

GDN Collaborative Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Crunch- Digital Priority Services Register (PSR) Campaign

Sophie Shorney
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September 2023

Sophie Stone
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Updated January 2025

Gas Network Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Eligibility Criteria

Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)	
In order to qualify as a VCMA project, a project must:	
VCMA Eligibility Criteria	Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)
a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), calculated in accordance with a model which the GDNs have developed and submitted to Ofgem including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project, and ii. have a positive, or a forecasted positive Net Present Value (NPV); 	Yes
b) Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or ii. Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO; 	Yes
c) Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve the requirements in paragraph b;	Yes
d) Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and	Yes
e) Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.	Yes
Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing	
To qualify as a VCMA Project, essential gas appliance servicing must meet the following criteria:	
a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. a GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or iii. a GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; and 	Yes
b) the household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria in the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery document; and	Yes
c) sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord and national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance servicing.	Yes
Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance repair and replacement	

To qualify as a VCMA Project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	
<p>a) i. GDN has had to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or</p> <p>ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has had to condemn unsafe pipework, or an essential gas appliance, following an essential gas appliance service (as described in 2.12) and</p>	N/A
<p>a) i. The occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes and has a household income as per ECO4 Income thresholds, or</p> <p>ii. The household cannot afford to repair or replace unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria in the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery document (see Appendix 1); and</p>	N/A
<p>b) sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance repair or replacement.</p>	N/A
Section 4 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects	
In order to qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
a) Meet the company specific project eligibility criteria set out in sections 1-3 above; and	N/A
b) Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	Yes
c) Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	Yes

Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Registration Table 2

Information Required	Description
Project Title	Digital Priority Services Register (PSR) Campaign
Funding GDN(s)	Wales and West Utilities (WWU) and Southern Gas Networks (SGN)
New / Updated (indicate as appropriate)	Updated January 2025
For Collaborative VCMA Projects: Role of GDN(s)	Lead: WWU Supported by SGN
Date of PEA Submission	September 2023 Updated January 2025
VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number	Sophie Shorney Sophie.Shorney@wwutilities.co.uk 07583076147 Sophie Stone Sophie.stone@wwutilities.co.uk
Total Cost (£k)	£223,880.60 Updated January 2025

	£98,507.46																																													
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	<p>Crunch will manage each network as individual clients with set budgets as agreed. Split calculated based on geographical split of customers served within each network as per VCMA guidelines.</p> <p>Based on budgets supplied for each network and using the audiences and metrics from the previous campaign (WWUs PSR Facebook Campaign), below is the breakdown for each:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 465 1407 763"> <thead> <tr> <th>Network</th> <th>Budgets</th> <th>Estimated Impressions</th> <th>Estimated Reach</th> <th>Estimated Sign Ups</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>£30,000.00</td> <td>2,361,111</td> <td>295,139</td> <td>9,807</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SGN</td> <td>£68,507.46</td> <td>5,391,790</td> <td>673,974</td> <td>22,396</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cadent</td> <td>£125,374.14</td> <td>9,867,409</td> <td>1,233,426</td> <td>40,987</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£223,880.60</td> <td>17,620,310</td> <td>2,202,539</td> <td>73,190</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All media spend will have a 15% management fee which covers the management, set up, reporting and optimisation of campaigns. Each GDN will have a dedicated team who will drive results and maximise the impact of the campaign across a 12-month period. Campaign reporting has been agreed and will be provided monthly. There will be a setup fee of £150 (one off cost) and an additional £45 p/w report fee to provide live access to reports with agreed success metrics. Additional data feeds can be added to reports but may incur additional costs.</p> <p>Updated January 2025:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 1151 1311 1379"> <thead> <tr> <th>Network</th> <th>Budgets</th> <th>Estimated Impressions</th> <th>Estimated Reach</th> <th>Estimated Sign Ups</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>£30,000</td> <td>2,361,111</td> <td>295,139</td> <td>9,807</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SGN</td> <td>£68,507.46</td> <td>5,391,790</td> <td>673,974</td> <td>22,396</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£98,507.46</td> <td>7,752,901</td> <td>969,113</td> <td>32,203</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Cadent have withdrawn from the project, due to challenges with their procurement, which was causing significant delay to the project start date. Cadent have not made any payment to the supplier prior to this.</p>	Network	Budgets	Estimated Impressions	Estimated Reach	Estimated Sign Ups	WWU	£30,000.00	2,361,111	295,139	9,807	SGN	£68,507.46	5,391,790	673,974	22,396	Cadent	£125,374.14	9,867,409	1,233,426	40,987	Total	£223,880.60	17,620,310	2,202,539	73,190	Network	Budgets	Estimated Impressions	Estimated Reach	Estimated Sign Ups	WWU	£30,000	2,361,111	295,139	9,807	SGN	£68,507.46	5,391,790	673,974	22,396	Total	£98,507.46	7,752,901	969,113	32,203
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Problem(s)	<p>Light, power and heating are essential services for our society. Different customers have different needs or interests, and some consumers are significantly less able than others to protect or represent their own interests in the energy market.</p> <p>To assist these consumers, each gas and electricity supplier, DNO, water supplier and water distributor owns and maintains a Priority Services Register (PSR). This entitles the consumers who are eligible to be on the register to a range of free information and support services, to make sure they are completely looked after. WWUs consumer vulnerability engagement programme demonstrated the lack of knowledge around the PSR and the various types of vulnerabilities that exist. Based on 10 engagement events in total, including 3,362 stakeholders, there was strong support for sharing data and information between utilities and third parties to avoid multiple sign-ups to different registers.</p>																																													

