



Part One Submission

Stakeholder and consumer vulnerability strategies



Jim Grayson
Distribution Cabinet Joint

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White Paper

White Paper

Welcome

Western Power Distribution (WPD) is the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) responsible for delivering electricity to eight million customers across the East and West Midlands, South West England and South Wales.

This is Western Power Distribution's **Part One submission** to Ofgem's Stakeholder Engagement & Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive for the regulatory year 2018/19.

2018/19 is the fourth year of the eight year Business Plan period called RIIO-ED1.

This stands for:

Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs (Electricity Distribution 1)

It is the regulatory framework set by Ofgem and is designed to drive clear outcomes and benefits for consumers, and provide companies with strong incentives to step up and meet the challenges of delivering a low carbon, sustainable energy sector.

Ofgem's SECV Incentive is an annual scheme, which encourages network companies to engage proactively with stakeholders in order to anticipate their needs and deliver a consumer focused, socially responsible and sustainable energy service.

WPD's submission to this incentive is divided into three parts:

Part 1: WPD's stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies and key evidence (demonstrating that we meet Ofgem's minimum requirements).

Part 2: Key outcomes resulting from WPD's stakeholder engagement activities.

Part 3: Key outcomes resulting from WPD's consumer vulnerability activities.

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1. OUTCOMES: QUESTIONS

WPD needs to communicate in a way that helps stakeholders to understand what we commit to deliver:

- Are WPD's six strategic outcomes still appropriate – are there any missing?
- Do you agree with how we propose to structure our strategic outcomes under Ofgem's new categories?

Meet the needs of consumers and network users	Maintain a safe and resilient network	Deliver an environmentally sustainable network
All customers in vulnerable situations supported	A safe and secure network for all (public and staff)	A smart, flexible & interconnected network (that is 'future proof')
Information accessible easily (& in the format customers want)	Keeping the lights on (with lowest ever levels of power cuts)	
Efficient, value for money service (with the lowest possible bills)		



1. Introduction

Quality, frequent and challenging engagement with stakeholders is crucial to the success of any organisation. WPD's goal is to be the best. To succeed, we must set a clear vision and purpose and follow robust planning processes to achieve them; all of which can only start with stakeholder engagement.



Why engagement is so important

WPD's purpose is to deliver an essential public service for customers. Robust consultation helps us by defining what our priorities must be - delivering invaluable insight about our operating environment and customer needs and allowing stakeholders to influence our future and revealing opportunities to improve.

At WPD we adopt the widest possible definition of a "stakeholder", seeking to engage with anyone that has an interest in, or is impacted by, our operations. This can be a challenge as each group brings a unique perspective and set of priorities. The key is to work with them to balance the various considerations and come to a consensus that works for all stakeholders wherever possible - their views represent the diversity of our eight million customers, all of whom pay for everything we do and therefore have a right to influence our service.

I am clear with everyone at WPD that, in order to be the best, we must always strive to be better. I reinforce this at face-to-face roadshows I conduct with every staff member each year. Where our performance places us at the top of a league table, we must pursue further improvement, as that's what our customers expect. Engagement is key to this process, and everyone at WPD must play a role. Projects may fail to deliver their maximum positive impact if stakeholder engagement is not recognised as an integral part of the process. WPD's services and plans are built around engagement, not vice versa.

Defining our strategy

This Part One submission sets out our strategies for stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability.

I personally review them every year, along with detailed action plans containing business owners, budgets, timescales and, most importantly, the intended outcomes for customers. I then monitor our progress each month. Our strategies are long-standing and consistent. Challenging external assessments each year benchmark our approach against those of other leading companies, while the greatest measure of success is the decisive, measurable actions we continue to deliver as a result. **In 2018/19 we delivered 290 outputs and positive outcomes for customers - set out in detail on pages 6 and 7.**

The consistency of our approach is important as it sets a clear purpose and set of expectations that all WPD staff can understand and buy into. Consistency must never be conflated with inflexibility. On the contrary, the mature nature of our strategies ensures they continue to drive great results even as the environment in which we operate changes. To chop and change our approach for change's sake would cause confusion for those delivering it and inconsistency for the stakeholders being engaged. By contrast, our commitment is an enduring one, where we build long-term relationships with existing stakeholders and move quickly to identify new groups as they emerge.

With so much engagement activity taking place within the wider utilities sector as part of the RIIO price control process I have heard it said that there is a risk of "stakeholder fatigue". In WPD's experience stakeholders continue to willingly engage as long as we make it as convenient as possible for them to do so and we demonstrate that their feedback leads to action. Fatigue comes when stakeholders feel they are continually giving the same messages and not being listened to - something we refuse to do.

Introducing this Part One submission

To demonstrate we meet Ofgem's minimum requirements for this incentive scheme, the first half of this Part One submission outlines how we approach engagement. It describes our strategies

and gives examples of the various engagement mechanisms we use. It also explains how we have put our strategic principle of "centrally coordinated, locally delivered" engagement into practice, with examples of senior-level commitment and delivery.

The second half of this submission focuses on the impact of our efforts. It is imperative that engagement moves beyond talking, to drive real change. We therefore detail the wide range of outputs we have delivered this year, and the positive outcomes they have brought to customers. While our commitment to action is unwavering, there are of course areas in which we cannot deliver actions in the exact ways stakeholders request them. We therefore provide examples of this, as well as the pilot schemes that didn't work perfectly the first time. We do all we can to minimise the number of times this happens, but the key is to learn from them quickly when they don't work in order to improve our approach in the long term. We also explain how we have sought to collaborate with others. Stakeholders tell us that, wherever possible, we must share ideas and co-deliver schemes with other utilities to avoid duplication for customers and we therefore work hard to do so. Stakeholders are also clear, however, that where others are slow to act we must demonstrate leadership and forge ahead. Finally, we provide examples of external surveys and accreditations that provide an independent view of our performance.

Overall, we currently face exciting challenges as a business, particularly as we transition from a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to a Distribution System Operator (DSO) and deliver a smarter, more flexible energy system. While such a shift brings some uncertainty and requires innovative, new ways of working, our ethos of involving stakeholders early and extensively at every stage of our decision-making can only stand us in good stead.

Phil Swift,
WPD Chief Executive

Key outputs we've delivered:



290 improvement actions taken



Business restructured to create standalone DSO team



Customer Service Excellence Standard - 44/57 'compliance plus' ratings



1.1 million customers proactively contacted during power cuts



BSI certificate - 6th year running



9.07/10 No 1 rating for customer satisfaction for the 8th year



£6.4m annual savings for 17,764 fuel poor customers



First ever EV strategy published



First DNO to appoint new CEG



154MW capacity unlocked by flexibility, saving £40m on reinforcement

2. Core engagement strategy

Our approach: A well-established core strategy, accompanied by an annual tactical strategy

WPD's underlying stakeholder engagement strategy is comprehensive, enduring and mature. It has been in place since 2007. This longevity has enabled it to become truly embedded in our operations such that it is a key component of our decision making processes. It is understood by staff so everyone at WPD knows what we are working to achieve and their role in delivering it. It is also proving agile and responsive to change.

It is of course necessary to review our strategy every year. The updated strategy is reviewed and signed-off by WPD's CEO and Directors. The core strategy for how we approach engagement and the fundamental drivers for why we do so are enduring. This strategy undergoes minor evolution each year and is set out below as part of the 'minimum requirements' for this incentive scheme. While the environment in which we operate changes, as do stakeholder priorities and expectations of WPD, our core approach to engagement is proving adaptable. Challenging external scrutiny and feedback (see page 9) ensures this is the case and that our approach is not simply "fit for purpose" but that it is ambitious and successful.

