change, but our entire network is there for them regardless of how they reached us.



Our new 'Supporting vulnerable households' website area is a space for partners to learn more about our Safe & Warm partnerships and access support for their own service users. Our website landing page has received 3,593 visits to date with our partnership pages attracting 4,192 visits collectively.



"Our partnership has also enabled valuable conversations with partner organisations like Age UK, Scope and Together for Short Lives, sharing programme learnings and agreeing to act as referral partners for one another."

Lily Whitlam



"Working in genuine collaboration with SGN has enabled the charity to grow its profile across Scotland as well as being able to connect with likeminded third sector organisations, such as Citizens Advice Scotland. Being able to attend the partnership day in Edinburgh in February 2024 was particularly helpful and expanded our network of organisations that are delivering complementary services to ours."

Laurie Cuthbert



"Thanks to our partnership with SGN, we have become more aware and been able to make connections with other organisations such as National Energy Action who provide free training on energy matters. This training has been invaluable to our advisers in enabling in keeping up to date with changes to legislation and being able to advise our callers accurately."

Stacey Kitzinger



"SGN has always encouraged broader partnership where we can think outside of the box and link up with related teams and services to ensure we can help as many people as needed. It's encouraged us to strive for innovative solutions that provide additional support to residents in need."

Annette Slattery



"One of the highlights of working with SGN has been the opportunity to develop a partnership with Kent Fire and Rescue service, to help us reach out to over 500 potential service users with a combined offer of energy advice, gas safety advice and a fire safety visit. We've also trained members of the Kent Fire and Rescue to become refers into the Green Doctor Service."

Daniel Brittle



# Identifying households most in need

Data and insight are fundamental in enabling us to determine how we target our support at communities who need it most.

We use our Vulnerability Index, developed in partnership with the Energy Savings Trust (EST), to identify regional communities most in need of support to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably.

This data-driven approach allows us to prioritise and tailor our engagement approach for communities in greatest need. The Vulnerability Index data is current and takes into consideration the cost-of-living crisis is having in the community, as well as longer-term social indicators such as age, deprivation and disability.

We combine this data with insight from our stakeholders and partners to help inform our understanding of how regional condition, policies and schemes impact customer options across our two network areas. This collaborative approach extends to sharing best practice around how to identify the most impactful ways of connecting vulnerable households to services designed to help them within their particular geographical region.

## Fuel poverty across our regions

Just as customer need, provision of services and how customers engage with those support services differs between our two regions, so too does fuel poverty.

In recent years, the fuel poverty gap in both our regions has increased. Scottish Government reports the actual median fuel poverty gap in Scotland increased from £750 in 2019 to £1,240 in 2022 – an increase of 65%. Meanwhile, in England, the UK government states the fuel poverty gap increased 66% from £251 in 2020 to £417 in 2023.

Despite the increases in the fuel poverty gap in both regions, fuel poverty isn't uniform across our network areas. Across the south of England, we find intensive pockets of fuel poverty nestled right alongside areas of considerable affluence. Whereas in Scotland, there is more widespread fuel poverty across the communities we serve.

Recognising the distinct need across our two regions, we've created a tailored portfolio of regional programmes with expert local partners. We've mobilised projects in the top 15 most vulnerable areas in both our Scotland and Southern networks, delivering targeted support to those in need.



Our design principle is to always invite and, where possible, partner with the regional utility networks to maximise the impact on customers struggling to afford and benefit from the support linked to their essential services. This approach enables us to reduce the partners' costs to administer and manage the project, increase the outcomes for customers and, in most cases, increase funding too. This means we can deliver more help to those who need it.

# Keeping vulnerable households safe and warm in Scotland

Average life expectancy in Scotland is markedly lower than elsewhere in Britain. Data from the Office of National Statistics highlights that life expectancy is 77 in Scotland, while in England it is around 82 years. Glasgow City and East Dunbartonshire have a 13-year gap in life expectancy compared to the national mean. As well as lower life expectancy, there is a significant disparity in health outcomes between those living in the most and least deprived areas.

Our customers in Scotland consistently experience colder winters. Winter temperatures are 1.5 to 2°C colder on average across Scotland compared to the rest of the UK.

The rate of fuel poverty is higher in our Scotland network compared to the south of England. The latest Scottish Government figures estimate 31% of Scottish households to be in fuel poverty. By comparison, 23% of English households are in fuel poverty using the same metric.

Poorly insulated homes are a key contributor to fuel poverty. Around 12% of Scottish homes are in the lowest EPC bands (E, F or G), according to Scottish Government data, whereas it's 10% of homes in England.

Scottish Government figures estimate around 18% of Scottish homes are outside the coverage of the gas grid, meaning these households must rely on more expensive fuels to heat their home such as electricity or oil.

The Fuel Poverty Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) is designed to connect customers in fuel poverty to the gas network for affordable heat. In Scotland, there is greater need for these gas

connections due to the higher levels of fuel poverty, but there is less VCMA funding allocated to support customers in fuel poverty as there are fewer gas customers across the region.

By extending our network into areas currently unconnected to the gas network, we're helping to alleviate fuel poverty in some of the most deprived areas of Scotland. One of these areas is Falkirk, where over a third of households are in fuel poverty. We're currently working to extend our network to 742 homes across five Falkirk villages.

We work closely with Citizens Advice Scotland, Centre for Sustainable Energy, Energy Savings Trust, National Energy Action and The Wise Group, who take us through monthly trends that help to keep us close to the nature of challenges faced by people in extreme need.

This year, we've invested in a dedicated Insights Officer at Citizens Advice Scotland who is working closely with energy advisers and their clients to better understand the lived experience of people living in energy crisis in Scotland with a view to ensuring our programmes are targeted to making a long-term impact for those most in need.

## Outreach initiatives in region



36

Partners delivering services in region



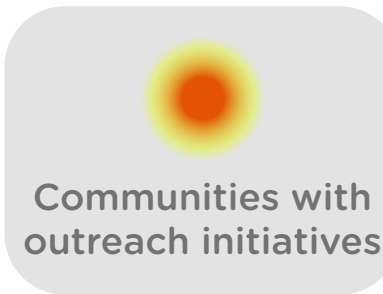
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Safe and Warm Community Scheme (CSE)



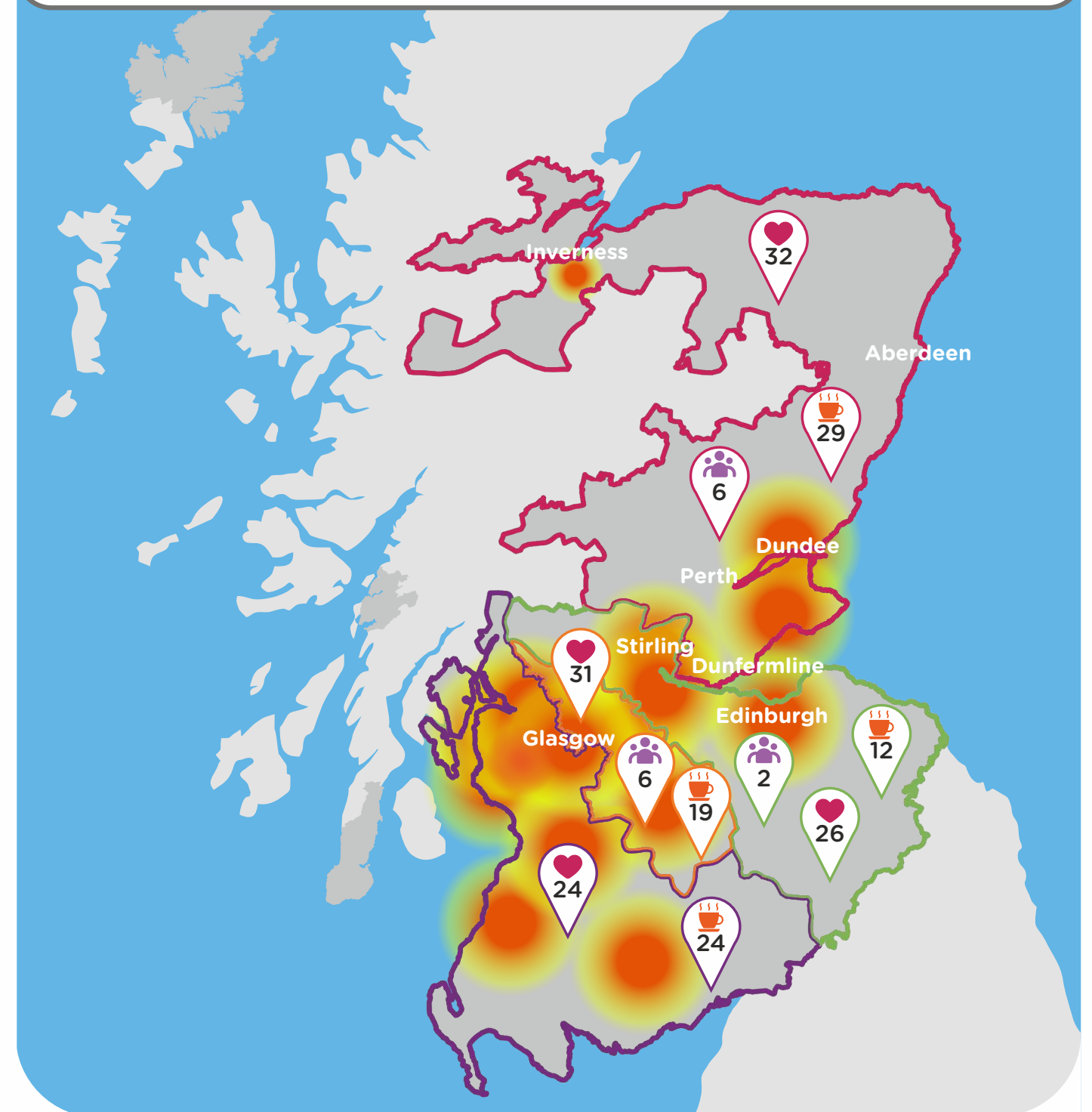
84

Warm hubs



## Our top 15 regional priority areas

- Clackmannanshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Dundee City
- East Ayrshire
- Falkirk
- Fife
- Glasgow City
- Inverclyde
- Midlothian
- North Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- Renfrewshire
- South Ayrshire
- South Lanarkshire
- West Dunbartonshire



# Supporting vulnerable households across our Southern network

According to UK Government estimates, fuel poverty rates in the south of England are the lowest in the country with 9.7% of households living in fuel poverty. By comparison, the overall level of fuel poverty in England in 2022 was 13.1% using the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency fuel poverty metric.

Despite the regional average being so low, there are areas of extreme fuel poverty right across the region. Unlike Scotland where fuel poverty is widespread across the country, we see pockets of extremely high deprivation across our Southern network. For example, Dorset has the largest fuel poverty gap in the southwest of England. Many factors contribute to this, including poor housing stock, lower-than-average incomes and a large proportion of off-gas properties.

We also see that fuel poverty is particularly prevalent in coastal towns like Hastings, Margate and Gosport. Many coastal towns suffer from outdated infrastructure, poor transport links and poor healthcare facilities compared to more urban areas. In addition, coastal communities typically have a higher-than-average population of older people meaning age-related health conditions, disabilities and unpaid care are likely to be more prevalent.

Across our Southern region, language and culture are some of the biggest barriers to households accessing energy safeguarding services and fuel poverty support.

According to the 2021 Census, London is the most ethnically diverse region in England and Wales with 46.2% of residents identifying with Asian, Black, mixed or 'other' ethnic groups. The capital has the lowest percentage of people with English as a main language at 78.4%. There are around 355,000 London residents whose main language is not English and cannot speak English well or at all.

To reflect the diverse communities across our Southern region, we are designing inclusive programmes with trusted community partners who can help residents break down the cultural barriers to maintaining a safe and warm home. An example of this is our Safe and Warm Community Scheme, where we engage with grassroots organisations to help lift harder-to-reach households out of fuel poverty.

As well as language and cultural barriers, we also see a higher prevalence of certain medical conditions that can prohibit people from maintaining a safe and warm home.

Data from the Alzheimer's Research UK Dementia Statistics Hub identifies three independent care boards operating in our region as having higher-than-average estimated numbers of people living with dementia. These are Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Medway and Kent, and Sussex, with between 24,100 and 32,300 people estimated to be living with dementia in each of these regions.

## Outreach initiatives in region

 57

Partners delivering services in region

 18

Safe and Warm Community Scheme (CSE)

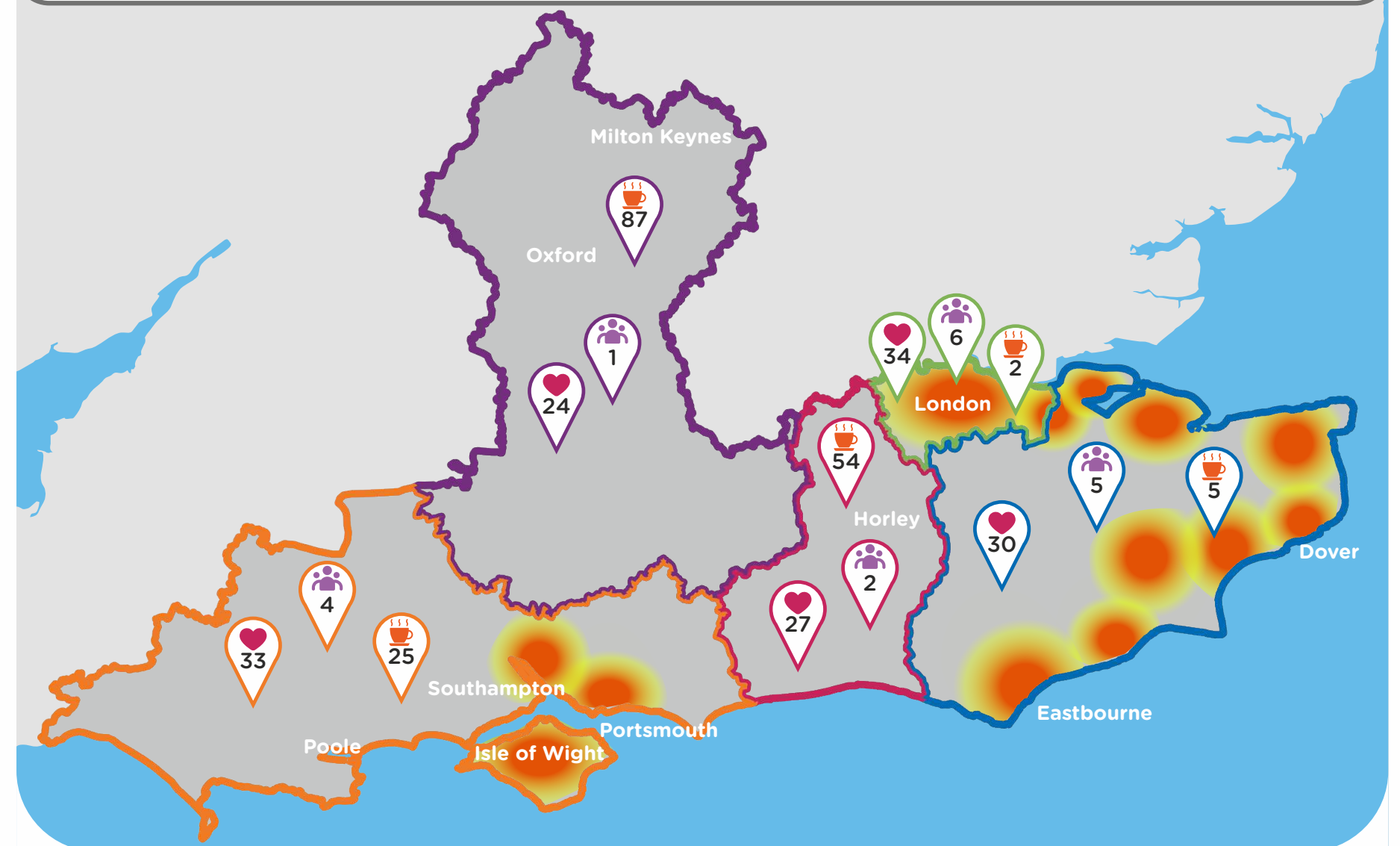
 173

Warm hubs

 Communities with outreach initiatives

## Our top 15 regional priority areas

- Dover
- Eastbourne
- Folkestone and Hythe
- Gosport
- Gravesham
- Hastings
- Havant
- Isle of Wight
- Lewisham
- Medway
- Portsmouth
- Rother
- Southampton
- Swale
- Thanet



# Collaborating with national partners

While there are fundamental differences in the nature of need across our Scotland and Southern networks, many vulnerable households face barriers to maintaining a safe and warm home unrelated to where in the country they live. For example, people with critical illnesses, disabled people and people with mental health conditions.

By complementing our regional programmes with national partnerships, we're able to co-design support services that can be tailored to provide holistic support based on a shared customer vulnerability or need.

We've seen multiple successes from this approach over the past three years, with our regional initiatives informing expanded national partnerships involving the other gas distribution networks.

By developing programmes collaboratively with the other gas networks, we're able to reach some of the priority vulnerability groups we've identified in our strategy more effectively and more inclusively than if we were to run the programme alone.

We're proudly leading joint-GDN partnerships with Age Collaboration, Bonanza Creative, Citizens Advice (England and Wales), Fuel Bank Foundation, Marie Curie, Mental Health UK, MyBnk, Scouts, Scope and Think CO.

In 2023, at the halfway point in RIIO-GD2, we worked with the other gas networks through our two industry working groups to map common regional stakeholder priorities and align our strategic ambitions. By establishing agreed strategic ambitions and target priorities, it allows us to maximise the impact of the repurposed FPNES allowance both nationally and regionally.

New partnerships we're participating in this year include Kidney Care UK led by Wales & West Utilities, Parsley Box led by Cadent, and the NEA Warm Homes Healthy Futures programme led by Northern Gas Networks.

Whenever we work with organisations nationally, we share the insight gained from our partnership with our smaller regional partners through our Safe & Warm partnership network. This year, we've seen greater collaboration between our national and local partners around sharing best practice, advocating for vulnerable customers in terms of energy costs and coming together to support vulnerable customer journeys for cross referrals. For example, Marie Curie has teamed up with Age UK, Citizens Advice England and Wales, and Scope to refer people with terminal illnesses in the south of England to these organisations for more in-depth support.

Our regional pilot programmes have become the blueprint for national joint-GDN partnerships with organisations including:



Read more about our joint-GDN strategy and programme in the [2024 annual collaborative VCMA report](#)



# Insights and external assurance

We always aim to deliver exceptional 10/10 customer experience. We look to our customers to validate that we're providing the service they need and want from us, and we're delivering that service to the standard they expect.

We want our strategy to deliver the best possible outcomes for vulnerable communities, so it's important to us to look outside of our industry to ensure that our support is best practice beyond the energy sector. We've welcomed external critique of our strategy, delivery plan and outcomes to ensure we're designing programmes that best meet the evolving needs of vulnerable communities.



## CCA Global Standard 8

For the sixth year running, we've achieved the CCA Global Standard 8 for our commitment to excellent customer service. It's industry's recognised accreditation programme, demonstrating an organisation's long-term commitment to continuously improving customer experience.



## PSR Csats

Customer satisfaction is independently measured by Explain Market Research for all gas networks across Britain, through telephone, postal and online surveys. Year on year, we've consistently delivered industry-leading high scores for customers on the PSR and this year we've seen our best-ever performance at 9.42 out of 10.



## BSI Kitemark

We're proud to build on four years verification of the British Standard BSI 18477 Inclusive Service provision by achieving BSI accreditation for the new ISO 22458 Kitemark (Energy Provision). This scheme demonstrates our commitment to accessible services for all of our customers.



## Awards

We're extremely proud to have been recognised with six national awards this year:

- **IGEM Gas Industry Awards** – Customer Service Award for Never Walking Away
- **CCA Global Excellence Awards** – Team of the Year (Gold Award)
- **CCA Global Excellence Awards** – Innovation in Customer Service (Gold Award)
- **CCA Global Excellence Awards** – Global Standard Achievement (Bronze)
- **Chartered Institute of Fundraising Scotland Awards** – Best Partner Relationship: SGN & Age Scotland
- **Scouts Better Together Awards** – Most Creative Partner for our programme of CO safety activities



# Insights and external assurance



## National Energy Action (NEA)

We're working with NEA to survey beneficiaries of our VCMA partner-delivered services across both our network areas to understand how the support has impacted the lived experience of vulnerable households. This insight not only shapes our activity, but we share these outputs with our partners to inform the effectiveness of our collective interventions and amplify outcomes for customers.