	<p>Respondents to our vulnerability interviews were surprised that utilities and suppliers were not already working together to raise awareness of the PSR and increase sign-ups.</p> <p>This project aims to improve awareness of the PSR and in turn increase PSR sign ups. The project will also ensure data is shared with suppliers and other utilities as we work with Regulators towards our aim of a single PSR register for utilities in the UK reaching the most vulnerable and ensuring they are aware of the PSR and any associated free support services that comes with being registered with their energy companies.</p>
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p>WWU have completed a 12-month project with Crunch focussing on PSR referrals via a Facebook Campaign. The project was a continuation of work carried out in GD1 and set up to support our increased commitments for GD2 in terms of raising awareness of the PSR and referring people to their registered energy suppliers PSRs.</p> <p>After the success of WWUs Facebook Campaign and the successful number of PSR sign ups, we recognised that this could become a collaborative campaign across the GDNs which Crunch are able to support.</p> <p>Building on WWUs Facebook Campaign, this project will become a Digital PSR Campaign which will incorporate other digital platforms such as Instagram and You Tube as well as Facebook and other possible platforms such as Tik Tok to ensure we are reaching and targeting various demographics and vulnerable groups who are eligible to be signed up to the PSR.</p> <p>The campaign will advertise the benefits of the PSR and encourage those eligible to sign up. The campaign utilises a targeted approach based on audiences. It considers demographics, specific searches, and audience engagement, particularly focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents with young children • 'At Risk' users such as over 60s • Those that are Chronically Sick* <p>*Categories can be reviewed and changed in line with GDNs targeted preferences in line with PSR needs codes.</p> <p>The project outcomes and delivery will be reviewed quarterly with the approach and adapted as required. Reports will be provided as an overall campaign but will also be split down to individual GDN areas so granular data will be available to each contributing GDN as well as collaborative data.</p> <p>The GDNs will use consistent messaging to promote the PSR but will have slightly different approaches in terms of capturing customer details and sending them on to the relevant registered energy companies.</p> <p>WWU will continue their approach of capturing core data from the campaigns, which will be fed into an internal team and then sent over to the registered gas and electricity suppliers, DNOs and Water Utilities.</p> <p>SGN will signpost to the PSR UK landing page where customers will be able to sign up directly with the DNO's and on to their energy supplier via the data share agreements in place. SGN will receive MI of the successful PSR signups quarterly.</p> <p>These will be compared at a mid-point review and fed into lessons learnt for the remainder of the project and possible extension.</p>

