



Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

Social Obligations Workshop October 2018

Results and suggested actions

2018 Social Obligations Workshop

- On 10th October 2018, WPD held a stakeholder workshop on its social obligations programme. The purpose was to inform stakeholders about the company's current and future programme, and to get feedback on its activities. Attendees included local authorities, emergency services and non-profit organisations / charities.
- 31 stakeholders attended the workshop, representing 29 organisations.
- The workshop was split into three sessions. Each session included a presentation followed by a roundtable discussion.



Session 1: Key challenges for customers and service providers

WPD session:

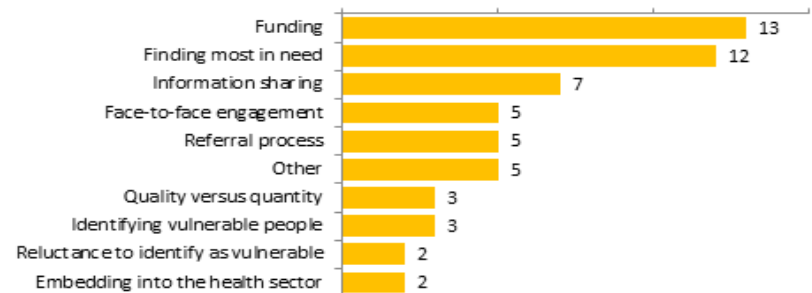
- What do you think the main challenges are for vulnerable customers?
- What do you think the key challenges are for service providers?

Key feedback:

The main challenges raised by stakeholders were:

- The number of people in poverty – exacerbated by the benefit changes that were felt to be placing a huge amount of pressure on low income families
- The increasing number of people in rented accommodation, and the decline in standards of rental properties
- The quality of the existing housing stock and the cost of making older homes energy efficient
- A lack of education

- Stakeholders were asked to state what they felt were the key challenges for services providers as part of the written feedback form. The most common challenges identified were the availability of funding and engaging with the hard to reach. The results can be found in the bar chart below. The results are based on the number of times each challenge was mentioned by stakeholders.



Proposed actions:

- 1 *All our flagship partnerships, Power up & Affordable Warmth schemes will work with organisations that can help/understand the benefit system and assist customers to understand Universal Credit*
- 2 *Investigate a project to look at rented properties, working with tenants to install easy to fit/DIY measures to increase energy efficiency of properties economically and quickly*

Session 1: What role do you think WPD should play in this area?

WPD session:

- What role do you think WPD should play in this area?

Key feedback:

Stakeholders had a range of views on the sorts of activities that WPD should be undertaking in this area:

- Act as a facilitator between different partner organisations
- Help local service providers get access to GP surgeries and provide marketing support to assist in this
- Provide funding so partner organisations can deliver services
- Support agencies with identifying which customers need support
- Promote the PSR as well as other available advice and referral schemes to customers

- Act as a shared hub of information, providing branded materials that service providers can access and use
- Support agencies to share best practice and lessons learnt

Proposed actions:

- 3 *Continue facilitating & funding projects with multiple partner organisations, to a minimum of 15,000 customers per year*
- 4 *Launch Energy Affordability Fund to look for new partners and innovative ideas for projects*
- 5 *Investigate advertising PSR/projects via GP surgery screens*
- 6 *Update the social indicator mapping every two years to assist in identifying customers who need support*
- 7 *Hold an annual social obligations workshop allowing partner organisations to share best practice and lessons learnt*
- 8 *Continue promoting the PSR and explaining how to become a referral partner as well as providing our branded leaflets, crisis packs and video for partners. We will have a minimum of 81 partners by the end of 2019*

Session 2: WPD's existing programme

WPD session:

- What do you think of WPD's current performance in the area of social obligations?

Key feedback:

There were several suggestions for WPD of areas where they could do more or improve:

- Focus more on energy efficiency (including within the private rental sector)
- Avoid taking a seasonal approach to funding, as it restricts the ability for providers to deliver services all year round
- Provide more certainty on what regular funding streams are (going to be) available
- Consider providing funding opportunities for longer-term projects
- Establish a way in which to capture those outcomes that are harder to measure, for example behaviour changes in customers or the socially responsible investment (SRI) impacts of the projects

Proposed actions:

- 9 *Pilot an Affordable Warmth scheme for 12 months to assess the delivery of a year round scheme*
- 10 *Award the Affordable Warmth schemes for two year contract, either seasonally or annually*
- 11 *Lead joint DNO social value research*
- 12 *WPD's customer satisfaction research to include 'happiness/wellbeing' index*



Session 2: WPD's existing programme

WPD session: PSR

- What do you think of WPD's current schemes?

Key feedback:

In terms of suggestions of how WPD's current schemes could be improved, stakeholders had the following suggestions:

- Several organisations felt that they could have a role in supporting the sign up of customers to the PSR and felt they needed to be talking to WPD about it (for example the fire service)
- WPD should reconsider the way the PSR is marketed, to ensure that certain images (for example just of old people) don't put customers off
- Stakeholders supported WPD's decision to remove those customers on the PSR that they have been unable to contact, as it was agreed that the quality of the list is more important than its quantity
- Share PSR data across utility companies – persuade Ofgem and Ofwat to work together more closely to align the lists

- Work more closely with other utility companies, particularly water companies to publicise both the PSR and social tariffs for water – and promote this through parish councils / doctors' surgeries
- Look at ways in which to promote the PSR to customers with mental health problems

Proposed actions:

- 13 *Continue to remove customers after three years of no contact on our cleanse cycle to keep PSR up to date and relevant*
- 14 *Work with every water company in our area to share PSR data by the end of 2019*
- 15 *Launch a scheme with a mental health organisation and investigate ways to work with them and other mental health charities to sign customers up to the PSR and give training to our contact centre staff*
- 16 *Review PSR section of website and work with the customer panel to define language & branding of PSR pages to ensure they don't make reference to 'vulnerable' customers*
- 17 *PSR referral scheme strategic reach out to target areas of lowest sign up vs eligibility*

Session 2: WPD's existing programme

WPD session: Affordable Warmth & Power Up

- What do you think of WPD's current schemes?

Key feedback: Affordable Warmth

- Make sure partner organisations are aware they can request support packs, so they can distribute them on WPD's behalf
- Establish other ways to work collaboratively with the GDNs, for example support by delivering outcomes on heating systems

Power Up

- Review the approach to ensure that the focus isn't entirely on benefit savings as there are other important interventions. For example, it is important not to take the focus away from making a property more energy efficient or from supporting customers to switch energy suppliers
- Consider how to promote some of the small energy efficiency 'fixes' that make a real difference, such as radiator filters and letter box draft excluders

Proposed actions:

- 18 *Promote to all partners the availability of crisis packs to distribute to customers*
- 19 *Approach all Gas Distribution Networks in our region to offer opportunity to joint fund /commission schemes*
- 20 *Continue to ensure Power Up covers all six interventions to give a holistic approach fuel poverty and energy affordability*
- 21 *Investigate ways to find sub partner organisations that can fund/install small energy measures as part of the Power Up programme*



Session 2: WPD's existing programme

WPD session: General

- What do you think of WPD's current schemes?

Key feedback:

- Avoid using the term 'vulnerable' as people tend not to see themselves / don't want to see themselves as such
- Customers should be contacted a year on to see how things are going
- Look at doing something more strategic with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) and the health sector. (Service providers are struggling to get into these organisations at the decision-making level, so there could be a role for WPD to help in terms of access)
- Work to generate the evidence base to demonstrate to the NHS the value of certain interventions (e.g. getting 'warm homes' as one of the checks on the hospital discharge list) so that they are more open to collaboration
- Work with Ofgem to broaden the scope of what DNOs can do in this area to create a more holistic approach

- Play a greater role in influencing Government on this agenda
- Hold regular workshops for the social obligations sector to promote information sharing
- Share the details of all the referral schemes that are currently in operation
- Communicate more – partners need to know what WPD is doing and where they are doing it

Proposed actions:

- 22 *Gain consent from referral partners to share a list/map of existing partners on our website*
- 23 *Publish a social obligations newsletter twice a year with information and updates about successful projects and what's coming up, via website subscription*
- 24 *Continue to engage with Ofgem to define the role of DNO's in this area*
- 25 *Try to engage CCG's/NHS to develop ways to act on the link between cold homes and ill health and work collaboratively, referring customers to organisations who can support them*

Session 3: Innovative approaches

WPD session:

- Would access to our social indicator mapping data be useful to you / how would you use it?

Key feedback:

When asked this question as part of the written feedback form, 83% said that 'yes, definitely' they would use it and the remaining 17% said they would 'probably' use it.

- Several stressed that the data should only be used as a starting point and that there was no substitute for local knowledge
- It was felt that some information was missing, for example whether the homes in question were empty holiday homes and which households were eligible for benefits but hadn't applied
- One stakeholder said they would like to see some data in relation to health, such as the location of damp homes or asthma rates
- Several stakeholders said that they would use the map in conjunction with other data collection methods, such as leafleting or using Google Street View

- One stakeholder pointed out that Click Sense, live data compiled by constabularies, could be used as an additional data source
- One local authority stakeholder said that to use the data they would need detailed information on how the source data was collected
- The substation vulnerability data was identified as a particularly interesting aspect of the data, and it was suggested this was something that water and gas companies should seek to replicate
- The question was asked as to whether you could overlay two or three variables on top of each other at the same time

Proposed actions:

- 26 *Launch user friendly interactive version of social indicator mapping and send details to all organisations identified by the horizon scan*
- 27 *Launch an online demonstration tool with a manual on how to use the new interactive tool*
- 28 *Investigate additional data sources for the next update to include health data and information on holiday homes, etc.*
- 29 *Investigate ways to overlay two or three variables in the next update*

Session 3: Innovative approaches

WPD session:

- Are there any partnerships you would like us to consider / innovative projects you could work with us on?

Key feedback:

A range of partnership suggestions were made, including the following:

- A range of different health practitioners, including community pharmacists, frailty nurses, school nurses, GPs, care providers
- Food banks
- Charity shops
- Dementia charities
- Innocent Smoothies (who work with Age UK)
- Community groups (e.g. the ones that knit hats and scarves)
- Faith groups
- Befriending groups
- Neighbourhood Watch groups
- Living Safe and Well visits by Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service
- Snow wardens
- Local councillors

Proposed actions:

- 30 *Conduct a 'pilot' to reach out to a selection of all of these in a 'PSR hot spot' areas and & evaluate success of each to inform ongoing PSR referral strategy*
- 31 *Continue working with Dementia Action Alliance and Fire and Rescue Services*



Session 3: Innovative approaches

WPD session:

- Are there any partnerships you would like us to consider / innovative projects you could work with us on?

Key feedback:

A range of suggestions were made, including the following

- Targeting people with mental health issues
- Targeting hoarders
- Community Energy projects (to match fund their social funding)
- Health referrals, including working with doctors' surgeries and flu clinics
- Cross utility working and planning
- Back-up heating / medical equipment
- Electric heating

Proposed actions:

See actions 5, 15 & 19

32 *Expand Power Up Health to all areas*



Session 3: Innovative Approaches

WPD session:

- Energy Affordability Fund If we were to roll out the fund again, is there anything you would like to see us change?

Key feedback:

Stakeholders had some feedback on how the funding process could be improved:

- Give service providers more notice to give them time to prepare the application and find time to resource the project
- Consider the timing of the fund – service providers have already planned for their winter activities by this point, so it is too close to winter
- Provide examples of previous projects and outcomes
- Raise the amount of the fund available, as £20k doesn't enable service providers to hire someone to help deliver the project
- Make it clearer as to whether this new fund is in addition to what is already available as that was unclear

- Get projects to meet certain milestones and, if those milestones are being met, provide the option of extending the project
- Share the details of successful applications afterwards, so service providers can learn from best practice for next time
- Provide a clearer definition of what success looks like

Proposed actions:

- 33 *Give longer lead times and forward notice via web pages etc. of the fund being available*
- 34 *Time future funds to cover winter period*
- 35 *Provide details of previous success stories along with application form and promote via social media*
- 36 *Offer successful projects the option to extend*
- 37 *Publish case studies on line to share success and learning*