


<b>WPD CUSTOMER PANEL</b>		 <b>WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION</b> <i>Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales</i>
Last revised : 01.01.18	<b>Meeting Minutes</b>	Notes by: Nicki Johnson

<b>Date</b>	27.09.18	
<b>Time</b>	10.00-15.00	
<b>Venue</b>	WPD Derby Depot	
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>KA</b> - Kate Algate, Coventry Citizens' Advice <b>SG</b> - Sean Gauton, University of Nottingham <b>PM</b> - Pauline Mahon, vulnerable customer representative <b>GM</b> - Gabby Mallett, National Energy Foundation <b>DM</b> - Duncan McCombie, YES Energy Solutions <b>DPI</b> - Daksha Piparia, independent consultant <b>MR</b> - Michael Rowe, Institute of Engineering & Technology <b>JS</b> - Jim Spriggs, British Red Cross <b>DP</b> - David Penfold, Teal Hippo Ltd. <b>NR</b> - Nicola Roberts, South West Water <b>JR</b> - Julie Robinson, Coventry Citizens' Advice	<b>WPD:</b> <b>AS</b> - Alison Sleightholm <b>AW</b> - Alex Wilkes <b>KM</b> - Karen McCalman <b>NJ</b> - Nicki Johnson

## **1. WPD Performance Update**

AS updated the group on WPD's performance to date including details on safety, network performance, contact centre service and performance during the recent storms.

Daksha Piparia (DPi) asked if there any trends showing that near misses (accidents) happen during extreme weather. AS confirmed that actually there no evidence of this – near misses and LTIs have not happened in severe weather.

Duncan McCombie (DM) noted that the CML performance for East Midlands is a third better than the target and asked if the target was wrong (other licence areas have tighter targets). AS explained that WPD purchased two licenses in 2011 and the targets were focused on their averages at that time. WPD then focussed on improving performance and achieved great results.

DPi made the point that the more improvement WPD make, the higher the customer's bills could be and AS noted that this also means the less likely customers are to have power cuts – and those they do have can be shorter.

Gabby Mallett (GM) asked if WPD compares operational performance in storms with other DNOs. AS explained an internal review ensures we continue to refine performance. If weather events are extreme we might share resources and/or Ofgem may compare stats.

GM wondered if resource levels are too high. Are contact centre staff sitting waiting for calls for example? AS explained customers say the most important thing is talking to someone. WPD puts lots of resources in place but remains no more expensive than other DNOs. In addition, Contact Centre staff make proactive calls to customers on our Priority Services Register (PSR) so are not sitting idle.

Pauline Mahon (PM) asked at what point PSR calls are made? AW noted we endeavour to call within 3 hours when customers are off supply and in recent storms we know 90% of calls were made within

an hour. However, we don't want to make a baseline promise we can't achieve when weather is really severe. PM made the point that even answering calls in five seconds, on average, is good if this makes time for callers to contact more PSR customers proactively.

**ACTION – AW to provide the three-hour breakdown for how many customers were called in certain times during recent storms/incidents (at December's meeting).**

DM asked if WPD has seen an increase in calls since the new 105 number went live. AS explained we receive the same number of calls, just with a different source. The percentage of calls to 105 has increased now we have promoted it.

The group discussed social media and online chat. AW explained WPD has integrated the twitter feed on to its live network map. DPi asked if speed of response to tweets and webchats can be added to contact centre performance stats in future slides.

**ACTION – NJ to ensure they are captured next time.**

Kate Algate (KA) asked about the data cleanse success rate, what proactive steps WPD makes to improve contact details and whether we know *why* customers not reached could not be contacted. AS explained the biggest challenge is having good data and that's the reason for the data cleanse. AW confirmed we analyse why when contact isn't made and there's a process to make calls at different times and send letters, etc.

KA asked at what the point WPD remove customers. AW explained WPD uses a process agreed by the panel – we remove customers after no contact in three years – hence the customer has had two cleanse round attempts (call and letter). We write to customers explaining they will be removed but allowing them to return a freepost form and remain registered if they wish. The number of proactive calls to PSR customers increased last year despite less people being off supply because we are not wasting time calling customers who no longer need to be registered. Last time we wrote to 316,250 customers and removed 250,923.

GM asked about research to see who was on the register. AW explained 'Who's on the Wires' uses public data sets (age, pension, benefits) to establish gaps between registered and eligible customers. AW talked about referral networks being targeted towards low sign up levels.

PM noted that different people have a different understanding of vulnerable so there may be many customers on the register who don't really need help. AS noted that we do register temporary vulnerability and prioritise internally when providing support.

**ACTION – cover Who's on the Wires at a future panel**

DM asked how our customer satisfaction scores compare with John Lewis, First Direct, Amazon, etc. and if we are sharing this info with MPs. AS confirmed we are better than many of the top companies and explained we unpick the detailed raw data monthly and continue to improve.

There was some discussion around customers who have no contact as water companies survey them too. Whilst WPD don't do this (because customers don't pay us), AW did note that the planned outages category of the survey does target every customer who has an outage and not just those who contact us.

## **2. Strategic Priority: Government Legislation & Policy**

AS updated the group on WPDs previous and planned engagement with MPs/Government.

The Panel held discussions around innovation and new connecting businesses. David Penfold (DP) noted that bolt on costs are pushing prices up and customers don't always understand this. It was noted that WPD publishes accounts which do give customers information about its returns.