	<p>Updated January 2025:</p> <p>Due to an extended mobilisation period and challenges with supplier access to GDN social media accounts, the launch in project delivery has been delayed. We have therefore extended the delivery period only, from November 2024 until May 2025.</p> <p>This extended delivery period will not affect the forecast reach or cost of the project; however, it will enable us to avoid any social media fatigue and align the campaign with other GDN digital/ social activity.</p>
<p>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</p>	<p>This project operates across the GDN networks and aligns to our collective GDN strategic ambition to support vulnerable customers most in need.</p> <p>It will help raise awareness of the PSR, encourage consumers to sign up and promote access to the free support services and benefits for each energy company in the event of a gas outage or electricity outage for example via collaborative working.</p> <p>As a group of GDNs, we do not own, maintain, or operate our own PSR. We do, however recognise the importance of the PSR and its benefits to those who would be eligible to register and have therefore put in place processes and systems to capture this information and share them with the registered gas and electricity suppliers, DNO's and water companies. This ensures customers in vulnerable situations and those who are most in need receive the necessary support.</p> <p>Our license and base allowances do not cover the promotion of the PSR, so in order for us to go above and beyond our business-as-usual activities and provide this additional support, the project will be funded through the VCMA.</p> <p>Our license and base allowances do not cover the promotion of the PSR, so in order for us to go above and beyond our business-as-usual activities and provide this additional support, this activity is being funded through the VCMA.</p> <p>The project will work collaboratively with expert agencies to maximise positive impacts and deliver defined outcomes for vulnerable individuals.</p> <p>In order to qualify as a VCMA Project, a project must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA project b) either: i. provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or ii. Provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO; c) have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these; d) go above and beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and e) not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local funding <p>This project is being funded through VCMA as per the above guidelines</p>
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</p>	<p>Through our business planning for RIIO GD2, priority customer research and stakeholders told us that raising awareness of the PSR was a priority for WWU</p>

alongside tackling fuel poverty and raising awareness of and the dangers of CO amongst hard-to-reach groups and those who are most in need.

WWU’s Consumer Vulnerability Engagement Programme:

During the shaping of WWU’s business plan we committed to raising awareness of the PSR and 12,000 PSR referrals each year over the 5-year period. Through our Consumer Vulnerability Engagement Programme, the lack of knowledge around the PSR was highlighted alongside the various types of vulnerability that exist. Based on 10 engagement events in total, including 3,362 stakeholders, there was strong support for sharing data and information between utilities and third parties to avoid multiple sign-ups to different registers.

WWUs Customer Engagement Group (CEG):

Our Customer Engagement Group is very engaged on this topic and keen to challenge and support us in ensuring our strategy to target underrepresented groups and communities is embedded and monitored.

Crunch and WWU’s Facebook PSR Campaign

Over the last 12 months, the partnership between Crunch and WWU has used a targeted approach to audiences who use Facebook to raise awareness of the PSR and encourage eligible users to sign up.

During this period, 9397 PSR referrals have been sent through to their registered gas and electricity suppliers, DNO’s and water utilities providing a one-stop shop for customers.

SGN Customer Engagement Group and Vulnerable Steering Group Engagement

During the shaping of the SGN business plan we committed to supporting over 250,000 vulnerable customers to use gas safely, affordably, and efficiently. To ensure that we adapt to market conditions we continue to engage our SGN Vulnerable Steering Group (VSG), have guided us to look for communities most vulnerable where the impact is greatest, to work with existing organisations that already support those in crisis and where we are able to broaden the reach or increase the capacity of those established organisations. This partnership is supported by the VSG as it supports the most vulnerable in the community with support to join the PSR and help with maintaining a safe and warm home. In addition, the VSG are keen on building sustainable partnerships that can maintain the required support in the long term.

GDN Vulnerability Working Group

This initiative is aligned to our ambition and collaborative strategy to support people most in need to access support services designed for customers in vulnerable circumstances and help those most at risk of harm by living in a cold home.