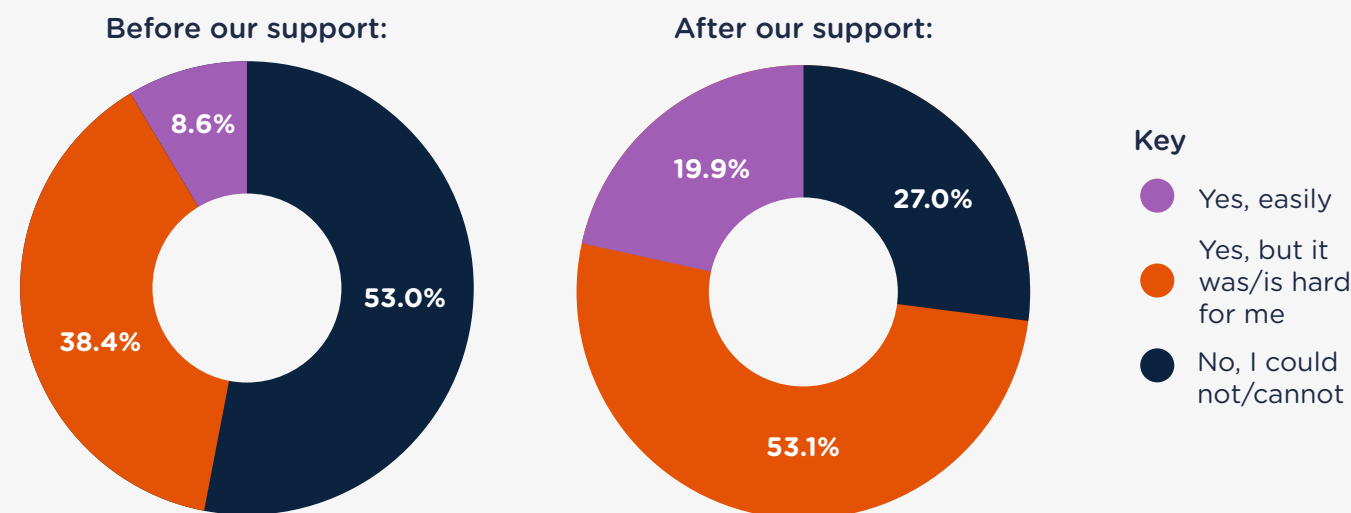
**It's clear from this research that our advice and support is reaching some of the lowest-income households in our communities. Of those surveyed, 72% had a net annual household income of less than £16,010, while almost half of those surveyed, 49%, had a household income of less than £12,000.**

In 2022, the UK poverty line was around £19,380, which is 60% of the median disposable household annual income of £32,000. When comparing the annual incomes of the households we've supported to these figures, there is no doubt that our support is truly reaching those who need it most.

Before our help, 92% of households found it difficult to heat their home adequately over the colder months with over 53% not able to heat their home at all to a comfortable level.

As a result of our services, we've seen a significant shift in people who couldn't previously keep their home comfortably warm at all now being able to do so, albeit still with difficulty. The number of households who were unable to keep their home warm reduced from 53% to 27% after our support. Meanwhile, the number of households who are now able to easily heat their home during the colder months increased from 9% to 20%.

### Independent researchers asked vulnerable households: Can you heat your home comfortably during the winter months?



Of the 209 households surveyed, almost three quarters to those who've received advice or support have shared that learning with others.



## Evaluation Support Scotland

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) is a charity that works with the third sector and funders so that they can measure and explain their impact and use learning to improve practice and inform policy.

This year, we invited ESS to work alongside our SGN team and our Safe & Warm partnership network to validate that our approach is achieving a broader impact for partner organisations delivering support and delivering systemic change for vulnerable customers.

The charity concluded:

- There is strong evidence from partners that SGN is enabling and outcome focused, working collaboratively to maximise impact
- The Safe & Warm partnership network has built capacity and connections amongst partners, and the network views SGN as a delivery partner, which is unique in a 'funder'
- The Safe & Warm partnership network sees SGN as "connecting each other and promoting their learning, amplifying the experience of partners and vulnerable"
- There is further opportunity in improving our evaluation and reporting so the impact is better told and understood
- That partners would value coming together to build skills and share how they measure impact and share impact evidence.

Since our work with ESS, we've developed in-person partnership workshops that bring together learning sessions and networking to help create further opportunities for partners to share best practice and build greater referral pathways. We're also working with our partners to improve the storytelling of the lived experience and impact of our services.



"We've continued to provide support to SGN as their SROI assurance partner - helping to drive year-on-year consistency and comparability in how they assess their VCMA projects. We're also proud to highlight an added focus SGN has placed this year on helping partners to better understand the way projects are assessed which is helping to enhance partners reporting capabilities."

Omar Clarke,  
Senior Manager Utilities, Sia Partners



"Our steering group has strongly encouraged co-creation with voluntary sector and community-based partners to add value to existing services and channels, building capacity and reaching further.

We have been pleased by the SGN team's willingness to seek out collaborations, and to take advice on what works to support vulnerable people, not just in their current circumstances, but for the long term, often by connecting them with other services beyond the immediate need. This has had the additional benefit of enabling networking and alignment between partner organisations, has been very well-received by charity workers, and we're already seeing service innovations as a result."

Dr Lucy McTernan,  
VSG member



# Engaging our stakeholders

We have an extensive and regular stakeholder engagement programme, which ensures we stay focused on the things that really matter to the regions both in Scotland and the south of England.

In addition to our dedicated Vulnerability Steering Group and our Safe & Warm partnership network, we invite stakeholders with interests in how we keep our customers and communities safe and warm to provide valuable feedback on our vulnerability strategy and delivery approach. We engage with our stakeholders in a variety of ways on both our regional and national plans through

face-to-face and online events, including the collaborative VCMA Annual Showcase.

We believe that we make better decisions in the interests of customers and all our stakeholders when we understand their requirements, evolving needs and priorities. We can then deliver real benefits which are valued by our customers and stakeholders providing valuable insights into how we should be delivering our core services and our community work.

Detailed here are some of the key challenges raised by stakeholders on our vulnerability and carbon monoxide programme this year and the actions taken as a result.



## ☞ You said

## We did

The VCMA allowance hasn't been spent equally over five years - can you explain why?

In our first year, our focus was on ensuring we were setting up partnerships that addressed the impact of Covid-19 on customers and communities. With a strong foundation in place for years two and three, we were able to amplify our support to help those impacted the most by the energy crisis. Mid year three, the allowance increased by 262% to enable us to support more vulnerable households in fuel poverty. In year three, we onboarded 16 projects to begin delivering from the start of April 2024. These are labelled 'New for 2024' in our project progress reports, which you'll find from [page 20](#) onwards.

Why repurpose FPNES funding when it makes a difference on alleviating fuel poverty for customers off gas?

The FPNES is an effective way to move customers from oil and other environmentally damaging heat, when living within a connectable distance to the gas network and where there is enabling first-time central heating funding available. We made an ambitious commitment to support 18,000 households to connect to the gas network during the RIIO-GD2 five-year price control period.. With changes in available enabling funding, the number of eligible households has dropped significantly. We are unable to fund the first-time central heating via the VCMA. By repurposing the FPNES funding, we're helping our communities stay safe and warm, today and tomorrow.

## ☞ You said

## We did

Work collaboratively with community organisations and regional utilities to maximise benefits for customers and partner organisations

When delivering local programmes and national programmes we invite the electricity, gas and water networks to join forces to maximise outcomes for customers and minimise the administration on partner organisations. This year, we've seen more hyperlocal collaborations with a focus on joined up responses in crisis warm spaces and warm hubs across our network areas. We understand to help families make sustainable choices and access help, we need to work with trusted agencies to eliminate households' perceived bias that our support is in our commercial interest.

How can SGN protect the most vulnerable customers to make sure they get help from their utility companies?

Our recent customer research flagged that 86% of customers say that increased costs of energy have impacted their household to the point where they have had to take cost reduction actions. We've prioritised supporting households not only with energy advice, but we've focussed on income maximisation checks and emergency fuel vouchers where people are in crisis. We've also increased the training for all partners on the protections afforded to customers who are on the Priority Services Register (PSR) as well as targeted marketing of the PSR.

## ☞ You said

## We did

Prioritise those 'most in need of support' to maintain a safe and warm home and those with 'health conditions made worse by living in a cold home'

In addition to having a data driven approach to identifying need, we've worked alongside partners and stakeholders including local authorities and fire and rescue teams to identify areas where there are funding and energy service gaps. We've also expanded our 'priority customer groups' to include unpaid carers and people at risk of homelessness, and we've built more partnerships in health-based services both locally and nationally.

Consider the impact of the VCMA programme beyond SROI in how we're keeping our communities safe and warm

Working with our Safe & Warm partnership network, in addition to working closely on SROI assessments, we've held workshops facilitated by external experts on measuring the impact of our partnerships in communities. We've also worked with Citizens Advice Scotland, NEA and our partners to measure the impact of support on the lived experience of households supported by our partnerships.

How do you consistently determine your programmes deliver value for customers?

We've continued to work with SIA Partners and SIRIO Strategies to independently assess all VCMA projects, making sure that they deliver great value for customers. By involving our partners in these assessments, we're able to build skills within our partner organisations and invest in their long-term development. We build capacity in our teams to support development of an industry-standard tool and we've worked closely with SIRIO Strategies this year to develop and test a common SROI tool and GDN rulebook to align outputs across energy networks.

## ☞ You said

## We did

Upskill community organisations on energy safeguarding to reach those harder-to-engage communities

We've continued to bring our Safe & Warm partnership network together to share skills and identify opportunities to learn from each other or collaborate on supporting households with energy safeguarding activities as well as help beyond energy. We've developed a cross-referral pathway through our SGN website to help partners collaborate for the benefit of their organisation and customers.

Consider the role of grassroots organisations and how to work with them under VCMA

We've built a programme specifically to support smaller organisations build the skills and capacity to deliver local energy safeguarding services. We've seen grassroots partners often require more support to set up programmes. However, after appropriate training and ongoing support, they do achieve success in tailoring support to personal and local circumstances and reaching those often left behind by other advice services.

## ☞

"Over the past year, SGN played an important role in advancing the robustness and comparability of social value measurement at both the sector and industry level. We particularly valued SGN's proactive engagement and the actionable insight shared with our team and other networks in the development of a new industry-wide social value framework and a sector-specific valuation rulebook. I look forward to building on early successes to drive further improvements."

Alessio Villanacci, SIRIO Strategies



# Our approach to delivery

With our mature strategy in its third year, we're well-positioned to effectively apply the additional VCMA funding to amplify the scale of our delivery and the numbers of vulnerable households we're able to help.

## Our four priority areas

We have four strategic priority areas, shaped by the expertise of our Vulnerability and CO Steering Group and combined with our vulnerability mapping tools, industry insights and community-level data.



### Providing direct support services to vulnerable customers

Direct 'beyond the meter' services for vulnerable households as we go about our day-to-day operational work



### Supporting priority customer groups

Tailored support for 11 priority customer groups, who are most likely to need trusted help to maintain a safe and warm home



### Targeting geographic communities most at risk of fuel poverty

Targeted support for customers struggling to afford energy in the most vulnerable geographical areas within our networks, identified by our Vulnerability Index data



### Reducing carbon monoxide (CO) harm

A data-driven approach to increase awareness and reduce the risk of carbon monoxide harm among those groups most at risk

## Reporting on our project progress

Over the coming pages, grouped by priority area, you'll find details of both the projects we're delivering within our regions, as well as the programmes that we're delivering jointly with one or more of the other gas networks.

For each of our programmes, we've detailed our project ambition and our progress towards our agreed outputs and deliverables, plus any challenges we've faced or changes to our initial plans.

Stakeholder engagement and disseminating our learnings are fundamental to our programmes, so information on these activities are also reflected in our project updates.

We've also included key financial information for each project. We use the following metrics consistently throughout our reporting:

- **Investment** - our committed spend to date
- **Initial funding** - our initial project investment
- **Additional funding** - our revised investment following repurposed FPNES funding
- **Social return on investment (SROI)** - the forecast additional value gained from social, environmental and economic benefits per £1 invested
- **Net present value (NPV)** - forecast value minus the cost to deliver the project

If you'd like to find out more about any of our programmes, including details on how to refer your clients, click the link in the QR codes or scan the code to visit the dedicated programme page on our website.



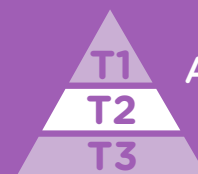
As you're reading the following pages, please look out for the following symbols:



Project duration



Local delivery area



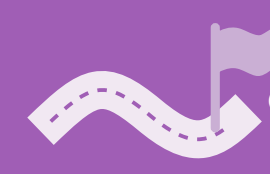
Average cost to serve model



New project



In progress



Completed



Total number of households supported since April 2021

 **48,217**



## Providing direct support services to vulnerable customers

We are trusted by our communities to keep people safe and warm.

In being invited into homes, our engineers witness first-hand the vast variety of barriers that customers face when trying to maintain a safe and warm home.

Our engineers continue to tell us, loud and clear, that they never want to walk away from a customer in need.





### What's changed in our approach this year

This year, our engineers have observed the increasing pressure felt by many households as the cost-of-living crisis deepened. They've seen an increase in the number of customers struggling to afford the basics. This is evident in the increase in households they've referred to our partners for energy advice and mental health support.

We piloted our Safe & Warm Mobile Community Hubs in winter 2022, establishing a new service to extend our Careline service into communities and enable us to further support customers in financial hardship over the winter months.

We've evolved the service this year, establishing a dedicated Safe & Warm community team offering support to vulnerable customers on their doorsteps all year round. With this new team trained by our programme partners, our communities are benefiting from a dedicated energy and vulnerability expert embedded in the heart of our operational projects.

We've progressed our joint-GDN partnership with NSPCC, coming together as gas networks to review our safeguarding policies in a joined-up way and to empower our frontline teams to our frontline teams with the skills and support processes to confidently respond where they feel that a family is in need of help.

### How new stakeholder insight has shaped our activity

With support from our stakeholders and Ofgem, the gas networks have worked together to ensure there is a consistent provision of support for customers who need to have their gas supply isolated due to unsafe pipework, unsafe essential gas appliances or where we suspect CO.

Through this collaborative approach, we can all provide support to vulnerable customers who meet the eligibility criteria. By funding the services of a Gas Safe engineer to repair or replace the unsafe pipework or appliance, we're able to minimise the impact of the emergency and prevent low-income vulnerable households from being left without gas indefinitely.

In addition, we've engaged with Ofgem and stakeholders to look collectively at how we can support financially vulnerable households to proactively maintain their essential gas appliances. We're working together to understand the impact and requirements of this service to ensure that vulnerable customers benefit from this assistance, should there be any issues identified from this proactive approach.



This year, we've achieved a customer satisfaction score of **9.42** from our customers who are registered on the PSR. This is an increase on last year's score of **9.36**. In comparison, the latest UKCSI UK Customer Satisfaction Score for January 2024 is **6.95**.





## Our frontline engineers

Every day, our frontline gas engineers visit customer homes to attend to gas emergencies and upgrade our network. With this, they're invited into the homes of some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Our engineers pride themselves on always delivering a 10/10 customer service. They've told us time and time again that they never want to walk away from a customer in need. Their real-time insight into customer need, and the resources they need to be able to help a customer in crisis, helps us shape our vulnerability strategy.

From the second they walk into a customer's home, our engineers are thinking about reassuring customers and keeping them safe. This safety-first culture is in their DNA. But now, they're also thinking about all the ways they could offer extra support to households in need to keep them safe and warm beyond their visit, using the tools and services they've actively helped co-design.

This year, our frontline teams referred 7,433 vulnerable customers to our Careline team for extra help. This is the highest annual number of referrals to date.

Our engineers are truly making a difference to our vulnerable customers up and down the country.

**Sam Batcheler,  
First Call Operative**



In January, Ms S called the National Gas Emergency Service after smelling gas in her kitchen. Our emergency gas engineer Sam attended her home to investigate. Sam identified a possible leak on her gas hob, which meant her hob would need to be replaced.

For Ms S, this financial burden came at a time when she was already struggling financially. Not only that, she had recently been diagnosed with cancer. Being without a working hob now became an overwhelming situation for her to resolve alone.

However, Ms S wasn't alone. Sam immediately recognised she needed extra help from our Careline team. He requested an urgent referral to our partner Universal Gas Solutions, who assessed her eligibility for funded support and arranged for a Gas Safe registered engineer to visit Ms S the same day.

The quick action that Sam took meant that Ms S wasn't left unable to cook for herself indefinitely. Instead, the impact of her emergency was kept minimal with her hob replaced - for free - within days.

**"I'm really pleased with how we were about to help. It brings real job satisfaction when you know we can help a customer who is struggling."**



**"Sam, the engineer sent to assess the leak, was amazing. It was more like having a member of my own family help me! He organised a hot plate to tide me over till they replaced the hob, secured the leak, ordered me a CO alarm and made me feel safe in my own home again."**

Ms S, Southampton

**David Kaminski,  
First Call Operative**



David is one of our first call operatives in the west of Scotland. When a gas emergency is reported, he is first on the scene to make the situation safe. But David does far more than make the situation safe. David prides himself in going above and beyond for every customer he meets to make sure they stay safe and warm at home long after he leaves.

David has referred more vulnerable customers for extra help from our Careline team than any other engineer in Scotland or the south of England. Across this year alone, David has helped 193 customers access 543 unique support services, including identifying 123 households for the Priority Services Register.

David is passionate about engaging his colleagues on the support services we can provide through our direct services and our network of Safe & Warm community partners.

Through internal news articles and in-person mentoring, David is encouraging his colleagues to identify opportunities to make the difference for our vulnerable customers.

**"I always assume someone is vulnerable until I can confirm they aren't. I have always liked helping people and encourage my colleagues to do the same. If I see someone is struggling, it is always nice to help and I support others to do the same."**



**"I was so reassured by everything David did for me. He was so lovely and so helpful, and an absolute gentleman."**

Ms F, Kilmarnock





## Our Careline team

Our six-strong Careline team is a dedicated team within our Customer Experience department with the sole purpose of looking after vulnerable customers.

When an engineer identifies a vulnerable household in need of support, they can refer the customer to our Careline team for extra help. The Careline team will then use their training and support matrix to identify the most appropriate services and partner organisations, creating a package of support tailored to the household's unique needs and circumstances.

As well as supporting our operational colleagues when they encounter a customer in need, the Careline team acts proactively using PSR data to support vulnerable customers during gas emergencies.

Our Careline colleagues are experts in vulnerability. They are passionate about genuinely understanding customer need, so they can truly make the difference for vulnerable households. The team works directly with our partners such as Kidney Care UK, Mental Health UK and Age Scotland to increase their awareness and develop their skills, so they're able to best support customers with specific needs.

Beyond our network of Safe & Warm community partners, the team has also established trusted relationships with local authority and broader

community safeguarding partners, which enables us to link our customers to the most appropriate source of support for their circumstances.

Our Careline team uses their first-hand experience of customer need to inform our operational teams and vulnerability management team to ensure we're providing the services and partnerships our vulnerable customers need.

This year, our Careline team has supported 17,757 vulnerable households, including 7,433 vulnerable customers identified by our frontline engineers, resulting in the provision of 13,643 unique support services.

It's through their dedicated coordination of colleagues and partners that we're able to keep our promise to never walk away from a customer in need. We're extremely proud that their unrelenting efforts have been recognised externally this year, by being named 'Team of the Year' at the CCA Excellence Awards 2023.

Louise Downie,  
Careline Team  
Manager



Louise has been at the heart of our Careline team since 2018. Not only does she work with senior leaders and partners to help shape our Careline service, but she also trains our wider Customer Experience team on the services we can provide to vulnerable households.

Louise manages our award-winning team of Careline advisers. She empowers her team to go above and beyond for customers, bringing people together to create solutions for customers. She never takes no for an answer when it comes to finding a way to help households in need of our help and she's always seeking out new ways to evolve our Careline service.

**"Every month I am astonished at the volume of people living with vulnerabilities that we are actively supporting. I can say with confidence that every one of them is treated with respect, dignity, and care. I am so proud of the work that SGN does to support our vulnerable customers."**

**"I am so grateful I could cry, my son has a school trip and I didn't know how I was going to afford a packed lunch for him. Thank you, Thank you."**

Miss B, Greenwich

Liz Cramb,  
Careline Adviser



While Liz only joined us in August 2023, she's quickly become an integral part of our Careline team. She's a highly skilled adviser, able to rapidly assess customer needs and identify the best solutions to keep them safe and warm at home.

Recently, Liz supported Ms R in Bonnybridge when her gas supply was isolated following a gas emergency at her home. With Ms R having terminal cancer, Liz recognised the added pressure she would face being without gas.

Liz quickly intervened, arranging for her gas supply to be promptly reconnected, as well as connecting Ms R to our expert partners for additional support.

**"I truly believe in the work that is done by Careline. It's a fantastic team that has been created and nurtured by Louise. I feel that I can put my skills into good use to help and support both my colleagues and our customers with all my knowledge and passion that I have for this role."**

**"I am overwhelmed with the support that you have given me and I am really grateful for everything."**

Ms R, Bonnybridge







## Our Safe & Warm community team

During long-term operational work, our teams become embedded in the community. Becoming a trusted authority with the community brings a unique opportunity for us to support vulnerable households to access a network of services to help them maintain a safe and warm home.

We first identified this potential through our pilot initiative in winter 2022. This year, we've established a new in-house Safe & Warm community team, which expands our much-needed and much-used Careline service into the community.

Our vulnerability liaison officers are highly-trained energy advisers, who have achieved the NEA Level 2 qualification in Energy Advice as well as received bespoke specialist vulnerability training from our partners including Age Scotland, Kidney Care UK, Mental Health UK, NSPCC and Scope.

Using data from our Vulnerability Index and the PSR, as well as insight from our operational colleagues, the team targets their support towards communities most in need.

Our Safe & Warm community team provide face-to-face support for our customers on their doorstep, offering tailored advice to the household's individual needs. This could be registering a customer for the PSR, providing energy efficiency advice, raising awareness of carbon monoxide safety or even fitting a free carbon monoxide alarm.

As well as providing direct support services, our Safe & Warm community team identify additional opportunities for us to help households maintain a safe and warm home and refer these customers to our Safe & Warm partnership network for specialist support. The team is also able to direct households in energy crisis to local support services, including warm spaces and other community resources.