Building on these fundamental principles, a tactical strategy and action plan is developed for each specific year. This outlines *what* we will engage on and the immediate drivers for *why*, responding to the specific requirements of stakeholders today. Details of that strategy can be found in Part Two, page 2. A brief outline is included below.



Western Power Distribution has an in-depth understanding of its customers that has enabled it to design and provide services that meet the needs of the full range of customer groups. You regularly engage with customers, through a wide range of mechanisms, to ensure that the methods you use provide reliable and representative results. The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy clearly confirms that consultation with customers continues to be an integral component of service planning. Services continue to be delivered to a very high standard, with successful outcomes for the vast majority of customers. Customer Service Excellence Standard Assessor 2019



2.1 Why we engage

WPD wants to be the best DNO in the UK across every possible measure. Stakeholders are integral to this aspiration. Every decision we take must be with the goal of improvement and every commitment and target we set must be well justified. Fundamentally we engage for four reasons:

1. It's the right thing to do

- Customers pay for everything we do, so they have a right to shape our services
- Engagement ensures we understand and consistently address stakeholder priorities in a timely and effective way.

2. To hold us to account for our performance

- We must inform stakeholders about our performance in a transparent and detailed way so they can understand and review our delivery against our commitments
- We must ask them relevant questions to help drive continual improvement.

3. To identify and drive service improvements (and opportunities for co-working)

- Ensure we quickly respond to new priorities/ concerns and changes in the ways customer use the energy network
- Involve stakeholders at every stage of our transition to a DSO, enabling them to influence our plans and participate fully in (and benefit from) future, smart operations.

4. To influence our long-term decisions and justify our Business Plan

- Planning for the future can be uncertain, so engagement helps to ensure our plans are well justified and we invest in the right areas
- We must seek early input to develop our future Business Plan and identify long-term strategic priorities for the business.

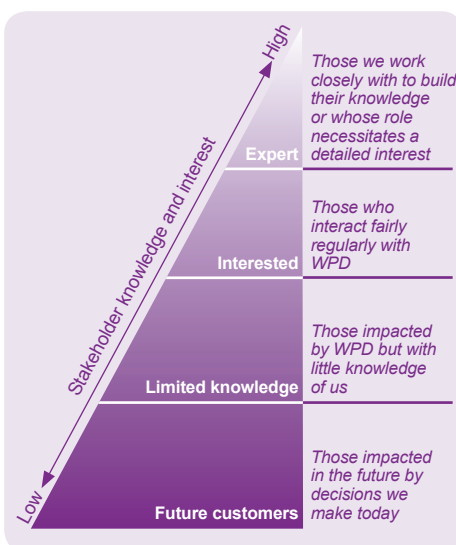
2.2 How we engage - Principles

Our drivers (stakeholders' perspective)

Wherever possible we favour face-to-face engagement with stakeholders, as it enables in-depth exploration of complex issues. It also allows us to discuss compromise solutions, which are sometimes necessary when balancing the views of one particular stakeholder group with those of our wider customer base. However, we recognise that the knowledge and interest of our stakeholders can vary, as can their willingness and availability to engage. We must therefore use a range of techniques and methods to achieve our key, overarching goals to deliver a stakeholder programme that is:

- **Inclusive:** of all stakeholders, including the hard-to-reach, by identifying both new stakeholder groups and changes in the needs of existing stakeholders.
- **Tailored:** using a wide range of methods to best suit each group's preferences, recognising that a "one-size-fits-all" approach never delivers quality, long-term engagement.

To achieve this we consider our stakeholders in relation to a knowledge and interest pyramid:



Our drivers (WPD's perspective)

There are key principles that underpin our stakeholder engagement approach internally:

- **Engagement is everyone's responsibility**
 - WPD's CEO and Directors lead by example
 - We follow a model of "centrally co-ordinated (Stakeholder and Social Obligations Manager) but locally delivered" (e.g. 52 WPD staff attended our annual workshops).
- **Engagement must always lead to action**
 - We build trust by acting on feedback quickly
 - We never host talking shops
 - We seek feedback that is challenging and not always easy to hear, but drives us to be better.

2.3 How we engage - Process

Stakeholder engagement is intrinsic to the way we do business - we cannot be the best without an extensive, enduring programme of delivery. It is a continual cycle:

Identify stakeholders

- Recognise emerging stakeholders
- Annually update a database of c.6,000 contacts, segmented by interest area.

Understand their needs

- Identify the range of interest areas, from investment priorities to connections to social obligations to the environment.

Make all feedback available

- Full transparency - publish all findings, along with a WPD response outlining actions we will take as a result.

Always engage with a purpose

- By defining clear objectives before we engage.

Use feedback to improve service

- Short-term: policies, procedures and projects
- Long-term: shape our priorities and business plans.

Use a range of methods

- E.g. expert panels, workshops, research, social media, webinars, surveys, podcasts, etc
- Tailor to best suit the audience.

Listen, act and measure the benefits

- Publish and consult on proposed actions following engagement
- Annually review our programme to ensure it delivers positive outcomes.

2.4 An updated tactical strategy for 2018/19

Stakeholders are engaged extensively in setting our strategy, not just as a consequence of its delivery. As their expectations and priorities change, so too must our engagement. For 2018/19 we've carried forward two long-standing focus areas, and added two new ones that reflect our wider transition to become a DSO, as well as an increasing desire from stakeholders for regionalised planning to reflect the bespoke needs of their communities:

- Deliver best-in-sector performance, exceeding customers' expectations
- Seek early input to develop our future Business Plan
- ***New*** Act swiftly to deliver a smart energy future, enabling customers to fully participate and benefit from DSO services
- ***New*** Strengthen our links to, and build trust with, the communities we serve.

Part Two outlines in detail our delivery against these priorities.

3. Core consumer vulnerability strategy

Embedded vulnerability strategy proves flexible and responsive to change

First developed with stakeholders in 2013, WPD's established strategy is leading to an understanding of the dynamic, multi-dimensional nature of vulnerability that deepens each year. It is proving flexible to changes in customer expectations and, most importantly, it is driving outputs and positive impacts for customers that grow year-on-year and that external accreditations tell us are delivering frontier levels of performance when compared across a range of industries.

Every year we return to stakeholders to review and update the strategy. We make additions where necessary - as we have done this year, as detailed below. We use their feedback to shape the development of an accompanying action plan that provides an up-to-date tactical approach to respond to specific issues we currently face, building on a stable and long-term core strategy. This approach is proving agile and responsive to change.



WPD's consumer vulnerability strategy is delivering high levels of continuous improvement, understanding of and commitment to the identification of customer vulnerability. It was clear the company are committed to developing services for vulnerable customers and have built on their recognition that vulnerability is often linked to fuel poverty. They continue to innovate in terms of engagement and actions to address customer vulnerability.
BSI Standard (BS18477) Assessor 2018

3.1 Core strategy

Stakeholders insist WPD's primary focus must always be to support customers in vulnerable situations during power cuts. Our efforts must therefore centre on the Priority Services Register (PSR) to ensure we have identified those that are likely to be in greatest need of support. While this cannot capture every possible customer with a potential vulnerability, it presents us with a valuable starting point to deliver appropriate, tailored support during emergencies.

However, simply holding a PSR alone is not enough. It must contain the right types of customers (reflecting a mature understanding of the wide range of factors that impact vulnerability). It must also contain accurate data that can be used effectively and we must take steps to include the hard-to-reach - not just the easy-to-find. After doing so, we must deliver a wide range of services so we provide holistic support - extending this, where appropriate, to associated issues such as fuel poverty.

