

Safe and Warm Fife

In partnership with

Greener Kirkcaldy

Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance

11/04/2024

SGN



SGN

Your gas. Our network.

Contents

1 Description.....	3
2 Problem statement	3
3 Scope and objectives	5
4 Why the project is being funded through the VCMA	6
5 Evidence of stakeholder/customer support	6
5.1 Experienced delivery partners with skills and access to target group	6
5.2 SGN Vulnerability Steering Group	7
5.3 Update RIIO-2 Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document	7
6 Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria.....	8
6.1 Outcomes	8
6.2 Associated actions	8
6.3 Success Criteria.....	10
7 Project partners and third parties involved	11
8 Potential for new learning	12
9 Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations, including NPV	13
10 VCMA Project start and end date	13
11 Geographic area	13
12 Internal governance and project management evidence	13

1 Description

Project title	Safe and Warm Fife
Funding GDN(s)	SGN
New/Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New
Date of PEA submission:	April 2024
Project contact name:	Linda Spence
Project contact number/email:	Linda.spence@sgn.co.uk
Total cost (£k)	£287,919
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£287,919

2 Problem statement

Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is a real and persistent problem in Fife. 26 neighbourhoods in Fife have high levels of income deprivation, falling within the bottom 10% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020). Fife currently has the third-highest local authority share of deprivation and areas in mid-Fife have the highest levels of inequality and unemployment. Average household incomes in these areas are significantly below the Scottish average¹.

The current cost of living crisis has exacerbated the impact on households further. Research by the National Energy Agency and Energy Action Scotland found that households in the fuel poverty are being disproportionately impacted by the crisis. Fuel poor households often live on the lowest incomes and in the most inefficient homes. These conditions magnify the 'average' impact of price rises for people with the least space in their budgets to cope. In addition to the acute financial impacts, households are seeing huge negative consequences for their health and wellbeing². The Child Poverty Action Group estimates that, as of January 2023, 62% of Scottish households are now in fuel poverty³.

Consultation on GDN's VCMA Governance Document (2023) identified there was a need to add essential gas servicing to the support offered to vulnerable households. The results found that leaving customers without a working essential gas appliance (and waiting for another organisation or source of funding to repair or replace it) would be a poor outcome for those in vulnerable circumstances.

CO safety

Carbon Monoxide (CO) can pose a serious threat to health. 4,000 people in the UK are treated in hospital annually as a result of CO poisoning and around 40 deaths are caused by CO poisoning each year. Many people in the UK who use carbon fuelled appliances are not aware of the dangers of CO and do not have a working audible CO alarm.

There is a direct correlation between fuel poverty and carbon monoxide poisoning. Lower income householders are often reliant on older boilers, older heaters, or gas cookers to heat their homes. National Energy Action and Gas Safety Trust research found 35% of low income and vulnerable households surveyed exceeded the 10ppm threshold for carbon monoxide levels. Older people, pregnant women, and young children have also been found to be particularly vulnerable to CO poisoning, spending more time at home and

¹ Fife Housing Partnership, 2022, *Local Housing Strategy Interim 2020-2022*.

² National Energy Agency, 2022, *Fuel Poverty Monitor Report 2021-2022*

³ <https://cpag.org.uk/news-blogs/news-listings/fuel-poverty-updated-estimates-uk>

with a need to stay warm, resulting using the heating more regularly⁴. People living in deprived areas are also less likely to own an audible CO alarm than homes in non-deprived areas, further increasing the risk of CO poisoning⁵.

Collaborative and preventative approach

People in Fife are often in crisis by the time they are referred to Greener Kirkcaldy's energy advice service. To mitigate the most preventable problems, early intervention is required. However, some of the people most in need are the hardest to reach and least able to protect their interests in the energy market. Older people, and those with disabilities, are often unaware of how to access information and advice. In Fife, 31.6% of adults have a limiting long-term condition. 6,661 people are living with dementia, and this figure is expected to rise⁶. In 2023-24, more than half of the people supported through Greener Kirkcaldy's energy advice service were living with a long-term health condition or disability.