**Angela Newman,**  
Vulnerability Liaison  
Officer



Angela supports our vulnerable customers in the east of Scotland. This winter, she visited households local to some of our gas network upgrade programmes in areas of particularly high deprivation.

As well as helping customers to stay safe and warm this winter, Angela is always keen to ensure vulnerable households can access services that help them stay warm and well for the long term.

By successfully signposting customers to our partners, such as Scope and Home Energy Scotland, Angela has done just that.

**"I am extremely proud to be part of shaping the safe and warm role, and I want to be able to reach as many of our vulnerable customers as I can to provide them with the support and tools to help keep them safe and warm in the coldest months."**



**"You are an absolute angel. I have 3 children who are all autistic and I suffer from COPD and arthritis, which makes things difficult for me. I am always living in my emergency. I would never have known that SGN would be able to give me any of this help."**

Mrs X, Edinburgh

**Stephanie Jeffries,**  
Vulnerability Liaison  
Officer



Stephanie joined our Safe & Warm team in winter 2023 to help our vulnerable customers through the cost-of-living crisis, as well as provide onsite support during our planned works.

She provides customers in south London with real-time updates on the progress of our operational support and supports them through the duration of our projects.

Stephanie's dedication to our vulnerable customers doesn't stop once our project ends, as she's always keen to continue working with our customers and linking into additional support services after our engineers have left site.

**"I am thoroughly enjoying my new role within the Safe & Warm team as a Vulnerability Liaison Officer. To be able to look after our customers and provide them with a range of amazing services makes me very proud to be part of the SGN team."**



**"I'm so grateful for the face-to-face visit and thankful that you are able to support during this difficult time for me."**

Mrs M, Mitcham





## Our Care and Repair service

When we're called to a gas emergency at a customer's home, our engineers will always make the situation safe. If the issue is with a faulty appliance or internal pipework, we must isolate the appliance or supply until it's repaired or replaced by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Many vulnerable households are unable to meet this unexpected cost or find it challenging to arrange a repair, meaning they are forced to remain off supply longer than necessary.

Our Care and Repair scheme provides emergency funding to ensure vulnerable households are not left without gas indefinitely because they can't afford the unplanned repair or replacement.

Gas Safe registered engineers from our delivery partner Universal Gas Solutions will repair or replace the faulty appliance or pipework, or service the appliance as required. Working with a trusted Gas Safe registered organisation ensures our customers can be supported within the first 24 hours of their gas going off.

If we've needed to isolate the gas supply to a vulnerable household due to a suspected or confirmed carbon monoxide leak from an appliance, the Universal Gas Solutions engineers will also test for CO in line with CMDDA1 and the associated procedures.

If these tests identify CO from a faulty appliance, the engineers can repair or replace it for the customer and reduce the amount of time the customer is without their gas supply.

The Universal Gas Solutions team makes sure that our customer has a carbon monoxide safety conversation and, where needed, will install a new CO alarm.

Since 2021, we've invested £475,450 into the delivery of our Care and Repair scheme, supporting 415 customers with essential repairs or replacements of gas appliances or pipework.

Emma Banbury,  
Universal Gas  
Solutions triage team



When our engineers identify a customer who might benefit from our Care and Repair scheme, our Careline team refers them to Universal Gas Solutions.

Emma will contact the customer within four hours of receiving our request to assess their needs and eligibility, before arranging for a Gas Safe engineer to visit their home.

As well as arranging the immediate repairs for the customers, Emma offers energy efficiency advice to keep customers safe and warm at home once their gas supply is restored.

As part of our Safe & Warm community, Emma can also refer the customer to any of our network of specialist support partners for extra tailored help, including income maximisation and debt support.

**"When we receive a referral from the SGN team, we respond quickly to put the customer at ease. We take the time to explain to vulnerable customers what help is available to them and reassure them about the steps we'll take to restore their supply as soon as possible."**

**"The engineer was amazing he really did help solve a big problem. Couldn't fault the service and for it all to be covered under the scheme really took away the trouble. Thank you so much for all your help."**

Ms N, Ryde

Nigel Murray,  
Universal Gas  
Solutions engineer



Once a vulnerable customer has been triaged, a Universal Gas Solutions engineer will visit the customer within 48 hours. Last year, Universal Gas Solutions engineers like Nigel attended 95% of households within 24 hours.

Nigel is able to resolve the majority of customer issues and restore their gas supply at the first visit. The team aims to restore the gas supply for customers with more complex repair needs within three days.

Sometimes Nigel will need to help customers address barriers before making repairs, such as clearing spaces first so the work can take place safely.

**"By sending us to help, the customer doesn't need to worry about finding a trusted tradesperson themselves as we're Gas Safe registered engineers. This could be particularly challenging for many of the customers we visit, which is why this scheme is so important."**

**"You have all been amazing from start to finish. Couldn't of asked for a better service. The engineer was great, explained everything, made me feel so safe in my home and was happy to answer my questions. Thank you for helping me. I really appreciate your time and effort."**

Mrs J, Chessington





### Extra care support services

#### Project ambition

We aim to support a minimum of 10,000 customers every year through our range of extra care support services. In addition to providing direct welfare services and onward support for vulnerable households, this programme also includes supporting customers through our Careline and Safe & Warm community teams, delivering our Care and Repair scheme and training for our frontline teams.

#### Project progress

Since April 2021, we've provided energy safeguarding services and onward support for 48,217 vulnerable households. This exceeds our target of helping 10,000 customers each year.

#### Learning and dissemination

This year we re-evaluated the SROI using the new industry SROI tools and GDN rulebook, which has resulted in the SROI decreasing from £4.58 to £2.34.

We've shared insights on the development of our services with the other utility networks to share how we've integrated engagement, training and IT systems to enable effective triage and customer support services.

We're delighted our Extra Care Support Services received the Customer Service Award for Never Walking Away at the IGEM Gas Industry Awards 2023, as well as Team of the Year and Innovation in Customer Service at the CCA Global Excellence Awards 2023.



### NSPCC collaborative GDN project



#### Project ambition

We're working to raise awareness and share techniques on how to spot potential child mistreatment through 'It's Your Call' training for GDN colleagues and contractors. We're also providing fuel poverty and CO awareness resources to NSPCC to support families in need.

#### Project progress

We've introduced 'It's Your Call' training for our people via our Learning Management System. We've started working with the other gas networks and the NSPCC to review our child safeguarding processes. The CO training for NSPCC and its network of frontline workers has been rolled out to 3,610 people, of which 357 were in our two regions.

#### Learning and dissemination

The NSPCC has started its independent review of the GDNs' current safeguarding standards. The charity is the UK leader in this particular field of vulnerability and is working with each GDN to improve internal standards. The rollout of the 'It's Your Call' training across the gas networks has been slower than initially forecast due to operational constraints, however, plans are in place to increase rollout during 2024-25.



Investment:  
£4,070,715

April 2021 to March 2026



SGN regions

SROI: £2.34  
NPV: £6,443,226



SGN investment :  
£151,502

April 2023 to March 2025



National joint-GDN

Joint-GDN investment:  
£595,719  
SROI: £5.01  
NPV: £2,392,043





Total number of households supported since April 2021

 **109,797**

## Supporting priority customer groups

Supported by our Vulnerability and CO Steering Group, strategic partners and research, we've identified 11 priority customer groups most in need of our help to maintain a safe and warm home:

- Carers
- Critically ill people
- Digitally and culturally excluded groups
- Disabled people
- Older people
- Families with young children
- Financially vulnerable people
- People at risk of homelessness
- People with health conditions made worse by living in a cold and unhealthy home
- People with mental health conditions
- Young people



### How we're supporting priority vulnerability groups

Given that these vulnerability groups are not determined or limited by location, we've formed partnerships with expert organisations that operate nationally, and not just within our two regions. With this, we also proactively invite regional utility companies and the other gas networks to join these partnerships to increase the outcomes for vulnerable households.

We're proud to report a total of six of our regional programmes have now been superseded by expanded joint-GDN programmes, reflecting the strength of our initial programmes in delivering positive outcomes for priority vulnerability groups.

As a sector, we're advocating for a joined-up approach to supporting priority vulnerability groups. We've been working with the other gas networks and other utility companies to deliver a single, easily accessible Priority Services Register (PSR) to ensure that those customers who need extra help from their utility companies know what support is available to them.

We're committed to uniting with our fellow utility network operators to promote the PSR so that in the key moments that matter, vulnerable customers get the help they need.



### How new stakeholder insight has shaped our activity

At a time when everyone's struggling financially, we've seen households within our priority vulnerability groups disproportionately impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation. For many of our priority vulnerability groups, life costs more, due to greater energy consumption because of essential medical equipment, hygiene needs and being less resilient to cold.

At the height of the cost-of-living crisis, 300,000 more children were plunged into absolute poverty in a single year according to the Department for Work and Pensions. Our new partnership with Home-Start UK is opening up access to vital support and energy safeguarding services to help 22,000 young families across southern England maintain a safe and warm home. While our partnership with Children 1st will see us work to minimise the health and wellbeing impact on children and families who are living in fuel poverty across Scotland.

Through research and stakeholder insight, we've identified three new priority vulnerability groups this year, unpaid carers, people at risk of homelessness and people with health conditions made worse by living in a cold and unhealthy home. We've co-designed new programmes that target these groups, which will be going live in 2024. Look out for more details of these in the coming pages.





# Home and Well Carers Support Service



## Why we're working together

Research from Carers UK in 2022 found a quarter of carers (25%) are cutting back on essentials like food or heating and nearly two-thirds (63%) are extremely worried about managing their monthly costs.

We're collaborating with The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Hampshire to bring together a large network of local community partners to proactively support 131,000 carers with tailored support services that help to tackle fuel poverty and introduce energy safeguards to help those most vulnerable maintain a safe and warm home.

## How we're working together

We've established ten hubs across Hampshire for carers to access tailored energy safeguarding support. Each hub provides engaging, social and relaxing activities to help create a welcoming environment, as well as refreshments and lunch.

Carers discuss their energy-related concerns with a skilled energy ambassador, who works through available support provisions to help them sustain their caring role for longer. We've supported 275 carers with this longer-term help, as well as provided immediate practical and financial support to carers in households in energy crisis. This includes measures such as emergency fuel vouchers, winter warm packs and heated blankets.

As well as our face-to-face service, we've provided energy safeguarding information to 27,000 households across Hampshire to date, detailing the practical, financial and emotional support that is available locally for carers and promoting our new carer hubs.

## Partnership impact

This partnership works alongside our Home and Well project in Hampshire, providing proactive and preventative support services for carers and those they care for. Our shared ambition is to reduce the potential impact on the NHS and prevent hospitalisation for high-risk people as a result of living in a cold and unhealthy home.

We've facilitated NEA Level 2 training in Fuel Debt Advice in the Community for the energy ambassadors. With this training, they support carers with many of the energy-related issues they face, while referring to our Citizens Advice Home and Well team for in-depth support with more complex issues.

Through the partnership, we've gained valuable insight from carers into their lived experiences and their awareness of the energy-related schemes. Of all the carers we've spoken to at the hubs, almost 95% had not heard of the Priority Services Register. We've since registered 146 Hampshire carers for the PSR in the first four months of our 24-month programme.

We've found that for many carers, loneliness and isolation is one of the biggest issues impacting their mental health. Our energy ambassadors have referred 82 carers for mental health related support.

Our energy hubs provide access to services including legal advice on power of attorney, wills and trusts, home library services and trading standards. The energy ambassadors have referred 23 carers to other partners via our Safe & Warm partnership network including to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service for a home safety visit.

The learnings of this partnership have helped to inform a national joint-GDN partnership with Carers Trust UK, which will launch in summer 2024.



## Key 2023/24 achievements

Households supported: **275**

Emergency fuel vouchers: **23**

Energy advice sessions: **275**

Benefit checks: **119**

CO safety conversations: **159**

PSR registrations: **146**

Marketing reach: **27,000**



"I visited the SGN Hub with my disabled daughter as she had a £600 energy bill for the last quarter. Together we called the provider, queried the bill and it was reduced! The impact on our mental health was awful, I can't thank you enough, we can sleep again."

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers service user

**Our project at a glance**

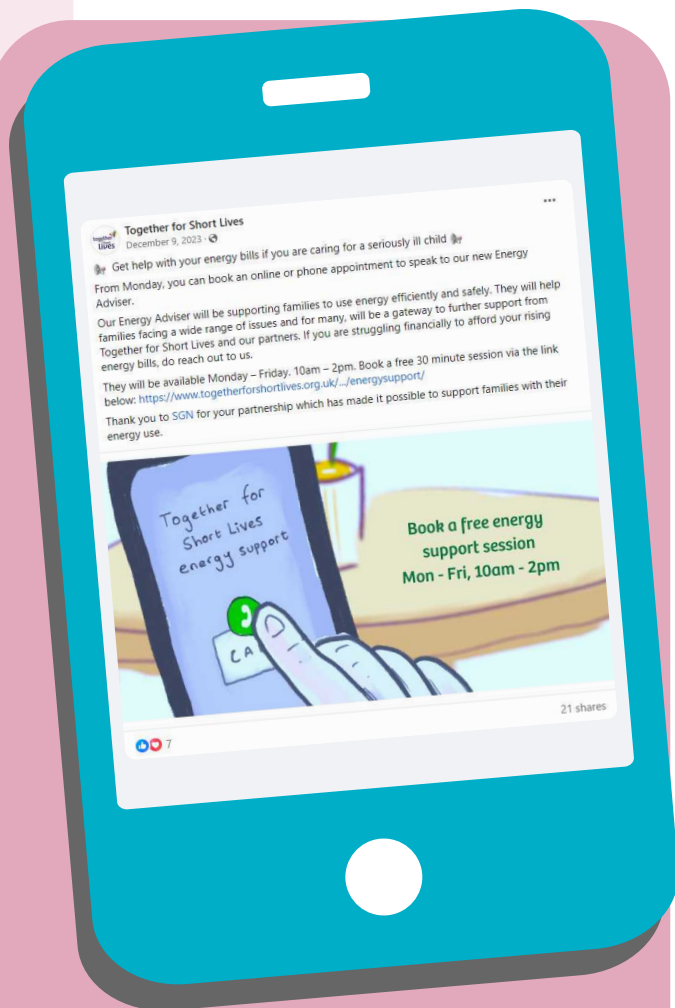
October 2023 to October 2025

Hampshire

Investment: £328,218  
Forecast SROI: £3.18  
NPV £1,043,590.23

T2





## Together for Short Lives

### Why we're working together

Many families with children who are seriously ill or have a lifelimiting condition depend on electrical equipment to maintain their children's health and enhance their quality of life. The cost of powering essential medical equipment, such as ventilators, hoists and food pumps, has soared during the cost-of-living crisis, putting considerable financial and emotional pressure on already vulnerable households.

We're partnering with children's palliative care charity Together for Short Lives to ensure 27,000 families have access to the energy safeguards and financial support they need to enable children with life-limiting conditions to be cared for at home as long as they wish, rather than being transferred to hospital or hospice care.

### How we're working together

We've upskilled 18 palliative and hospice care professionals to identify households in fuel poverty, equipping them with the knowledge and resources to support these families.

In mobilising the partnership, we linked Together for Short Lives with fellow Safe & Warm community partner Marie Curie to share best practice on recruiting for the energy advice service. With the service up and running, we've supported 49 families with energy-related issues so far.

We're able to provide one-to-one support for families in crisis who are unable to heat their homes, offering immediate practical and financial help, including a crisis fund for 'heat the person' assets such as electric blankets.

### Partnership impact

Through the Together for Short Lives helpline and established outreach service, the energy support service is helping families that are having difficulties with their energy bills or facing energy debt to stay safe, warm and at home. This includes helping families access the PSR, implement energy efficiency measures and identify financial support.

While a family may contact the charity initially about an energy query, these enquiries often lead to further emotional and financial assistance that helps them navigate one of the most difficult periods in their lives. The benefits the family will receive through their connection to Together for Short Lives are far longer lasting than the initial energy-related interaction and mean the family will receive ongoing and lifelong support from the charity for all the challenges they face.

In addition to one-to-one energy advice, we're able to reach many more households through the charity's established online communities. Together for Short Lives has initiated an extensive awareness campaign through its social media channels to engage families with our energy support services, including developing tailored animations. This social media activity has achieved a reach of 58,289.

Since launching our partnership on the charity's social media channels in November, several national organisations, including Young Lives vs Cancer, have contacted Together for Short Lives wanting to promote our service through their channels.

Our programme has been well received across the whole palliative care sector, raising awareness of the correlation between fuel poverty and the potential impact this has on this vulnerable customer group.

### Key 2023/24 achievements

Households supported: **49**

Emergency fuel and food vouchers: **8**

Energy advice sessions: **49**

CO safety conversations: **49**

PSR registrations: **23**

Marketing reach: **58,289**



"Thank you. I actually hate asking for any kind of help, but we're really struggling right now so don't feel that I have much choice."

Together for Short Lives service user

Our project at a glance



August 2023 to March 2026



Southern England

Investment: £500,149  
Forecast SROI: £2.42  
NPV: £1,168,519





# Safe and Warm

## Why we're working together

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a common, long term and irreversible condition affecting 180,000 people across Scotland, with almost 50% on dialysis living in highly deprived areas. Increased energy use combined with a low income and lack of employment options means that dialysis patients are at high risk of falling further into fuel poverty.

Of the 14,000 people living with kidney failure in Scotland, less than 10% are currently on the Priority Services Register and even fewer on the water companies' PSR. Both of which are absolutely critical for people on dialysis who face a medical emergency if there is a gas emergency, power cut or disruption to their water supply.

Utilities across Scotland have traditionally found it challenging to reach people with CKD who are dialysing at home and struggling to afford to keep themselves warm and well. Together with Kidney Care UK, Scottish Water, Scottish Power Energy Networks, Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, NHS Scotland and renal units, we're proudly working to reach almost 39,000 dialysis patients with useful information about their utilities and how to access holistic energy safeguarding and advice services across Scotland.



## Partnership impact

Working closely with renal teams in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Perth, we're joining forces in create a best practice approach to make the PSR Scotland front and centre of initial conversations from a clinical perspective too when patients begin their dialysis treatment.

The Kidney Care UK team, during their 604 one-to-one tailored energy advice sessions, have supported 547 patients to sign up to the PSR and provided 240 lifesaving carbon monoxide alarms to date.

Working in genuine collaboration has also enabled the charity to grow its profile across Scotland as well as being able to connect with likeminded third sector organisations, such as local authorities, Citizens Advice Scotland and others within our Safe & Warm partnership network.

We're delighted to share the learnings of our Scotland programme as we look forward to the coming together of the national GB-wide partnership with the other gas networks from April 2024.

### Key 2023/24 achievements

- Households supported: **605**
- Energy advice sessions: **206**
- Benefit checks: **132**
- CO alarms provided: **240**
- PSR registrations: **547**

Marketing reach: **15,500**



## How we're working together

Our face-to-face support services are being delivered in partnership with the Kidney Care UK Patient Support and Advocacy Officers (PSAOs) across Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Perth. We're targeting these areas due to financial deprivation and as representation on the Priority Services Register is low.

To date, we've provided energy safeguarding training to eight PSAOs so that they can triage and support kidney patients with energy advisory services. Our PSAOs ensure that patients and their families at risk of financial hardship will receive counselling, advocacy, dietary advice and direct financial support through Kidney Care's own financial resources as well as providing access to energy safeguarding services through our collaborative regional utility partnership.

*“I had lost all confidence and self-esteem. I offer my greatest thank you to the Kidney Care UK for all the support they have given me.”*

Kidney Care UK service user

**Our project at a glance**

- April 2023 to June 2024
- Scotland
- Investment: £28,349.50
- Forecast SROI: £26.05
- NPV: £736,075.83
- T3








### Cost of Living - Fuel poverty adviser



**Partnership ambition**  
Older people across Scotland often live in harder-to-heat homes. With energy costs and other household essentials rising, older people are really struggling. We understand around 123,000 eligible older people are not claiming Pension Credits which would further unlock other financial support services. Together with Age Scotland and project partner National Lottery Community Fund, we're supporting older people contacting the charity's helpline to maintain a safe and warm home through energy safeguarding and financial support.

**Partnership progress**  
Launched in March 2023, the service helps older people with trusted information around entitlement for key benefits and energy matters, and access to safeguarding services including the PSR. So far, 15,160 older people have accessed the service, with over 8,026 benefit checks completed, 422 people receiving food and fuel vouchers and 2,636 older people supported to use energy affordably.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Age Scotland has had a significant increase in demand around energy and income maximisation enquiries from older people who have been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Due to the successes of this initiative, we have provided further funding until March 2026 as part of a national programme with Age UK, Age Cymru and the other gas networks that builds on best practice from our Scotland programme.



**Investment:**  
£96,627


Initial funding: £46,627  
Additional funding: £50,000

**SROI: £7.22**  
**NPV: £1,028,118**


March 2023 to March 2024

Scotland

T2




### ALLIANCE Scotland



**Partnership ambition**  
People living with long-term health conditions are often unaware of energy industry support services available. We've partnered with the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland to remove some of the barriers to staying safe and warm at home for people living with long-term health conditions. Through the ALLIANCE's Link Worker Programme, we're in 65 GP practices in Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire that serve the most socioeconomically deprived communities in Scotland.

