

Safely back on supply

Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance

May 2024

SGN



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1 Description

Funding GDN(s)	SGN
For Collaborative VCMA Projects:	N/A
Date of PEA submission:	30.04.24
Project contact name:	Margaret Hamilton
Project contact number/email:	Margaret.hamilton@sgn.co.uk
Total cost (£k)	£30,000
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£3,000

2 Problem statement

People living in areas of high socioeconomic deprivation experience a range of challenges when managing a safe and warm home and have been identified as at higher risk of fuel poverty because of factors which include limited household income, poor housing, and health status.

Figures show that before the pandemic [25% of the population of Glasgow was in fuel poverty](#). Since then Glasgow residents have been hit by the energy crisis and the cost-of-living crisis and the energy team at South Seeds recognise that all residents engaging with them, are experiencing fuel poverty.

South Seeds have been supporting residents to reduce energy consumption on Glasgow's southside for 13 years and are familiar with the housing stock most of which is pre-1919, and the issues with energy efficiency. South Seeds [Energy Snapshot report](#) mapped housing stock, and identified energy efficiency measures which could be installed, and that about a third of the housing stock is privately rented. It is these homes which are the coldest and often damp too.

There are many negative impacts from living in cold damp homes and this is only worse when residents are unable to pay for adequate heat.

The South-Central area of Glasgow is mixed with 7 SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) data zones in the 10% most deprived, 4 in the 20%, 9 in the 30% and the rest a mixture, with none in the 20% least deprived. In addition to this 95% of the residents live in flats.

Together the Southeast Food Bank, Govanhill Housing Association and South Seeds have identified over 200 vulnerable households through the Housing Association who are not using gas in the area. It is more than likely that these residents are living in cold damp homes which could be harmful to the health of the occupants. These households were initially identified by Govanhill Housing Association when they investigated if their tenants were using gas. South Seeds has been running an energy support project for residents and had noticed an increase in the number of households off supply.

There are various reasons why vulnerable households may choose to isolate their gas supply or have the decision taken away from them by their supplier. Those on low incomes are finding it difficult to maintain the costs of heating their home or access to hot water.

All too often people supported by the Southeast foodbank are in poverty, struggling to maintain the ongoing costs associated with their home due to the rising cost of living which is impacting the choices they are having to make to either heat their home or feed their family.

Those who are rationing or not heating their homes are also struggling in other areas around energy and household debt, low income and using unsafe methods to try and keep warm, all of which they struggle to accept support with. This issue is often hidden by vulnerable people which means those who need support the most often go unnoticed.

3 Scope and objectives

Working in partnership across three local organisations and with the support of SGN, this project will enable vulnerable households to be supported back to using their gas supply to heat their homes.

The project will support an additional energy officer to look at these cases, and work with households to get them back on supply, providing holistic support suited to their needs and supporting them to use their energy safely, efficiently, and affordably.

Throughout this time, case studies will be recorded. Through documenting the real journey of residents back on to supply, the successes of the project and the barriers people face to maintain affordable heat will be better understood.

These case studies will bring the issue of no hot water or heat at home, which is often hidden, into spotlight.

The project will work directly with the 200 households, making contact, visiting them in the home and working with them in a collaborative non-judgmental way, to help them back on supply. The support will be bespoke face to face from an experienced energy officer to find the best solution to their issue.

For those who want to get back on supply, we hope to achieve this.

In addition to tackling the energy issue presented, the project will aim to sign as many households as possible up to the priority services register, and raising awareness around carbon monoxide, and if applicable, providing a CO monitor.

The main outcome will be that vulnerable households are given the support needed for them to become more confident with how they manage electricity and gas at home over the course of a year.

4 Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

The project delivers against SGNs Vulnerability Strategy, by providing targeted support to households most at risk of living in fuel poverty based upon their personal circumstances and their geographical location.

The partnership service aligns to our strategic ambition to support customers in energy crisis, helping those in fuel poverty to access financial crisis support, and other services including the Priority Services Register, awareness of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide and energy efficiency advice, empowering low-income households to use energy safely, efficiently, and affordably.

This partnership aligns to the SGN commitment to deliver support services customers aligned to our 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 pillar 3 (with outcomes in pillar 4).

5 Evidence of stakeholder/customer support

5.1 Stakeholder – South Seeds

South Seeds, Govanhill Housing Association and the Food Bank are all experienced at working with vulnerable households. Not only that it is part of their core values to support vulnerable households in the area. All organisations provide non-judgmental face to face advice. It is South Seeds who have the experience in

support for energy and will therefore be leading on this project. South Seeds has a track record of writing up case studies with the consent of clients. For example here is a [booklet of a number of energy case studies](#).

