

Fairer Warmth - Isle of Wight

Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Updated: May 2026

PEA reference: FP-SGNStH-030a



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Project registration table

Project summary	
Project title	Fairer Warmth - Isle of Wight
Strategic area	Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability
Lead partner name	Green Isle of Wight
New/Updated	New
Date of PEA submission	May 2026
Project start and end date	April 2026 – September 2027
Project location	Isle of Wight
Sectors involved (include only those involved)	Gas Distribution Network Charitable Organisation Local Authority Other (specify) Community Interest Company (CIC)
Project contact	
Name	Graeme McLarty
Contact details	Positive.impact@sgn.co.uk
Project partners and third parties involved	
Organisation name	Role
Green Isle of Wight	Lead delivery partner and funder of small measure installations
Centre for Energy Equality	Provider of Fairer Warmth Hub platform
Isle of Wight Council	Providing support with referrals, alignment with local fuel poverty strategies, and coordination with existing council-led services
Costs and funding	
Total cost (£k)	£80,000
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£80,000
Total BAU vulnerability and CO safety activity baseline allowance funding by activity (£k)	N/A

Problem(s)

This section needs to outline the problem(s) which is/are being addressed by the VCMA project.

Rising energy costs, fuel poverty and financial insecurity continue to place severe pressure on households across the UK. Since 2021, energy prices have almost doubled, and as of early 2026, it's estimated that around 6.7 million households across the UK are living in fuel poverty. Nearly half of low-income households remain in homes that are hard to heat, leaving millions exposed to cold, damp conditions that harm their physical and mental health.

On the Isle of Wight, an estimated 8,500 households (roughly 12.7%) live in fuel poverty. However, due to the island's older housing stock and reliance on off-grid heating, up to 41.3% of households may require more than 10% of their disposable income to adequately heat their homes. Fuel poverty remains high, especially in coastal and island communities where housing is older, incomes are lower, and access to support is limited. The Isle of Wight has an older population, lower average wages than the South East, and a high share of homes built before modern energy standards. [Over 27% of residents](#) in the Isle of Wight are aged 65 or over, compared to 19% across England. Older residents are more likely to live in cold homes and face health risks linked to low indoor temperatures.

Recent figures show that [31.4% of children](#) on the island were living in relative poverty in 2023/24. Families experiencing fuel poverty often struggle to heat their homes, which can have serious consequences for children's health, wellbeing, and education. Children living in cold, damp homes face increased risks of respiratory illness, mental health problems, and disrupted learning, with many going to school tired, hungry, or in unwashed clothing due to a lack of heating or hot water. These challenges mean that fuel poverty not only affects children's immediate quality of life but can also limit their long-term opportunities.

Support for households across the Isle of Wight is often fragmented. Many support services rely on short-term funding and manual systems. This makes it hard to track needs, book home visits, follow up actions, or report results in a clear way. Vulnerable households can drop out of support before changes are made.

Local authorities and community groups are also experiencing increased pressure. Demand for energy advice has grown substantially since 2022. In the absence of a shared system for coordinating support, it becomes challenging to identify which households need help most, manage referrals between different services, and demonstrate measurable outcomes to funders and network operators.

The serious problems faced by people living in or at risk of fuel poverty have been well documented, including the consequences for mental and physical health and the realities of having to make impossible choices daily between heating and eating. The importance of people being able to spend time in their own home safely, without having to live in cold, damp conditions and without the continual worry of what it might cost them to be warm, is even more significant.

With the impacts of the prolonged energy crisis still being felt, and the increase in demand from fuel-poor households for affordable heat, the impacts are felt across some of the most financially vulnerable communities across the Isle of Wight.

Scope and objectives

Outline the scope and objectives of the VCMA project linked to the problem statement above. This should be clearly defined including the benefits which would directly impact customers on the participating GDNs' network(s), and where the benefits of the VCMA Projects lie.

Green Isle of Wight is a Community Interest Company based on the Isle of Wight that provides energy efficiency support to households and businesses. The Centre for Energy Equality is a UK-based social enterprise focused on ensuring that all individuals and communities have equal access to safe, affordable, and sustainable energy. They run the Fairer Warmth Hub, a platform designed to improve energy affordability

Working in partnership with us, Green Isle of Wight and Centre for Energy Equality will deliver energy support to vulnerable households across the Isle of Wight through three connected methods: digital triage, targeted home visits, and school education.