**Partnership progress**  
The service launched in early 2022 and has already supported 19,205 households to maintain a safe and warm home, including 9,719 households this year. In the past 12 months, the team has carried out 8,454 benefit checks to increase household incomes, provided 285 CO awareness conversations and helped 169 eligible households sign up to the PSR.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, Community Link Workers have experienced increased demand for support around energy-related usage and debt issues, which are impacting vulnerable people's health and wellbeing. However, we found a high number of households did not proceed with our energy advice service when referred to a third-party. In response, we've co-designed a new energy safeguarding project to March 2026 introducing energy officers into the ALLIANCE to provide this much-needed in-depth support.




**Investment:**  
£96,027

**SROI: £5.80**  
**NPV: £698,851**

March 2022 to August 2023

Scotland

T2




### Safe & Warm Energy Efficiency Outreach



**Partnership ambition**  
Following the success of our initial partnership with the ALLIANCE, we've co-designed an expanded holistic service to provide energy safeguarding and financial resilience support to 25,000 vulnerable households across Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire. We're introducing new energy outreach advisers to the Community Links Worker service, who will provide in-depth energy crisis support and longer-term energy advice to 3,690 vulnerable people living in the Deep End of Scotland.

**Partnership progress**  
We've supported 5,044 vulnerable households across the Deep End. All 5,044 of these households have received benefits checks to identify opportunities to maximise household incomes. We've also provided mental health support to all households and supported 119 people to sign up for the PSR.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Recruiting experienced energy advisers to join the programme took longer than anticipated, with the new advisers joining the team in early 2024. This has impacted the number of households we've been able to support with in-depth energy advice, but the team aims make up the shortfall during the second year of the programme.




**Investment:**  
£474,017

**SROI: £2.60**  
**NPV: £1,192,078**

September 2023 to March 2026

Scotland

T2






### Trussell Trust and Foodbank Pilot

**Partnership ambition**  
Our foodbank pilot has been co-designed to complement our existing programme with the ALLIANCE. We're providing much-needed support to families visiting Trussell Trust foodbanks at five locations in Glasgow, helping households access energy safeguarding support and Community Link Worker services. By embedding Community Link Workers within the food banks, we're relieving pressure on the foodbank teams who are encountering increasing numbers of households with complex challenges preventing them from maintaining a safe and warm home.

**Partnership progress**  
Our partnership mobilised in March 2024 and has supported 36 vulnerable people to access income maximisation services and mental health support. Due to the complexities of the client group, we expect services captured for each client to be spread across a few months.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Building on the learning of our ALLIANCE partnership, we've applied our experiences to this new initiative with a new partner. We're looking with interest at the impact we can have when people are seeking crisis food support, as this would be targeted support for customers who are already struggling with household essentials.





### Mental Health UK Adviser Service

**Partnership ambition**  
People with mental health issues find it harder to stay safe and warm at home, with Money and Mental Health Institute research identifying energy bills as one of the most common payments people with mental health problems struggle to meet. We've partnered with Mental Health UK to establish a dedicated referral pathway for our engineers to refer vulnerable households to the charity's Mental Health & Money Advice Service.

**Partnership progress**  
In March 2022, we launched an initial six-month pilot with Mental Health UK in Scotland. Following the pilot's success, we extended our partnership in Scotland for a further nine months and replicated the service in our Southern network area. Since 2022, we've referred 981 households across both our network areas to the Mental Health & Money Advice Service. We've referred 708 households across Scotland to the service this year and 167 households in the southern of England.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Not only has the success of our pilot project in Scotland led to us expanding the service into our Southern network, but we've also now partnered with Britain's three other gas networks to embark on an expanded collaborative programme for the benefit of households nationwide. In addition to us providing advice to households after a referral from our teams, we're opening up the service to households who wish to self-refer through a new 'Money Navigators' support service.




### Money House and MoneyCast

**Partnership ambition**  
Our partnership with financial education expert MyBnk delivers direct financial education to vulnerable young adults aged 16 to 25, helping build financial resilience and avoid families becoming fuel poor in future. This includes supporting care leavers going into independent living for the first time.

**Partnership progress**  
Since the beginning of this partnership, we've been able to support 510 care leavers and at-risk young people to set themselves up with the skills to manage their finances and their household essentials. The total number of young people who've been supported by the week-long programme this year is 255. Each person has guidance on benefits, energy safeguards including signing up to the PSR and safe ways to save money and stay warm at home.

**Learning and dissemination**  
The insight from this partnership has been shared with the other networks and our Safe & Warm network partners. It's a programme that highlights the importance of integration with local authorities and other organisations that support young people coming out of care. A 30% increase in demand for the services has enabled greater expansion of the partnership across our footprint areas and the extension of the partnership into Cadent's footprints between 2024 and 2026.








**Investment:**  
£43,283

January 2024 to July 2025

Scotland

SROI: £4.98  
NPV: £215,339





**Investment:**  
£72,239

March 2022 to June 2023

SGN regions

Initial funding: £24,632  
Additional funding: £47,616

SROI: £3.20  
NPV: £230,980










**Investment:**  
£210,000

November 2021 to November 2024


SGN regions

SROI: £3.36  
NPV: £3,224,115




### Empowered by Energy




*Action for Warm Homes*

**Partnership ambition**  
For people coming to Britain as an asylum seeker or refugee, life is extremely challenging. Across the UK, refugees are disproportionately represented in unemployment and they often live in less energy efficient homes. Many face cultural and language barriers which means accessing help can also be a struggle. Together with NEA, we're committed to empowering representatives from these groups with the skills to share within communities to really make a difference.

**Partnership progress**  
Since this programme was formed, 162 newly settled refugees have participated in our face-to-face and online energy efficiency workshops. This year, the workshops focused on supporting refugee communities from Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine. The energy ambassadors commit to taking the skills they've learned about energy use, carbon monoxide safety and the PSR into their community to help others. Working with regional electricity networks to blend funding has increased the scope of support available.

**Learning and dissemination**  
This year, 100% of participants fed back that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the workshop programme, 73% were confident in providing information about the PSR to others and 95% were confident in safe ways to increase energy efficiency. This partnership has informed a joint-GDN partnership that we're leading on behalf of Northern Gas Networks, which is going live in 2024.



**Investment:**  
£36,673




Initial funding: £19,198  
Additional funding: £17,475

SROI: £5.50  
NPV: £201,700


April 2021 to April 2024

SGN regions

T1


### Help for disabled people in energy crisis



**Partnership ambition**  
We know disabled people have been most impacted by the energy and cost-of-living crisis, reflected in the experiences captured by Scope's Disability Energy Service (DES) and the recent research conducted by the Scope Utilities Membership partners. For disabled people who have exhausted all other support mechanisms and are still unable to keep warm at home, our project provides funding for heated blankets and fuel vouchers.

**Partnership progress**  
This pilot project was designed to ascertain the impact of providing additional crisis resources through the DES service. Disabled people were eligible for the support if they had additional energy needs due to medical equipment or were less mobile. In addition to providing heated blankets and emergency energy credit, service beneficiaries were surveyed to understand the impact of the support provided over the winter months. Those who received the help reported it positively impacted their physical, mental and financial wellbeing.

**Learning and dissemination**  
This pilot insight has been shared with other funders of the Scope Disability Advice services so that the lived experience of disabled people is being shared more widely. As a direct result of the pilot, we've introduced emergency fuel vouchers and heated blankets as resources we can offer disabled people through the collaborative Scope DES partnership for 2024-26.






**Investment:**  
£169,000

SROI: £7.07  
NPV: £1,194,561


February 2023 to February 2024

SGN regions

T1


### Helping older people live in safe and warm homes



**Partnership ambition**  
Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age UK are the country's leading charities for older people and they state that many older people simply won't be able to cover the further rise in living costs. This is particularly worrying for older people as they face higher heating needs, spend longer at home and are more vulnerable to the effects of the cold. Together we aim to support older people with their energy needs.

**Partnership progress**  
Through the original partnership with Age Scotland and this project with Age UK, we've supported over 24,554 older people in our network areas with personalised support to maintain a safe and warm home. Case studies and feedback from the project demonstrated how valuable the support being provided is and highlights the increase in demand.

**Learning and dissemination**  
As a result, and due to the success of the initial project, we have invested a further £683,709 to enable Age Scotland and Age UK to enhance their services and broaden their reach to further support older people across Britain. In addition, we've prioritised additional funding for older people to help with Pension Credit applications as this unlocks greater support services for the most vulnerable.



**SGN investment:**  
£1,044,456




Initial funding: £360,747  
Additional funding: £683,709

Joint-GDN investment:  
£2,295,020  
SROI: £8.38  
NPV: £56,950,623

February 2023 to March 2026


National joint-GDN

T2




### Maggie's cancer centres Safe and Warm



**Partnership ambition**  
A recent poll of cancer patients identified that well over 25% of people living with a cancer diagnosis are more worried about the cost-of-living crisis than their cancer. With around 2.5 million people in the UK living with cancer, we're partnering with Maggie's to support cancer patients with energy safeguarding at 22 of their centres, based in NHS hospitals across England and Scotland.

**Partnership progress**  
Since our partnership launched in November 2022, we've supported over 2,173 cancer patients in our two regions. This year alone, we've helped 1,445 cancer patients in Scotland and 439 patients in our Southern network area with energy advisory services and benefits checks.

**Learning and dissemination**  
The project faced some mobilisation delays as the team rolled out training to a broader network in Scotland and our southern England network. The team is now successfully delivering support services to cancer patients and their families who use the respite of Maggie's centres.



**SGN investment:**  
£95,418


**Joint-GDN investment:**  
£212,040  
SROI: £3.70  
NPV: £784,011

November 2022 to February 2025

National joint-GDN

T2


### Energy safeguarding and tackling fuel poverty for terminally ill people



**Partnership ambition**  
Recent Marie Curie research shows that a terminally ill person's energy bill can increase by as much as 75% after they are diagnosed. The impact has left an increased number of terminally ill people struggling to afford to heat their homes sufficiently, and living in a cold home can cause their health and wellbeing to deteriorate. We're working with Marie Curie to train their frontline community teams on energy safeguarding and provide a dedicated energy advice team.

**Partnership progress**  
Since December 2022, we've trained 749 Marie Curie nurses, clinical staff and volunteers, who now support patients at risk of fuel poverty. We trained 572 of these frontline teams this year. Since the start of our partnership, our energy support officers have provided personalised energy advice services to 766 households in our network area, with 518 of these households being supported this year alone.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Our bespoke energy safeguarding training was co-designed with the Marie Curie nursing team and has been a real success in terms of engagement as the course was deemed joint 'most engaged with' topic for Marie Curie's Caring Services teams this year. The Marie Curie team has shared their learning across the charity sector and we shared insights with other utilities at the Utility Week Vulnerability Conference in 2023.



**SGN investment:**  
£482,087

**Joint-GDN investment:**  
£1,780,825  
SROI: £12.16  
NPV: £20,992,287

September 2022 to October 2025

National joint-GDN

T2

### Disability Energy Support (DES) with water advice



**Partnership ambition**  
On average, life costs an extra £975 a month if you're disabled, according to research from Scope. We first partnered with Scope in 2020 to deliver tailored and targeted support through our Disability Energy Support (DES) with water advice service. In April 2022, we expanded our pilot into a joint-GDN programme, opening up access to Scope's independent energy advice and advocacy service to disabled people across England, Scotland and Wales.

**Partnership progress**  
During the past 12 months, 1,468 disabled customers had tailored appointment support of which 311 were in our network area. We've also provided 948 customers with CO information through our bespoke service and we had 2,492 PSR registrations. The DES service has identified financial savings of £764,813 this year alone by reviewing benefits and grant entitlements. In addition, customers have viewed the information on Scope's energy and carbon monoxide webpages 119,691 times.

**Learning and dissemination**  
More than half (52%) of customers assessed by our DES service this year were in debt to their energy supplier. On average they owed £1,103. To support this growing need, another partner IE Hub was introduced to the DES service. We shared learnings of this partnership at the Utility Week Vulnerability Conference 2023.



**SGN investment:**  
£934,881

Initial funding: £48,304  
Additional funding: £886,577

**Joint-GDN investment:**  
£3,515,000  
SROI: £7.03  
NPV: £24,242,717

April 2022 to March 2026


National joint-GDN

T2






### Digital Priority Services Register (PSR) Campaign



**Partnership ambition**  
PSR awareness among some eligible groups is low, in particular those who are unwell, older people and young families. Together with Cadent and Wales & West Utilities, we're working with Crunch Digital Media to build on the successful social media campaign developed by Wales & West Utilities to reach these target groups with a seamless customer journey to sign up for the PSR.

**Partnership progress**  
We've delayed delivery of this programme so Northern Gas Networks can join the programme, enabling us to deliver a national campaign. This programme will now begin delivery in autumn 2024, a year later than first scoped.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Led by Wales & West Utilities, the project was built on the foundations of effective local campaigns with targeted engagement on the PSR. To ensure that our campaigns reach our target communities, we've brought together data gaps from working locally with regional electricity network operators and Crunch to map out how best to deliver this campaign to maximise PSR registrations across Britain.







**SGN investment:**  
£68,507

**Joint-GDN investment:**  
£223,881  
SROI: £79.04  
NPV: £17,695,884

June 2023 to May 2026

National joint-GDN

T3

### Parsley Box



**Partnership ambition**  
Accessing essential services and information can be difficult for older people, especially if you live in a remote area and are not digitally engaged. Together with the other gas networks, we've provided information about winter preparedness, energy efficiency, the PSR and CO safety to at least 22,000 households who receive meal boxes delivered to their door.

**Partnership progress**  
As gas networks, we worked together to design a three-stage engagement plan with information to help older households maintain a safe and warm home in readiness for winter 2023/24. We've provided Parsley Box recipients with our energy advice and safeguarding information ahead of the winter and this project is now complete.

**Learning and dissemination**  
Led by Cadent, this project was built on using a trusted organisation that provides a range of meals to households who require nutritional meals in a convenient form. Often these households are not eligible for 'meals on wheels' services based on income. Working with Parsley Box ensured that we aligned the messaging at the right time to ensure relevance to the customer.








**SGN investment:**  
£4,796

**Joint-GDN investment:**  
£20,452  
SROI: £20.90  
NPV: £401,019

December 2023 to February 2024

National joint-GDN

T3

**NEW FOR 2024**




### Keeping Children Warm and Well

**Partnership ambition**  
Households with children have a high prevalence of fuel poverty. Almost 250,000 children in Scotland are living in poverty. Together with Children 1st, we are looking to minimise the health and wellbeing impact on children and families who are living in fuel poverty across Scotland and ensure they have the required energy safeguards in place to maintain a safe and warm home. The partnership aims to help at least 800 families across Scotland to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably.

**Partnership plan**  
The development of this partnership took place to enable the service to launch at the start of April 2024. The team has embedded the energy advise triage services into the core services to help identify families who require indepth caseworker support.



**Investment:**  
£372,202

**SROI:** £1.69  
**NPV:** £617,443

April 2024 to March 2026

Scotland

T1









**NEW FOR 2024**



**NEW**



**Hampshire and Isle of Wight dementia support**

**Partnership ambition**

Hampshire is one of the top five areas in the UK with the highest prevalence of dementia, according to the Alzheimer’s Research UK. The partnership aims to help at least 1,028 households across Hampshire and IOW who are living with dementia use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. To do this, we’ll introduce a new team of Safe & Warm Dementia Support Workers service that will give one-on-one energy advice, as well as promote the PSR and the locking cooker valve.

**Partnership plan**

The partnership recruitment and training is planned for April 2024, with community outreach and home visits are scheduled to go live in summer 2024.



**NEW FOR 2024**



**NEW**



**West Sussex dementia support**

**Partnership ambition**

More than 944,000 people in the UK have dementia with some areas of West Sussex being in the top 2.5% in the UK for dementia prevalence. We’re partnering with West Sussex charity Dementia Support to provide energy safeguarding services at its purpose-built Sage House community hub in Chichester, helping at least 1,500 households across Sussex living with dementia through its Wayfinding service.

**Partnership plan**

To enable delivery in the community from May 2024, the team is recruiting and onboarding new resources to build capacity in the Wayfinding team. This includes introducing a new Wayfinding bus to expand the charity’s advice services to rural and isolated communities by summer 2024.



**NEW FOR 2024**



**NEW**



**My Network Energy Advice**

**Partnership ambition**

Building on the success of the Safe and Warm Community Scheme pilot in 2023, we’re expanding the service with a new inhouse energy advice capacity to help at least 1,875 disabled people across West Sussex to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. We aim to run 200 energy advice workshops for disabled people with learning needs and their carers, host at least 20 information stalls at local events and upskill the broader Worthing Mencap team so that they have the skills to promote energy safeguarding service in the community.

**Partnership plan**


This partnership is built on the foundations of a service initially funded by SGN’s Safe and Warm Community scheme, so will be delivering from April 2024. The team is excited to be creating new energy safeguarding resources in EasyRead to launch before summer 2024 to help empower disabled people with their energy needs.



**Investment:**  
£93,541



April 2024 to March 2026



Hampshire & Isle of Wight



T2



SROI: £5.63  
NPV: £514,603

**Investment:**  
£164,053



April 2024 to March 2026



West Sussex



T2




SROI: £1.80  
NPV: £289,567

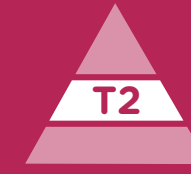
**Investment:**  
£152,081



April 2024 to March 2026



West Sussex



T2



SROI: £6.65  
NPV: £993,616





**NEW FOR 2024**

**NEW**



**Safe and Warm: Providing a Critical Lifeline to Dialysis Patients Across the UK**

**Partnership ambition**

Currently across the UK, over 30,000 patients with advanced kidney disease rely on dialysis to stay alive. Due to the health impacts associated with treatment for patients, almost three quarters of dialysis patients are unable to work (76%). The consequent low income means many of our patients live in relative poverty. We aim to provide 128 renal units across England, Scotland and Wales with skilled energy safeguarding resources to alleviate fuel poverty and ensure access to the Priority Services Register.

**Partnership plan**

With this national partnership built on the shared learnings of projects in Wales with West & West Utilities and Scotland with SGN, the Kidney Care UK team has a strong foundation ready to mobilise from April 2024.



**NEW FOR 2024**

**NEW**



**Mental Health and Money Advice Service**

**Partnership ambition**

7.5 million people in the UK live with a mental illness and it's estimated that one in four of us experienced a mental health problem every year. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis means we're seeing more people in energy debt and struggling to make ends meet. We aim to support 9,800 customers with support to maintaining a safe and warm home for the long term.

**Partnership plan**

Developed out of the success of our regional programme in Scotland and southern England, we've expanded our project into a national joint-GDN programme with all four gas networks starting in May 2024.



**NEW FOR 2024**

**NEW**



**Alleviating Unpaid Carers from Fuel Poverty**

**Partnership ambition**

In August 2022, Carers Trust surveyed unpaid family carers across the UK. The survey found that around 25% of unpaid carers had to cut back on food, 14% used a food bank and 63% of unpaid carers were worried about being able to afford energy bills. The project aims to directly reach over 40,000 beneficiaries with a range of interventions over the two-year duration and a further 106,000 indirectly through carer family members.

**Partnership plan**

Our focus is on alleviating carers from fuel poverty in the most deprived areas across England, Scotland and Wales. By providing them with direct support, immediate aid, knowledge and longer-term skills, carers will have increased financial resilience as well as and reassurance of where to turn for support when needed. The service will formally launch in summer 2024.



**SGN investment: £1,007,229**

April 2024 to March 2026


National joint-GDN

**Joint-GDN investment: £2,577,377**

SROI: £16.45

NPV: £41,847,008

T2



**SGN investment: £136,491**

April 2024 to March 2026


National joint-GDN

**Joint-GDN investment: £667,652**

SROI: £9.07

NPV: £29,236,919

T2



**SGN investment: £1,293,552**

April 2024 to March 2026


National joint-GDN

**Joint-GDN investment: £4,075,771**

SROI: £42.03

NPV: £169,151,534

T2






**NEW**

NEW FOR 2024



**Fuelling Futures**

**Partnership ambition**

One in five households with children experienced fuel poverty in 2020 in the UK. At the height of the cost-of-living crisis, a further 300,000 more children were plunged into absolute poverty. Fuel poverty impacts children’s growth and development, and there are wider physical and mental health implications of living in a cold home for both children and their parents. We’re proudly partnering with Home-Start UK to support young families in fuel poverty across our Southern network area.

**Partnership plan**

Built on the learnings of our previous project with a local Home-Start, this new project is to be rolled out across local Home-Start communities across our southern network. Over two years, we’ll be delivering 1,000 safe and warm energy advice workshops across our southern England network area. The workshops cover energy efficiency, energy debt, PSR and carbon monoxide safety and provide an opportunity to connect with other young families in a safe and inviting space. Roll out of the project starts summer 2024.



**Investment:**  
£1,451,297

April  
2024  
to March  
2026

Southern  
England

SROI: £1.64  
NPV: £2,325,582







Total number of households supported since April 2021

 144,866



## Targeting geographical communities most at risk of fuel poverty

Households in fuel poverty are at increased risk of using unsafe appliances or fuels to heat their homes, as well as rationing their energy use which can lead to cold damp homes. These measures all negatively impact household health, safety and wellbeing.





### How we're targeting geographical communities most at risk of fuel poverty

Our partnerships deliver essential support, not just addressing the immediate needs of households in fuel poverty crisis but also addressing the causes of fuel poverty to build long-term financial resilience. We look to partner with organisations that can provide crisis support, energy efficiency advice and energy bill advocacy to ensure that customers in fuel poverty get the support they need to manage their immediate needs.