Our partnership with SGN, Safe and Warm Fife has seen an unprecedented demand for complex in-depth energy advice. Experience gained through this project has shown that participants increasingly need face-to-face home energy advice visits and typically have multiple issues that require ongoing casework and multiple interventions. The cost-of-living crisis has increased demand from people experiencing fuel poverty and falling into long-term debt. In 2023-24, 42% of the people supported through Greener Kirkcaldy's energy advice service were in extreme fuel poverty.

With the cost-of-living crisis, affordability to repair or replace and service gas appliances is becoming difficult for many low-income households across Fife. In 2022-23, Greener Kirkcaldy partnered with the Community Heating Project CIC to support low-income households at risk to repair/replace gas safe appliances. The project also helps households gain wider support that might not otherwise have been possible. Participants are homeowners in fuel poverty who do not qualify for statutory schemes and would usually slip through the gaps. Most project participants so far had been without a working heating system for a considerable time but had not known where to access support. However, this project had been unable to fund the proactive servicing for households due to funding constraints. Working in partnership with SGN, Greener Kirkcaldy was able to expand the support offered through the Community Heating Project Fife and offer gas appliance servicing to low-income households from February 2024. There is a need in Fife for this service to continue.

Many Fife organisations have increased their support to help households through the cost-of-living crisis. However, they do not have the skills nor capacity to provide in-depth energy support. Requests from these organisations for talks and drop-in energy advice surgeries from Greener Kirkcaldy's energy advice service have increased significantly in the last year. In addition, other local support agencies often do not have the knowledge to identify fuel poverty. Greener Kirkcaldy provides training to frontline workers in other organisations to 'spot and refer' people in fuel poverty. In 2021, it trained 250 frontline workers - in 2023 this had risen to over 1,600. There continues to be a demand for both fuel poverty awareness and energy safeguarding training, but the scope of support is limited by capacity.

Working in partnership with SGN and other agencies to provide holistic energy advice is the key to alleviating both the immediate effects and root causes of fuel poverty and to creating safe and warm homes. A collaborative approach - working in areas of high fuel poverty and with local trusted organisations who support people on low incomes or most vulnerable to fuel poverty - provides targeted support where it is most needed. This initiative will build on the success of the current VCMA project, extending support to the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach households, in particular those with long-term health conditions or disabilities, and will address the increase in demand for support from Fife households that are struggling to heat their homes affordably.

⁴ SafeLink's, 2020, *Carbon monoxide poisoning: Who is most at risk?*

⁵ Kokkarinen et al, 2014, *Investigation of audible carbon monoxide alarm ownership.*

⁶ *ibid*

3 Scope and objectives

The 2024-26 extension will build on the success and learning of the 2022-24 Safe and Warm Fife project and increase the reach of the previous project. It will engage with up to **51,840 people** in the Fife community over the twenty-three-month period, raising awareness of energy issues and providing support to improve the wellbeing, safety, and financial outcomes for households in vulnerable circumstances. It will provide a referral pathway to provide these households with access to support services under this project.

The project will provide in-depth support to vulnerable households at risk of, or living with, fuel poverty, by providing advice on energy efficiency and financial support. They will also refer to other sources of well-being support, from income maximisation to befriending services and registration to the priority services register. Where appropriate, people will be referred on to statutory and local schemes to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, including Home Energy Scotland's Warmer Homes Scotland programme and Greener Kirkcaldy's 'handy' service.

The project will raise awareness of the risks of CO in the home and fuel-poor households who do not have a CO monitor will receive one for free. Vulnerable households that require additional support will be referred to SGN for CO monitors and locking cooker valves and for fire safety visits through their partner support.

Gas servicing will be offered to low-income owner-occupiers who cannot afford the cost of servicing. Without this service, eligible households would not have access to working or effective heating through the winter months with consequences for their health and wellbeing.

Low-income households who are at risk of self-disconnection and under-heating will be supported through the provision of heated blankets and cosy packs, as well as referrals for fuel vouchers to stay connected. Slow cookers will be provided to households in food or fuel poverty to support them in reducing energy costs associated with cooking.

The project will support the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach households and will meet the increase in demand for support from Fife households struggling to heat their homes affordably. It will focus on households most vulnerable to the impacts of fuel poverty, especially older people, people on low incomes, and people with disabilities or long-term health issues. The project will provide a holistic package of assistance to vulnerable households that empowers participants to manage their energy usage and gives them the confidence and knowledge to seek further support if needed.

The project will achieve sustainable, measurable outcomes for the people it works with, supporting them to achieve a warm and safe home and making them more resilient to future risks of fuel poverty.

The project will:

- Reach Fife households through various channels, community events and direct marketing, social media, newsletter, and other partner communication channels
- Deliver free and impartial energy advice and support to fuel poor households in Fife through in-depth one-to-one support and community-based workshops in targeted areas
- Provide gas servicing to enable vulnerable households to stay warm safely
- Provide cosy packs and heated blankets to help fuel poor households who are struggling to heat their homes
- Identify and tackle under-heating and self-disconnection, reducing the risks of cold-related ill-health
- Raise awareness of CO risks and identify ways to make participant homes safer to live in
- Ensure vulnerable participants are on the Priority Services Register for energy and water and can access broader relevant support services
- Tackle fuel poverty holistically, increasing participant ability to manage their energy use and costs going forward
- Provide energy efficiency and safeguarding workshops
- Provide cookery skills workshops and increase participant ability to cook and eat healthily within a budget

- Increase partnership working and support in fuel-poor communities through pop-up energy advice surgeries
- Increase frontline workers' awareness of energy safeguarding and fuel poverty and their confidence to 'spot and refer'
- Increase the level of knowledge of our services amongst other local support agencies

4 Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

This partnership service goes above and beyond our core responsibilities as a Gas Distribution Network and is eligible under the VCMA funding criteria as it will provide energy crisis support, access to energy efficiency and CO advice, empowering vulnerable households to use energy safely, efficiently, and affordably.

This partnership aligns to the shared GDNs commitment to deliver support services customers aligned to our shared four strategic pillars:

1. Services Beyond the Meter
2. Supporting Priority Customer Groups
3. Fuel Poverty & Energy Affordability
4. Carbon Monoxide Awareness

This project aligns to strategic pillars 1, 3 and 4.

5 Evidence of stakeholder/customer support

5.1 Experienced delivery partners with skills and access to target group

Greener Kirkcaldy has been providing in depth energy advice to fuel poor Fife households since 2010 and works closely with Home Energy Scotland, Fife Council's Housing Services and around 200 other partners. To date, they have provided in-depth energy advice to over 16,000 households, helping them save energy and money, maximise their income, tackle fuel debt and access other support services.

Experience gained during the 2022-24 Safe and Warm Fife project has shown:

- Many people locally, especially older people, people with disabilities and health conditions and low-income households, under-heat their homes and are at risk of cold-related ill-health
- It only takes a small, unexpected expense to trigger a crisis for households in 'in-work' poverty or people with insecure work
- People in under-heated homes are more at risk of CO as they are more likely to reduce ventilation to retain heat and less likely to be aware of the causes and dangers of a poorly ventilated home
- There has been an increase in households with multiple vulnerabilities (as identified through the PSR) and specific support needed for each group
- The Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have increased the severity and complexity of the effects of fuel poverty. Participants increasingly require debt relief support to help them manage and improve their circumstances
- Online marketing and targeted campaigns are useful channels for raising awareness of energy efficiency, safeguarding and budgeting
- Other local support agencies often do not have the knowledge to identify fuel poverty or the skills to provide in-depth energy support. The demand for training from frontline workers exceeded expectations
- The 'Safeguarding your clients from CO safety risks during the cost-of-living crisis' annual training and networking event created by VCMA partners for frontline workers was very successful
- The most vulnerable people are often the least able or likely to come forward for help. Working in partnership with other local support agencies is crucial to reducing barriers to seeking advice

- Energy workshops and pop-up energy advice clinics delivered as part of the current project have been very popular with other organisations and received positive feedback from both participants and frontline workers

The approach, including training referral partners, means that the service reaches households that are most vulnerable to the impacts of fuel poverty. It ensures sustainable outcomes for the people they work with and builds capacity within the local community. In-depth advice is provided in the participant's home and by telephone, which increases the take up of advice and ensures they meet the needs of the individual households. It also helps identify under-heating, safety concerns and the risks of disconnection. The service tackles fuel poverty holistically, addressing energy efficiency, behaviour change, income maximisation, fuel debt, tariffs and switching.

For the last two years, Greener Kirkcaldy has been the lead partner of a Fife-wide heating project that provides support to low-income owner-occupiers who cannot afford essential boiler repairs or replacements, or other heating repairs. It is part of a strategic Fife-wide approach to tackling fuel poverty and supporting low-income and vulnerable households struggling with home energy costs.

Greener Kirkcaldy's 2024 participant survey evidences the impact of their support. 70% had enhanced heating needs, needing their heating on at a higher temperature or for longer periods due to ill health, disability, old age, or families with children under the age of five. As a result of receiving support, 76% feel warmer or more comfortable at home and 90% feel more confident managing their home energy use after receiving advice. 28% felt that the service had helped improve their physical health and 47% had better mental health as a result. Building on learning from the current project, as part of the Safe and Warm Fife 2024-26 extension Greener Kirkcaldy will help SGN to better understand its customer groups, the impact of the service on these groups and the approaches that best support each group.

5.2 SGN Vulnerability Steering Group

During the shaping of the SGN business plan, we committed to support at least 250,000 vulnerable households to use gas safely, affordably, and efficiently over GD2. During 2023, following ongoing engagement with Ofgem, SGN's Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Group and Vulnerable Steering Group we increased this commitment to support 500,000 vulnerable households, those most at risk of living in a cold and unhealthy home. SGN have used data and insights to develop our programme, this has underpinned how this commitment to support those most in need from a strategic ambition into an extensive partnership-based delivery programme.

As we have progressed our portfolio of projects throughout GD2 our strategic Vulnerable Steering Group (VSG) has provided ongoing guidance to SGN, reiterating the importance of impactful partnerships that co-ordinate activities with others to support those most in need.

5.3 Update RIIO-2 Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document

In 2023, Ofgem proposed changes to the VCMA Governance Document which would allow more vulnerable consumers to benefit from essential gas appliance servicing. The proposed changes will enable GDN's to fund and/or deliver further essential gas appliance servicing in the homes of customers in vulnerable situations. The proposed changes are restricted to households where it is the obligation of the occupier (and not a landlord) to service the essential gas appliances, and the customer is unable to afford the costs of regular essential gas appliance servicing through their own financial means. The policy enables a GDN or its Project Partners to identify an essential gas appliance due for servicing in the home of a vulnerable consumer with a health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes.

6 Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria

6.1 Outcomes

The planned and measurable outcomes for the partnership are:

- People supported through the one-to-one sessions will be empowered to manage their energy usage and costs, reducing the risk of further fuel poverty
- People supported through free essential gas servicing will have effective heating and reduced risk of cold-related ill health
- People supported will be less at risk of utility disconnection helping them manage affordable warmth within their home
- People will feel safer in their homes as they will have access to CO awareness and carbon monoxide detectors, helping them become more aware of the risks of Carbon Monoxide and how to mitigate these
- People living in fuel poor households will have greater access to emergency support through fuel vouchers, food provision and workshops
- People supported will have access to measurable immediate and ongoing financial savings improving their household income, health, and wellbeing
- People within the community will have an increased awareness of the Priority Service Register with an expected increase in registrations
- There will be an increased knowledge of support services, including non-energy support, amongst Fife residents and other local support agencies
- Fuel poor households will be helped to access support services specific to their needs through refreshed community-specific energy safeguarding materials
- Project evaluation that evidences the impact of the service provided through the project

6.2 Associated actions

6.2.1 Energy Advice and support

A team of energy advisors, who are all qualified in City & Guilds Energy Awareness, will deliver home energy advice. This will be via either a telephone advice appointment or face-to-face home visit for those needing more in-depth advice or support.

When delivering energy advice, the advisors make an initial assessment, asking a series of questions about the home and the household's needs, concerns, and motivations. They then give tailored advice, which includes:

- Helping participants to improve their understanding of energy bills, meters and tariffs, heating and hot water systems and heating controls
- Supporting participants to achieve a suitable heating regime
- Options for physical improvements to the home, e.g. insulation, draught-proofing, new heating systems under FPNES or controls and home renewable technologies
- Assisting with accessing statutory schemes and other relevant grant schemes
- Ensuring participants' homes are safe and healthy spaces through ventilation, condensation, and damp advice, along with CO safety
- Encouraging the best use of heating, lighting, and appliances
- Giving simple, low-cost tips to save energy
- Providing impartial energy switching advice
- Referring vulnerable participants to the Priority Service Register
- Giving advice on fuel debt, energy budgeting and entitlements, such as the Warm Home Discount
- Alleviating immediate energy crisis and disconnection through fuel top-ups
- Energy monitor loans to help households understand their electricity usage and smart meter advice

- Providing a range of advice materials and leaflets relevant to each participant's home and circumstances
- Thermal imaging surveys to verify building performance to specifications - to determine whether the building has insulation, locate air leaks, verify structure, design, and locate moisture intrusion

In addition to this, energy advisors will:

- Act as an advocate if participants need support to deal with energy suppliers or landlords
- Refer participants to supported appliance repair or replacement services, if needed
- Refer participants to other support services, e.g. Citizens Advice Scotland for benefit checks to maximise income or for complex debt advice, to carer or befriending services, and to SGNs additional services

6.2.2 Additional Support

CO monitors will be gifted to households that do not have a monitor, identified through the energy advice project. Electric blankets and cosy packs will be provided to people with restricted mobility as a consequence of a long-term health condition or disability as emergency warmth measures. These measures will help to 'heat the person' who needs a higher temperature to achieve thermal comfort. Slow cookers will also be provided to help people on low incomes to reduce energy costs and maintain a healthy balanced diet.

The project will provide essential gas servicing to low-income owner-occupiers who cannot afford boiler servicing. Without this service, eligible households would not have access to working or effective heating through the winter months with consequences for their health and wellbeing.

Referrals for gas servicing will be made when an advisor identifies an essential gas appliance that has not been serviced in the last 12 months in owner-occupied homes of vulnerable participants, suffering from permanent or temporary health conditions, and where sufficient funding is not available from other sources. Energy advisors will ensure that households meet the income thresholds and qualifying benefits detailed in the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery Document.

The energy advisors will also make referrals for additional support provided by the project partners including:

- SGN to provide locking cooker valves and CO alarms to vulnerable households
- Greener Kirkcaldy's 'handy' service, a means-tested service that installs simple energy efficiency measures and provides saving items to improve thermal comfort and safety and reduce energy usage
- Home Energy Scotland's Warmer Homes Scotland programme and water-saving measures

6.2.3 Events and workshops

- As part of the previous Safe and Warm Fife project, energy advisors delivered interactive energy advice workshops to small groups in the most at-risk communities. The workshops were designed to increase energy literacy and resilience and reduce fuel poverty amongst the most vulnerable households. Greener Kirkcaldy worked with local support agencies to reach their participants, tailoring workshops to suit the needs of each group. The workshops were very popular and well-received. The extension will build on the success of these workshops, partnering with local organisations working with people who are most at risk.
- Based on feedback from the previous project, the extension project will also offer energy awareness cooking workshops. People in fuel poverty are often also experiencing food insecurity and lack the skills or confidence to cook on a budget. The workshops will be delivered in Greener Kirkcaldy's community training kitchen. People will learn about energy efficiency and safeguarding in the kitchen, energy efficiency appliances such as slow cookers and how to cook and maintain a healthy balanced

diet on a budget. Participants will also receive advice on where to access further food provision, such as community meals, community fridges, pantry projects and food banks.

- In 2022, the VCMA project was extended to pilot winter energy advice drop-in clinics across South Fife. The clinics were delivered in warm spaces and alongside community food projects. Greener Kirkcaldy and SGN also supported people in fuel poverty in the H100 catchment area of Levenmouth with energy advice at community events and in warm spaces. The 2024-26 extension will continue to provide energy advice clinics, building on learnings from the current project and work in communities where support is most needed.

