

# GDN Collaborative Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

## Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

---

*Marie Curie – Energy safeguarding and tackling fuel poverty for terminally ill people*

---

*Kerry Potter*  
*Kerry.potter@sgn.co.uk*

*04/08/2022*

*Updated August 2024*

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

<p><b>Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)</b></p> <p>In order to qualify as a VCMA project, a project must:</p>	
<b>VCMA Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)</b>
<b>a)</b> Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA project;	<b>Yes</b>
<b>b)</b> Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i.</b> Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or</li> <li><b>ii.</b> Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or</li> <li><b>iii.</b> Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>c)</b> Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	<b>Yes</b>
<b>d)</b> Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and	<b>Yes</b>
<b>e)</b> Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.	<b>Yes</b>
<p><b>Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair and replacement projects</b></p> <p>In order to qualify as a VCMA project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:</p>	
<b>a)</b> A GDN has to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role;	<b>NA</b>
<b>b)</b> The household cannot afford to service, repair or replace the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance; and;	<b>NA</b>
<b>c)</b> Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement.	<b>NA</b>
<p><b>Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects</b></p> <p>In order to qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:</p>	
<b>a)</b> Meet the above company specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria;	<b>Yes</b>
<b>b)</b> Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	<b>Yes</b>
<b>c)</b> Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	<b>Yes</b>

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

Table 2

<b>Information Required</b>	<b>Description</b>																																								
<b>Project Title</b>	Energy safeguarding and tackling fuel poverty for terminally ill people																																								
<b>Funding GDN(s)</b>	Cadent, NGN, SGN and WWU																																								
<b>New/Updated (indicate as appropriate)</b>	Updated PEA																																								
<b>Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only</b>	The specific role(s) of GDN(s) participating in a collaborative VCMA Project SGN lead Supported by Cadent, NGN and WWU																																								
<b>Date of PEA Submission</b>	Original 04/08/2022 Updated PEA 31/08/2024																																								
<b>VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number</b>	Kerry Potter <a href="mailto:Kerry.Potter@sgn.co.uk">Kerry.Potter@sgn.co.uk</a>																																								
<b>Total Cost (£k)</b>	Total - £1,780,825 plus VAT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year 1 - £675,000 plus VAT + £5,825 SROI</li> <li>Year 2 - £550,000 plus VAT</li> <li>Year 3 - £550,000 plus VAT</li> </ul> Updated August 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event cost = £4,194.75</li> <li>Nov 25 - March 26 = £275,000 plus VAT</li> </ul> <b>Revised total - £2,060,019.75 + VAT</b>																																								
<b>Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)</b>	Updated August to reflect original and updated funding - <b>£2,060,019.75 + VAT</b> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 1279 1449 1585"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Year 1</th> <th>Year 2</th> <th>Year 3</th> <th>Extension</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cadent</td> <td>£339,092.38</td> <td>£273,933.55</td> <td>£273,933.55</td> <td>£136,966.78</td> <td>£1,023,926.26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NGN</td> <td>£78,679.55</td> <td>£63,560.76</td> <td>£63,560.76</td> <td>£31,780.38</td> <td>£237,581.45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SGN</td> <td>£184,306.13</td> <td>£148,890.50</td> <td>£148,890.50</td> <td>£74,445.24</td> <td>£556,532.37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>£78,746.94</td> <td>£63,615.19</td> <td>£63,615.19</td> <td>£31,807.60</td> <td>£237,784.92</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 1648 759 1955"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Event cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cadent</td> <td>£998.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NGN</td> <td>£998.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SGN</td> <td>£1,198.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WWU</td> <td>£998.75</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Extension	Total	Cadent	£339,092.38	£273,933.55	£273,933.55	£136,966.78	£1,023,926.26	NGN	£78,679.55	£63,560.76	£63,560.76	£31,780.38	£237,581.45	SGN	£184,306.13	£148,890.50	£148,890.50	£74,445.24	£556,532.37	WWU	£78,746.94	£63,615.19	£63,615.19	£31,807.60	£237,784.92		Event cost	Cadent	£998.75	NGN	£998.75	SGN	£1,198.50	WWU	£998.75
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Extension	Total																																				
Cadent	£339,092.38	£273,933.55	£273,933.55	£136,966.78	£1,023,926.26																																				
NGN	£78,679.55	£63,560.76	£63,560.76	£31,780.38	£237,581.45																																				
SGN	£184,306.13	£148,890.50	£148,890.50	£74,445.24	£556,532.37																																				
WWU	£78,746.94	£63,615.19	£63,615.19	£31,807.60	£237,784.92																																				
	Event cost																																								
Cadent	£998.75																																								
NGN	£998.75																																								
SGN	£1,198.50																																								
WWU	£998.75																																								
<b>Problem(s)</b>	Anyone can experience fuel poverty, but among the groups most vulnerable to the damaging consequence of living in cold housing are older people, those with chronic illnesses or long-term conditions, and people with low or declining incomes. Many people who are terminally ill fall into several, if not all, of these categories.																																								