DM asked what WPD do with young stakeholders as this is another opportunity to be innovative. AS explained we do a lot with schools, apprentices and potential employees - but there is definitely a future customer's piece that will play into the next Business Plan. Social Media campaigns have huge power.

DM noted he attended a recent WPD local network investment event and found it really useful - local managers and planners broke information down to understandable levels.

DM noted that the closed session discussed Brexit and asked for one slide on Brexit next time – for example; how it affects larger assets that WPD import, would the exchange offer of resources in emergencies still stand and would equipment under, say a CE standard, still remain compliant?

**ACTION – Add a slide on Brexit for the next Panel.**

## **3. Stakeholder Engagement & Consumer Vulnerability (SECV)**

AW updated the group on the recent SECV results.

DM noted that WPD is driving innovation and achievement is WPD led so should be commended. DM asked if it is difficult to be innovative now and AW explained we did still get recognised this year for things we started five years ago. For example – our data cleanse operation is not new but it has grown. One million proactive calls lead to 15,229 referrals so naturally we want to keep it going. We do also innovate though, e.g. we used an idea from Uber this year!

DPI expressed a desire to see one PSR that functions online as a self-serve App, a bit like banks/financial institutions.

## **4. RIIO-ED2 enhanced engagement - forming a new Customer Engagement Group (CEG)**

AW and the Panel discussed the process of forming a new CEG and how it is progressing. The Panel discussed also the recruitment process for the new Chair.

GM suggested that equal opportunities are considered and applications be anonymised before WPD sees them. It was agreed by the Panel that AW's proposed process appears very robust and should ensure we get it right – especially given an external independent agency and senior independent chief exec will filter applicants at each level (and Ofgem will review at each stage). The Panel felt WPD's process was worthy of sharing with other DNOs and Ofgem and AW agreed he would happily do so.

**ACTION - AW to consider Peter Davies or recruitment agency attending interview.**

## **Connections Surgery**

GM noted that with the connections and Social Obligations split people can only attend one and asked for an overview of Connections and Social Obligations (one slide each) at the next panel. It was also noted that surgeries have lots to get through and can feel rushed so it was agreed surgeries will be 90 mins instead of 60 at future meetings.

**ACTION - summary of Connections and Social Obligations surgeries to be on the main agenda.**

**ACTION - NJ to alter surgeries to 90 minutes long in future.**

**ACTION - AS to ask a Non-Exec director to attend some/part of future Panels.**

**ACTION - AS to ask Matt Watson to attend the December connections surgery and talk about Project Entire (and Graham Halliday (DSO) in March).**

## **Social Obligations Surgery**

Panel members endorsed the suggestion to create some short PSR Videos and gave the following suggestions:

1. A mix of animation is ok (one member not keen on animation) - take steer from design agency
2. Video should get across: how to contact us, phone number, how to join the PSR, a customer getting support (ie benefit(s) of joining and resilience advice
3. Ensure tone is help IF customers want it - video shouldn't talk about vulnerability, e.g. "did you know we offer?"
4. Video should be 60 seconds long - two mins is too long
5. Categories could include: Dementia, medical dependence, communication needs, a separate video for agencies
6. Tone should consider that people looking might be carers and in industries so maybe focus on "do you know anyone", invite viewer to consider friends/family/neighbours
7. Talk about "we do this" rather than "if you have this 'disability'"
8. Consider entertainment value to ensure people watch – should add humour to make it worth watching
9. Don't forget to share with agencies such as WI, mother's union

**ACTION – WPD to create a suite of short videos to promote the PSR.**

Mike asked if WPD has you targeted the Salvation Army and religious charities?

**ACTION – KM to check religious charities are picked up within horizon scan (have they had invite to tender and/or the workshop) and consider reaching out to them with a referral invite.**

KM shared the plans/process for a new Innovation Fund and the Panel endorsed the approach. The Panel felt:

- £80 won't go far so follow the need rather than the licence areas.
- Minimum funding of £10k might ensure better 'value' projects than, say, ten £1k projects.

- WPD 'ring-fence money' for each licence area (to begin with) in the hope we can evenly share the funds.

**ACTION – WPD to run an £80k Innovation Fund competition.**

The Panel discussed advertising in doctor's surgeries. WPD have done this before and take up of the register was low but the Panel agreed WPD could target PSR hotspots and advertise on GP screens.

**ACTION – KM to propose GP surgery advertising in high eligibility/low sign up areas to WPD Comms Team.**

**Summary of actions (whole meeting)**

1. AW to provide 3 hour breakdown for how many customers were called in certain times during recent storms/incidents (at December's meeting).
2. NJ to add speed of twitter and webchat response to Contact Centre performance info.
3. AW to cover Who's on the Wires at a future panel.
4. A slide on Brexit will be included at the next Panel.
5. AW to consider Peter Davies or the recruitment agency attending CEG Chair interview.
6. Summary of Connections and Social Obligations overview to be on the main agenda next time.
7. NJ to ensure surgeries are 90 min long in future meetings.
8. AS to ask a non exec director to attend some/part of future panels.
9. AS to ask Matt Watson to attend the December connections surgery and cover Project Entire (and Graham Halliday cover DSO in March).
10. WPD to create a suite of short videos to promote the PSR.
11. KM to check religious charities are picked up within horizon scan (have they had invite to tender and/or the workshop) and consider reaching out to them with a referral invite.
12. WPD to run an £80k Innovation Fund competition.
13. KM to propose GP surgery advertising in high eligibility/low sign up areas to Comms.