We also partner with trusted energy advice partners who support customers to access energy efficiency schemes, so households who are struggling to afford to heat their homes get the help they need to improve the energy efficiency of their home in the longer term.

### How new stakeholder insight has shaped our activity

According to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the number of households who spend more than 10% of their income (after housing costs) on energy rose in 2023 to 8.91 million. This is 36.4% of households, up from 27.4% or 6.66 million in 2022.

While we did see the energy price cap lower this year, it coincided with increased costs for housing, food and other household essentials. Citizens Advice research highlights that energy debt has been on a particularly steep upward trend since the pandemic.

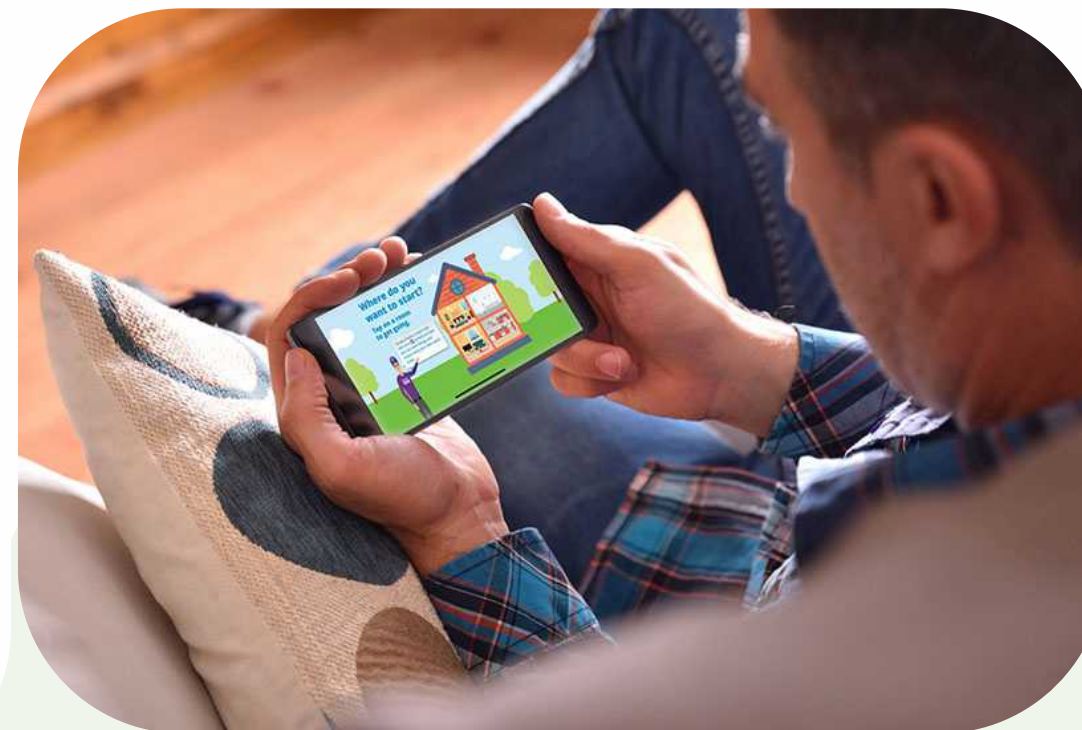
We've continued with our data-driven approach to prioritising our outreach programmes in areas of greatest fuel poverty need, either creating new services or supporting existing energy advice services where demand exceeds resource.

On a local level, providing resources for warm spaces has been key to our activity this year. We've linked with local provisions to ensure these community facilities have the resources to help vulnerable people when they return home. We've onboarded more energy advice experts to help the most vulnerable customers access support, as well as provided immediate interventions such as warm packs and crisis funds.

We continue to strongly believe in the power of grassroots organisations to reach vulnerable households that wouldn't typically access help from more mainstream sources of support. We've increased the financial commitment to our Safe and Warm Community Scheme following the success of our initial cohort of partners to include more hyperlocal community organisations this year.

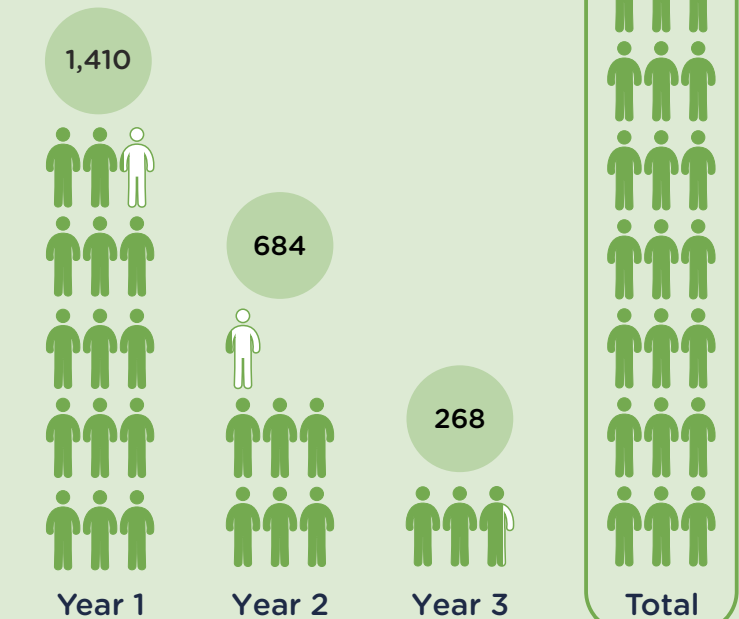
At a national level, the additional VCMA funding has enabled us to build greater capacity in our joint-GDN partnerships. We've also joined together to launch our Warm Homes, Healthy Futures partnership, an ambitious programme integrating energy advisory services into health care services nationally.

For the benefit of all our customers and partners, both regionally and nationally, we've introduced a new online tool in partnership with Energy Saving Trust to help households find safe ways to save money on energy. Developed from feedback from our engineers and partners, the personalised tool can be easily accessed from our website.



### Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) connections

= 100



This year, we've supported 268 households in fuel poverty into a warm home through the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme.

We connected 231 households in Scotland to our gas network and 37 in our Southern region. This is lower than previous years and reflective of the impact of changing policy.





## Warm Welcome

### Why we're working together

Tens of thousands of Surrey residents face fuel poverty. Broader affluence masks areas of extreme deprivation with 21 areas of high need identified across the county in the English deprivation indices 2019.

We co-founded the Warm Welcome partnership with Surrey County Council in 2022 to reach hyperlocal communities within Surrey in need of support. We created a network of warm hubs in locations across the county, with each venue offering residents a place to go for a hot drink, social interaction and wellbeing activities.

This year, we aimed to help at least 34,000 vulnerable Surrey residents who would find it difficult to stay warm at home during winter.

### How we're working together

We set up 84 Warm Welcome venues across Surrey this winter for vulnerable residents to warm up and have a free hot drink or meal, while accessing much-needed energy advice and financial support.

To help residents after leaving the Warm Welcome venue, we distributed almost 9,000 packs of winter essential items including thermal socks, gloves, flasks and wheat bags. For those less able to move around due to ill health, we provided 170 heated electric blankets.

For the first time this winter, we expanded our support to residents who cannot travel to a warm hub by supporting them in their homes. We also introduced a free boiler servicing and gas safety check scheme, supporting eight of the most vulnerable households.

### Partnership impact

We've supported more than 46,000 households at our Warm Welcome venues this winter with immediate crisis support and longer-term wellbeing and energy advice. This is an increase on last year, which exemplifies the demand for spaces like these to exist and the need they are fulfilling.

Mental health issues are still extremely high among the service users and many attendees are extremely socially isolated, without a support system to help them through difficult times. What was unexpected from the programme this year was the strength of the communities that have been formed, and real friendships and support groups established. They don't just exist for the length of a Warm Welcome session but are now part of people's everyday lives and have had a long-lasting impact on them.


A real sense of belonging has emerged through the sessions, with many attendees who were once in need of support wanting to give back and volunteer at the venues. These volunteers know very well what other attendees are going through, so they are a fantastic asset to the service.

In evolving our partnership this year, we wanted to ensure our support extended from our Warm Welcome venues back to residents' homes by introducing new interventions to keep people safe and warm at home too.

In partnership with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, we carried out 3,393 Safe and Well home visits to deliver personalised fire and gas safety information at home and have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms fitted if needed. We've advanced this service to include a fuel poverty check as part of the visit. Tackling issues at source, in the home, means the impact is greater than signposting to advice alone.

### Key 2023/24 achievements

 Households supported: **46,205**

 Emergency fuel vouchers: **1,134**

 Energy advice sessions: **4,702**

 Benefit checks: **1,756**

 CO safety conversations: **6,623**

 PSR registrations: **1,446**

 Warm packs: **8,926**



Marketing reach: **570,194**



CC

"The advice on saving money and the heated blanket was a godsend, but it was knowing I am not alone [that made a real difference]."

Warm Welcome service user

Our project at a glance



November 2023 to March 2024



Surrey

Investment: £150,000  
Forecast SROI: £5.22  
NPV: £2,607,604





## Safe and Warm

### Why we're working together

According to Energy Action Scotland, one in three Scottish households are in fuel poverty. Even before the cost-of-living crisis, many families were finding their energy bills unaffordable.

Citizens Advice Scotland is the largest independent advice service in Scotland and the go-to agency for households in crisis.

We've partnered with Citizens Advice Scotland on a growing portfolio of projects across Scotland, helping us extend our support to households who need it most across the country. Citizens Advice Scotland's holistic approach allows us to combine specialist fuel poverty advice with guidance and information on other issues that affect households' health and wellbeing.

Through our core programme, we aim to support up to 6,400 vulnerable households living in fuel poverty and in harder to reach communities through dedicated and skilled energy advisers.

### How we're working together

Building on the learning of our 2021-22 pilot with Citizens Advice in the north of Scotland, we developed our Safe and Warm programme to expand the service into regional communities identified as being in greatest need through our Vulnerability Index and where there is no existing dedicated energy advice service.

Since March 2022 we've helped over 4,690 Scottish households in struggling with energy costs in the most deprived parts of our network. This year alone we've been able to help 2,217 vulnerable households with their energy needs.

As part of this programme, we also provided energy advice training for 700 frontline workers, covering topics including energy efficiency, the Priority Services Register and carbon monoxide awareness. It's through this training we see that the most vulnerable referred into the service. We understand frontline workers will support an average of 57 clients each, leaving a legacy and a reach of almost 40,000 people.



"[The energy adviser] helped us to apply for things we were entitled to - unbelievable. Getting new boiler and radiators, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Getting benefits we never knew about and debt written off. We can never thank her enough for her assistance".

Citizens Advice Scotland service user

### Partnership impact


Through our core Safe and Warm programme, we've gained real-time insight into customer need and gaps in services across Scotland. We've identified the need for in-depth caseworkers to deal with the complexity of issues. By responding quickly and determinately, we've co-created two additional partnerships with Citizens Advice Scotland to address this need.

Between February 2023 and August 2023 in response to the growing demand for energy advisers in newly formed warm spaces, we responded quickly to support people seeking respite with skilled people to help address the underlying factors impacting their ability to maintain a safe and warm home. **During this short project our partnership supported 2,768 households in energy crisis.**

In October 2023 we set up a **winter outreach programme** to expand the energy advisory services into 14 of the most deprived areas of Scotland. We delivered face-to-face holistic energy and income maximisation advice to 2,272 households at community hubs, including foodbanks, libraries and warm hubs.

### Key 2023/24 achievements

 Households supported: 2,217

 Emergency fuel vouchers: 1,711

 Energy advice sessions: 1,556

 Benefit checks: 367

 CO safety conversations: 1,784

 PSR registrations: 638

### Our project at a glance

 March 2022 to March 2024

 Scotland

Investment: £1,082,53.80  
Forecast SROI: £35.19  
NPV: £37,411,052.48





# Better Housing Better Health

## Why we're working together

For many households most in need, navigating and accessing available support services can be too much to manage independently. Many vulnerable households remain excluded from vital assistance, trapped in the cycle of poverty and living in a cold and unhealthy home as a result.

We joined forces with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to introduce an integrated and comprehensive warmth and wellbeing support service in areas of high deprivation across the south of England.

Extending beyond energy-related support alone, our holistic Better Housing Better Health service aims to facilitate access to health, income and housing support services for 10,000 households with the resources to provide in home energy assessments and caseworker support for 2,500 households that addresses the underlying causes of fuel poverty.

## How we're working together

We've provided information on safe ways to save energy and money to 10,592 households in areas of high deprivation to date, through direct marketing and outreach activity.

This has led to us providing 1,836 personalised energy sessions for fuel poor households that address the unique challenges they face in achieving warmth and wellbeing. The sessions cover energy efficiency advice, thorough assessments of eligibility for energy efficiency grant-funded schemes, assistance with energy bill advocacy, CO safety conversations and PSR registration for all customers.

In addition, we've developed and begun to implement training programmes for frontline workers, equipping them with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively address fuel poverty. We're doing this through workshops, educational materials and awareness campaigns that promote understanding of fuel poverty, energy efficiency and sustainable energy practices.


## Partnership impact

Through our one-on-one energy advice sessions, we've been able to connect 483 households to vital debt relief programmes and provide support to 104 customers who were in energy debt with manageable repayment plans. The team has also completed income and benefits checks, and referred those in need to local authority services, fire and rescue teams and support from charitable organisations. The team has provided 53 households with lifesaving CO alarms.


Launched in September 2023, the team was slower to mobilise than expected and faced some initial challenges getting into local authorities and other community groups to provide the frontline training that enables impactful referrals into the caseworker service.

Working together, we've increased our local promotion of the support that's available. To help the team in delivering our target number of households receiving caseworker support, we've extended the partnership timeline by three months to enable the delivery of the outcomes against our commitment.

## Key 2023/24 achievements

 Households supported: **1,836**

 Emergency fuel and food vouchers: **190**

 Energy advice sessions: **1,836**

 Benefit checks: **1,836**

 CO safety conversations: **1,836**

 PSR registrations: **303**

 Marketing reach: **10,592**



“

Thank you so much for helping me with keeping warm this winter, I do really appreciate it. I've got so many other bills to take care of and this has really made me feel more positive about tackling them. God bless you!”

Better Housing Better Health service user

Our project at a glance



September 2023 to April 2024



Southern England

Investment: £223,000  
Forecast SROI: £4.00  
NPV: £892,107





## Safe and Warm Community Scheme

### Why we're working together

Many people don't feel comfortable seeking help from mainstream sources, such as government organisations, when struggling with day-to-day living issues. Instead, they prefer to turn to trusted local or need-specific grassroots organisations, such as community-based support groups, faith groups or play centres.

Often these small organisations don't have the capacity or skills to support their service users with energy or financial issues, and they find it difficult to access potential funding streams to meet their community needs.

By partnering with Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) to deliver our Safe and Warm Community Scheme, we're able to help grassroots organisations supporting financially vulnerable communities with both funding and skills to provide energy advice and energy safeguarding services.

### How we're working together

Since we launched our Safe and Warm community scheme, we've provided 43 grassroots organisations with the skills and resources to help frontline support workers lift hard-to-reach households out of fuel poverty and provide energy safeguarding services. So far, we've reached almost 19,000 vulnerable households with energy triage and crisis support.

In addition to identifying small organisations that are well placed to support communities, the CSE helps these organisations with the initial funding application and project implementation.

We've worked closely with CSE and the organisations involved to understand the challenges faced by people in their local communities and how best to build energy safeguarding skills in these community-facing teams. As a direct result, we've run engaging workshops both online and in person for representatives and their frontline workers to ensure that each organisation gets the support they need to deliver.

### Partnership impact

Our partnership has fostered a collaborative environment within CSE and the grassroots community partners. By building in more networking events, we're opening up more opportunities for both ourselves and funded partners to share insight and best practice, collaborate on solutions, make local connections, and learn about regional and locally relevant offers and grants.

Sharing knowledge and convening partners fosters innovation, and we've seen specialist support organisations apply innovative approaches and engagement methods to working with vulnerable people. For example, Community Drug & Alcohol Recovery Services (CDARS) integrated energy advice into gardening and craft sessions to build trust with their service users. Whereas the Afghanistan and Central Asian Association integrated energy advice into a boat trip to address low uptake in their home energy workshops.

Upskilling these trusted hyperlocal organisations can ease pressure on larger and more formal support services who cannot always respond to the high demand for energy and financial maximisation support.

We're delighted to see some of our local partnerships develop into larger scale projects this year. For example, Home-Start UK, initially piloted in Adur and Worthing, now extends to Home-Start communities across our Southern network.

### Key 2023/24 achievements

 Households supported: **17,854**

 Emergency fuel and food vouchers: **5,719**

 Energy advice sessions: **13,887**

 Benefit checks: **6,410**

 Debt advice: **5,829**

 CO safety conversations: **11,304**

 PSR registrations: **8,290**

 Marketing reach: **120,277**



"This training and information proved to be invaluable resources for our organisation. They have significantly enhanced our capacity to provide impactful energy advice confidently and safely to our customers. The field of energy advice often contains a wealth of information, sometimes with conflicting advice. However, we found the resources provided comprehensive and well-suited to our specific needs."

Network of International Women for Brighton & Hove

Our project at a glance



November 2022 to January 2025



SGN regions

Investment: £1,472,288  
Forecast SROI: £0.69  
NPV: £1,011,720.83





### Tackling fuel poverty together



#### Partnership ambition

Together with Citizens Advice Arun and Chichester and Hastings 1066, we're supporting some of the most deprived communities in southern England. By creating strong referral pathways to over 600 local groups and training frontline workers in the community, we're supporting 4,354 households with energy caseworker support.

#### Partnership progress

Since 2021, we've supported 3,289 vulnerable households via energy caseworkers and 2,824 this year alone. The holistic approach to delivery means that the outcomes for customers go beyond energy. This year, the partnership has supported 1,014 customers with benefits checks, supported 1,011 customers to sign up to the PSR and helped 189 households with debt issues.

#### Learning and dissemination

This partnership was built on the foundation of joined up collaboration with regional utility networks to maximise outcomes for customers while reducing the impact on the delivery partners. Meeting regularly, we've been agile in delivery, to the benefit of supporting customers in need. This partnership identified the opportunity to further support Warm Spaces in 2023/24 based on the positive impact in 2022/23.



### Welcoming Warm Spaces Sussex



#### Partnership ambition

This project was co-designed with Citizens Advice Arun and Chichester in response to the emerging Warm Spaces movement across East and West Sussex. Our ambition was to provide winter crisis information and promote the in-community resources located at Warm Spaces, as well as fund energy caseworkers to help 2,142 households with energy crisis support over winter 2023/24.

#### Partnership progress

The partnership exceeded the original success criteria, supporting 3,160 customers at Warm Spaces. Skilled energy advisers provided resources including personalised energy case work and CO conversations for all. The project distributed over 3,000 warm packs, supported 947 customers to sign up to the PSR and helped 415 customers with debt issues.

#### Learning and dissemination

Coordinated support of existing Warm Spaces meant that other funding was available to provide energy and water efficiency measures through the scheme co-funded by SSEN, UK Power Networks and Southern Water. This joined-up way of working also helped minimise the impact on reporting for the delivery partners.



### Warmth for Wellbeing



#### Partnership ambition

Our four-month pilot programme was co-designed with Brighton and Hove City Council to build additional scope into the existing Local Discretionary Funding team. This included access to a new dedicated energy advice service covering affordability, CO safety and the PSR, which aimed to support 1,042 financially vulnerable fuel poor households.

#### Partnership progress

The service launched in early 2024 and has supported 76 households with energy advice so far, of which we've seen 74 of these households receive emergency fuel vouchers and 39 households referred to debt support services.

#### Learning and dissemination

The pilot project took a little longer to mobilise than we'd planned. As a result, we've worked with the partners to extend the delivery timescales to August to achieve our set targets. Working in a joined-up way with UK Power Networks locally has helped minimise the impact of reporting on the delivery partner and has helped with cross-sector guidance on customer challenges.



Investment:  
£266,000

Initial funding: £96,000  
Additional funding: £170,000

SROI: £3.75  
NPV: £1,128,856

December 2021 to August 2024

East Sussex West Sussex

T2

Investment:  
£83,000

SROI: £5.25  
NPV: £1,911,664

February 2023 to April 2023

East Sussex West Sussex

T3

Investment:  
£71,500

SROI: £1.93  
NPV: £138,170

January 2024 to April 2024

East Sussex

T2





### Affordable Warmth Advocacy **CHANGEWORKS.** South-East Scotland

#### Partnership ambition

Together with SP Energy Networks, we're supporting some of the most deprived communities across south-east Scotland to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. The project has been co-designed to bring together energy advisers and specialist debt advisers to provide tailored help to 2,850 households in energy crisis.

#### Partnership progress

Since launching in January 2022, the team has supported 1,850 vulnerable households across Edinburgh, Fife, East Lothian, West Lothian and the Scottish Borders where fuel poverty levels are between 19% and 29%. This year, the team supported 527 households with their energy costs, 110 of these households received emergency funds and 46 were supported with their energy debts.

#### Learning and dissemination

This project has been supported across the utilities sector in Scotland and we have shared valuable learning and training with Changeworks on energy safeguarding. Through the programme, we were able to deliver in-depth energy efficiency support to almost 740 households and register a high proportion of households for the PSR, confirming that we successfully reached our target demographic. Our programme helped Changeworks identify a gap in the provision of service for fuel poor households in tenancy agreements and will be the foundation of a larger project across Scotland.



### Highland Affordable Warmth **CHANGEWORKS.**

#### Partnership ambition

This programme brings together Changeworks, New Start Highland, Scottish & Southern Energy Networks and Scottish Water to help support some of the most deprived people in the Highlands of Scotland use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. Together, we aim to support 1,500 people who are financially vulnerable from homelessness into independent living.



#### Partnership progress

Since 2021, we've supported 1,404 vulnerable people into warm homes with a holistic support programme and 665 this year alone. The approach to delivery means that the outcomes for customers go beyond energy, with an additional focus on health and financial resilience. The team has supported 744 customers with benefits checks, supported 734 customers to sign up to the PSR, had 1,326 CO awareness conversations and provided crisis funds to 491 people in energy crisis.

#### Learning and dissemination

This partnership proved challenging at times due to the complexity of client cases. Each client had up to eight engagements to minimise the risk of losing their homes. With this focus, it set our food poverty initiative back slightly. After reevaluating the initiative and resetting targets, we're pleased the project achieved its goal. As well as being more informed about energy and housing, 1,404 extremely vulnerable households have also gained cookery skills and certifications to help them with future employment.



### Energy Matters

#### Partnership ambition

In July 2022, Cherwell District Council in North Oxfordshire declared a fuel poverty emergency. In partnership with Citizens Advice West Northants & Cherwell, we're engaging a wide range of community groups to proactively identify households in fuel poverty and provide advice and support to reduce energy costs and increase household incomes. We aim to help at least 1,075 vulnerable households each year through caseworker support, with a focus on digitally and culturally excluded households, disabled people and older people.

#### Partnership progress

The service launched in early 2023 and has exceeded our expectations already, supporting 2,472 households with energy safeguarding services. So far, the team has helped 1,018 customers sign up to the PSR, provided crisis funds for 813 households, provided 938 CO awareness sessions and issued 164 lifesaving CO alarms.

#### Learning and dissemination

The project team has been really successful at building trusted relationships with local networks and target community groups, for example, Banbury Mandi Mosque and NHS groups through the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. As part of our Safe & Warm partnership network, the Energy Matters insights and learning has been used to support broader successful engagement with harder-to-reach groups.



Investment:  
£126,806



SROI: £2.85  
NPV: £366,416



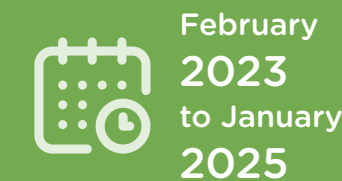
Investment:  
£294,008



SROI: £0.72  
NPV: £202,139



Investment:  
£202,800



SROI: £6.82  
NPV: £1,416,973







### Home & Well

#### Partnership ambition

The Home & Well programme aims to support 11,250 residents in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to return home as quickly and easily as possible after a hospital stay. Importantly, the programme ensures people have a safe and comfortable home environment that will help them to continue to recover rather than relapse and return to hospital.

#### Partnership progress

The partnership has supported 5,362 customers to date, including 2,292 this year. In addition to energy advice services, the team has supported 4,035 people to sign up to the PSR and provided 3,821 benefit checks. The team has expert caseworkers to support patients with complex challenges including housing, debt and independent living support.

#### Learning and dissemination

The project has expanded since the original partnership to include other health care providers across Hampshire and Isle of Wight. A collaborative co-funded initiative with regional water providers, SEN and the regional health team has ensured integration into the clinical setting. Insights and data from this mature regional project has been used to inform other projects that integrate into health based services including the national NEA Healthy Homes Healthy Futures project launched in 2024.



### Safe and Warm Spaces - Scotland

#### Partnership ambition

Citizens Advice bureaux (CAB) across Scotland were experiencing an unprecedented increase in demand from households needing help with managing living costs as they struggled to keep warm over winter. We aimed to work with 20 CABs in fuel poor areas, providing targeted interventions via local community outreaches in readiness for the winter months to support those most affected by the energy crisis.

#### Partnership progress

We engaged 23 CABs across Scotland to support 2,768 households at safe and warm spaces and outreach centres. All households had access to energy efficiency behavioural advice and 277 people attended CO awareness sessions. We provided 887 households with emergency funds, 412 with benefit entitlement checks and 374 with more in-depth one-to-one energy advice sessions.

#### Learning and dissemination

This has been a successful approach of bringing localised services to those in communities who were hardest hit from the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. People could visit their local centre rather than travel distances to reach a trusted organisation. This project was also particularly successful at reaching those who are digitally excluded and those who were struggling to maintain a safe and warm home due to cultural barriers.



### Safe and Warm - Winter Outreach Programme

#### Partnership ambition

This project was co-designed with Citizens Advice Scotland in response to the cost-of-living crisis and following on from the success of the previous winter outreach programme. This initiative also included an additional Vulnerability Impact Advisor in post for six months to provide insight from across Scotland to help us understand the current landscape and the challenges facing fuel poor households during the crisis.

#### Partnership progress

We engaged 14 CABs across Scotland to support 2,727 households in safe and warm spaces and outreach centres. All households had access to energy efficiency behavioural advice, as well as CO awareness sessions. We've supported 1,395 households, including providing 1,614 households with emergency funds, 665 with benefit entitlement checks and 464 with more in-depth one-to-one energy sessions. This hyperlocal approach ensured people had access to trusted local people within their community to help them maintain a safe and warm home.

#### Learning and dissemination

With the increase in support required around emergency funds this winter, it was clear this approach was much needed this year. By providing these emergency funds, we helped ensure 1,614 people in fuel poverty did not fall further into crisis. Our learnings around where the need is greatest in Scotland will be shared following insight analysis.



Investment:  
£694,751

Initial funding: £128,756  
Additional funding: £565,995

SROI: £3.45  
NPV: £4,709,216

April 2021 to March 2026  
Hampshire and Isle of Wight

Investment:  
£352,200

SROI: £9.19  
NPV: £3,237,977

February 2023 to August 2023  
Scotland

Investment:  
£400,000

SROI: £3.07  
NPV: £1,227,439

October 2023 to March 2024  
Scotland





### Winter Crisis Fund



#### Partnership ambition

As the fuel crisis escalated into the cost-of-living crisis in 2023, record numbers of households were struggling to afford energy for essentials. With this, households were finding themselves in fuel poverty and the crisis was disproportionately impacting households on pre-payment meters. As a result of unprecedented numbers of households needing support, we committed to providing 2,900 emergency fuel vouchers for people in energy crisis.

#### Partnership progress

This short project ran for four months to add an additional 2,900 emergency fuel vouchers for customers on pre-payment meters unable to top up their credit. These emergency vouchers were distributed via Fuel Bank Foundation's extensive network of crisis support partners in Scotland and our southern England network areas.

#### Learning and dissemination

This year, Fuel Bank Foundation had seen record numbers of people living in deep poverty and energy crisis. With more debt and negative household incomes, the need has grown significantly. This year more than any other year, the service has supported more young people and young families.



### Energy Canny Communities



#### Partnership ambition

This project was co-designed in winter 2023 to support some of the most deprived communities in Fife. We aimed to provide 5,680 vulnerable households with energy advice through an extensive partnership network, plus reach a further 320 people through community events and offer skilled energy caseworker support to 240 households in energy crisis.

#### Partnership progress

Our Energy Canny Communities programme has supported 927 households via community events and one-to-one energy advice. This year, the partnership supported 290 households sign up to the PSR, delivered 583 CO awareness sessions and supported 98 financially vulnerable households increase their household income during the energy crisis through benefits checks. Between March 2023 and April 2024 the programme supported 16,763 households, including 927 households via community events.

#### Learning and dissemination

After the success of our initial six-month pilot, we extended the project until March 2024 and broadened the scope to include crisis funding and 'cosy packs' to help the most financially vulnerable households. The team has built successful referral pathways into the local community by training frontline workers and using the Fife-based FORT Online referral tracker system to ensure those in need can access our skilled energy advisers.



### Safe and Warm Fife



#### Partnership ambition

Our programme builds on the success of Greener Kirkcaldy's existing energy advice service, extending support to the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach households including older people, people on low incomes and people with disabilities or long-term health issues. We initially set out to engage up to 20,000 Fife households over two years - including 1,440 fuel poor households with one-to-one with energy efficiency and safeguarding advice.

#### Partnership progress

Since launching in May 2022, we've provided 30,909 households with information on how to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. This year we've supported 1,166 households by helping 600 households sign up to the PSR, delivering 816 CO awareness sessions and by providing benefits checks to support 258 financially vulnerable households increase their household income during the energy crisis.

#### Learning and dissemination

We've identified that fuel poor households are requiring more face-to-face engagement in the home due to the complexities and financial challenges brought on by the cost-of-living crisis. Fuel poverty in Fife has increased and our initiative is seeing an increase in young people and working families accessing support. Due to the impact of this partnership on the local community, we're expanding this service to reach a further 51,840 households by March 2024.



Investment:  
£100,000

February  
2023  
to May  
2023



SGN  
regions

SROI: £4.52  
NPV: £677,347



Investment:  
£58,505

March  
2023  
to April  
2024



Fife

Initial funding: £25,000  
Additional funding: £32,542

SROI: £7.37  
NPV: £431,438



Investment:  
£261,646

May  
2022  
to March  
2024



Fife

SROI: £10.04  
NPV: £2,723,720





### Warm Homes Fife



#### Partnership ambition

Greener Kirkcaldy is a community-led charity working locally to bring people together, supporting residents in fuel poverty. With a well-established community engagement partnership in place, this two-month pilot has been set up to trial proactive gas servicing for financially vulnerable households where someone has an existing health condition made worse by living in a cold home.

#### Partnership progress

We are extending this initiative beyond the trial period as although we've identified households eligible for the servicing initiative, the homeowners have not responded to follow-up calls to arrange an appointment.

#### Learning and dissemination

Although there is a customer need that has been identified through the service, we are not yet seeing households participate in the servicing initiative.

Our project team is working with key organisations across Fife to understand why eligible households are not choosing to participate, as well as engaging more eligible households to be part of this trial.



### Green Doctors Kent



#### Partnership ambition

Building onto an existing two-year partnership, our partnership with Groundwork Kent aims to support 2,000 Kent households in fuel poverty and energy crisis through community events and personalised support. The service is integrated into the community with the energy advice team providing training to frontline workers, ensuring customers at risk of living in a cold and unsafe home are referred to the Green Doctors team.

#### Partnership progress

The partnership is exceeding expectations reaching 4,595 customers since the energy safeguarding partnership was formed in April 2021. This year, the service supported 1,192 households and some of the key outcomes for customers included 443 carbon monoxide awareness conversations and 114 CO alarms provided. The team also trained 314 frontline workers on energy triage to help increase community referrals into the service.

#### Learning and dissemination

This partnership's success has been testament to how they've worked locally with frontline workers to build local referral pathways to identify households struggling to maintain a safe and warm home. The energy doctor service has a focus on energy efficiency and energy caseworker skills that can help to identify opportunities to help people by seeing their homes.



### Digital Kent



#### Partnership ambition

The Digital Kent initiative is designed to improve digital inclusion and ensure vulnerable residents have the skills, technology and confidence to access online services. Working together with UK Power Networks and Southern Water, the partnership has added energy and water advice services into this scheme to help at least 5,000 households across Kent access much needed help from their utilities.

#### Partnership progress

Since launching in January 2024, we've been working with the Digital Kent team to build their energy safeguarding skills. This will lead to greater outcomes as the project progresses. So far, the partnership has supported 441 households via the digital support service. All households received energy advice with the team helping 11 households with benefits and income support, providing energy crisis funds for five households and supporting six customers to sign up for the Priority Services Register.

#### Learning and dissemination

This is a newly formed partnership that looks at innovative ways to connect the digitally excluded with essential services. By working together with regional utilities we're supporting the delivery partners with joined up reporting and industry insights.



Investment:  
£1,050

January  
2022  
to March  
2024



Fife

SROI: £16.11  
NPV: £16,918



Investment:  
£104,333

April  
2023  
to April  
2025



Kent

Initial funding: £55,000  
Additional funding: £104,332

SROI: £6.42  
NPV: £658,081



Investment:  
£61,015

January  
2024  
to December  
2024



Kent

SROI: £4.66  
NPV: £284,482





### Dundee Heat



#### Partnership ambition

Dundee has some of the highest rates of fuel poverty in Scotland, with 29% in fuel poverty and 15% living in extreme fuel poverty. Social enterprise Scarf has been working with Dundee City Council to alleviate the impact of fuel poverty on households across Dundee. Together, we've created a new partnership to provide a holistic support advocacy service that gives 4,000 fuel poor households in Dundee free access to energy experts.

#### Partnership progress

While the partnership only launched in January 2024, we've already supported 44 households with one-to-one energy advice, as well as holding debt advice sessions with 12 households and providing fuel vouchers to 17 households in energy crisis.

#### Learning and dissemination

Even though the project is very early in delivery, we're seeing that the service is valued by the target community. By increasing the capacity of the already-established team, we're able to connect more fuel poor homes to energy experts and deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable customers.



### South London Together



#### Partnership ambition

By bringing together SELCE and Thinking Works, we aim to support at least 4,903 vulnerable households across South London through a skilled energy caseworker.

Our programme has a targeted focus on helping financially vulnerable communities, especially digitally and culturally excluded households, disabled people and older people.

#### Partnership progress

The South London Together partnership has already supported 4,361 households with energy safeguarding services. This included helping 1,457 customers sign up for the PSR, offering crisis funds to 3,224 households, delivering 1,472 CO awareness sessions and issuing 848 lifesaving CO alarms.

The team has also completed 717 Heat Doctor appointments, providing essential heating system maintenance and simple repairs such as bleeding radiators, repressurising boilers, cleaning the sludge from radiators and adjusting the flow control.

#### Learning and dissemination

The project team has been really successful at building trusted relationships within local and diverse communities. We've seen a significantly higher need for carbon monoxide alarms and crisis funds this year, especially for private tenants who really should have been provided with a CO alarm by their landlord.



### Warmworks Aftercare Service



#### Partnership ambition

Warmworks deliver Scottish Government's national fuel poverty scheme, Warmer Homes Scotland. Warmworks supports households struggling to heat their homes by improving the fabric and heating system. Through our partnership, we aim to support 6,000 fuel poor homes with energy advisory services that help empower vulnerable households to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably.

#### Partnership progress

The partnership has supported 1,683 customers to date of which 1,377 were supported this year. In addition to the energy advice services, this year the team has supported 276 people sign up to the Priority Services Register, had 1,036 CO awareness conversations and provided 828 lifesaving CO alarms.

#### Learning and dissemination

During the initial project that ran in 2022/23, we helped 684 vulnerable households, which was more than double our target. This insight informed a follow-on initiative that built on the learnings of the initial project and runs to March 2026.



Investment:  
£264,600

January 2024 to January 2026  
Dundee

SROI: £1.19  
NPV: £308,697



Investment:  
£390,285

February 2023 to April 2025  
South London

SROI: £3.20  
NPV: £1,249,108



Investment:  
£158,960

October 2023 to March 2026  
Scotland

Initial funding: £46,954  
Additional funding: £158,960

SROI: £1.69  
NPV: £257,797





### Holistic Energy Advisory Service



#### Partnership ambition

YES Energy Solutions provides a trusted telephone-based energy efficiency advice service to support our customers. By marketing the service across all our day-to-day customer touchpoints and briefing our teams on how to identify households in need, we're ensuring we reach customers who are seeking energy advice themselves as well as those who aren't actively looking for advice but could benefit from our support.

#### Partnership progress

Since March 2023, the team has supported 3,120 customers through the service including providing customers with energy advice packs. This year alone, the team has held carbon monoxide safety conversations with 1,267 households and supported 64 fuel poor households with successful FPNES applications.

#### Learning and dissemination

Due to the increase in customers in energy crisis accessing our holistic energy advisory service, we've introduced emergency fuel vouchers into the service to help customers with their immediate needs while the caseworkers start working through the longer-term opportunities to help customers address the underlying causes of fuel poverty.



### Energy safeguarding and CO safety partnership



#### Partnership ambition

Our joint-GDN partnership expands on the success of our previous project, which sees us build greater capacity for energy safeguarding of vulnerable people across England and Wales, as well as embedded CO safety in the Citizens Advice Energy Advice Programme (EAP).

#### Partnership progress

We've reached a total of 8,620 clients this year, all receiving potentially lifesaving CO safety advice and 2,804 households receiving the full support of the Energy Advice Programme. These clients were helped with over 42,000 advice issues and an overall estimated income gain of £5,422,362. In our Southern region, we supported 3,554 households, reaching 1,253 households with in-depth energy advice through the programme and resulting in an income gain of £1.8m.

#### Learning and dissemination

We're proudly leading this joint-GDN partnership on behalf of Northern Gas Networks and Wales & West Utilities. Following the success of our initial 15-month pilot - where we supported 20,488 clients and achieved an income gain of £7,056,535 - we've extended this programme through to March 2026 with CO awareness training now embedded within the broader Citizens Advice service.



### Fuel Crisis Support



#### Partnership ambition

With rising fuel prices in 2021, we saw an increasing number of prepayment customers struggling to afford to keep their meters topped up. This resulted in extreme rationing and, when the credit had run out, no energy at all. Working with Fuel Bank Foundation, we initially aimed to support 8,000 households in fuel crisis. In December 2023 we extended our support to help a further 12,400 households by March 2026.

#### Partnership progress

By coming together as gas networks, we've increased the charity's capacity to support people in fuel crisis by providing the financial backing to allow existing centres to keep operating and to allow new centres to open nationwide. To date, we've provided 9,378 crisis vouchers. This year, 4,378 vouchers were issued across Britain with 1,182 vouchers provided to households in our two regions.

#### Learning and dissemination

We're proudly leading this partnership on behalf of all four gas networks. In 2023, Fuel Bank Foundation saw the demand for fuel crisis support increase by 85%, highlighting that crisis funding isn't lasting as long as it did in 2022. Key customer groups using the service changed also, with the service seeing younger people and families as a community needing help more this year.



Investment:  
£172,677

Initial funding: £151,647  
Additional funding: £21,030

SROI: £3.41  
NPV: £588,406



SGN investment:  
£1,655,866

Initial funding: £534,480  
Additional funding: £1,121,385

Joint-GDN investment:  
£4,586,933  
SROI: £5.54  
NPV: £25,303,157



SGN investment:  
£406,065

Initial funding: £135,355  
Additional funding: £270,710

Joint-GDN investment:  
£1,500,000  
SROI: £2.88  
NPV: £6,085,806





### Warm and Safe Homes (WASH)

#### Partnership ambition

With more people struggling with energy costs and energy debt year on year, skilled energy advice services are becoming increasingly valued and resource strained. Our partnership with NEA and the Wise Group offers the opportunity to engage customers at scale, and support more than 6,400 households via our energy advice line and community engagement events.



#### Partnership progress

Since this project was launched, we've supported 3,093 customers in our two network areas with energy safeguarding and advice services, including 1,700 households this year alone. Key services delivered this year include providing crisis funds for 646 households in energy debt, supporting 257 households with energy debt payment plans and supporting 253 households to have energy debts written off.

#### Learning and dissemination

Following a regional partnership with NEA and The Wise Group in 2021, we developed a new joint-GDN programme with Cadent for 2022. From April 2023, we expanded the coverage to include all four networks. With customers in energy debt increasing as a direct result of the cost-of-living crisis, NEA is monitoring the trend changes in the types of support being offered through the project and will highlight the hypothesis of energy debt being an issue for vulnerable customers.



### Financial education and energy saving in schools

#### Partnership ambition

We're partnering with financial education experts MyBnk to expand its primary school programme with a dedicated 'fuel finance' module focused on using energy safely and efficiently at home. Together with the other gas networks, we're providing children in some of our most deprived communities with financial literacy skills and energy safeguarding skills that will benefit them for life.



#### Partnership progress

While our partnership was formed in March 2022, the delivery programme was impacted in the first year by Covid-19. Some class sessions were moved into the 2023/24 academic year while schools worked to catch up with time lost to the pandemic. To date, the school programmes we've run in our regions have reached 2,022 young people. This year alone, we've reached 1,596 in Scotland and the south of England.

#### Learning and dissemination

We've co-designed an additional 75-minute module for MyBnk's flagship Primary Money Twist programme covering topics including how to use energy efficiently, the financial relationship to energy use and the environmental impacts of energy use. We're targeting our sessions at schools in areas where data on poverty impacting children is highest. By doing this we're helping families in need today, as well as building children's financial and energy resilience skills to help them avoid fuel poverty in future.



### NEW FOR 2024



### Safe & Warm Communities

#### Partnership ambition

We're working with Action Hampshire to support voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups with support and training to help diverse communities who may be experiencing barriers to accessing energy safeguarding services.

The scheme aims to help at least 3,500 households across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Dorset access much-needed help from their utilities through local trusted community and volunteer groups.

#### Partnership plan

The development of this partnership has enabled the team to mobilise and start delivering training workshops to 70 regional VCSE organisations, with a network of 200 volunteers from April 2024. The support provided includes workshops and tailored resource packs to help the network of community organisations and volunteers confidently and consistently support vulnerable customers across the region.



SGN investment:  
£321,299

Initial funding: £127,741  
Additional funding: £321,299

Joint-GDN investment:  
£731,326

SROI: £3.20  
NPV: £2,295,616



SGN investment:  
£102,057

Joint-GDN investment:  
£102,058  
SROI: £15.53  
NPV: £5,645,027



Investment:  
£298,863

SROI: £4.59  
NPV: £1,336,742





NEW FOR 2024



**CHANGEWORKS.**



**Midlothian Affordable Warmth**

**Partnership ambition**

Nearly a third of households in Midlothian are living in fuel poverty without a local energy advisory support service. Together with Changeworks and Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau, we're working to develop a local holistic fuel poverty support service serving the local community. The partnership aims to help at least 640 households across Midlothian with access to support including access to energy advice, registering for the PSR and crisis funds when essential.

**Partnership plan**

Training for this new service started in April 2024. Working in a joined-up way, the Changeworks and Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau delivery teams will be providing support services from May 2024 to help vulnerable residents use energy safely, efficiently and affordably.



Investment:  
£100,351

April 2024 to March 2025  
Midlothian

SROI: £1.97  
NPV: £197,261



NEW FOR 2024



**Breaking Barriers**

**Partnership ambition**

Dorset has the largest regional fuel poverty gap for the southwest of England region. In partnership with Citizens Advice East Dorset and Purbeck, we're looking to deliver 150 energy events and workshops and train 200 frontline workers who work with vulnerable people in the community on energy safeguarding and referrals into the service where caseworker support is needed. The partnership aims to help at least 10,500 households to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably.

**Partnership plan**

The partnership includes investment in a new rural Energy Advice Bus to help target harder to reach rural communities through the outreach programme. The service will be delivering from April 2024 with community training and workshops for frontline community workers, followed by the launch of the rural outreach service in September 2024.



Investment:  
£684,162

April 2024 to March 2026  
East Dorset & Purbeck

SROI: £1.36  
NPV: £1,215,729



NEW FOR 2024



**Home & Well Good Neighbours Network**

**Partnership ambition**

Increasingly, the Good Neighbours Network is finding residents forced to make difficult choices when it comes to heating their homes due to stretched household incomes. We've joined together with the Good Neighbours Network and Citizens Advice Hampshire to proactively support at least 4,000 Hampshire residents through tailored energy safeguarding and support services designed to tackle fuel poverty.

**Partnership plan**

The team are in the process of recruiting new energy advisers and are on track to start delivering summer 2024.



Investment:  
£418,956

April 2024 to March 2026  
Hampshire

SROI: £1.65  
NPV: £679,313





NEW FOR 2024



**Safe and Warm Advice Service**

**Partnership ambition**

Research from Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) indicates that energy bills are the biggest financial concern for 2.2 million people during winter 2023 and also estimates that over 1.4 million people are worried about being able to adequately heat their homes. We'll provide targeted support to customers in energy crisis, and provide access to the PSR and broader safeguarding and wellbeing services. The partnership aims to help at least 9,215 households across Scotland to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably.

**Partnership plan**

This initiative builds on the foundations of our previous projects with Citizens Advice Scotland. Where the service is newly formed in a Citizens Advice bureaux, the team will be trained and start mobilising from April 2024. For existing teams, the service will continue offering energy safeguarding services and sharing best practice across the network.



Investment:  
£1,659,907



SROI: £1.70  
NPV: £2,803,512



NEW FOR 2024



**South West London Energy Advice Partnership (SWLEAP)**

**Partnership ambition**

In south-west London, there are vast inequalities with areas of extreme deprivation existing alongside wealthier areas. The partnership aims to help at least 4,000 households through a tailored energy advice service across south-west London to use energy safely, efficiently and affordably. Together with CREW Energy and Habitats & Heritage, we'll deliver 300 community events and workshops, as well as training for frontline workers.

**Partnership plan**

An experienced and integrated energy advice team will be delivering community outreach sessions and frontline community worker training sessions from April 2024.



Investment:  
£344,649



SROI: £1.53  
NPV: £600,860



NEW FOR 2024



**Warm and Well Networks in Lambeth**

**Partnership ambition**

Lambeth is a dense inner London borough with 31% of its population living in areas of high deprivation. It is also ethnically diverse with 63% of residents describing their ethnicity as other than White British. With trust such a critical factor in delivering effective support and building capacity among households facing intersectional exclusions, we've joined together with Repowering London to deliver much-needed energy advice and safeguarding services to fuel poor households in Lambeth.

**Partnership plan**

The Repowering London team is experienced in community engagement and energy advice services including broader energy efficiency scheme eligibility. Over the two years, the team will be hosting community workshops, training frontline community workers to identify those in need, providing energy advice sessions and proactive boiler servicing for eligible households.



Investment:  
£207,888



SROI: £2.08  
NPV: £424,907







NEW FOR 2024



## Warm Homes, Healthy Futures

### Partnership ambition

Warm Homes, Healthy Futures (WHHF) is an evidence-based, multi-year nationwide project that connects health professionals and local public health bodies to energy advice and other specialist support services. Our partnership aims to address the root causes of fuel poverty and targeting support to those most vulnerable. We've set out to support 30,400 people across the country to live in safe and warm homes, ultimately improving the health of these households.

### Partnership plan

We started mobilisation of this national programme in March 2024, engaging with health care providers and completing a regional funding mapping activity to support the onboarding of targeted health providers identified based on health outcomes.



SGN investment:  
£3,299,856



Joint-GDN investment:  
£12,198,660  
SROI: £2.66  
NPV: £32,849,183





Total number of households supported since April 2021

 **100,847**

## Reducing carbon monoxide harm

In our organisational carbon monoxide strategy for RII0-GD2, we've set our ambition to reduce CO harm in our communities.

We do this by:

- Responding quickly to those at risk of CO exposure to make sure that they are safe and supported with what to do next
- Providing appropriate safety solutions to those in a domestic setting least likely to access support without assistance
- Delivering tailored education and engagement programmes that empower and increase understanding of the dangers and ways in which people can prevent harm to themselves and others.





# Reducing carbon monoxide harm

Collaboration is key to us reducing CO harm in our communities. We're proud to continue chairing the GDN Carbon Monoxide Working Group, bringing together our gas network peers with key stakeholders such as Gas Safe Register, Policy Connect and Project Shout Fire Angel.

While a key responsibility of the working group is to oversee the joint-GDN carbon monoxide awareness programmes funded by the VCMA, the group's remit goes well beyond that. As chair, we steer the group in facilitating the strategic national CO awareness programme, as well as research, innovation activities and national partnerships. This collaborative approach between gas networks - and wider industry - enables us to increase the reach of our CO awareness-raising efforts and increase the impact.

Raising awareness of carbon monoxide safety is a fundamental element of all our community partnerships, embedded in each of our partnerships. We recognised the importance of bringing this lifesaving message to vulnerable people through trusted and everyday interactions with people. To ensure that we're getting these messages out across our community, we're training people to look out for the signs and symptoms and giving people the tools to help.

This year, we've amplified our support for programmes that raise CO awareness among young people. Not only are young people one of the groups most at risk of CO harm, but they are also a group with the biggest potential to become ambassadors for CO safety as they take safety messages home and increase CO awareness within their families.

We've led a joint-GDN partnership with the Scouts since August 2021 and we're delighted with how that partnership has continued to grow this year not just to extend the existing scope until 2026 but to introduce safe ways to be energy efficient, save money and the environment.

In recent years, we've taken great strides in ensuring our carbon monoxide awareness and protection activities are inclusive and accessible. We've continued to develop our

customer resources this year, specifically increasing our translated CO resources from five languages last year to 11 this year.

This year, we've more than doubled the reach with our CO safety resources compared to last year - reaching more than 108,000 households with lifesaving information.

With accessibility and ease of access in mind, we're developing new tools for frontline workers to quickly and easily access CO safety information. Together with our existing CO training partner Gas Safe Charity, we're leading a new programme that brings together all the gas networks to develop an app that helps frontline workers in the community quickly access information on their smartphone should they suspect CO poisoning.

We've witnessed the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on carbon monoxide safety with many vulnerable customers unable to afford to maintain their gas appliances with annual gas safety checks or replace lifesaving CO alarms.

We've taken steps to address this by providing CO alarms to the 57,876 households who were unable to afford an alarm themselves.

**أول أكسيد الكربون**  
**والسلامة من الغاز**

**أول أكسيد الكربون - ماذا يكون؟**

أول أكسيد الكربون (CO) هو غاز سام عديم اللون والرائحة والطعم ينبعث عن الأفران غير المكتمل لتأويح الوقود الذي يحترق على الكربون (ما في الغاز والبريت والخشب والسمك والمشمع) والأثاث لا تصطبغ بآبته أو تدفئه أو تدفئه أو تدفئه فهو خطير للغاية وفي بعض الظروف يمكن أن يقتل بسرعة ويموت إنداء سابق.

**أعراض التسمم بأول أكسيد الكربون**

التعب، الصداع، الغثبان، الدوار (الدوخة)، القيء، فقدان الوعي، التقيؤ.

**علامات أول أكسيد الكربون**

• ينبغي أن يكون له معظم أجهزة التسخين حثك ساعته وأيضاً النين  
• ينبغي أن يمتص في شخص النهب أضر أو يرقطني النين  
• تحدث عن نديع أو سحاج (السوداء) أو تغير لون بالأهوية  
• تحدث عن تكلف حتراب  
• نظفاه الضفلة الدليلة بشكل منتكر

إذا كنت قلقاً أن هناك أول أكسيد الكربون يمكنك أن تلاحظ أن نديع بدأ أكسيد الكربون فيجب الاتصال بحدمة طوارئ الغاز المحلية على الهاتف رقم 0800 111 999 مبراً

**كيف تحافظ على سلامتك من أخطار أول أكسيد الكربون**

- يجب أن يمتص في مؤهل الأجهزة التي تعمل بالغاز أو الزيت أو الغاز الطبيعي سميلاً
- تركيب جهاز إنذار من أول أكسيد الكربون والأمان الدائم لإرشادات الشركة المنتجة
- الأضرار المنظمه جهاز الإنذار من أول أكسيد الكربون وفقاً لإرشادات الشركة المنتجة واستبدال البطاريات / جهاز الإنذار حثماً وكلمة كان ذلك مطلوباً
- الحرس على وجود تهوية كافية للأجهزة وعدم سده فتحات الهواء
- إيفاف تشغيل الجهاز بطلب المساعدة فوراً في حالة الأشماء في وجود أول أكسيد الكربون أو عند انطلاق جهاز الإنذار من أول أكسيد الكربون
- ممنوع متركاً بالآ وجود جهاز شواء (باربيكيو) أو سحاج مستقل في مكان مغلق بدون التهوية اللاتمة

**طوارئ الغاز**

توفر SGN الاستجابة الفاسة بطيران الغاز اللاتمة في مستطفك، ومن ندم بالألاخ عن تصريف في الغار أو مضاف من وجود أول أكسيد الكربون فإن مهندسيها يمتصن حدمة على مدار 24 ساعة بجهريون إلى المكار لتوفير السلامة والأمان

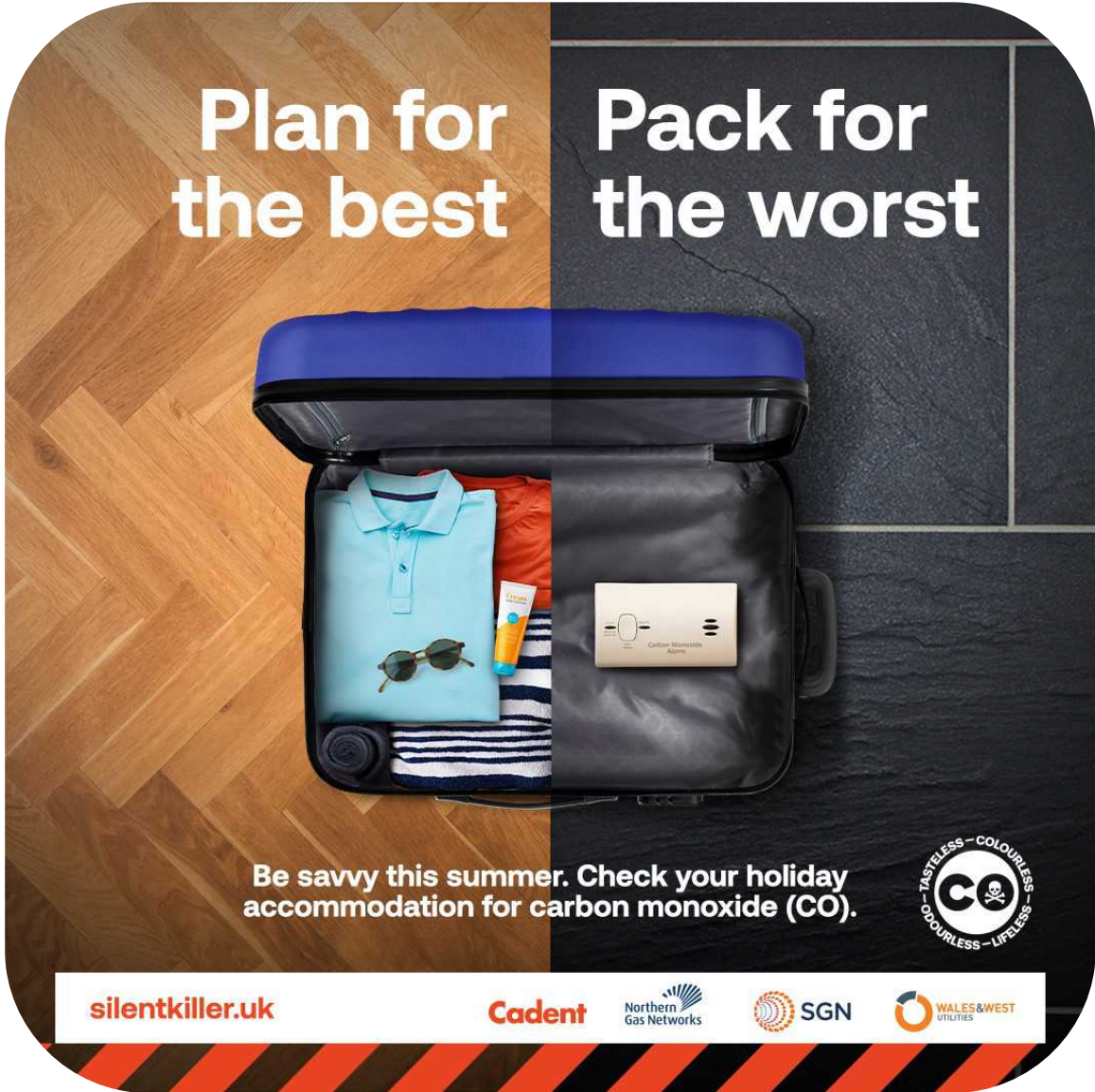
**يجب اتباع هذه الخطوات العسك في حالة شيم الغاز:**

- ✓ يجب فتح النوافذ والأبواب للتمسك في ممنوع التدخين أو استخدام أي لهب مكشوف تهوية الغار
- ✓ يجب قطع التدفئة بالغاز عند العداد والتأكد من إيقاف تشغيل (الطفاة) أي مضاف ممنوع أن يشعل الغار بالغاز
- ✓ يجب الاتصال على رقم خدمة طوارئ الغاز الوطنية على 0800 111 999 مدار 24 ساعة يومياً 365 يوماً سميلاً

بالمشاركة مع SGN Scottish Gas

“The biggest impact we have seen across our communities is the cost of living. This has caused people to cut on safety in their home therefore not have boiler servicing, install detection and mainly not have any insurance cover in the event of a fire. We did have number of fires that were caused through residents lighting rubbish fires in their front rooms to keep warm.”

Chrissie Cooper, Station Commander, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service





### Measuring our CO activity

Through our own efforts, combined with our partner and joint-GDN projects, we estimate that we've reached 8,346,373 customers in our network area with our CO awareness-raising activities this year.

To measure effective engagement, all gas networks apply a common retention rate of 3% to any reach through marketing campaigns, based on marketing expert guidance.

Applying this approach to campaign reach, we're proud to report we've effectively engaged at least 1,517,306 customers within our network area with our CO awareness-raising activity this year contributing to a total of 3,815,140 customers over RIIO-GD2.

We measure the impact of our in-person CO awareness conversations through a survey that captures self-assessed awareness scores before and after the conversation.

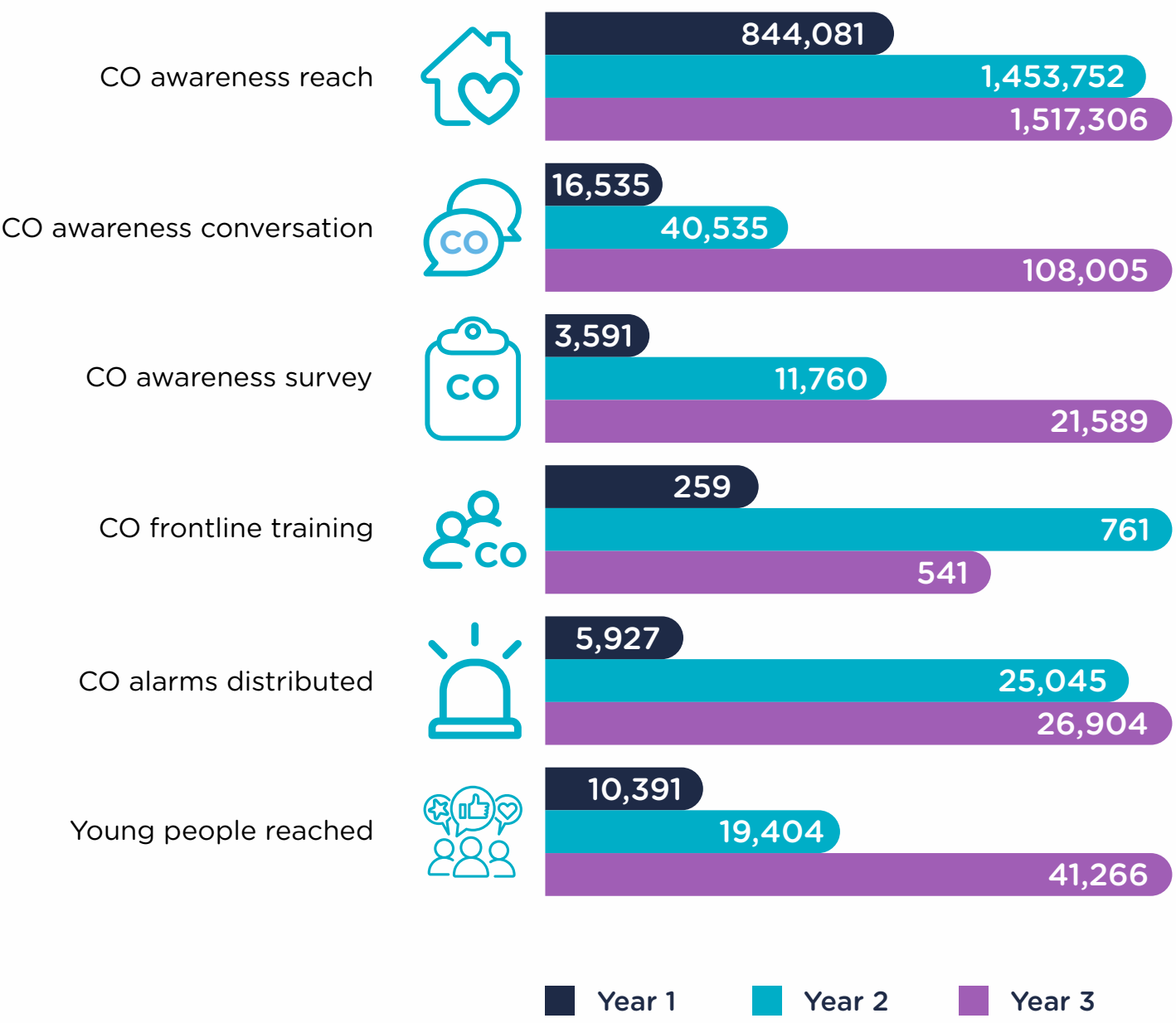
In recent years, the success of national awareness campaigns and legislations changes has impacted overall CO awareness in the community. We're seeing this reflected in an increase in pre-survey awareness scores.

Despite this overall rise across our customer base, when it comes to our most vulnerable customers, we've seen presurvey awareness scores drop compared to our first year.

When it comes to our CO awareness survey scores for this year, we've seen our scores rise from 5.94 pre-discussion to 8.38 post this year. The impact of these direct and partner-led conversations is an increase in CO awareness of 41%.



### CO activities across our regions





# CO community safety projects

## Why we're working together

While different fire and rescue services operate in different regions across Britain, they all have established home safety programmes that see them deliver at-home support for some of the most vulnerable households in our communities.

The home safety programmes, sometimes known as Safe and Well visits, are extremely effective at engaging hard-to-reach and high-risk households, such as older people, people with disabilities and people with chronic health conditions.

Within this programme, we also engage with other regional community partners to raise awareness of carbon monoxide. We've joined with home improvement agencies and local charities to educate vulnerable households on the dangers of carbon monoxide and how to stay gas safe at home, as well as providing both standard and accessible CO alarms.

## How we're working together

We've established two-way relationships with our community partners to safeguard the most vulnerable households in our communities, and these partnerships are truly reciprocal. For example, our fire and rescue service partners provide us with safeguarding support through home visits to customers we encounter in homes that are unsafe due to hoarding or self-neglect.

In addition, we have 15 unique partnerships with fire and rescue services across our Scotland and Southern networks funding CO safety

initiatives that provide access to CO alarms for trusted fire service home safety prevention teams and community partners to install.



## Partnership impact

Installing potentially life-saving CO alarms is one of the most powerful impacts of this programme. To date, we've provided 46,495 CO alarms to fire and rescue services and community services with 20,110 of these alarms provided this year alone.

Crucially, we're also providing accessible CO alarms for people with sight or hearing impairments. These organisations often have little or no provision for accessible alarms, so by providing 540 hearing-impaired alarms and 470 verbal alarms this year alone, we're making sure these households have access to safety devices that meet their needs.