3.2 Delivery strategy

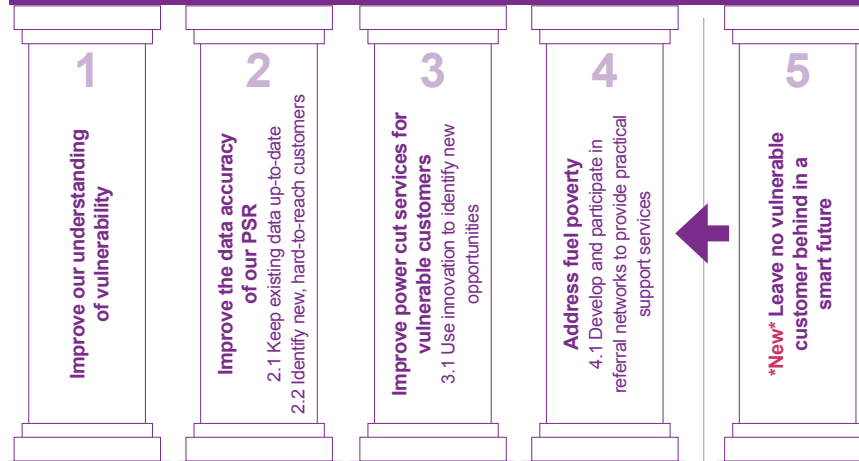
There are a number of delivery objectives and principles that underpin the core pillars of our strategy. Chief amongst these is partnership working. This is where our engagement develops beyond consultation to co-create and co-deliver projects in order to achieve better, more extensive outcomes for customers than if we had acted alone - utilising the expertise of a range of trusted, local experts. Our delivery programme has robust project management via WPD's Stakeholder and Social Obligations Manager who coordinates all activities. Performance is monitored via detailed monthly reporting to WPD's CEO and Directors, with all partners set specific, stretching targets against which they are measured.

▶ WPD's Stakeholder and Social Obligations Manager seeks feedback on WPD's existing strategy at our Consumer Vulnerability Conference in 2018, followed by roundtable discussions to set our future priorities



Priority Services Register (PSR)

A free, confidential register of customers who require priority assistance, for reasons including age, disability, medical dependencies on electricity, communication needs or temporary vulnerabilities. It enables us to offer targeted services such as proactive contact and welfare support during power cuts, bespoke notification ahead of planned work and password security schemes. WPD's PSR now contains 1.8m customers.



Partnerships

With local delivery experts to share their knowledge and approaches. Collaborate with the wider industry to ensure consistency	To increase PSR sign-ups with WPD directly, (ensuring accurate records from the outset). Build processes with suppliers, gas networks and water companies to share data	To deliver a wide range of appropriate welfare services that continually develop and innovate to reflect our deepening understanding of customer needs	By identifying existing, trusted outreach schemes. Work together to identify and support the hard-to-reach, targeting areas with the highest rates of fuel poverty
Relevant accreditation schemes and external assessments	Referral networks to target hard-to-reach customers	Bespoke, proactive contact for all power cuts	Tackle root causes of fuel poverty
Expert external training for WPD front-line staff	Regular, proactive contact with existing PSR customers	Embed our approach with all staff, including front-line engineers	End-to-end ownership for every referral
			Pilot projects initially and quickly scale-up and embed successes

3.3 New for 2018/19

In the same way that stakeholders added fuel poverty to our core strategy five years ago, stakeholders have highlighted the shift to a DSO (and the smart, flexibility services this brings) as having the potential to significantly impact vulnerable customers. They stressed the importance of WPD taking steps to ensure all customers can benefit and do not face detriment. We made a key addition to our strategy in 2018/19 to reflect this.

Our delivery strategy will evolve over time as the full range of smart services are developed and the impacts and opportunities for customers are fully understood.

We have set four initial delivery objectives, which are set out in greater detail in Part Three.

Know our customers and get the basics right

Help customers to lower their demand and re-engage them about energy

Deliver joined up services with others

Enable customers to participate in flexible energy services

4. Key engagement methods

We utilise a wide range of engagement mechanisms to ensure we are inclusive of all stakeholders and engage them in the most appropriate and effective ways. We tailor activities and events to suit the diverse knowledge and interest of our stakeholders, demonstrated by the pyramid matrix shown on page 2. Below are examples of our key engagement activities within each knowledge/interest level, as well as some of the outputs they have led to.

This year we have carried out more 'level 2' engagement for 'interested' stakeholders than ever before - including topic specific conferences on consumer vulnerability and electric vehicles. In 2018, stakeholders at our annual workshops told us that end users want to have a wider scope of influence in shaping our operations and plans for our next Business Plan. In response, we have also expanded our activities within 'levels 3 and 4', introducing a new online engagement forum to enable customers to participate in surveys; but in a meaningful way, with short videos and presentations providing vital context to inform their responses.

	Audience	Reach	Times a year	Tailored approach	Example outputs (detailed in Parts 2 and 3)
Level 1 - Expert	E.g. Customer Collaboration Panel Domestic/business customers Various (incl. B&Q) Vulnerable/fuel poor Citizens Advice Connections Major Energy Users Council Emergency resilience Police Health Mears Care (new) Government Welsh Assembly Innovation University of Nottingham Utilities South East Water (new)	38	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roundtable discussions Meeting with CEO/Director (with question and answer sessions) Detailed presentations (provided with transparency of WPD's performance and early sight of future plans) Policy/action plan drafting Topic-specific surgeries Independent leader Member only pre-meetings Budget for independent research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of key strategies and action plans Independent, member-written assurance report (alongside WPD's annual performance report) 24 actions taken including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer Vulnerability Conference held New PSR information videos created £80k innovation fund launched
	E.g. Customer Engagement Group (CEG) (new) Vulnerable/fuel poor Citizens Advice; CEO YES Energy Environment CEO Centre for Sustainable Energy Customer service Former CEO Ombudsman Services Local issues CEO Birmingham Local Enterprise Partnership Government Member of Parliament; Former Ofgem Director Innovation CEO Regen Utilities Former E.ON UK Director of Regulation Research Former Director at Accent Market Research	16	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Chair sets agenda Independent Secretariat manages governance Critical challenge of the WPD Business Plan Site visits Presentations and interviews with various senior managers Pre-reading and critical review of submitted WPD evidence/documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First DNO to appoint an Independent Chair (recruitment process with extensive independent oversight/expertise. 46 candidates considered) Wide range of expertise recruited (24 knowledge areas covered) First DNO CEG to meet Terms of Reference signed off by members On-boarding complete
Level 2 - Interested	E.g. Annual stakeholder workshops Domestic customers, small businesses, major energy users, parish councillors, local authorities (LA), consumer interest bodies, charities, connections providers, community energy groups, developers, trade associations, utilities, universities, environmental groups, storage providers, energy aggregators	330	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations from WPD and industry experts Roundtable discussions (facilitated by WPD Distribution Managers) Interactive voting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 actions taken including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed to publish two versions of our Business Plan for stakeholder review prior to submission to Ofgem Agreed content for WPD's social contract
	E.g. Distribution System Operator events Local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Ofgem, MPs, National Grid, community energy groups, storage providers, aggregators, academics, major energy users	18,200	167	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question and answer sessions with WPD senior managers Topic specific surgeries In-depth reviews of WPD's strategies/action plans Webinars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of 10 new 'Constraint Management Zones' New 'flexibility' website and map displaying where the network requires flexibility
	E.g. Local Network Investment workshops E.g. Electric Vehicle Conferences (new) Local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, developers, parish councillors	467	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local depot events Sessions with WPD Network Planners 'Take away' guides/information leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA development plans fed into WPD's Strategic Investment Options Reports First ever EV strategy published
	E.g. Consumer Vulnerability Conference (new) Local authorities, vulnerable customer representatives, community groups, emergency services and non-profit organisations/charities	31	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive demonstrations of WPD information and tools (e.g. flexibility mapping or social indicator data) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New social indicator mapping launched Affordable Warmth scheme piloted for 12 months
Level 3-4 - Limited	E.g. Research, surveys and awareness campaigns All customers: e.g. focus groups and surveys following planned interruptions, unplanned interruptions, connections (including major users and distributed generation), general enquiries and vulnerable customer services	28,675	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction surveys Research and focus groups Annual 'Power for Life' newsletter/media campaign Storm bulletins (new) Online engagement forum and voting Social media polls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple improvements leading to number one rating for customer satisfaction in the industry for eighth year 55% of all contact with customers now proactive Workshops sessions filmed and published online to enable 955 end users to participate in the consultation

5. Senior level commitment

Customers are at the heart of everything we do at WPD. In order to consistently deliver the services customers want and the improvements they expect, while also supporting changes in their behaviour and the ways they use energy, we must have a detailed and up-to-date understanding of what our customers' priorities are. This can only come from extensive engagement with both customers and other stakeholders, across all areas of WPD's business. WPD's culture is paramount to delivering this. We have three key commitments that we communicate to staff:

- Engagement is an essential part of our decision-making process
- Engagement must always lead to action
- Engagement is everyone's responsibility.

WPD's staff are key to delivering engagement as part of their day jobs. It is not something to be delivered by a single team that the business requests insight from when the need arises. While central co-ordination is needed, delivery of the engagement activities themselves falls to the staff who have final responsibility for acting on the feedback we receive. This is key to ensuring that engagement is truly embedded in our operations.



Lee Wallace, Safety and Training Manager

Safety is the number one priority in everything we do at WPD - it is at the forefront of every decision we make and the policies and procedures myself and my team introduce.

Stakeholder engagement is a key part of this process. During 2018, we undertook an independent climate safety survey of our staff. Satisfaction with training and competence was the highest scoring area in their feedback. Public safety, in particular, is paramount and as a result we have engaged hundreds of thousands of stakeholders via targeted outreach to schools, the farming community, haulage firms and contractors. During this year's Farming Safety Week a new social media campaign reached over 127,000 people.

Throughout 2018/19 we also:

- Held a safety conference for 70 trainees
- Completed four company safety conferences attended by 400 staff (including behavioural safety discussions and workshops)
- Ran four safety conferences which engaged 350 employees from our contractor organisations.

Engaging children is a priority. Taking advantage of the fact that children have a keen interest in gaming and technology, this year we achieved an industry first, by launching a new virtual reality (VR) safety experience to help children understand the dangers of electricity in an active and immersive way. Stakeholders told us that our safety offering, which historically focused on flying kites and playing ballgames near to substations and electrical equipment, needed to be updated. Viewers are guided through a story of a group of teenagers having fun flying a drone which gets lost in an electricity substation. They decide to put themselves in a dangerous situation, so the film highlights the hazards that should be avoided.



Our safety visits incorporate messages about substation safety, smart networks and information on helping vulnerable customers to join our Priority Services Register. In total we reached 84,707 students through 3,683 educational sessions in 2018/19.

5.3 An independent view

"WPD's culture continues to be highly customer-focused, with a strong emphasis on team working and the use of customer insight to improve service delivery. There is strong leadership and appropriate policies and procedures to support staff in delivering consistently high levels of performance. Senior managers empower and encourage all staff to play a role in engagement and actively promote the customer focused culture via regular staff meetings, workshops and training events. The Chief Executive's annual staff roadshow takes the customer service message to all 6,500 staff in a series of events across our region. Staff are encouraged to take ownership for engaging stakeholders and using the feedback received to drive decisions." Customer Service Excellence Standard Assessor 2019

5.1 Executive team lead by example

2018 was a challenging time for WPD, with the passing of Robert Symons, former Chief Executive, in November. Robert had been CEO for 18 years and was instrumental in the customer-first culture WPD prides itself on. His successor, Phil Swift, had worked for Robert since joining the company in 1992, most recently as Operations Director since 2013. This has been key to ensuring the continuity of WPD's well-established ethos and passion for customer service and stakeholder engagement.

Leading by example is key to this. Phil personally attends our Customer Collaboration Panel, Connections Steering Group, new Customer Engagement Group (CEG) and our annual stakeholder workshops, as well as leading a wide range of bilateral meetings including events with MPs, Ofgem, BEIS and the Health and Safety Executive.



WPD's Directors are also involved extensively in our programme. For example, WPD's Resources and External Affairs Director held sessions with stakeholders on the creation of a WPD "social contract" as part of our RII0-ED2 planning. In addition, WPD's new Operations Director led an innovative new approach to engage parliamentarians, civil servants and key policy makers via a "Dragon's Den" style event. This allowed the showcasing of innovative smart network schemes and prompted discussion on key policy decisions required to facilitate their full-scale roll out.



WPD's CEO and Directors annually review WPD's stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies. This senior level commitment ensures there are clear decision making arrangements within the company and a top-down approach to deliver and embed engagement. WPD's culture empowers staff to act on stakeholder feedback in a timely and effective manner. WPD's structure, based around local depots and managers with responsibility for all aspects of service delivery within specific geographic regions, ensures employees are close to the customer at all times and recognise the direct impact they have on the services and improvements we deliver.

5.2 Embedded delivery



Rebecca Betty, Contact Centre Manager, Cardiff

WPD's Contact Centre handled over 2.1 million contacts with customers last year with our highest ever overall levels of satisfaction. Key to this achievement

is listening to stakeholders. I personally lead engagement with a host of customers and agencies and then have responsibility for making changes as a result of their feedback. Customer research revealed that customers wanted more proactive contact in emergencies. This led my team to take a number of steps to improve the accuracy of the details we hold on customers, including creating stand-alone data cleanse projects and expanding the number of mobile phone records we hold.

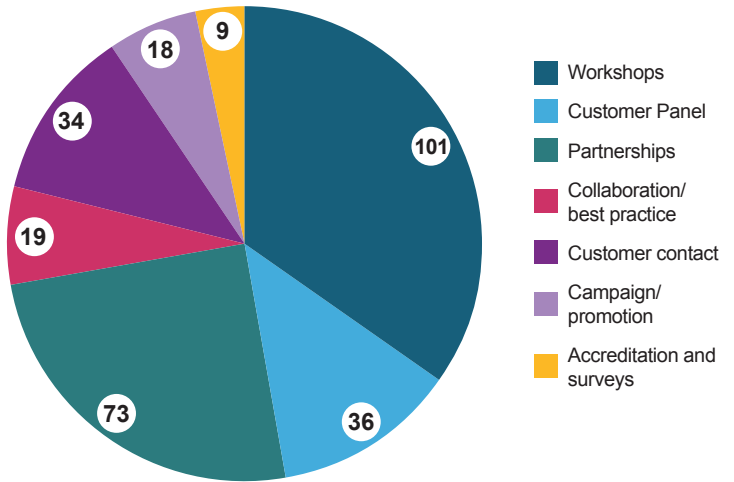
In 2018/19 the impact was 406,024 proactive calls to customers during power cuts. Stakeholder engagement is also key to ensuring my team respond in the most appropriate way and provide a holistic service to meet the individual needs of the customers we deal with. Key to this is giving my staff the confidence and knowledge to identify the customer's needs and the right tools to then deliver an empathetic, tailored service. As a result, I secured training from a range of our partner agencies in 2018/19 on issues including Parkinson's disease, dementia, cancer and depression.

Stakeholders have also told me they want to be given a greater choice of how they access updates during power cuts. In the last year I was involved in improvements to our power cut map which provides information on live fault data and estimated restoration times. It now also includes severe weather updates, links to our Twitter feed and priority services information. The map had 1.6 million hits in 2018/19 and after returning to stakeholders to seek their views, it is now being further developed to send automated text messages when customers report a power cut. The online tool has also been improved to include a smart system to save a customer from reporting a fault we are already aware of. This has resulted in a 50% drop in our webchat sessions from customers who stated they could not find the information they needed.

6. Key outcomes delivered

In the last year we engaged over 35,000 stakeholders (excluding surveys) at around 500 events, using a wide range of mechanisms. We believe that engagement activities are only worthwhile if they result in action and improved outcomes for customers.

WPD's total outcomes split by the engagement method to achieve them:



In 2018/19 our engagement activities led to 290 positive outcomes for customers

We have invested £4.8 million delivering these outcomes - an 11% increase on 2017/18.

The extensive research we carry out with customers (see page 10) demonstrates they place significant value on the improvements we have delivered. Furthermore, as our customer valuation research reveals (see Part Two, page 3 and Part Three, page 3), WPD's programme as a whole has delivered a cost benefit of at least £11.52 per customer.

It is not practical to list all 290 outcomes here, but we have published a full table at www.westernpower.co.uk/outputs. Instead, we have provided key examples below, split by stakeholder groups/segments. We have indicated the number of initiatives that are new, enhanced or embedded, and in all cases have been clear which engagement mechanism drove each output and corresponding outcome. Reflecting the drivers set out in our stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies, the greatest number of new initiatives have been delivered in the areas of 'smart networks' and 'vulnerable customers'.

Overall:

Examples:

Stakeholder groups and impact summary

Domestic, business, utilities/industry and parish councils

Total cost: £1.2m

Total outputs: 72

Breakdown:

■ New ■ Enhanced ■ Embedded

Vulnerable, PSR, hard-to-reach and fuel poor

Total cost: £2.4m

Total outputs: 93

Breakdown:

■ New ■ Enhanced ■ Embedded

Source	Cost	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)
Workshops	£227k	Embedded: Six stakeholder workshops - engaged with 330 stakeholders (led to 25 actions)	E.g. agreed a five-stage engagement process for RIIO-ED2 Business Plan; Established components of, and reporting mechanisms for, WPD's social contract; identified 16 strategic priorities for RIIO-ED2
Customer Panel	-	Embedded: Quarterly Customer Collaboration Panel (CCP) meetings held - new members include Mears Group (carers service) and Telford and Wrekin Council (led to 24 actions)	E.g. member-written assurance report provided independent review of WPD engagement and actions; Consumer Vulnerability conference shared new open-sourced social indicator mapping with key partners
Customer contact	£56k	Embedded: 1.1m proactive customer contacts during power cuts (647,063 texts and 406,024 calls, of which 41% (166,783) were to PSR customers)	55% of all contact is now proactive, ensuring customers receive updates with minimal effort. Mobile phone records held for 65% of customers to enable updates by text if preferred
Customer contact	-	New: Online engagement portal launched	Allows more end-user customers, who cannot attend workshops in person, to participate (extra 955 responses)
Customer Panel	£121k	New: Customer Engagement Group established (14 members, Chair and independent Secretariat). Extensive recruitment process with independent oversight	First DNO CEG to be established. Member knowledge spans every stakeholder expertise area to ensure robust scrutiny of the RIIO-ED2 Business Plan
Customer contact	£38k	New: Interruption Comms Hub launched	Informs media and interested customers of potentially high profile works via an interactive online map and email alerts
Customer contact	-	Enhanced: Updated PSR policy allows customers to set individual time periods to receive call-backs from WPD	Allows customers with sleep apnoea, for example, to receive proactive calls during overnight power cuts when ordinarily calls don't take place due to unsociable hours
Customer contact	£11k	Enhanced: Redesigned webpages for our RIIO-ED1 Performance Reporting	Following stakeholder feedback website has been improved to ensure pages are in a clear and digestible format. 2,141 hits since October 2018
Customer Panel	-	Enhanced: 'ReciteMe' online feature now available on WPD's careers website	Improved website accessibility, allowing more applications from diverse backgrounds. The function allows translation, including 103 languages, provision of text to speech and larger font. 2,412 uses in 2018/19
Partnerships	£590k	Embedded: Four 'Power Up' fuel poverty referral schemes	8,693 customers supported, who saved £1.8m a year
Partnerships	£340k	Embedded: Four 'Affordable Warmth' fuel poverty collaboration schemes	6,478 customers supported, who saved £3.9m a year
Survey	£28k	Embedded: 1,402 vulnerable customers surveyed and new 'happiness' index introduced	Tracks satisfaction and identifies service improvements to WPD's PSR data cleanse process and fuel poverty schemes
Partnerships	£12k	New: "SAVE Energy" social landlord project with Walsall Housing	539 customers supported with smart meter advice and fuel poverty measures, leading them to save £96k a year
Partnerships	£12k	New: Consumer Vulnerability Conference (led to 37 actions)	E.g. introduction of a scheme with a mental health organisation to sign up customers to the PSR and provide training for WPD's contact centre staff
Partnerships	£80k	New: Energy Affordability Innovation Fund - supported six new projects including working with health organisations and off-gas grid customers	925 customers supported to save £269k a year
Customer contact	£1.1m	Enhanced: Proactively contacted 1.1m PSR customers (946,127 data cleanse team, 166,783 during power cuts)	30% of records updated, enabling more proactive and targeted support to PSR customers in power cuts
Collaboration/best practice	-	Enhanced: Data share trials in place with five water companies as we work towards two-way sharing industry wide	Provides a one-stop-shop service for customers, so they only have to register with one company for all their utility services. 36,832 records shared to date
Partnerships	-	Enhanced: 24 new PSR referral networks (now 87 in total)	A wide range of agencies are identifying hard-to-reach customers via relevant frontline services. Contributed to 29,051 direct sign-ups in 2018/19

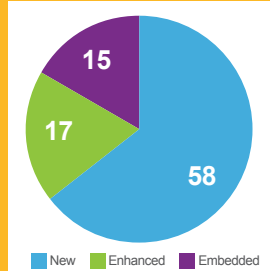
Stakeholder groups and impact summary

Smart networks, connections, innovation, DSO, storage, electric vehicles, community energy

Total cost: £536k

Total outputs: 90

Breakdown:

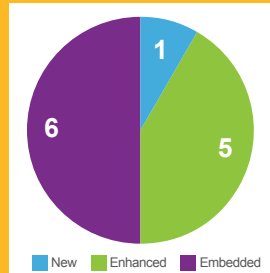


Emergency response, resilience and security

Total cost: £106k

Total outputs: 12

Breakdown:

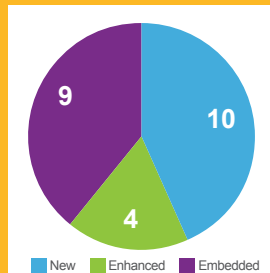


Other: e.g. education, environment, Government and staff

Total cost: £566k

Total outputs: 23

Breakdown:



Source	Cost	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)
Customer contact	-	Embedded: Alternative connections offers now standard process for all connections in constrained areas	Customers able to connect quicker and cheaper in constrained areas (by accepting a form of curtailment rather than fund conventional network reinforcement.) Unlocked up to 1.8GW (50% increase on 2017/18). Total of 3GW achieved in last two years
Workshops	-	Embedded: Published updated Distribution System Operability Framework	Identifying issues that arise at the boundary between distribution and transmission, leading to more efficient operations and enabling more flexibility services
Collaboration/best practice	-	Embedded: Published WPD's second Regional Development Plan following collaboration with National Grid	Coordinated planning ensures activities on one network do not impose constraints on the other. This enables us to provide the best solution for a customer connection
Workshops	£71k	New: Electric vehicle (EV) conferences with 267 stakeholders (led to 10 actions)	Helping local authorities develop plans to facilitate projected volumes of EVs. WPD's pioneering strategy to install three-phase supply cables in all new build developments will enable 175% quicker EV charging
Workshops	£50k	New: Network Flexibility Map and Flexible Power website developed including valuation tool and flexibility signposting	Enabling customers to determine where flexibility services are currently required and likely to be needed in the future, to aid their planning. 7,106 website hits in the first two months alone
Workshops	£8k	New: Held eight webinars on future energy scenarios with 265 stakeholders	Enabling stakeholders to better understand, and raise questions about, WPD's detailed forecasts for future energy use (demand, generation, storage) and our new 'Flexible Power' services
Workshops	-	Enhanced: 10 new Constraint Management Zones launched (takes the total to 13)	Telemetry and remote automation installed enables us to operate the network dynamically, allowing flexibility as an alternative to expensive reinforcement. Clear information has been published on zone locations and times when WPD requires flexibility so providers can consider opportunities to earn revenue. 154MW of capacity unlocked, deferring up to £40m of load related reinforcement
Workshops	£59k	Enhanced: Local investment workshops held in every region for over 200 stakeholders	Enabling stakeholders to meet local Distribution Managers and Network Planners to understand our local network investment plans, discuss the impacts of specific schemes and deliver better coordinated local development plans
Workshops	£24k	Enhanced: Community energy communication tools including three new animation videos and written case studies	Explain different innovative business models in simple terms, tailored specifically for a community energy audience. 5,784 views in 2018/19
Partnerships	-	Embedded: Helicopter support offered to Local Resilience Forums	Allows resilience partners to utilise our fleet of helicopters for food drops or similar to support customers who are isolated as a result of severe weather
Partnerships	£14k	Embedded: British Red Cross welfare support extended to planned power cuts as well as unplanned power cuts. Service offered to all IDNOs (Independent Distribution Network Operators)	Nine WPD call outs to date in 2018/19 assisted 71 vulnerable customers. GTC (an IDNO) used the service for the first time in October with WPD managing support on their behalf during the incident - 10 customers assisted
Partnerships	£13k	Embedded: 1,268 power cut crisis packs distributed	Free, practical support (items useful in a power cut) provided for vulnerable customers to increase their resilience ahead of a power cut. Distributed via WPD field staff and partner agencies
Customer contact	£5k	New: Website 'storm mode' launched	Simplified homepage permanently displays our power cut map, link to PSR information/form and live power cut storm reports (e.g. numbers of customers off supply). Improving access to vital information during widespread disruption
Customer contact	£1k	Enhanced: Improved, tailored text messages sent to customers after power cuts	Helping to better inform customers about power cuts affecting them. 51,422 sent. Customers receive an apology and explanation of the reasons for the power cut, including links to register for WPD's PSR ahead of any future incidents
Customer contact	£43k	Enhanced: Improved online power cut map with integrated twitter feed messages	Allows quick and easy reporting of power cuts and access to live and updated fault information. 1.6m hits in 2018/19
Partnerships	-	Enhanced: Twelve Fire and Rescue Service partnerships established to promote PSR & resilience advice	Two-way referrals processes to identify customers in vulnerable situations and ensure they receive support. WPD receives referrals in to the PSR from Fire and Rescue teams and PSR customers are referred out by WPD to receive a free home fire safety check (6,661 in 2018/19)
Survey	£68k	Embedded: 2,500 staff participated in an annual satisfaction survey and New independent and anonymous 'safety climate' survey	Engaging staff about WPD's commitments and their role in delivery. Feedback improves the working environment, reducing staff turnover and, in turn, giving customers a stable, highly skilled workforce. Gained an understanding of employee opinions regarding safety. Action plan developed to address areas of learning
Campaign/promotion	-	Embedded: 26 political meetings and MP visits to meet their WPD local Distribution Manager	Providing awareness and advice to MPs about issues such as local investment, WPD's costs and profits and consumer vulnerability
Partnerships	£284k	Embedded: 306 charitable and non-charitable organisations helped (e.g. wildlife and environment improvement projects funded)	E.g. bursary support for underprivileged children involved with Duke of Edinburgh awards, a British Heart Foundation initiative to provide CPR kits in schools and Wildlife Trust partnerships in Bath and Gloucester
Campaign/promotion	£15k	New: Hosted Dragon's Den style event for civil servants, BEIS and parliamentary researchers	Showcasing innovative approaches to deliver smart networks, spanning various components of the low carbon transition (including transport, heat and storage) and discussing policy requirements to aid full roll-out
Customer Panel	£40k	New: Careers website launched following review by our Customer Collaboration Panel	Making the application process simpler and promoting diversity - with online applications, FAQs, a wide range of job case studies and profiles (e.g. to attract more female engineers) and job alerts
Campaign/promotion	£75k	New: ECOBOT energy efficiency competition launched for schools. £75k fund made available	Helping schools reduce their energy consumption and, in turn, costs. It included a range of fun challenges for primary-school children to save energy. 412 registered schools had to log electricity consumption and achieve a reduction in their energy use over a four month window to earn up to £750
Partnerships	£24k	Enhanced: Expanded schools education programme to include energy efficiency, smart networks and PSR	Broadening the range of information provided to 84,707 children through 3,683 educational sessions
Campaign/promotion	£3k	Enhanced: Craft apprenticeship scheme recruitment campaign	1,586 applications received with the social media campaign reaching 1.1 million people

7. Collaborative working

WPD's stakeholders are clear that we must establish close working relationships with other utilities and network operators, in order to collaboratively tackle industry-wide issues. Doing so ensures that we deliver improvements in a joined-up, efficient way. As part of this, it is important we share best practice to inform and refine our approach and roll-out successful approaches more widely. We offer full transparency in our engagement with others, disclosing our action plans, delivery models, costs and outcomes.

We work hard to ensure collaboration extends beyond sharing ideas. Where we identify common challenges, we encourage action and jointly-delivered outputs. Often this enables us to go further than if we had acted alone, and ensures consistency and efficiency for customers. For example, this year we have:

- Saved 335 customers £87k through a joint fuel poverty trial with Scotia Gas, a Gas Distribution Network (GDN) (see Part Three, page 9)
- Hosted meetings with water companies to devise data sharing processes for PSR customers. Through collaboration we are making the aspiration of a 'one-stop-shop' service for PSR customers a reality, making it much easier for customers to register to receive bespoke, tailored assistance across all their utility providers via one registration (See Part Three, page 9).