6.2.4 Community Engagement Approach

The project will focus support in areas where it most needed, in particular in the neighbourhoods that fall within the bottom 10% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, especially post-industrial towns in Central Fife and Levenmouth and former mining villages. It will actively raise awareness of the support available through local marketing and community engagement campaigns in target neighbourhoods to reach the project priority groups. The project will also work with an established network of over 200 local support agencies to cascade training to frontline workers, encouraging them to refer vulnerable people they support into the project. This will increase the scale, scope, and resilience of the support network in Fife.

A varied and targeted marketing strategy will be carried out to engage participants. There will be a leaflet-dropping exercise to households in target areas. The project will also be promoted through local shops and community buildings, as well as through social media to reach local groups and organisations. Energy advisors will also host in-person and online events with various groups and organisations in the local area, helping to spread the word through close partnership working and taking referrals from partners, including broader support organisations and local landlords.

By taking a holistic approach to tackling the causes of fuel poverty, other crucial services can be delivered as a package of support at the same time and through a central trusted agency. For example, alongside the delivery of energy advice, the project will provide wider support, including referrals to Citizens Advice & Rights Fife for income maximisation and benefit checks and supporting households experiencing food poverty through providing local access to food. Energy advisors and partnerships in Fife will all be trained on gas safety.

The project will also distribute an updated 'safe and warm' energy saving guide to households to increase the likelihood that advice is acted upon, and habits are maintained.

6.3 Success Criteria

A minimum of 1,840 households will be supported through this initiative with 960 people supported through one-to-one in-depth support, 880 people will be supported through workshops energy and cooking and up to 50,000 households will be supported through various partnership networks and marketing channels.

- 50,000 people accessing energy efficiency advice and gaining CO and Priority Service Register awareness through marketing and campaigns
- 1,840 heating solution conversations
- 1,840 'safe and warm' energy saving guides for all participating households
- 1,840 CO safety conversations
- 1,840 Priority Service Register conversations
- 960 Priority Service Register registrations/water referrals
- 960 households receive energy tariff support and fuel debt advocacy
- 960 people receiving in-depth energy efficiency advice
- 600 Warm Home Discount applications
- 500 households receive energy efficiency improvements
- 320 income maximisation and benefit entitlement reviews
- 60 energy advice and safeguarding events to vulnerable/fuel poor communities

- 880 with basic energy efficiency advice from workshops
- 20 energy safe and aware cooking workshops to help support those in food poverty
- 380 frontline workers trained on energy safeguarding (PSR/CO) and fuel poverty awareness
- 180 working CO alarms where required
- 100 gas boilers serviced
- 150 cosy packs, 150 heated blankets and 60 slow cookers provided
- 85% people reporting increased energy and financial literacy
- 40% people reporting increased health or wellbeing
- Annual learning exchange hosted by Greener Kirkcaldy for other national VCMA project partners

To monitor the impact we will:

- Monitor outcomes against services provided, ensuring that those trained are confident in their ability to identify and support eligible customers to relevant help
- Produce data and insight from the gas servicing initiative, evaluating its impact and use these to make recommendations
- Monitor outcomes of energy workshops and the identification of households most in need, gathering insight around energy usage, food poverty and CO safety
- Generate learning reports from insights generated from the engagement of the 50,000 households, through various community engagement and local partnerships
- Work closely with our partners to ensure that we all understand the issues faced to continue to develop our services in the community based on need

7 Project partners and third parties involved

Greener Kirkcaldy

Greener Kirkcaldy, the lead delivery partner, is a community-led charity and development trust working locally to combat the climate emergency, tackle fuel poverty and food insecurity, delivering a range of projects, activities, and training skills to meet the needs and goals of local people.

It has an established energy advice service, experienced in by providing holistic, bespoke, and in-depth energy advice to tackle fuel poverty and empowering vulnerable people in Fife to gain the confidence and skills to manage their energy. Staff have the skills and experience to deliver robust outcomes.

Community Heating Project CIC

The Community Heating Project, which is a Community Interest Company, is run by RGM Heating. All labour is charged at an agreed, transparent rate with no profit or markup added to this or any required materials and separate from RGM heating accounts - 100% of the money raised through the Community Heating Project CIC goes towards helping vulnerable people in Fife with their heating and hot water.

SGN

Greener Kirkcaldy and SGN will work closely in partnership to deliver the project, providing training and access to broader referral partners and direct services for customers including, but not limited to, Locking Cooker Valves, CO alarms and access to the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme.