Terminally ill people are a risk of being connected to the vicious cycle of fuel poverty. Their deteriorating health means they must spend more money to heat their homes sufficiently, which some may struggle to afford due to depleted incomes and the other significant costs associated with their illness. The consequences of living in a cold home can be severe. It can lead to new infections, make existing symptoms flare up or become worse, affect their mental wellbeing and, in the worst cases, even hasten their death.

Data of fuel poverty rates among terminally ill people is not available, so Marie Curie sought to shed a light on the scale of the problem. We surveyed our community nursing workforce and among those who responded, 28% have provided care to a dying patient during the last five years who said they were struggling with heating costs.<sup>(1)</sup> 38% of Marie Curie Nurses who have cared for patients in fuel poverty believe it made the person's physical health worse. Our findings reinforce other evidence that those with advanced or life-limiting illnesses are particularly vulnerable to experiencing fuel poverty. For example, households with someone with a long-term illness or disability account for over 40% of all fuel poor households in England.<sup>(2)</sup> With the current cost of living crisis and rising energy prices, we expect the impact on terminally ill people to become greater.

In 2021/22, Marie Curie answered 16,589 calls and webchats through our support line and 13% of these were regarding benefits or money issues. Since April 2022, this percentage has risen to 16.5%. Marie Curie is currently unable to provide financial advice and we only provide light-touch information on fuel poverty and benefits on our website. If the call is about a cancer patient, we signpost them to Macmillan Cancer Support but for other terminal illnesses, there are few areas we can signpost to.

Marie Curie's Registered Nurses and Health Care Assistants (HCAs) can be the key to identifying households in need to support. Each year our nurses and HCAs visit between 30,000-45,000 households with terminally ill people in. The patients they support are all at a high risk of being in, or falling into fuel poverty, but may not be receiving the right support. Our nurses and HCAs are trusted by our patients and can help make sure that they receive support on energy through our Information & Support service and get signed up to the Priority Services Register.

After receiving a terminal diagnosis, people should be able to concentrate on the things that matter – making the most of the time they have left, creating new memories with loved ones and putting their affairs in order. They shouldn't have to worry about whether they can afford to keep their house warm.

Urgent action is needed provide energy safeguarding support and tackle fuel poverty amongst terminally ill people. It is unacceptable that any dying person should spend the end of their life in cold, damp, and uncomfortable conditions – deprived of the best possible end of life experience because of unaffordable heating costs.

#### References

- <sup>(1)</sup> Marie Curie (2020). [The vicious cycle of fuel poverty and terminal illness.](#)
- <sup>(2)</sup> Office for National Statistics (2020). Annual fuel poverty statistics in England, 2020 (2018 data).