7.1 Sharing best practice

This table summarises the collaboration and best practice sharing we have undertaken with industry and government stakeholders in 2018/19:

	DNOs	GDNs	Northern Ireland Electricity	National Grid ET	Suppliers	Anglian Water	Severn Trent Water	Bristol Water	South Staffs Water	South West Water	Wessex Water	Welsh Water	Thames Water	South East Water	Consumer Council for Water	UK Regulators	Government/MPs	Local authorities	Telecoms Industry
Customer Panels/CEG	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	
Business Plan reporting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
Long-term priorities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	
DSO/future networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	✓
RiIO-ED2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	
Electric vehicles	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	✓	✓	
Building a social contract	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓								✓	
Network charging	✓		✓		✓												✓		
Losses and innovation	✓	✓		✓						✓						✓		✓	
Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓	✓	
PSR services	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PSR data sharing	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joint research	✓																		
Customer service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fuel poverty/vulnerability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Connections and Distributed Generation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						✓	✓	✓	✓
Community energy	✓																		
Safety	✓															✓	✓		

7.2 Delivering collaborative outcomes

The need: Facilitating increased volumes of renewable generation is one of the biggest changes electricity networks have experienced in decades. It presents a range of commercial and technical engineering challenges spanning every voltage level - all of which must be met without compromising the network reliability customers have come to expect. Rather than conduct planning in isolation, focused solely on the impact on our distribution system, we joined forces with National Grid to develop a whole system approach. This ensures we work to consistent scenarios, avoid duplication of effort and deliver better solutions to network problems.

Aims: We have started in areas where our joint modelling suggests we may have significant constraints earliest. For example, in the South West where there has been the largest uptake in solar PV

E.g. Collaboration with National Grid on whole system planning delivers first ever joint Regional Development Plans

(photovoltaic) generation in the UK, without action the network is set to face significant issues by 2020. The programme therefore sought to:

- Analyse the requirements and capabilities of the network
- Ensure future capacity requirements can be managed
- Examine the most cost-effective way of enabling renewable generation to connect to the whole network.

Challenges: The first set of challenges considered were technical. Traditional one-way power flows provide a straight-forward handover from the transmission to the distribution network. New two-way power flows, however, make the interaction between the two networks more complex. Analysis revealed that the logical and traditional solution for an issue

on one network could create problems on the other.

Outcomes:

The increased understanding of this interaction and development of appropriate solutions, will ultimately enable an increased number of connections at minimal cost to customers and risk to reliability.

The table below sets out other benefits from this specific joint project. It also includes examples from a number of other collaborations WPD has undertaken in the last 12 months:



Partner	Action as a result of collaboration (output)	Benefit (outcome)
National Grid (see above)	New: Developed a single-stage generation connection process for both companies	Quicker, more efficient connections for customers
	New: Securely linked up our control rooms to exchange information across the transmission and distribution boundary	Reduces the risk of conflicting actions on each network, identify opportunities for service optimisation and facilitate access to wider markets. All this will help to reduce the system operation costs, reducing customer bills
	Enhanced: Shared findings with other network companies via the Energy Networks Association's Open Networks project	Encouraged replication for networks customers across Great Britain
All DNOs	Enhanced: 'Look Out Look Up!' safety campaign during farming safety week reached over 127,000 people	Encouraged farmers to plan ahead to work safely, avoid contact with overhead power lines and to know what to do if contact is made
	Enhanced: National 'Be Winter Ready' campaign reached 31,193 customers	Increased customer resilience ahead of winter
	Enhanced: Joint 'Willingness to Pay' research	Identified the social value to customers of 18 potential improvement actions all networks can deliver across customer service, vulnerability, resilience, smart networks and sustainability. We shared costs to deliver this key insight and derived consistent values across all GB customers for the first time. These can be used to cost benefit key projects
Local authorities	New: First ever Greater Lincolnshire Energy Strategy developed	Delivered joined-up energy infrastructure planning up to 2050, combining WPD's network plans with local development aspirations. Enables interested parties to understand infrastructure requirements for major new housing developments and match this to decentralised energy generation to enhance the region's energy resilience

8. Unsuccessful projects

We work hard to always take action as a result of stakeholder feedback, but it is not always possible to respond in the ways specifically requested by stakeholders, especially when different groups deliver conflicting feedback. When we act, despite our best intentions we don't always get things right. A range of such examples is set out below. Our cyclical approach to engagement is key here - we return to stakeholders after action is taken to assess the impact and continually revisit stakeholder priorities, which helps us to quickly identify when things haven't gone as intended. We then work with stakeholders to learn lessons and devise alternative approaches. Pilot schemes are used to test and maximise the reach, impact, social value and cost benefit of projects before they are scaled up. If they don't deliver the required outcomes they are not taken forward or are re-scoped and trialled again.

Initial action	Learning and next steps
WPD's new flexibility services (see Part Two, page 7) initially set a minimum threshold that participants must offer over 100kW of generation (needed in order to make a significant enough impact in light of the scale of constraints we were dealing with)	WPD's DSO consultation specifically for community energy (CE) revealed we had set the lower limit too high, therefore excluding CE groups from participating. They told us we needed to be more inclusive of small-scale generation that, through community aggregation and local supply business models, can provide the combined levels of flexibility to make an impact in constrained zones. As a result, WPD has removed the threshold for entry for all flexibility zones
WPD's flexibility services were first developed with larger industrial and commercial customers. In doing so, we set up processes that weren't clear on the precise revenues available, as this granularity wasn't required for customers of this size. We were told this made it difficult for small providers to build a business case without any certainty of the guaranteed incomes possible	We learned from this that we must provide clarity at an early stage for flexibility providers of all sizes. We must also provide support for smaller generators to be able to "stack" services with other operators of Distributed Energy Resource assets, in order to earn revenue by providing combined flexibility services. WPD launched a new website for potential flexibility providers, which includes a section tailored specifically to communities and cooperatives and includes a value calculator tool to estimate the potential revenues available based on their specific availability and capacity
Historically, new connections customers were able to reserve demand capacity on the network indefinitely by accepting an offer. As WPD began to encounter network constraints in a number of areas, we set a cap of three years before an offer of demand capacity was withdrawn following consultation with connections customers including our Connections Steering Group	These queue management processes meet the needs of smaller connections customers by avoiding larger providers reserving capacity for long periods without any works taking place. Doing so results in high quotations for customers further down the queue to fund reinforcement works despite capacity not yet being utilised, only reserved. However, Independent Distribution Network Operators are unhappy with the cap and state it restricts their long-term development capabilities. When we consulted again in 2018 we still received conflicting feedback. Smaller providers compellingly stated that you cannot secure a price for building materials such as bricks to be used in 20 years, so it is unfair to expect the terms for your connection that far ahead. As a compromise, we have extended the reservation period to five years, but are reviewing the progression milestones (that must be met within that period without offers being withdrawn) with stakeholders. For IDNOs that still wish to reserve as far as 20 years ahead we now offer the option to do so if they pay contributions in advance to secure that capacity
Stakeholders recommended we partner with trusted local authority services for vulnerable customers including free bus pass and blue badge renewals. We funded a trial in Bristol and included an innovative extension to fund energy efficiency enabling works (such as loft clearance) for these customers	A combination of stretched services and data protection regulation concerns meant the project didn't achieve the desired outcomes or volumes (see Part Three, page 6). Recognising this half-way through the project period, we worked with stakeholders to devise a solution to achieve some value from the funding. Approaching the customers that had been successfully identified, we gained informed consent to refer them to our existing Power Up schemes, achieving financial savings as a result of WPD's established fuel poverty interventions

9. Audit and accreditation

Accreditations such as the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard and the British Standards Institution (BSI) standard for Inclusive Service Provision (BS18477) provide an independent, external view of our performance and are integral to the process to update our strategies each year. Our continued use of these accreditations is not solely to validate the performance we've delivered; they provide critical evaluation, scrutiny, and frank feedback. This, in turn, helps us to view our programme in a more objective way in order to identify ways to drive continual improvement. Moreover, benchmarking ourselves with leading companies across a range of other utilities and wider service sectors generates new ideas and leads us to implement specific changes as a direct result and recommendations from the expert assessors each year.