Through the three connected methods of delivery, our programme will support vulnerable households across the Isle of Wight.

Digital triage and advice

Delivered through the Fairer Warmth Hub platform, operated by the Centre for Energy Equality;

- Provide support to households by phone and email through energy champions and advisors
- Produce personalised action plans and tailored recommendations
- Offer tariff comparison/switching guidance and PSR eligibility checks
- Screen for grants, makes direct referrals and track follow-up actions.

Targeted home visits

Delivered by Green Isle of Wight advisors and trained energy champions:

- Focus on highest-need groups: over-75s, disabled people, those with long-term conditions, families with young children in cold homes, and people unable to engage remotely
- Provide full home energy assessments and installation of LED bulbs/draught-proofing (funded by Green Isle of Wight)
- Provide heating control guidance, tariff switching, PSR registration and CO safety checks
- Provide warm-handover referrals to relevant grant schemes
- Provide a written action plan to each household supported with a three-month follow-up.

Schools' energy education

- Deliver quarterly one-hour sessions to schools across the island
- Teach pupils about energy costs, heat loss, and practical energy-saving actions
- Engage pupils with an interactive online game that teaches them to manage energy in a virtual house
- Provide pupils with information about Fairer Warmth advice line to take home to families
- Provide teacher training to support staff to embed energy learning and identify families needing support.

Project design engagement

Targeting vulnerability support: This must describe how the GDN(s) identified the vulnerability need being addressed through the VCMA project, including the use of consumer research, stakeholder engagement, and data and technology.

Evidence of stakeholder and/or customer support: Information regarding all stakeholder and/or customer engagement which has contributed to the development of the VCMA Project.

Stakeholder project design input: How stakeholders were actively involved in the project design, and how their input and feedback were incorporated to shape the project design. Where stakeholders disagree about the project design, justification must be provided for why the current project design is deemed preferable.

This project builds on the success of our GD2 innovation partnership with the Centre for Energy Equality, which led to the development of the Fairer Warmth Hub platform and demonstrated the value of coordinated, community-focused energy support. Building on the strong foundations already established across the Isle of Wight, the programme has been co-developed with Green Isle of Wight and the Centre for Energy Equality, drawing directly on their frontline insight into the barriers households face and the types of interventions that create meaningful, lasting change. This collaborative approach ensures the project is shaped by lived experience, practical delivery knowledge, and an understanding of what works for households most at risk of fuel poverty.

The Fairer Warmth Hub has also been an active part of our broader Safe & Warm partnership network, contributing to local engagement events alongside other VCMA-funded partners and strengthening the collective approach to tackling fuel poverty. In 2025, the Centre for Energy Equality took part in one of our Partner Spotlight sessions, sharing insights on the development and use of the Fairer Warmth Hub tool and supporting several community partners to pilot the support framework and CRM system within their own local projects. Stakeholder feedback from these sessions was highly encouraging, highlighting the significant gap many grassroots organisations face in understanding what local support exists and how to navigate it effectively. Partners recognised the value of a platform that not only maps local services but also provides customer management tools and access to training and school education resources, helping them deliver more coordinated, confident and informed support to households in need.

The model has been designed for fully joined-up delivery, working in close collaboration with a wide network of local partners who already provide vital support to residents experiencing energy challenges across the Isle of Wight. These partners support the project with trusted referral pathways, and deep community reach, ensuring that households receive coordinated, high-quality support without being passed between services.

By combining targeted data analysis with community-led design, the project is shaped around real need, builds sustainable local capability, and reaches people who might otherwise continue to miss out on vital support.

The project has also been guided by principles co-developed with our Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Steering Group (VSG), ensuring that vulnerable households are meaningfully involved in shaping accessible, locally relevant services. The VSG's framework emphasises co-production with trusted community partners, equitable access regardless of personal circumstances, and tailoring support to local needs.

Grounded in a shared, evidence-based understanding of vulnerability, the project delivers a service that is responsive to lived experience and aligned with wider commitments to fairness, inclusion, and targeted support for those most at risk.

Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

This should include an explanation of why the VCMA project meets the VCMA eligibility criteria, and how it aligns with the GDN's VCMA collaborative strategy.

