

Vulnerable customer policy

We manage the network that distributes natural and green gas to 5.9 million homes and businesses in the south of England and across Scotland. We're dedicated to keeping our customers safe and warm, all day, every day.

Our commitment to supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances

We have a long heritage of care and concern for our customers, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances.

We sought the specialist expertise of stakeholders and partners to advise us on a full range of support for our customers who need extra help. We work directly with expert partners and we also set up specialist stakeholder panels, asking for advice and co-creating solutions to the challenges faced by these customers.

As part of our ambition to deliver excellence in customer service, we developed an additional strategy and four-stage plan to focus specifically on our most vulnerable customers. Our commitment is to keep **all** our customers safe and warm by ensuring services are readily accessible and by prioritising and responding to specific customer needs.

Defining vulnerability

We view each situation and circumstance in isolation and empower our colleagues to take the most appropriate course of action for the individual. There are a number of factors that could mean a customer requires extra help either temporarily or long term. We can provide additional support for people who:

- Are over 65
- Have children under five or are pregnant
- Have long-term physical or mental health issues
- Have a disability
- Have additional language or communication needs
- Are living in fuel poverty

Even if a customer's specific circumstances aren't included in the above list, we will still always do our best to look after them and provide appropriate support.

Supporting those who need it most

Whether we're carrying out emergency work to repair a gas leak or planned work to upgrade our network, our engineers will prioritise the needs of customers in vulnerable circumstances. Our range of day-to-day services available for people who need priority support, include:

- Referring customers for their supplier's **Priority Service Register**
- Fitting a free safety device, known as our **locking cooker valve**, in the homes of people with dementia or autism
- Providing **carbon monoxide awareness** advice
- Offering **free or disconnected connections to our gas network** for households struggling to afford keeping their home warm, through our Help to Heat scheme
- Alternative **electric cooking and heating appliances** (hotplates and fan heaters) if a customer is without their gas supply
- Additional **support during supply incidents**, often working in partnership with resilience partners
- Ensuring we maintain appropriate **access to customers' homes** during our planned and emergency work
- A dedicated **Customer Careline** telephone number for help and advice
- Seasonal leaflet and social media campaign around **winter readiness information**