9.1 CSE Standard

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



Every year WPD undergoes a rigorous two-day audit by an independent assessor. Split across five criteria, 57 service elements are assessed and awarded one of four ratings: 'Compliance Plus' (indicating UK-wide best practice); 'Compliance'; 'Partial Compliance'; or, 'Non Compliance'.

CSE



The assessor reviews WPD's stakeholder and vulnerability strategies, policies and improvement plans, stakeholder engagement delivery (including engagement with hard-to-reach customers), published information, website and customer contact methods. In 2018, they:

- Examined over 100 items of evidence
- Reviewed inbound (power cut) and proactive outbound (PSR data cleanse) call handling
- Interviewed senior managers
- Held closed sessions with field staff
- Held a closed session with a member of WPD's Customer Collaboration Panel.

Result:

44/57 "COMPLIANCE PLUS" RATINGS

Top performer in the UK (out of 590 companies)

"WPD is notable for having been continuously accredited to the Charter Mark/CSE Standard since its inception in 1992, which is an outstanding achievement. This is reflected in the impressive total of 44 Compliance Plus elements, which includes one new one this year for 3.2.4 ('Information provided to customers is accurate and complete'). There are no partial or non-compliant elements." - CSE Assessor

9.2 BSI Standard

A Call Handler's perspective:

Andrew Broughton, WPD Contact Centre

"I work in WPD's Midlands Contact Centre in Castle Donington where I receive and make calls relating to power cuts, connections and general enquiries.

WPD's two contact centres collectively handled over two million contacts in 2018/19.

I personally met with the BSI Assessor in 2019 as part of this year's three-day audit, which also included interviews with other call handlers, field staff at our local Derby depot, senior managers and Directors. Over 50 pieces of evidence were examined. In total, we are assessed against 36 elements, including:

- How we meet individual vulnerability needs
- Policies, procedures and standards of service
- Improved services and accessibility as a result of engagement
- Quality of published information
- Partnership working
- Customer satisfaction and training.

Result:

6th YEAR OF FULL COMPLIANCE

Longest of any assessed company in the UK



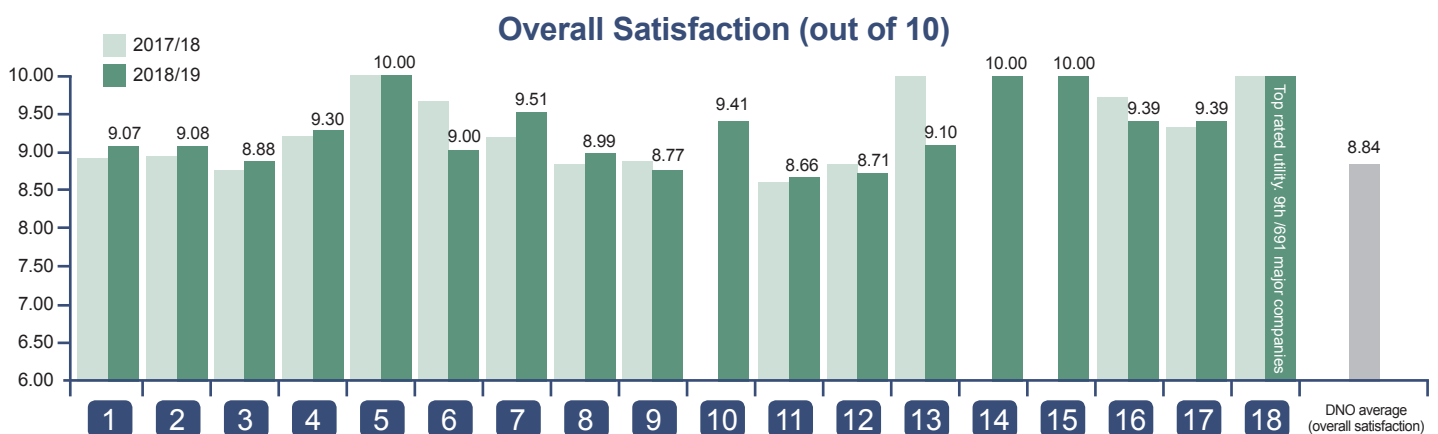
10. Measuring our impact

The goal of all WPD's stakeholder engagement activities is simple - to improve our services in order to be recognised by customers as the best DNO in the UK. Our Part One, Two and Three submissions demonstrate that engagement is embedded in our business operations, drives decisions and leads to the delivery of a huge number of outputs. But it is vital that we go one step further and measure the effectiveness of these outputs by considering the positive benefits they lead to. To do so, we seek honest and objective feedback from customers and stakeholders. Our stakeholder engagement considers a wide breadth of groups, so our satisfaction research must be similarly broad to provide meaningful assurance that our actions had the required, positive impact.

In addition to mandatory industry customer satisfaction measures, which saw 21,606 WPD customers surveyed in 2018/19, we voluntarily commission extensive additional surveys covering our major services and projects. This saw us survey a further 7,069 customers. As well as testing their satisfaction with our actions, we also sought views on the effectiveness of our engagement mechanisms in the first place, in order to refine our approach in the future. 2018/19 saw more 'topic specific' engagement than ever before, including webinars (e.g. on our future energy scenarios, see Part Two, page 6), an online engagement portal (broadening out our business planning face-to-face workshops to a wider audience of end users, see Part Two, page 4) and a Consumer Vulnerability Conference showcasing our extensive, publically-available social indicator mapping (see Part Three, page 6).

In total, 28,675 WPD customers were surveyed in 2018/19 and a summary of their satisfaction levels is detailed below:

Satisfaction survey		Customers	Example actions it measures the impact of	More detail
1	Overall customer satisfaction	21,606	All outputs	Part 1, page 6-7
2	- Power cuts		Service improvements (e.g. from Customer Collaboration Panel feedback)	Part 2, page 5
3	- Connections		Innovative alternative connection offers	Part 2, page 7
4	- General enquiries		Improved connections pre-application information (capacity, charges, application process, etc.)	Part 2, page 8
5	Annual stakeholder workshops	330	25 actions (e.g. identification of social contract components to be included in the Business Plan and how we will report on them)	Part 2, page 5
6	Local network investment events	200	27 booklets and online map detailing our planned investments to aid their planning and benefits to customers	Part 2, page 9
7	Vulnerable PSR customers	1,402	Extensive staff training e.g. from Parkinson's UK and Kidney Wales	Part 3, page 4
8	- Power Up fuel poverty schemes		Social indicator mapping shared with stakeholders and used by referral partners to ensure they target areas of greatest need	Part 3, page 5
9	- Affordable Warmth fuel poverty schemes		Text messages now sent to customers ahead of data cleanse activity	Part 3, page 5
10	- *New* Online survey		17,764 fuel poor customers supported to save £6.4m	Part 3, page 7-9
11	Major connections	1,779	Five new videos to explain the benefits of the PSR for key hard-to-reach groups	Part 3, page 6
12	Distributed Generation (DG)	397	Future Energy Scenarios published on expected growth of demand, storage and generation	Part 2, page 6
13	- DG Owner Forum		73	Innovative alternative connection offers New Flexible Power website launched
14	*New* Vulnerability Conference	31	£80k innovation fund led to six new fuel poverty project approaches	Part 3, page 9
15	*New* EV Conferences	267	WPD's first ever EV strategy published	Part 2, page 9
16	Community energy	397	Guidance for CE groups wishing to work with aggregators	Part 2, page 8
17	Social Media	1,485	New online flexibility maps have improved customer journeys - reducing enquiries from customers who couldn't find what they wanted by 30%	Part 2, page 7
18	- Webchats - Twitter		691	New online engagement videos from WPD's workshops promoted via Twitter



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