With carbon monoxide awareness so well-embedded within the home safety programmes across many of our fire and rescue service partners, we're extending our support to particularly vulnerable groups within our communities outside of the home setting.

The Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service's Prevention team is delivering fire and CO safety sessions to Afghan families who are being resettled in the UK. Each family is given a resource pack to take away with key fire and CO safety information for adults and an activity book for the children, translated into both Pashto and Dari.

This year, we've made notable progress in establishing reciprocal safeguarding partnerships with fire and rescue services across Scotland. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is split into different regions, each with different ways of working, and previously, we have experienced some challenges in setting up partnerships across Scotland. We started this year with one regional partnership, but thanks its success, we've ended the year with five regional partnerships and six more in the pipeline.

Following open and honest feedback from our fire and rescue service partners, we established that, for some, adding an additional reporting requirement with our online CO awareness survey was creating some issues.

To overcome this, we've now embedded our CO survey questions into existing FRS reporting frameworks and data capture within some partnerships.

## Key 2023/24 achievements

Households supported: **21,254**

Frontline workers trained: **49**

CO alarms provided: **20,110**

CO safety conversations: **21,240**

## Our project at a glance

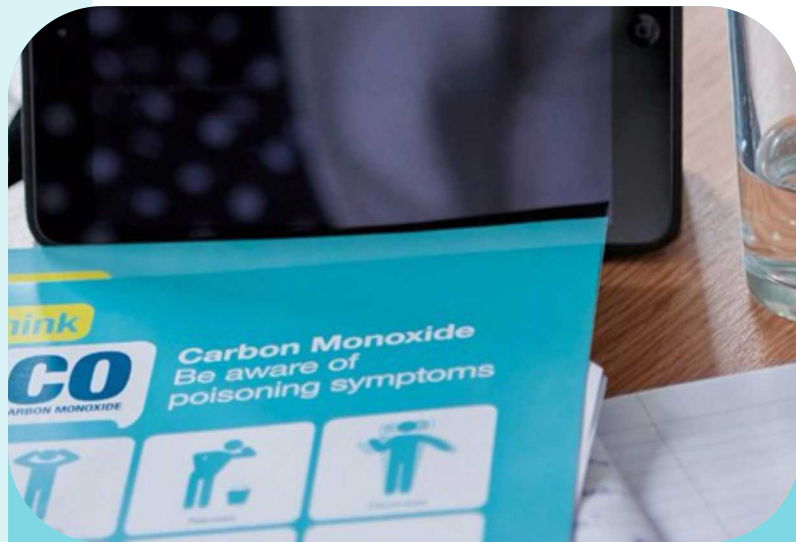
September 2021 to March 2026

SGN regions

Investment: £991,110  
Forecast SROI: £7.64  
NPV: £7,068,421.41

T3





## Helping to make our CO ambitions a reality

### Why we're working together

Educating frontline workers at our partner organisations on carbon monoxide safety is key to us being able to reduce CO harm in our communities.

Gas Safe Charity shares our ambition of helping people be gas safe by informing, educating and supporting those who need it most. By increasing awareness of carbon monoxide, we can reduce harm.

By coming together with Gas Safe Charity, we're able to offer expert carbon monoxide training to our network of programme partners. The charity's interactive online and face-to-face Think CO programme is designed to help frontline workers who visit the homes of vulnerable people become more aware of the risks of CO poisoning.

### How we're working together

Driven by the holistic approach to support we take at SGN, nearly all of our partnerships incorporate carbon monoxide awareness raising as a core outcome.

By linking our partners with Gas Safe Charity's Think CO training programme, we're able to enable and empower them to confidently raise awareness of carbon monoxide safety among the vulnerable communities they support. Recognising the need for flexibility and ease of access to this training, partners can choose to either complete the e-learning programme online or attend an online workshop. Dedicated in-person workshops can also be arranged where a need is identified.

Within our own organisation, we've embedded the Think CO e-learning into our employee learning platform, making Think CO training available to all SGN colleagues. We launched the training package during CO Awareness Week 2023 and encouraged our people to take part in the simple e-learning so they can not only better support the households we work with, but also keep themselves and their families safer from the silent killer.

### Partnership impact

Through our relationship with Gas Safe Charity and linking our partners to the Think CO training programme, not only have we been able to empower our partners to confidently recognise CO risk when supporting vulnerable households, but they're able to provide potentially lifesaving advice on how to keep safe from CO poisoning.

By educating and empowering our partners in this way we're creating a legacy that will live on even when our partnerships come to an end, with our partners able to continue assessing households for CO risk and sharing CO safety advice.

Having established the Think CO training programme as a key resource for many of our partners, and having received such positive feedback about the impact of this training, we're now working closely with Gas Safe Charity to action new opportunities to provide additional support to our partners.

Together, we're supporting our partners at an organisational level by facilitating dedicated Think CO online partner workshops to help generate internal discussion and provide an opportunity for our partner organisations to assess their CO safety processes and safeguards.

We've also identified additional scope within existing partnerships to create more tailored CO safety resources. Along with Gas Safe Charity, we've developed a bespoke e-learning package for our joint-GDN programme with the Scouts. This e-learning package incorporates advice and scenarios specific to Scouting to make it more relevant and engaging to Scout leaders and adult volunteers.

Looking ahead, we're also working with Gas Safe Charity to produce a Think CO training video based on the content of the online workshops. The video will have full BSL translation throughout, as well as subtitles, to make it accessible to more of our partners and stakeholders.

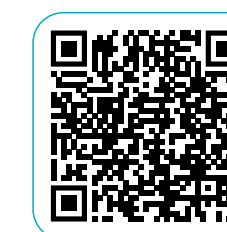
### Key 2023/24 achievements



Community frontline workers Think CO trained: **344**



SGN employees Think CO trained: **88**





### Carbon monoxide schools' education



#### Partnership ambition

Young people are one of the groups most at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning. The NHS explains this is because the smaller a person is, the faster they'll be affected by carbon monoxide. By working in schools, we're reaching this at-risk group where they are focused on learning and likely to be receptive to CO safety advice, with resources and learning they can share with families and friends.

#### Partnership progress

We're leading this initiative on behalf of Northern Gas Networks, and for Wales & West Utilities in 2023/24, delivering school-based educational programmes for young people aged 5 to 11 including delivery in special educational needs (SEN) schools. This year, we extended the programme scope to reach an additional 58,880 young people across the three GDNs, including an increased programme in our two regions. In our regions alone, we've engaged 15,335 young people to date, 9,143 of which were reached this year.

#### Learning and dissemination

This established programme is delivered nationally by Bonanza Creative and has a mature relationship with schools enabling us to test new resources and delivery models. We're seeing schools request these sessions year-on-year as the delivery model is inclusive, creative and engaging, tailored to each age group and educational need.



### Raising CO Awareness using Augmented Reality



#### Partnership ambition

Young adults who face life changes such as moving into student or rented accommodation, and those attending festivals and having social events like BBQs are at an increased risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. As Britain's four gas networks, we've joined together on a collaborative awareness-raising campaign targeted at university students. Working with Egnida, we aim to reach at least 20,000 university students through an innovative augmented reality engagement campaign.

#### Partnership progress

We're developing bespoke coffee shop coasters, providing access to an augmented reality CO safety activity, that will be distributed to identified campus coffee shops at four universities across the UK, one for each GDN. We've developed a storyboard for the activity and are working closely with Egnida to design the 3D elements that will make up the augmented reality model, with the aim being to roll out just after Freshers Week 2024.

#### Learning and dissemination

Engagement with safety awareness campaigns is often particularly low among young people aged 18 to 25. To address this we've partnered with technical consultancy Egnida to create an augmented reality campaign with a unique incentive scheme, creatively designed to engage and educate this harder to engage demographic.



### Collaborative GDN Winter & Summer Awareness Campaigns



#### Partnership ambition

Together with the other gas networks and Eleven Miles, we're delivering a national campaign to raise awareness of carbon monoxide, the national gas emergency service number and the PSR. Our biannual campaign, running each summer and winter until 2026, with the aim to keep people safe in their homes and whilst doing recreation activities including BBQ and travel.

#### Partnership progress

This year, we've delivered inclusive and multi-channel summer and winter campaigns across radio, social media and print as well as key outdoor and transport advertising. Our summer campaign drove messages on CO linked to BBQs and taking a CO alarm on holiday. Our winter campaign focussed on in-home CO risks and the PSR. So far, the campaigns have had 37.5m impressions in our regions with a potential reach of 7.2m.

#### Learning and dissemination

Not all customers who see or hear one of our campaign assets or adverts will be receptive to the information, so we apply a 3% engagement rate for all our campaign activity. We call this the 'engaged reach'. This means that for 2023/24 we had an 'engaged reach' of 217,985. We work with marketing experts to review this engagement rate with a view to updating it pending further analysis across media and marketing channels.

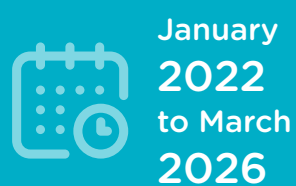


SGN investment:  
£388,141

Initial funding: £21,176  
Additional funding: £366,965

Joint-GDN investment:  
£575,901

SROI: £2.35  
NPV: £1,411,614



SGN investment:  
£20,000

Joint-GDN investment:  
£80,000  
SROI: £3.51  
NPV: £275,432



SGN investment:  
£341,348

Joint-GDN investment:  
£1,000,000  
SROI: £120.42  
NPV: £120,417,447





### Think CO App development



#### Partnership ambition

There is a significant knowledge and skills gap around CO safety within third-sector organisations and their frontline workers and volunteers who work in the homes of vulnerable people. We have a shared ambition with the Gas Safe Charity to help people be gas safe by informing, educating and supporting those who need it most. We aim to engage and support frontline workers with training and resources to make it easy to safeguard vulnerable customers.

#### Partnership progress

This project has been developing a dedicated Think CO app for smartphones designed specifically for frontline workers who are in vulnerable customers' homes. This year, the team has worked with a developer to create the Think CO app which has now progressed to prototype stage for product testing and engagement.

#### Learning and dissemination

We're leading this initiative on behalf of the gas networks, and it forms part of our approach to provide the resources and the skills to those people who are supporting those most vulnerable to carbon monoxide exposure. The feedback from frontline workers, our target community, has been extremely positive at both in-person and online workshops. Attendees have welcomed having additional quick access resources to help them retain this lifesaving information.



### elearning for healthcare



#### Partnership ambition

Carbon monoxide awareness among health and social care professionals is very low. This is a concern when working with those who are most vulnerable, for example, during pregnancy. Health and social care professionals need the knowledge, skills and resources to support the identification of CO poisoning. We aim to integrate high quality, evidence-based resources into elearning for healthcare (elfh) which has over 2 million users.

#### Partnership progress

This project is in its initial stages, with literature and messaging reviews underway. We're developing a generic module to help professionals understand the harm caused by exposure to CO, how to identify those at risk and how to protect them from harm. Building on this generic learning module, there will be three shorter professional specific learning modules. These focus on CO risk in pregnancy, for older people and a dedicated module for medical examiners.

#### Learning and dissemination

This project was informed by work previously undertaken including the VCMA IPPCO study, Pathways in Pregnancy. The study found a high number of midwives were unaware of the harm of exposure to CO during pregnancy highlighting the need for educational tools like this one to be rolled out.



### Carbon monoxide awareness programme



#### Partnership ambition

Young people are one of the most at-risk groups from CO poisoning and one of the least aware of how to recognise signs and symptoms or keep themselves safe from CO harm. By working with Scouts, we aim to educate, engage and empower young scouting members, increasing their understanding of the dangers and ways in which they can prevent harm for themselves and others from CO.

#### Partnership progress

The project is established, with a programme of 10 CO awareness activities across Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer sections reaching 48,445 young people in SGN regions, and almost 179,000 overall. These range from camping recipes with CO safety messaging embedded into the activity through to a role play mystery game called 'The Undetected Danger'. Working with Gas Safe Charity, we were able to develop and roll out a package tailored for Scouting leaders and adult volunteers this year, empowering them to confidently deliver CO activities.

#### Learning and dissemination

Due to the success of our project and a shared ambition with Scouts to educate on energy efficiency, we're expanding the scope of our partnership beyond CO awareness to incorporate energy efficiency activities into our programme. The learning from our current programme will inform the expansion, as well as insight from other projects that incorporate energy efficiency activities for young people.



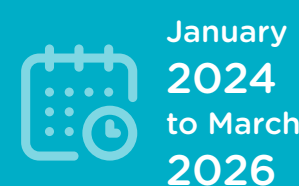
SGN investment:  
£11,593



Joint-GDN investment:  
£42,825  
SROI: £1.10  
NPV: £21,437



SGN investment:  
£51,663



Joint-GDN investment:  
£190,850  
SROI: £18.63  
NPV: £3,556,218



SGN investment:  
£81,213



Joint-GDN investment:  
£300,000  
SROI: £1.86  
NPV: £558,000





# Completed projects

Partner organisation	Project	Strategic theme	Region	Duration	Forecast SROI	SGN investment
<a href="#"><u>AgilityEco</u></a>	Care and Repair Scheme	Direct services	SGN	2021	NA	£50,000
<a href="#"><u>Bonanza Creative</u></a>	CO awareness in schools (Year 1)	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2022	£1.56	£21,260
<a href="#"><u>Citizens Advice - Hampshire</u></a>	Home and Well	Fuel poverty	SGN - Southern	2021-23	£22.15	£128,756
<a href="#"><u>Citizens Advice - Sussex</u></a>	Tackling Fuel Poverty Together	Fuel poverty	SGN - Southern	2021-23	£1.81	£96,000
<a href="#"><u>Citizens Advice England and Wales</u></a>	Energy safeguarding and CO safety partnership	Fuel poverty	GDN collaboration	2022-23	£5.76	£534,481
<a href="#"><u>Citizens Advice Scotland</u></a>	Energy Advisory Services - North Scotland	Fuel poverty	SGN - Scotland	2021-22	£3.57	£89,886
<a href="#"><u>Draw Events</u></a>	Alzheimer's Dementia and Care Show 2023	Priority customer groups	SGN	2023	£7.56	£2,025
<a href="#"><u>Groundworks South</u></a>	Groundwork Green Doctors - Kent	Fuel poverty	SGN - Southern	2021-23	£1.90	£62,975
<a href="#"><u>Heavenly &amp; Campus Group</u></a>	Game Over	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2022-23	£12.84	£108,519
<a href="#"><u>IPIP</u></a>	CO in pregnancy research study	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2021-23	£0.02	£67,670
<a href="#"><u>Jseven Media</u></a>	CO winter awareness campaign 2021-22	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2021-22	£39.30	£81,341*
<a href="#"><u>Mental Health UK</u></a>	Advisor Service	Priority customer groups	SGN	2022-23	£3.20	£72,239
<a href="#"><u>NEA and The Wise Group</u></a>	Warm and Safe Home service	Fuel poverty	SGN	2021-22	£4.64	£92,741
<a href="#"><u>NEA and The Wise Group</u></a>	Warm and Safe Homes	Fuel poverty	GDN collaboration	2022-23	£9.05	£127,741
<a href="#"><u>Policy Connect (APPCOG)</u></a>	CO Awareness Week 2022	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2022	£24.86	£5,414
<a href="#"><u>Policy Connect (APPCOG)</u></a>	CO Safe 4 Summer campaign	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2022	£34.51	£13,536
<a href="#"><u>Scope</u></a>	Disabled community CO research	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2022	£1.82	£8,284
<a href="#"><u>Scope</u></a>	Energy Help Desk	Priority customer groups	SGN	2021-22	£13.21	£25,000
<a href="#"><u>SPEN</u></a>	PSR - CO Awareness Pilot	Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness	GDN collaboration	2022-23	£13.18	£895
<a href="#"><u>Surrey County Council</u></a>	Warm Hubs Surrey	Fuel poverty	SGN - Southern	2022-23	£5.81	£70,000
<a href="#"><u>Warmworks</u></a>	Warmworks Aftercare	Fuel poverty	SGN - Scotland	2022-23	£5.53	£46,954*

\* project cost slightly less than original PEA



# Looking ahead

Against a backdrop of more households than ever before facing unmanageable energy debt, we set out to support 100,000 vulnerable customers this year.



This year marked a significant gear change in our support for vulnerable households across our diverse communities. After revising our vulnerability strategy to accommodate the additional VCMA funding and putting considerable efforts into developing new partnerships, we've been able to reach more vulnerable households than ever before with our energy safeguarding, fuel poverty alleviation and carbon monoxide safety initiatives.

**Thanks to the dedication and commitment of our people and partners, we end the year having supported 232,847 vulnerable households to stay safe, warm and well at home. This is 96% more households than last year and over double our target.**

## Looking beyond RIIO-GD2

Throughout 2024, we will be engaging extensively with stakeholders and partners to consider our business plan for Ofgem's next five-year price control RIIO-GD3. We're working with Sustainability First and Centre for Sustainable Energy to forecast the evolving needs of customers, to further understand our regional vulnerability and refine the role we can play in keeping customers warm today and in a clean energy future.

We can see the impact we're having on our customers and our communities through our vulnerability strategy in this price control and we believe we can go further in RIIO-GD3. This year, we've introduced additional qualitative methods of measuring the impact on the households we've supported through the VCMA allowance, considering both the direct outcomes for customers and the role we've played in convening community organisations to help those most in need.

This insight, gathered by National Energy Action and Evaluation Support Scotland, enables us to be confident that we are making a positive difference to vulnerable households and that we are successfully targeting our help at those who need it most.



## Our focus in year four

As we move into year four, our ambition remains the same. We will continue to work towards our ambition to help 500,000 vulnerable customers use energy safely, efficiently and affordably by 2026.

As well as nurturing the existing services and partnerships that facilitate this ambition over the coming 12 months, we are also onboarding new partnerships that will run for the rest of the price control period.

By the end of this regulatory year, we intend to allocate the remaining VCMA allowance. This will give all our programme partners adequate time and opportunity to deliver meaningful outcomes for vulnerable customers.

We're excited to have shared a number of projects that already launched in April within this report. These include further expansion of some of our regional projects into new national projects with the other gas networks.



## Building a legacy

We're constantly inspired by the work our people and our partners do to protect, support and champion for the most vulnerable members of our communities.

We believe that we're better together, and it's through genuine collaboration that we can deliver the best outcomes for vulnerable households.

We're equipping our network of community partners with the resources, skills and training to upskill their organisations for the long term. We're proudly creating an enduring legacy through the networks we've established and the partnerships we deliver.

**At the heart of it all is our commitment to never walk away from a customer in need, today or tomorrow.**

## A final word from our partners

Thank you to our community partners for your support in delivering the third year of our programme and helping collate this report. If you share our strategic ambition to support communities most at risk and would like to suggest a partnership project, we'd love to hear from you at [positive.impact@sgn.co.uk](mailto:positive.impact@sgn.co.uk)



“Funding has enabled Age Scotland to develop a team of specialist staff who are skilled, knowledgeable and confident in identifying and responding to energy and cost of living pressures on older people. SGN’s support allows us to make a positive impact for more vulnerable older people now and into the future.”

Scott Stewart,  
Head of Information,  
Advice and Friendship



“Our partnership with SGN has enabled us to tackle poverty and social isolation in a joined-up way, getting support directly to residents most in need. With increased financial pressures being felt so acutely across the public and voluntary sectors, it would simply have not been possible to continue this project at the same scale and impact without SGN’s support.”

Natalie Fisken,  
Chief of Staff



“Without SGN’s valued partnership, our ability to support vulnerable clients during this unprecedented cost-of-living and energy crisis could not have been achieved. SGN’s understanding of their customers’ challenges has enabled us to work together to provide life-changing advice to those in or at risk of fuel poverty.”

Jonathan Watt,  
Director of National Funded Services



“Disabled people have been impacted the most throughout the cost-of-living crisis. The Disability Energy Support Service with water advice (DES) has been vital in supporting our customers. Our partnership with the GDN collaboration has been most valuable and we are delighted that we are now able to build the capacity of DES together, at this very critical time.”

Mark Hodgkinson,  
Chief Executive



“We’re thrilled to have celebrated the first year of our partnership with the Gas Distribution Networks. Our Energy Support Officers are making a vital difference to Support Line callers and the national roll-out of training to Marie Curie staff means we can be there for more people experiencing fuel poverty at the end of life. This partnership is ensuring we tackle these important issues head on and better support those at the end of life.”

Matthew Reed,  
Chief Executive



“Due to the level of vulnerability of our target client group on this project and the fact that we were working as a new, innovative partnership with New Start Highland, we have valued SGN’s ongoing commitment and involvement over the two years of the project. Keeping the people we support at the heart of our project has left a lasting positive impact on the lives of so many vulnerable individuals in the Highlands.”

Morven Masterton, Head of  
Community Engagement  
and Energy Advice Services



“For families caring for a seriously ill child, their energy bills are far higher than the average household’s due to the need to stay warm and power vital life-saving equipment – like a ventilator or respirator. We are excited and thankful to be working with SGN to help families with extra support exactly when they need it.”

Andy Fletcher,  
Chief Executive



“Through this collaborative partnership, we’re addressing the broader consequences of digital exclusion and steering residents out of fuel poverty towards sustainable solutions. Although in the early stages of delivery, the project has seen great benefits for residents, and we are looking forward to continuing this impactful and holistic approach with SGN and other partners.”

Samuel Lawrence-Rose,  
Digital Lead