	<p><b>Update August 2024</b></p> <p>Through this project, we have identified a clear route to improved financial and energy security for people living with terminal illness. The Energy Support Officers on our Support Line have supported over 4,400 people living with terminal illness to date (June 2024). This has involved in-depth conversations about energy that cover all aspects of someone’s financial security, typically signposting to the PSR, completion of benefits and grants checkers, and signposting to other consumer rights organisations. Use of the benefits checker has helped callers identify on average £178 per week in extra benefits they’re entitled to, with 18,630 benefits checks completed to date (June 2024). This means that when combined with other means of maximizing income or reducing household costs, the information provided by our ESOs can have a significant impact.</p> <p>Evidence has shown that following a call with Marie Curies ESOs, service users have been left with an improved sense of relief and lower levels of stress about their situation. We have also heard from staff that some callers were left feeling empowered, with a clear plan of action for what they need to do next. Calls are typically broad, in-depth, and cover all aspects of a person’s financial situation. The dedication, commitment and expertise of the staff working in the service is a key impact driver. Support line staff are passionate and committed subject matter experts who ensure callers have the best possible experience.</p> <p>We have learnt that people of all financial backgrounds call the ESOs for financial support. However, more people living in the most deprived areas use the service than those living in the least. But at the same time, people living in areas of deprivation, but not the most deprived areas, are underrepresented, so we could do more to market in these areas. Marie Curie Community Nurses, HCAs and Volunteers see levels of deprivation broadly in line with the national average, albeit with some underrepresentation of people living in the most deprived areas. Because of the significant extra costs all people living with terminal illness face, access to the service is not restricted to only those living in the most deprived areas. It is therefore worth considering when marketing the service how we can raise awareness of the service in areas of deprivation or with other marginalised groups.</p>
<p><b>Scope and Objectives</b></p>	<p>Delivered in partnership with Marie Curie, and co-funded by the four UK Gas Distribution Networks (GDN’s), aims to identify and support terminally ill people and their families that are suffering from fuel poverty with dedicated support and advice. There are four key areas that Marie Curie will deliver on through this partnership. These are:</p> <p><b>1. Improving information and support on fuel poverty</b></p> <p>Marie Curie will recruit a member of staff to the I&amp;S team on a fixed term contract for the duration of this partnership to undertake the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to I&amp;S staff on how to deal with energy related questions, how to support our beneficiaries to use the benefits calculator, access to the Warm Home Discount Scheme, Cold Weather Payments, Winter Fuel Payments and triage energy related enquiries</li> <li>• Deal with enquiries on a case-by-case basis relating to fuel poverty to ensure the best possible support and information is provided to enable the beneficiaries to get out of fuel poverty and access the necessary financial support</li> <li>• Work alongside the GDNs to improve and create new information resources on the Marie Curie website to help terminally people and their families understand how to increase their energy resilience, access the correct financial support and safeguarding support, such as eligibility for the Priority Services Register.</li> </ul>

## **2. Priority Services Register**

Marie Curie promotes the Priority Services Register (PSR) to the households it supports. The Priority Services Register give vulnerable households immediate support in the event of emergencies such as power cuts. All of the households Marie Curie supports will be eligible for the PSR. A power cut without immediate support could be catastrophic to a terminally person's household. Marie Curie will promote the PSR through:

- Including the PSR in the list of prompts for our I&S service when dealing with calls or webchat enquiries
- Providing training to the Community Nurses, Health Care Assistants (HCAs) and Helper Volunteers to increase their understanding and awareness of the PSR. The Nurses, HCAs and Helper Volunteers will be encouraged to ask the households they support if they are signed up to the PSR. If they are not signed up, staff/volunteers will encourage the patient, carers or family members to sign the household up whilst they are with them. In certain circumstances, the staff will sign the patient up if another member of the household is unable to do so
- Communications through the Marie Curie social media channels, email, and magazine to promote the PSR to a wider audience
- Providing information resources on the Marie Curie website about the PSR and referencing it where appropriate on related webpages.

## **3. Identifying households in fuel poverty and providing support**

Provide training and support to Community Nurses, Health Care Assistants (HCAs) and Helper Volunteers on how to spot signs of a household suffering from fuel poverty, how to react and where to report it to. Assessing where the household is potentially suffering from fuel poverty will be built into the risk assessment Community Nurses & HCAs conduct when visiting a home.

- This training will be led by Marie Curie and rolled out through L&D. Training content will likely be webinars or modules with video content. The GDNs will support the development of the content with their expertise
- Reporting the household in need to Marie Curie will go through to our I&S Energy Line who will be able to contact and support the household to access the right support and information

We will run a 3-month pilot with a place-based team in the UK. We will conduct evaluation to ensure the training and in-home support is effective.

## **4. Reaching groups most likely to be suffering from fuel poverty**

Following recent research conducted by Marie Curie, working aged people at the end of life are twice as likely to be in poverty than those of pension age. 2 in 5 working aged people from minority ethnic groups die below the poverty line. Working aged people with children are more likely than any other group to fall below the poverty line at the end of life. As these groups are most at risk of fuel poverty at end of life, it is essential that we reach these groups with this partnership.

To achieve this, we will:

- Include in training to I&S staff so they are aware of the groups most at risk and can ask questions about fuel poverty when supporting enquiries from these groups.
- Include in the training for Community Nurses so when they are supporting patients from these groups, they will be more aware of the importance of referring them to I&S and the Priority Services Register.
- Targeted communications to reach those most likely to be a risk.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused projects in our place-based locations with a higher portion of people from an ethnic minority background.</li> </ul> <p><b>Update August 2024</b></p> <p><b>1. Improving information and support on fuel poverty</b> We will look to continue this work, with the Energy Support Officers increasing their visibility within the partnership, working alongside the GDNs and internally at Marie Curie to create new information resources to help terminally ill people with energy resilience and access to financial support.</p> <p><b>2. Priority Services Register</b> We will continue to embed PSR training across the Marie Curie team ensuring it remains a key part of fuel poverty awareness training for Marie Curie healthcare staff and is featured on social comms, energy webpages and across all relevant marketing materials.</p> <p><b>3. Identifying households in fuel poverty and providing support</b> We will continue as is until all Marie Curie nurses, HCAs and Volunteers have completed training. Once this is done, we will embed the training into new starter inductions to ensure all eligible new Marie Curie nurses, HCAs and Volunteers participate.</p> <p><b>4. Reaching groups most likely to be suffering from fuel poverty</b> We will look to work with third party organisations to build the most impactful and sensitive ways to do more of this during the extended partnership.</p>
<p><b>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</b></p>	<p>This project operates across all the GDN networks and aligns to our collective GDN strategic ambition to support vulnerable customers most in need of help to maintain a safe and warm home and to access key services designed to meet their needs including the Priority Services Register.</p> <p>This project meets the VCMA eligibility criteria as it will provide energy safeguarding for those most in need through a defined set of outcomes. The initiative will proactively support customers with tailored access the help they need to live in a safe and warm home ensuring that the funding achieves a positive Social Return on Investment.</p> <p><b>Update August 2024</b> This partnership service goes above and beyond our core responsibilities as Gas Distribution Networks and is eligible under the VCMA funding criteria as it will provide support to those people most at risk of detriment without energy safeguarding support from their utility companies.</p> <p>This partnership aligns to the commitment to deliver support services customers aligned to our four strategic pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Services Beyond the Meter</li> <li>2. <b>Supporting Priority Customer Groups</b></li> <li>3. Fuel Poverty &amp; Energy Affordability</li> <li>4. Carbon Monoxide Awareness</li> </ol> <p>This project aligns to strategic pillars 2 (with outcomes in both 3 &amp; 4).</p>
<p><b>Evidence of Stakeholder Customer Support</b></p>	<p><b>Marie Curie Research and client feedback</b> In 2020 Marie Curie released the report ‘The vicious cycle of fuel poverty and</p>

terminal illness' <sup>(1)</sup> which provides an overview of some of the drivers and impacts of fuel poverty among people living with terminal illnesses, as well as setting out the case for change and policy recommendations that would help reduce the number of dying people who can't afford to heat their homes.

As a result of the lack of data on fuel poverty rates among terminally ill people, Marie Curie surveyed our community nursing workforce and received the following results <sup>(1)</sup>:

- 65% of Marie Curie community nurses believed that they had supported patients in the last year who were struggling to make ends meet financially.
- 38% of Marie Curie Nurses who have cared for patients in fuel poverty believe it made the person's physical health worse.
- 17% of Marie Curie Nurses who have cared for patients in fuel poverty believe it hastened the person's deterioration.
- 40% of Marie Curie Nurses who have experienced patients in fuel poverty believe it made the person's mental health worse.

Response to our community nurse survey:

*"On numerous occasions over the five years I have experienced different levels of fuel poverty. The pressure carers have when faced with less income and the additional cost of having to purchase things like incontinence items results in choosing between heat in the home and patient dignity. Patients can be very agitated, especially when experiencing end stage pain and body temperature changes. Some families would rather have them laden with covers than put the heating on for fear of the winter bill or increased fuel costs"*

Beth is a Marie Curie Healthcare Assistant working in Greater London:

*"Caring for patients in the winter months presents its own challenges, particularly when you're working in houses that are freezing cold with no central heating and you have to find ways to keep the patient warm. I remember one night I spent with a patient, and it was freezing... It was a struggle to go through the night, but I made sure the patient was fully covered. They have two electric heaters, so I put them by the patient to make sure they were warmer than me."*

Karen's dad Patrick, from Barnsley, had terminal lung cancer and other co-morbidities: *"Dad was always an outdoorsman – a strapping big guy. He loved looking after the garden and wouldn't really have been bothered by the temperature. He'd have been happy sitting in a pair of shorts and t-shirt in the house no matter what time of the year. But once he got sick, he lost a lot of weight and really started to feel the cold more. If he was watching TV or in bed, he'd need to be wrapped up in multiple layers just to be comfortable. Towards the end, the heating was on pretty much non-stop, so the bills absolutely sky rocketed."*

13% of the enquiries to the Marie Curie helpline in financial year 2021/22 were about money and during this financial year, we have seen this rise to 16.5%. Joanne Lewis is a Marie Curie Support Line Office and when asked about enquiries she's been receiving about fuel poverty, she said this:

*"I have recently had a few calls regarding this. One gentleman recently diagnosed with a terminal illness and had to give up a highly paid job due to his health. He was struggling to pay his fuel bills and had built up arrears. I told him to contact the provider and see if he would be eligible for a hardship fund and shared information on energy advice lines that could help him save money on his bills and looked at a benefit assessment to check he was receiving the correct amount of benefits to help his financial situation. I have a few other examples with similar*



*scenarios; people concerned that their bills are rising and due to their diagnosis, they are no longer able to work, and this has impacted their income. Benefits are taking time to be processed and so debts are mounting up.”*

### **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 Vulnerability 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.

### **Cadent Vulnerability and Fuel Poverty approach**

Cadent conducted extensive stakeholder engagement and customer feedback in order to shape its strategy for investment of the VCMA funding, particularly centred around fuel poverty. Cadent stakeholder feedback has supported the co-design of this project as it aligns to the principle of providing customers with help with more broader welfare services, including support with alleviating fuel poverty, PSR registration, and support for customers living with critical illness.

### **NGN Strategic Workshops**

In NGNs February 2020 annual strategic workshop, cold related ill health and fuel poverty awareness was discussed as an emerging issue. During their July 2020 workshop, stakeholders discussed new emerging issues due to Covid-19, what the impact of the pandemic had on hidden vulnerability and how the pandemic impacted demand for essential services to support customers in vulnerable situations. A Covid-19 specific workshop was held in August 2020 and NGN stakeholders said some of the main impacts had been associated with an increase in mental health issues due to social isolation, job losses, food, and fuel poverty. They also identified that larger energy bills was an emerging issue due to the pandemic, and spending more time at home, especially during winter. They identified that there was also an increased risk of CO due to not being able to get appliances repaired or maintained because of financial hardship. Maintaining and repairing or replacing appliances was not a priority for these groups, therefore this significantly increased the risk of CO poisoning. Stakeholders said there needed to be more focus on CO awareness, so customers understand the risks posed by not having appliances repaired or serviced. They see a strong correlation between safety and the gas networks social obligations and said that it is essential that we continue to raise awareness of CO, because doing so saves lives. Stakeholders also raised the point that the mental health of people living with physical disabilities had been significantly impacted due to lockdown. Another impact the pandemic had was on accessing essential services for those living in vulnerable situations. In some of these areas, a GP may have been the only person providing support to priority groups.

A further workshop around Customer Touchpoints was held in October 2020. Stakeholders said that to tackle fuel poverty, gas networks needed to maximise opportunities at every-day touchpoints and daily interactions, such as GP surgeries, clinics, and hospitals. This project will engage with these health professionals, which will help to identify and reach a significant number of individuals, vulnerable due to living in cold homes with underlying health

	<p>problems. Charities like Marie Curie are one of the key touchpoints for people living with cancer.</p> <p><b>NGN Customer Perceptions Research</b>  Each year NGN use annual Customer Perceptions Research to understand the priorities of their customers. Amongst a set of general tracker questions ie, the same questions that are asked year on year, the evidence in the most recent research, indicated that keeping bills as low as possible ranked more highly than providing a safe and reliable supply of gas for the first time. This is a clear indication as to how concerned customers are about the cost of energy and the need for support to address these issues.</p> <p><b>GDN Vulnerability Working Group</b>  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.</p> <p><b>GD2 VCMA Steering Group</b>  This initiative was supported by all members of the strategic steering group as a key partnership that looks to deliver our ambitions to support those most in need via the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide allowance.</p> <p><b>GDN Collaborative VCMA Show Case Event</b>  During the 2022 Annual VCMA show case event there was overall endorsement that Marie Curie and supporting people at end of life with energy safeguards would be a positive use of VCMA funding.</p> <p><b>References</b>  (1) Marie Curie (2020). <a href="#">The vicious cycle of fuel poverty and terminal illness.</a></p> <p><b>Update August 2024</b>  Our partnership learnings were shared at the 2023 Utility Week Vulnerability Conference as an example of best practice in collaborating to support a vulnerable customer group most in need.</p> <p>At the VCMA Showcase Event in 2023 we shared our first years learning and received positive endorsement on the partnership from a broad range of stakeholders to do more to support people living with life limiting illness.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</b></p>	<p>Through this partnership, we aim to achieve the following outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train 7x I&amp;S staff to be able to support enquiries relating to energy and money. This will lead to the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Helping beneficiaries use the benefits calculator</li> <li>○ Understand the Warm Home Discount Scheme, Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payments and how households can be eligible so they can help beneficiaries sign up</li> <li>○ Understand the Priority Services Register and how households can be eligible so they can help beneficiaries sign up</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support 2,200 beneficiaries per annum through energy related enquiries to our energy helpline.</li> </ul>

- 2,000 users per annum access each energy related resource we create for the Marie Curie website with trend analysis to demonstrate the resources' usefulness.
- 9,000 completed calculations on the benefits calculator per annum to increase household income with an additional target to identify a minimum of £1.5m of income people are entitled to.
- 4,500 people per annum use the interactive Warm Homes Discount tool to reduce household expenditure on bills.
- In the first year, begin training 1,445 Community Nurses and Health Care Assistants (HCAs) on how to spot signs of fuel poverty, how to react and where to report it to. We will aim to have all Community Nurses and HCAs trained within the first year and a half of the partnership. Thereafter train all eligible new Community Nurses and HCAs when joining Marie Curie as part of their induction process.
- In the first year, begin training 1,445 Community Nurses and HCAs on the Priority Services Register. We will aim to have all Community Nurses and HCAs trained within the first year and a half of the partnership. Thereafter train all eligible new Community Nurses and HCAs when joining Marie Curie as part of their induction process.
- Last year approximately 22,500 of the homes we supported would be suitable for our Community Nurses and HCAs to encourage to join the Priority Services Register.
- Through I&S and Community Nursing, we will aim to record 5,000 conversations about the Priority Services Register to encourage the households to sign up.
- Community Nurses and HCAs include fuel poverty in the risk assessment for 30,000-45,000 households per annum and refer households at risk of fuel poverty to I&S for additional support.
- In the first year, train 338 Helper Volunteers on how to spot signs of fuel poverty, how to react and where to report it to. Thereafter train all new Helper Volunteers as part of their induction process.
- Train 338 Helper Volunteers on the Priority Services Register. Thereafter train all new Helper Volunteers as part of their induction process.
- Helper Volunteers support 1,000 households to sign on to the Priority Services Register each year and assess whether the household is struggling with fuel poverty.
- Collect case studies from employees about how the training they received has made a difference to our beneficiaries.
- Collect case studies from beneficiaries about how the information and support has made a difference to their lives.
- Collect case studies from ethnic minority and young families supported by the partnership.

These outputs will lead to achieving the following outcomes:

- Increase in # of beneficiaries supported with energy related enquiries on I&S helpline
- Increase in # beneficiaries accessing resources around energy from the Marie Curie website
- Increase in beneficiaries able to use the benefits calculator/increase in beneficiaries having/ knowledge of benefits & support for energy related issues
- Increase in # of households identified as entitled to benefits
- Increase in I&S team knowledge in supporting beneficiaries with Warm Home Discount Scheme, Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payments

- Increase in I&S team confidence in supporting beneficiaries with Warm Home Discount Scheme, Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payments
- Increase in I&S team knowledge around the Priority Services Register
- Increase in # nurses and HCAs trained in Priority Service Register
- Increase in beneficiaries signing up to the Priority Services Register
- Increase in community nurse, HCA and Helper Volunteer knowledge of the signs of fuel poverty, how to react and where to report it
- Increase in community nurse, HCA and Helper Volunteer confidence in spotting the signs of fuel poverty, how to react and where to report it
- Increase in the # of household supported by MC community nurses, HCAs and Helper Volunteers to sign up to the Priority Services Register
- Increase in fuel poverty risk assessments for households, conducted by MC nurses
- Increase in # of households signposted to I&S for additional support
- Reduction in anxiety around energy related issues
- Increased financial security

We will survey the information and support team and community nurses before and after the training. We will do this to understand what change there has been in their knowledge and confidence at supporting people experiencing fuel poverty. We may also conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with staff to explore how the training benefited them and the people they support.

We will also survey people who contact the I&S team for energy related queries. This will explore the difference the call has made. This will be in terms of their feelings around energy and fuel poverty, and how able they now feel to deal with energy-related issues.

We will look into the possibility of speaking to people experiencing fuel poverty who have benefitted from the community nurses' support in their homes.

#### **Update August 2024**

Through the additional five months of partnership, we will aim to achieve the following additional outputs:

- Train 23 new eligible Marie Curie Community Nurses, Healthcare Assistants and Volunteers on how to spot the signs of fuel poverty, how to react and where to report it to, as part of their induction process. In addition, we will train them on the Priority Services Register.
- Through I&S and Community Nursing, we will aim to record at least 838 conversations about the Priority Services Register to encourage households to sign up.
- Completion of at least 2,260 completed calculations on the benefits calculator to increase household income.
- Support at least 993 beneficiaries through energy related enquiries to our energy helpline.
- Enable and encourage at least 2,780 users to access energy related web pages on the Marie Curie website, and a further 1,010 users to access energy related booklets created by Marie Curie.
- Collect case studies from Marie Curie healthcare staff about the impact training they received has had on them and their beneficiaries.
- Collect case studies from families and individuals supported by the partnership.
- Produce evaluation and impact reports to measure the success of the partnership.

<b>Project Partners and Third Parties Involved</b>	<p>SGN – Lead gas network  Cadent / Northern Gas Networks / Wales &amp; West Utilities – Collaborative partner gas networks  Marie Curie – Lead delivery partner</p>
<b>Potential for New Learning</b>	<p>Working in partnership with Marie Curie will help the GDNs better understand the needs of customers who are dealing with terminal illness or experiencing bereavement.</p> <p>Marie Curie will conduct ongoing evaluation of the impact of the partnership as well as provide case studies and feedback from beneficiaries of the partnership. This will help Marie Curie and the GDNs better understand how to support vulnerable households struggling with fuel poverty. Currently there is little data on the relationship between terminal illness and fuel poverty. The data collected through this partnership will be able to shape future policy change and Marie Curie campaigns.</p> <p>This partnership is designed to become embedded within Marie Curie to ensure it delivers systemic change. Once the funding from the GDNs ends, Marie Curie will be able to continue supporting terminally ill people and their families that are struggling with fuel poverty. The learnings and evaluation of this partnership can be used as a model for future partnerships the GDNs conduct to ensure the projects they are funding are sustainable and continue to have a legacy after the funding ends.</p> <p>Marie Curie will conduct ongoing knowledge sharing activities with the GDNs and their partners to help improve ongoing partnerships that are supporting vulnerable people. Marie Curie will be keen to have ongoing open conversations with the GDNs and their partners to help us all learn from one another.</p> <p>Marie Curie are a leading charity in bereavement and can support the GDN’s staff in gaining a better understanding of bereavement and how to support customers that are experiencing bereavement.</p> <p>Through this partnership, Marie Curie will be able to work with the GDNs to better support their staff experiencing bereavement. Marie Curie will be able to share data, online resources and run webinars on bereavement in the workplace.</p> <p>It is estimated that, at any time, around one in ten UK workers are affected by a bereavement (1) which can lead to an impact on their health, wellbeing, and productivity (2). Marie Curie found that 58% of employees felt their performance was still affected by their grief months after the death of a loved one, and it is estimated that “presenteeism” (being at work but unable to function effectively) of employees at work following a bereavement costs the UK economy £16 billion per year (3).</p> <p>References  (1) McGuinness, B (2009). Grief in the workplace: Developing a bereavement policy. Bereavement Care, 28 (1).  (2) Marie Curie (2021). Respecting and supporting grief at work.  (3) Sue Ryder (2021). Grief in the workplace. How employers can provide better bereavement support.</p>
<b>Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations, including NPV</b>	<p>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.</p>

Carrying out an in-depth assessment of the predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net social return of £12.16.

<b>Total cost*</b>	£1,725,656.85
<b>Total gross present value</b>	£22,717,943.59
<b>NPV</b>	£20,992,286.74
<b>SROI</b>	£12.16

*\*Factoring in the WACC adjustment for year two and three costs*

**Update August 2024**

To provide consistent social value forecasting for the five-month extension we used the forecast previously assessed by SIA Partners as a basis for the update, reworked based on the cost and outcomes for the extension. Carrying out this in-depth assessment we forecast a positive net social return of £12.56.

<b>Total cost*</b>	£275,000.00
<b>Total gross present value</b>	£3,729,225.82
<b>NPV</b>	£3,454,225.82
<b>SROI</b>	£12.56

Taking into account the original forecast and the forecast for the extension, this gives us a revised overall net social return on investment of £12.22.