GD2 VCMA Steering Group

	<p>This initiative was supported by all members of the strategic steering group as a key partnership that looks to deliver our ambitions to support.</p>
<p>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</p>	<p>Outcomes: The below outcomes have been generated based on the success of WWU’s initial campaign and how it was implemented. There were key learning points from the initial campaign which will be reflected in the collaborative campaign and closely monitored and amended throughout to ensure the successful delivery of the below proposed outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We saw great engagement using lead generation ads contain videos, which avoided any questions directly asking about specific age on the lead gen form • Each audience group we are specifically targeting using their own campaign, so we can include specific demographics and interest targeting such as money saving, money saving comparison sites • We are then retargeting any users who have not fully completed the form or engaged with the ad • Crunch will monitor and continuously build look-a-like audiences based on the data to find similar users likely to take action. <p>WWU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated Impressions - 2,361,111 • Estimated Reach - 295,139 • Estimated Sign Ups - 9,807 <p>SGN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated Impressions - 5,391,790 • Estimated Reach - 673,974 • Estimated Sign Ups - 22,396 <p>Total:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated Impressions - 7,752,901 • Estimated Reach - 969,113 • Estimated Sign Ups - 32,203 <p>Associated Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the PSR and encourage consumers to sign up • Promote collaborative messaging for the PSR and free support services • Streamline process for consumers accessing PSR and adding details <p>As a group of GDN’s, we will fund this project at a cost of £98,507.46 for one year. We have committed to working together to raise awareness of the PSR and working towards the aim of one PSR with minimum effort from the customer.</p> <p>Being registered on the PSR will also help households receive additional support services from their energy providers, such as assistance in paying their bills, which in turn will reduce the likelihood of mental distress. In addition, households will also realise health benefits associated with residing in warmer and more comfortable homes.</p> <p>The individuals who sign up to the PSR will also be prioritised during a utility interruption by network companies and get communications in formats of their choice ensuring they are not disadvantaged and receive an inclusive service from companies</p>