5.2 Stakeholder – SGN

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’ve progressed our portfolio of projects throughout GD2, our strategic steering group reiterated the vital impact we could have by co-ordinating our activities with others to support those most in need, those most impacted by the cost of living and energy cost crisis. The VSG have recommended that we look at ways in which we can build stronger links with other organisations including collaborating with other utilities, health services and charities to deliver support services that tackle the fuel poverty gap and the underlying causes of fuel poverty.

6 Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria

6.1 Outcomes

The 11-month partnership will support 200 households who are currently off gas supply in the area. These households will be supported by a dedicated energy officer who will work with the households to help them back on supply.

The project will support these households manage their energy, raising awareness around energy efficiency, energy safeguarding, Priority Service Register and CO awareness.

Further vulnerable households will benefit from this project as it will provide a better understanding of how vulnerable households can manage their energy during this cost-of-living crisis.

On completion of the project, a publication will be produced which includes five case studies – each one explaining how the households came to be disconnected from gas, and the support that followed to connect them back safely.

6.2 Success Criteria

Over 200 households will receive in depth support throughout this project, with further vulnerable households benefiting through a better understanding of how they can manage their energy during this cost-of-living crisis.

Through the project we will support 200 households to be connected back on gas by providing:

- 200 households receiving in-depth fuel poverty support
- 200 households receiving advice and promotion of energy efficient behaviours including heating system advice, energy efficient measures, helping people to understand energy bills and meters, accessing discounts (e.g. WHD), accessing energy vouchers and tariff/supplier switching
- 200 households receiving fuel and other debt advocacy, including wider debt and benefits advice
- 200 households given access to hardship funds or vouchers
- 200 households made aware of the Priority Service Register (energy & water)
- 120 PSR Registrations (around 60% will join PSR)

- 200 households provided with awareness of CO dangers, preventions, and mitigations and how to stay safe

Other successes

- A booklet of five case studies will be published on-line, this will show how some clients have managed to better manage their energy at home.

7 Project partners and third parties involved

South Seeds, the lead delivery partner, is a community organisation based in the South-Central area of Glasgow who aim to work in partnership with residents and organisations within the local community to help improve the look and feel of the area, to enable Southsiders to lead more sustainable lives.

Govanhill Housing Association is a community-controlled housing association operating in Govanhill and Merrylee to the south of Glasgow city centre, who own and manage more than 2,800 homes for social rent and factor around 1,500 privately owned properties. Their voluntary Management Committee is made up of local residents, contributing to strong and stable governance and high levels of trust in the Association by the local community. The Association delivers a comprehensive range of services, all focused on the needs of customers and the Govanhill and Merrylee communities.

South East Food Bank was founded in 2011 and serves the Glasgow South East Area, approx. 100,000 people. They are supported by local churches and faith groups, local community groups and businesses and of course by the general public through permanent collection points in local supermarkets, weekly and ad hoc collections, and financial donations. Last year they fed 12,200 individuals with numbers steadily increasing.

SGN, through their vulnerability strategy will work closely in partnership with South Seeds to support the project, providing training and access to broader referral partners and direct services for customers including, but not limited to, Priority Service Register, Locking Cooker Valves, and CO awareness.

8 Potential for new learning

Monitoring and evaluation

The booklet published will contain the learning from this project. The case studies will outline why some residents chose not to use their gas supply. The case studies will cover a range of reasons why residents become disconnected from supply. This will be learning for everyone and available to everyone on-line.

Through documenting the real journey of residents back on to supply, the successes of the project and the barriers people face to maintain affordable heat will be better understood.

Learning

The learning will be captured in the case studies and shared widely on South Seeds' social media platforms.

The case studies will not just cover supply issues but touch on health, confidence, and experience of warmth. We will all be able to learn from these real examples.

9 Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations

Social Value Measurement

Using the Industry Standard Social Value Framework, supported by the associated GDN Rulebook we have carried out an in-depth assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership. From this assessment we forecast a positive net social return on investment (SROI) of £1.75.

Total cost	£30,000
Total gross present value	£82,514.63
NPV	£52,514.63
SROI	£1.75

10 VCMA Project start and end date

The project will run from 1 May 2024 to 31 March 2025

11 Geographic area

South central area of Glasgow, which covers postcodes G42 and some of G41.

12 Approval

SGN has worked alongside South Seeds 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 internally assessed using the Industry Standard Social Value framework and supporting GDN rulebook based on the overall project cost and outcomes.

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.