<b>Total cost*</b>	£2,000,656.85
<b>Total gross present value</b>	£26,447,169.41
<b>NPV</b>	£24,446,512.56
<b>SROI</b>	£12.22

**VCMA Project Start and End Date**

September 2022 to October 2025.

**Update August 2024**

Five-month partnership extension from October 2025 until March 2026.

**Geographical Area**

UK Wide to reflect Marie Curie’s service area

**Internal governance and project management evidence**

SGN have worked alongside Marie Curie and the other gas networks to co-design this partnership and ensure that its ambition contributes to the delivery of their collaborative Vulnerability Strategy and adheres to the updated VCMA governance criteria.

The initial SROI was completed by SIA Partners in 2022 using the shared DNO methodology with GDN specific proxies included at an additional value of £12.16 for every £1 invested.

For the updated 5-month extension, the SROI has been assessed using the previous forecast as assessed by SIA Partners as a template.

As detailed above we have reviewed the overall partnership scope which has been forecast at adding an additional £12.22 for each £1 invested, this will be monitored closely to ensure we adhere to the VCMA governance criteria and over deliver as we have done throughout the partnership to date.

To support the partnership to deliver the success criteria outcomes as detailed, Marie Curie and the gas networks will continue to meet quarterly to review partner



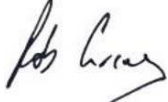
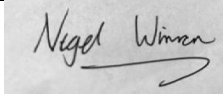
	<p>challenges, review outcomes, learn, share best practices, and address any delivery issues.</p> <p>The updated PEA has been drafted by the business lead Kerry Potter from SGN in partnership with Marie Curie and has been reviewed by representatives of the gas networks and signed off by the senior leaders of all participating GDNs.</p>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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



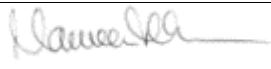
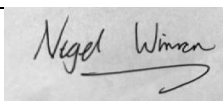
In order to ensure that a VCMA project is registered in accordance with the Ofgem VCMA governance document (incl. project eligibility assessment), the below table should be completed as part of the project registration process.

<p>Stage 1: GDN Collaboration Group PEA Review  <b>Meeting date review completed: Multiple dates confirmed via email</b>  <b>Review completed by:</b></p>		
GDN:	Name:	Job Title:
Cadent	Jo Giles	Customer Safeguarding Senior Manager
NGN	Eileen Brown	Director of Customer Experience
SGN	Kerry Potter	Group Social Impact and Vulnerability Manager
WWU	Nigel Winnan	Head of Customer and Social Obligations
<p><b>Update August 24</b></p>		
GDN:	Name:	Job Title:
Cadent	Kate Clarke	Social Responsibility Specialist
NGN	Eileen Brown	Director of Customer Experience
SGN	Kerry Potter	Group Social Impact and Vulnerability Manager
WWU	Sophie Shorney	Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance Manager
<p>Stage 2: GD2CVG Panel Review  <b>Meeting date sign off agreed: Original - Multiple dates confirmed via email</b>  <b>Review completed by:</b></p>		
GDN:	Name:	Job Title:
Cadent	Phil Burrows	Head of Customer Vulnerability
NGN	Eileen Brown	Director of Customer Experience
SGN	Maureen McIntosh	Head of Customer Experience
WWU	Nigel Winnan	Head of Customer and Social Obligations
<p><b>Update August 24</b></p>		
GDN:	Name:	Job Title:
Cadent	Guv Dosanjh	Social Programmes Manager
NGN	Eileen Brown	Director of Customer Experience
SGN	Maureen McIntosh	Director of Customer Services
WWU	Nigel Winnan	Head of Customer and Social Obligations

Step 3: Participating GDN individual signatory sign-off – Original

GDN	Name:	Job Title:	Signature:	Date:
Cadent:	Phil Burrows	Head of Customer Vulnerability		17/08/2022
NGN:	Eileen Brown	Customer Experience Director		18/08/2022
SGN:	Rob Gray	Director Of Stakeholder and Communications		23/08/2022
WWU:	Nigel Winnan	Head of Customer and Social Obligations		18/08/2022

**Update August 24**

GDN	Name:	Job Title:	Signature:	Date:
Cadent:	Phil Burrows	Head of Customer Vulnerability		27/09/2024
NGN:	Eileen Brown	Customer Experience Director		27/09/2024
SGN:	Maureen McIntosh	Director of Customer Services		27/09/2024
WWU:	Nigel Winnan	Head of Customer and Social Obligations		27/09/2024

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