This project meets the VCMA eligibility criteria because it directly supports our Vulnerability Strategy and our overarching ambition to keep communities safe, warm, and supported, both now and as we transition toward a green, clean energy future. Our strategy places vulnerable households at the centre of our decision making, ensuring that those most in need receive meaningful, practical assistance.

The project is designed to help us deliver our Business Plan commitments, particularly two key customer pledges, the first to support at least 650,000 of the most vulnerable households over the next five years. The second, to ensure that the project has been designed to ensure that it delivers meaningful outcomes and measurable value for customers and stakeholders. This includes maximising the social return on investment (SROI) for every pound spent, while consistently prioritising the needs and experiences of vulnerable customers.

In addition, the project reflects the strategic priorities of our Vulnerability Strategy – an approach shared by all four gas networks – which delivers support across four core areas:

- Providing Services Beyond the Meter – direct services for vulnerable households as we go about our day-to-day operational work that extends beyond traditional gas network responsibilities
- Tackling Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability – targeted support for customers struggling to afford energy, helping households reduce energy costs, improve efficiency, and access essential advice
- Supporting Priority Customer Groups – identifying and assisting those with heightened needs, ensuring they receive tailored and timely support
- Reducing Carbon Monoxide Harm – a data driven approach to raising awareness, improving safety, and reducing carbon monoxide risks.

By addressing these themes, the project demonstrates strong strategic alignment and delivers tangible benefits to vulnerable customers, making it a clear fit for VCMA funding.

This project forms part of the 'Tackling Fuel Poverty and Energy Affordability' theme and budget area.

How VCMA funding complements or supplements BAU activities

Where the VCMA Project is being delivered alongside a BAU vulnerability and/or CO safety activity or activities funded through the GDN's baseline allowance, the GDN must provide sufficient evidence that the VCMA Project complements or supplements the BAU activity or activities to prevent the risk of double funding.

By working in partnership with us, Green Isle of Wight and Centre for Energy Equality have established a robust referral pathway to raise concerns related to key energy safeguarding services. This collaboration ensures that issues affecting vulnerable individuals, particularly those who may struggle to access or navigate utility services are identified early and directed to the appropriate support from their utility companies.

As a trusted organisations, Green Isle of Wight and Centre for Energy Equality are well placed to engage effectively with vulnerable individuals and refer eligible people to us for BAU funded support. This includes access to carbon monoxide alarms, Locking Cooker Valves, and other measures that help maintain safety and independence in the home.

Justification for why the project should not be collaborative

This should include evidenced reasoning as to why the VCMA Project cannot, or should not, be delivered in collaboration with other GDNs. For example, this could include the unique context within a network area, or the development of an innovative pilot project.

This project has been intentionally designed as a targeted intervention within the Isle of Wight, rather than as a collaborative initiative across multiple networks. Green Isle of Wight operates solely on the Isle of Wight so has a unique and in-depth understanding of the needs, challenges, and lived experiences of households experiencing fuel poverty across the island.

The project model is built on local insight, trusted relationships, and place-based delivery, rather than shared delivery across multiple Gas Distribution Network areas. Its objective is to address a clearly defined gap in support for households in, or at risk of, fuel poverty on the Isle of Wight. As such, a broader collaborative approach would not be effective or appropriate for achieving the intended outcomes.

Outcomes, associated actions and success criteria

Details of the VCMA Project outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these, interim milestones and how the Funding Licensee will evaluate whether the project has been successful. Each action should have a proportion of the funding allocated.

Outcome	Project Target	Interim Milestones
Energy efficiency advice	2,600	Quarterly Performance - 433
Energy triage	2,000	Quarterly Performance – 333
CO safety information	1,600	Quarterly Performance – 267
PSR conversations	1,600	Quarterly Performance – 267
PSR registrations	400	Quarterly Performance – 67
Accessing third party funding for energy efficiency measures	1,450	Quarterly Performance – 242
Income maximisation	1,100	Quarterly Performance – 183
Billing support/meter readings	350	Quarterly Performance – 58
FRS safe and well visit referral	200	Quarterly Performance – 33
Energy efficiency advice training	30	Quarterly Performance – 5
Front line worker training	4	Quarterly Performance – 1

Success Criteria

During this 18-month project, Green Isle of Wight and Centre for Energy Equality will support 2,600 households across the Isle of Wight. These households will be supported by trained energy champions and advisors embedded within each organisation.

Customers supported through this project will be more confident in managing their energy usage within their homes and who to turn to if support is needed. This will prevent future fuel debt situations and improved thermal comfort in their homes.

Potential for new learning

Provide details of what the GDN(s) expect(s) to learn and how the learning will be disseminated.

This new partnership has been shaped by insights gathered throughout GD2. Centre for Energy Equality has delivered multiple energy advice programmes, including Fairer Warmth Hubs through our innovation project in GD2, in Rossendale, Isle of Man and over 30 UK communities. Through ongoing monitoring and collaboration, the project generated valuable learning, highlighting the key barriers customers face, the most effective engagement approaches, and the importance of trusted local delivery

Continued monitoring of this project will help us to better understand changing customer behaviours as the landscape evolves, ensuring we remain well-equipped to support those most at risk

The Fairer Warmth Isle of Wight project will focus on gaining insights on customer behaviour and feedback across a range of areas, including:

- Gas safety and carbon monoxide awareness
- Impact on energy bills
- Debt management and income maximisation
- How island isolation affects delivery and reach
- Effectiveness of different engagement approaches in close-knit island communities
- Effectiveness of school-based education programmes in supporting hard to reach families
- Effectiveness of quarterly school sessions in achieving sustained awareness

All data and insights collected through the project will be analysed and brought together into a comprehensive post project report, outlining key findings, recommendations, and the demonstrable impact of the Aftercare Service.

The final report will be published and shared with project partners, sector stakeholders, and wider audiences through inclusion in our regional stakeholder event, the VCMA Showcase and the Annual Report.

Aligning with and supporting wider vulnerability approaches

Details of how the project supports or aligns with approaches to vulnerability taken by the wider energy industry, other utilities and/or consumer organisations; local, national or devolved governments; or evidence innovation or a gap in vulnerability support provision. For example, this could include evidence of collaboration beyond the VCMA, non-VCMA joint funding of the initiative, or identified gaps in the provision of vulnerability services which the project seeks to address. The GDN should show how the project fits within broader approaches to vulnerability.

This project is strongly aligned with national and local approaches to vulnerability, reflecting the principles embedded across UK energy sector frameworks that prioritise early identification, safeguarding, and continuity of supply. Its design mirrors the direction set out in Ofgem's Vulnerability Strategy and the wider cross-utility commitment to ensure that customers with additional needs receive consistent, proactive support. By working collaboratively across a range of sectors and organisations, the project contributes to a coordinated, multi utility response that strengthens protections across all essential services.

The project is also fully aligned with the national direction set by the Warm Homes Plan and the Fuel Poverty Strategy for England, both of which emphasise the importance of targeted, place-based interventions that reduce energy inequality and protect households at greatest risk. By strengthening access to advice, improving awareness of support mechanisms, and enabling earlier identification of households experiencing or approaching fuel poverty, the project directly contributes to the strategic goals of improving home energy efficiency, reducing avoidable hardship, and ensuring that vulnerable residents are not left behind in the transition to a more resilient, affordable, and low-carbon energy system.

The project also directly supports the ambitions of the Isle of Wight's Climate Adaptation Strategy and the wider Poverty Reduction Strategy, both of which emphasise the need for a coordinated and collaborative approach to reducing fuel poverty and supporting those already affected. Both strategies highlight growing local need, including rising utility costs and increased use of food banks, outlining measures such as enhanced welfare support and targeted financial and energy advice to mitigate the pressures of fuel and energy insecurity on vulnerable households.

A key area of alignment is the project's focus on improving awareness and uptake of the Priority Services Register (PSR). Embedding PSR conversations into community outreach and homebased support reflects wider utility sector priorities to strengthen safeguarding, ensure priority restoration, and improve access to communication support and extra care services.

The project also demonstrates the multiagency collaboration encouraged across national vulnerability frameworks. Working with partners such as Age UK, Citizens Advice, and schools throughout the island, the project creates a coordinated ecosystem capable of delivering holistic, person-centred support. This approach strengthens local resilience, improves outcomes for vulnerable households, and supports the national shift from reactive crisis intervention toward prevention, behaviour change, and long-term wellbeing.

Monitoring and evaluation

Details of how the GDNs will work with their project partners to monitor the impact of the VCMA project and evaluate its effectiveness and success.

Together with SGN, the Centre for Energy Equality and Green Isle of Wight will review monthly reports on measurable outcomes, working together to ensure successful delivery. Each quarter, the core project team will meet to share performance insights, highlight and mitigate any underperformance, and provide structured updates on delivery, risks and emerging outcomes.

We will ensure that there is an evidence base through audit and research that seeks to understand how effective the project is in supporting their local communities who are struggling to maintain a safe and warm home, as well as assess the before and after to better understand the impact of the services provided on the lived experience of beneficiaries.

We will continue to report annually on partnership impact, sharing broadly via our company-specific reports to showcase outcomes and key learnings and inform future delivery. Additionally, the learning will be shared across the GDN Vulnerability working group as well as our business governance processes, including on request to our Independent Steering Group (ISG).

Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations, including NPV

Justify the scale of the VCMA project – including the scale of the investment relative to its potential benefits. As part of this, the Funding Licensee(s) should provide the SROI calculation, including NPV. Note: The value in numbers of the SROI and NPV must be provided, rather than confirmation of positive impact.

Together with the other Gas Distribution Networks, we worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIRIO Strategies on the development of the Industry Standard Social Value Framework and supporting GDN Rulebook. We have used that GDN Rulebook to carry out an assessment of financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable households included in this partnership.

We've incorporated social value based on the deliverables and associated targets detailed above. Carrying out an assessment of these predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net Social Return on Investment of £14.81 for every £1 spent.

Social value measurement

Total cost*	£79,974.59
Total gross present value	£1,264,327.64
Net Present Value (NPV)	£1,184,535.05
SROI	£14.81

*Accounting for inflationary factors over the term of the project.

Internal governance and project management evidence

Provide a description of GDN(s) review of proposal and project sign off, with details on how the project will be managed.

We have worked closely with the Centre for Energy Equality and Green Isle of Wight to co-design this partnership so that its ambition directly contributes to our Vulnerability Strategy, developed with support from our stakeholders including through our Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Steering Group and overseen by our Independent Steering Group.

The PEA has been reviewed and approved through our internal governance processes and formally signed off as detailed below.

Approver (Name and Role)	Date
Kerry Potter, Group Social Impact and Vulnerability Manager	02/06/26
Maureen McIntosh, Director of Customer Services	03/06/26

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No
Positive SROI	Have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculated in accordance with a model which the GDNs have developed and submitted to Ofgem including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project	Yes
Positive NPV	Have a positive, or a forecasted positive Net Present Value (NPV)	Yes
Support Criteria	Either: i. provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to Energy Safeguarding, or ii. provide support for those most at risk of being left behind in the transition to net zero, or iii. provide awareness of, and education on, the dangers of CO beyond the activities funded as business as usual (BAU) through baseline allowances, or iv. reduce the risk of harm caused by CO	Yes
Defined Outcomes	Have specific, measurable, and time-bound outcomes which align with relevant Consumer Vulnerability Strategy objectives to achieve the requirements set out in 'Support Criteria' above;	Yes
Beyond Other Funding	Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s), including baseline allowance funding, or required through licence obligations	Yes
Support or Align	Support or align with approaches to vulnerability taken by the wider energy industry, other utilities and/or consumer organisations, and local, national and devolved government, or evidence innovation or a gap in vulnerability support provision;	Yes
No Other External Funding	Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding	Yes
BAU vulnerability and CO safety activities	Where a GDN's BAU vulnerability and CO safety activities are funded through baseline allowances, these are not suitable for funding through the VCMA. The GDN is permitted to use VCMA funds to supplement or complement its BAU activities, however, it must ensure that its reporting provides sufficient evidence to prevent double funding.	Yes

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No or N/A
Servicing must meet the following criteria:	Either: i. A GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition¹² that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or iii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes	N/A
Affordability	The household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria set out in the VCMA governance document	N/A
Funding	Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord and national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance servicing	N/A

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance repair and replacement

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No or N/A
Unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	Either: i. GDN has had to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has had to condemn unsafe pipework, or an essential gas appliance, following an essential gas appliance service (as described in 3.19 of the VCMA governance document)	N/A
Health condition	Either: i. The occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes and has a household income of £31,000 or below in 2025/26 prices, adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index with Housing costs (CPIH) 13, or ii. the household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria set out in Appendix 1 of the VCMA governance document	N/A
Funding	Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance repair or replacement.	N/A