Scottish Power Energy Network

Regional electricity distribution network operators providing programme funding and support to the delivery team including, but not limited to, access to the energy PSR.

Home Energy Scotland

Home Energy Scotland will act as a referral partner for the project, providing additional energy efficiency and water saving measures. SGN and Greener Kirkcaldy have a good working relationship with Home Energy Scotland and partnership agreements in place.

FORT partner network

A Fife-based network of over 200 partners providing additional support services that can be accessed directly through the Fife Online Referral Tracker system.

8 Potential for new learning

Monitoring and evaluation

As a partnership we will work closely to ensure that we all understand the issues faced by hard-to-reach households and the Fife community and adapt the support provided to address barriers to a safe and warm home.

Data and insight will be produced from the project activities and an annual report will be created each year with findings and recommendations which show the real difference this project has made.

Through ongoing monitoring, the project partners will:

- Keep comprehensive records of all activities undertaken, the number of households taking part and any referrals made
- Monitor money saved/gained for each household using the 'financial gain' methodology of Citizens Advice Scotland, which includes increases in income, savings made by switching energy supplier and other ways in which households benefit financially
- Use participant satisfaction surveys to evaluate the impact project activities have on the households
- Use case studies to report on project activities, outcomes, and impact
- Collate feedback captured through other communications, including in-person and through online platforms

The project annual report will be published on Greener Kirkcaldy's portal, such as the charity website, and disseminated to project partners and relevant members and stakeholders in the sector through the VCMA showcase and the Annual Report.

Learning

This project will build on and extend the 2022-24 VCMA project. We are keen to learn from this project and for the success to be incorporated into future delivery initiatives and promoted to others. Below are opportunities for replication, learning and sharing:

- Use of data and feedback acquired to create best practices for supporting hard-to-reach households in fuel poverty and evaluate the impact of the service
- Assess the variety of feedback tools used to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the project advice and activities, documenting project learning and sharing best practice among organisations seeking similar outcomes for communities and groups who are hard to reach with existing services
- Use an Action Learning approach to reflect on progress and identify good practice, especially around how to reach and engage with people who might not normally ask for help, or to add new activities
- This project will trial innovative approaches to embedding energy saving cooking and heating behaviour changes, including in-depth advice in the home and practical workshops, assessing the impact on households in food and fuel poverty
- Partnership working will generate new joined up working practices and lessons learned to be replicated in future projects and assessed year on year to understand if there is a gap in providing support to fuel poor households

- Disseminate project learning at a local level, to partner organisations through steering groups, and share best practice with other grass-root organisations
- Evaluating delivery will support learnings and successes which will be shared with the Fife Fuel Poverty Strategy Steering Group and Fife Healthy Heating Group, working with them throughout the project to identify and support further fuel poor households in Fife.

Greener Kirkcaldy will use the project experience to inform local policy, such as Fife’s Fuel Poverty Strategy, and will share learning nationally through events such as Energy Action Scotland’s advice forums, and Scottish Communities Climate Action Network’s gatherings.

9 Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations, including NPV

Social Value Measurement

We worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIA Partners to carry out an assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership using the DNO methodology/rulebook with additional proxies developed for GDN activity. Carrying out an in-depth assessment of the predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net social return in investment (SROI) of £3.44.

Total cost	£283,050.80
Total gross present value	£1,256,936.07
NPV	£973,885.26
SROI	£3.44

10 VCMA Project start and end date

The project will run from 01/05/2024 to 31/03/2026

11 Geographic area

Fife

12 Internal governance and project management evidence

SGN has worked alongside Greener Kirkcaldy to co-design this partnership and ensure that its ambition contributes to the delivery of our Vulnerability Strategy, the guidance from our Vulnerable Customer Steering Group and adheres to the updated VCMA governance criteria. The SROI has been externally assessed by SIA Partners using the DNO / GDN common rulebook.

To support the partnership to deliver the success criteria outcomes as detailed, the partners will review progress monthly and quarterly to learn, share best practices and address any delivery issues.

The PEA has been reviewed and approved by the business lead Linda Spence and the Director of Customer Services Maureen McIntosh.