Project Partners and Third Parties Involved	Wales & West Utilities – Lead GDN SGN – Supporting GDN Crunch Digital Media											
Potential for New Learning	<p>Sharing data with all DNO's, Gas Suppliers and Water companies gives us scope to share best practice on the practical applications of the data.</p> <p>We have already shared our experience of using targeted social media adverts with other Stakeholders including the other GDNs and have identified the opportunity and need for collaboration in this area.</p> <p>We have some learning that we could benefit from including other companies who already use demographic data to target programmes.</p> <p>In addition to the above and for the purposes of the project, the GDNs will be using slightly different approaches which will be reviewed at the stage gate point (6 months) and compared to see which referral route has been the most successful and the lessons learnt at that point will be fed into improving the project and feed into a potential extension throughout the remainder of GD2 and possibly beyond.</p>											
Scale of VCMA Project and SROI calculations, including NPV	<p>This project will provide at least 73,000 customer referrals to the PSR across Wales, England, and Scotland.</p> <p>Using our SROI model for this project, we estimate that based on 73,000 referrals being made, there will be a net benefit of £79.04 per £1 spent.</p> <p>Updated January 2025:</p> <p>This project will provide at least 32,000 customer sign ups to the PSR across Wales, England and Scotland.</p> <p>We have taken the forecasted numbers of PSR sign ups expected throughout the delivery period and calculated the following SROI over the duration of the project:</p> <p>Total Gross Present Value = £1,750,768.97 Net Present Value = £1,655,251.21 Positive SROI per £1 spent = £17.33</p> <p>Please note that the updated SROI calculation was completed using the GDN-shared SROI rulebook released in September 2024, which produces stricter and more accurate results compared to previous models.</p>											
VCMA Project Start and End Date	<p>The project will run from November 2023 for 12 months.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 1608 1455 2072"> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1608 703 1641">September 23</td> <td data-bbox="711 1608 1455 1641">Final decisions from GDNs</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1641 703 1933">Sept/Oct 23</td> <td data-bbox="711 1641 1455 1933">Crunch and Comms teams' discussion to set up assets and creatives etc for projects. Once media plans are approved Crunch will require access to GDNs platforms and GA/GA4 and GTM to allow them to set up each campaign and install tracking to feed into monthly reports and provide the metrics and conversions per platform. GDNs will also need to complete an asset matrix to set up ads using the content provided.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 1933 703 2000">Sept/Oct 23</td> <td data-bbox="711 1933 1455 2000">Set up of contracts, finance, and procurement documentation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 2000 703 2033">November 23</td> <td data-bbox="711 2000 1455 2033">Project Launch</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="427 2033 703 2072">April 24</td> <td data-bbox="711 2033 1455 2072">Mid-Point Review</td> </tr> </table>		September 23	Final decisions from GDNs	Sept/Oct 23	Crunch and Comms teams' discussion to set up assets and creatives etc for projects. Once media plans are approved Crunch will require access to GDNs platforms and GA/GA4 and GTM to allow them to set up each campaign and install tracking to feed into monthly reports and provide the metrics and conversions per platform. GDNs will also need to complete an asset matrix to set up ads using the content provided.	Sept/Oct 23	Set up of contracts, finance, and procurement documentation	November 23	Project Launch	April 24	Mid-Point Review
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Monthly	High Level project reports/findings						
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	<p>Updated January 2025:</p> <p>End date extended to 31 May 2025 due to delayed launch. Campaign activity will now be live between November 2024 and May 2025, with no impact to the forecast reach.</p>						
Geographical Area	Covers area of Wales, England, and Scotland in line with WWU's and SGN's geographical coverage for consumers						
Internal governance and project management evidence	<p>Updated January 2025: (New section)</p> <p>This project proposal has been reviewed through various industry working groups including:</p> <p>GDN Vulnerability Working Group (monthly) VCMA Steering Group</p> <p>In addition to the above, each GDN has their own internal governance structure which involves reviewing project proposals and budget costs with various teams and management levels throughout their organisation including senior managers and at an executive level.</p> <p>This project is also supported by stakeholders (as outlined above).</p> <p>The project will be managed and led by WWU and will consist of:</p> <p>Monthly project review meetings Stage gate review after 1 year of delivery Ongoing reviews throughout the duration of the project regarding delivery of outcomes, including proactive reallocation to media budget depending on performance - this will feed into lessons learnt and shared best practice to ensure the project is successful in delivering value for money and maximising outcomes for customers and communities</p>						

Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - PEA Control Table

<i>Description of GDN(s) review of proposal and project sign off, with details on how the project will be managed</i>														
<p>Stage 1: GDN Collaboration Group PEA Review Meeting date review completed: Review completed by:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>GDN:</th> <th>Name(s):</th> <th>Job Title</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cadent</td> <td>Phil Burrows</td> <td>Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SGN</td> <td>Linda Spence</td> <td>Vulnerability Manager – Scotland</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>Sophie Shorney</td> <td>VCMA Manager</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			GDN:	Name(s):	Job Title	Cadent	Phil Burrows	Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery	SGN	Linda Spence	Vulnerability Manager – Scotland	WWU	Sophie Shorney	VCMA Manager
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Stage 2: GD2CVG Panel Review


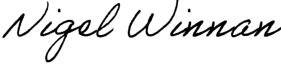
Meeting date sign off agreed:

Review completed by:

GDN:	Name(s)	Job Title
Cadent	Phil Burrows	Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery
SGN	Maureen McIntosh	Director of Customer Services
WWU	Nigel Winnan	Customer and Social Obligations Strategy Manager

Updated January 2025:

Step 3: Participating GDN individual signatory sign-off

GDN	Name(s)	Job Title	Signature(s)	Date
SGN:	Maureen McIntosh	Director of Customer Services		30/01/25
WWU:	Nigel Winnan	Customer and Social Obligations Manager		29/1/25

Project management:

This project will be managed by Wales & West Utilities- Sophie Stone VCMA Project Co-Ordinator

Step 4: Upload PEA Document to the Website & Notification Email Sent to Ofgem (vcma@ofgem.gov.uk)

Date that PEA Document Uploaded to the Website:

Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: