

Part one

Stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies

Ofgem Stakeholder Engagement
and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive
2022/23



Welcome

National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) 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 document is the first part of National Grid's submission to the 2022/23 Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive (SECV).

2022/23 is the final 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 introduced 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.

Our submission to this incentive is divided into three parts:

Part one

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

Part two

Key outcomes resulting from our stakeholder engagement activities.

Part three

Key outcomes resulting from our consumer vulnerability activities.



1 Jill Russell, our Environment Manager presenting at our stakeholder roadshow in Bristol, September 2022.



2 Stakeholders having round-table discussions at our stakeholder roadshow in Bristol, September 2022.



3 Mark Shaw, our Electricity Distribution Transformation Lead, receiving our award for maintaining the Customer Service Excellence standard 30 years.

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Stakeholders at our engagement workshop in Bristol in September 2022.

1. Introduction from our President

The global energy industry has experienced high levels of challenge and change in the last year, partly as a consequence of the war in Ukraine. This has resulted in an even higher global drive towards net zero that is expected to double our electricity demand by 2025.

Coupled with the cost of living pressures faced by many, it has never been more important to transform the energy system to deliver decarbonisation, energy security, and energy affordability. In response to this, we must directly address the challenges facing our sector and our customers at the same time; investing and innovating to achieve net zero whilst minimising impact on customer bills and ensuring support is available for those who need it most.

We may be the largest electricity distribution company in the country, but this doesn't mean we have all of the answers. Collaboration with our customers and stakeholders is essential if we are to build the energy future our customers want to see. We also know that net zero cannot be achieved by engineering alone, it requires engagement and uptake from customers and we're committed to bringing people on this journey with us and playing our part in making the transition accessible to all.

As the incoming President, it has filled me with optimism to see the work that has been done over the last year to meaningfully engage with over 42,000 stakeholders and implement a suite of industry leading measures that have provided more than £15.2 million of direct financial benefit to our most vulnerable customers.

Work in this area will never be done and my commitment to our customers is that we will never stop collaborating and innovating to provide them with the very best service.



Cordi O'Hara,
President,
National Grid Electricity Distribution

Our vision

Our purpose is to bring energy to life for our customers. We're doing this by delivering our vision, to put National Grid at the heart of a clean, fair and affordable energy future.

This is what our stakeholders demand of us and what we demand of ourselves. It is the right thing to do for **our customers, our communities and our environment.**

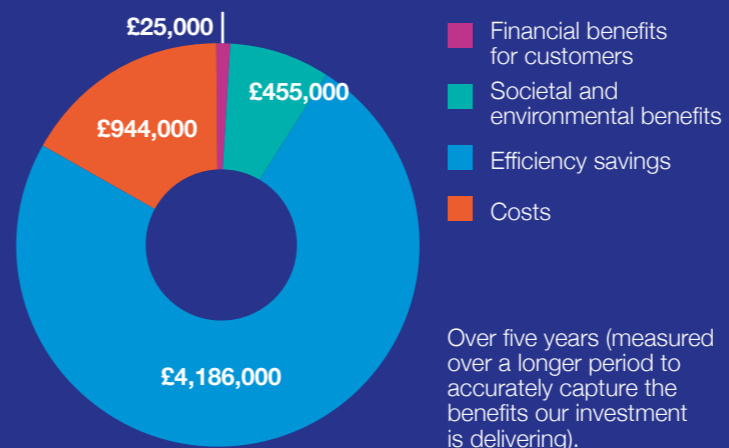


Our stakeholder engagement and customer vulnerability strategies enable us to deliver this vision for our customers. Ongoing, meaningful engagement and collaboration means we understand what our stakeholders need, and can work with them to translate their insights into priorities for the business that will deliver positive outcomes. Parts two and three of this submission set out how we have delivered against the objectives identified this year.

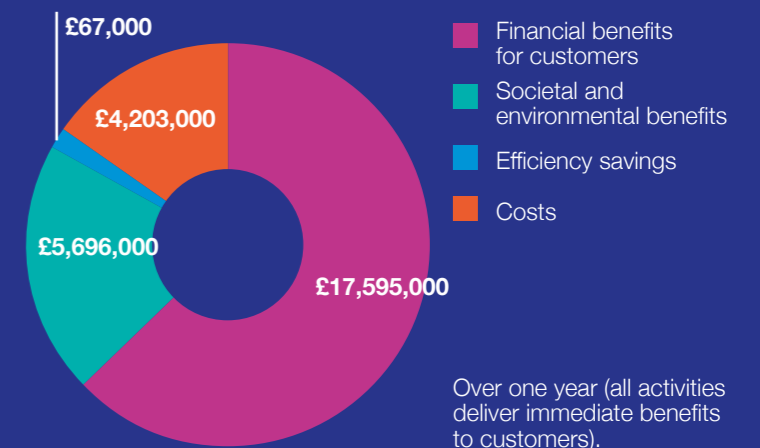
To ensure our actions benefit customers and deliver the priorities of our stakeholders, we have used a wide range of key metrics to capture our impact, including social value measurement.

We have evaluated the impact of 29 initiatives that are featured in parts two (stakeholder engagement outcomes) and three (customer vulnerability outcomes) of this submission, and summarised below.

Part two - costs and benefits



Part three - costs and benefits



2. Our stakeholder engagement strategy

We engage to enable close collaboration with our customers and communities, adapting to the rapid pace of change and increasing breadth of their needs. The significant scale and impact of initiatives detailed in parts two and three of this submission could not have been delivered without our continued focus on placing stakeholders at the centre of everything we do.

Principles of our longstanding engagement strategy

Our engagement this year continues to be underpinned by five key principles.

Inclusive
We always seek to reach new, emerging and increasingly local groups. This means deliberately identifying and targeting seldom heard voices with continuous engagement to capture changing stakeholder needs. E.g.:

Embedded: Our established deliberative engagement group, comprising future, domestic and business customers ensures a range of consumer voices are represented in our plans.

New: We developed an innovative model for inclusive engagement, working with a hub of key local stakeholders to deliver Social Contract commitments in partnership with the community.

Transparent
We ensure stakeholders have a clear line of sight when it comes to feedback and actions from our activities. We proactively share insights and learnings, making sure others can benefit. E.g.:

Enhanced: At our annual customer vulnerability workshop, we tested feedback captured over the past 12 months with expert stakeholders, building plans to support customers over winter. Using independent facilitation, we sought honest and challenging feedback and published the results in independent reports.

Embedded: Published synthesis reports consolidate all feedback and actions from our workshops, webinars and events.

Proactive and tailored
Early and continuous engagement, using methods that suit the needs of different audiences provides deep, actionable insights. E.g.:

Enhanced: Increased topic-specific engagement, driven by stakeholder needs, has given greater depth of insight. Examples include vulnerability surgeries and focus groups to help develop our new connections portal.

New: Groups with bespoke needs, identified through wider engagement, are proactively supported by dedicated teams, e.g. Community Energy Engineers and new Strategic Engagement Officers.

Purposeful and impactful
All engagement aims to learn from, improve and build plans with our stakeholders. We focus on meaningful, two-way engagement that shares decision-making power to shape our actions. E.g.:

Enhanced: Our Customer Panel 'buddy' system has been deployed in the development and delivery of Social Contract actions, including our first community solar panel initiative.

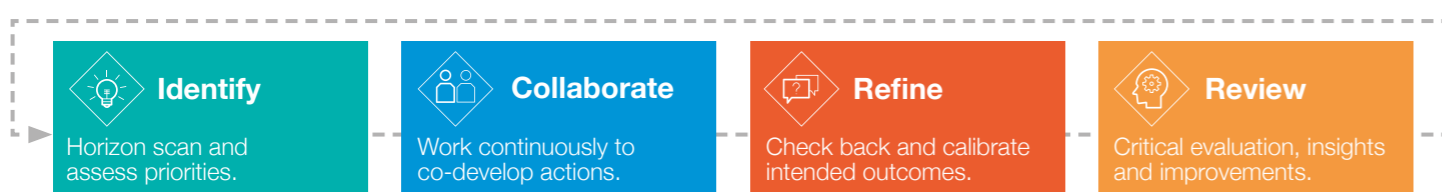
Enhanced: Frequent consultation with Flexibility Service Providers has shaped our procurement process so it is simple, accessible and standardised by design.

Expert-led
Purposeful engagement is strengthened by bringing together stakeholders with National Grid business leaders responsible for turning feedback into action. E.g.:

Enhanced: Local network investment events enabled Local Authorities to engage in detail with both the central teams responsible for network planning, and local delivery teams.

New: National Grid environment leaders worked with expert ecologists to help us translate stakeholder feedback and insights into purposeful action through innovative biodiversity trials.

At National Grid we use a four stage process of continuous engagement to ensure we always make decisions with, not on behalf of, our stakeholders:



Enabling methods and processes

- Stakeholder databases record extensive feedback
- Research and insights
- Surveys
- Annual stakeholder priority setting events
- Horizon scan
- Review external best practice

- Workshops
- Focus groups
- Bilaterals
- Industry groups and policy forums
- Partnerships
- Action plans

- Expert panels
- Deliberative group
- Focus groups
- Surgeries
- Collaborative trials

- Social value measurement
- Key performance indicators
- Qualitative outcomes
- Customer satisfaction

Independently produced synthesis reports collate individual pieces of feedback captured via these methods, ensuring all views are readily available, highlighting trends and any conflicting views. This feeds into our triangulation approach, balancing stakeholder feedback, social value, regulation and legislation, policy and learning from practical trials to build our decisions and actions.

3. Embedded culture of tailored engagement

Each year we engage with an increasingly broad and inclusive range of stakeholders and their respective knowledge, interest and experience varies significantly. To maximise the value of stakeholder input, we consistently broaden our range of engagement techniques and mechanisms, tailoring them to best suit the audience and utilising best practice to avoid a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Key examples from 2022/23 include:

	Stakeholder expertise level					
	Limited knowledge		Interested		Expert	
	New/enhanced	Embedded	New/enhanced	Embedded	New/enhanced	Embedded
Engagement mechanism	Winter preparedness campaign All customers, including targeted communications to over two million PSR customers.	Deliberative Focus Group 96 enduring members ensure a range of consumer voices are represented in our plans.	Local Network Investment events 102 delegates at 11 local depot events.	Flagship Stakeholder roadshows 401 delegates attended nine workshops (in-person at multiple locations and hybrid).	Social Contract Working Group 12 senior managers meet quarterly to collaborate on the Social Contract's development and delivery.	Customer Panel 29 members attend quarterly meetings with our President/ executive leaders. Sub groups and topic-specific surgeries enable in-depth collaboration.
Stakeholder groups, e.g.	Domestic customers, including those in vulnerable situations.	Business, domestic and future customers retained over time.	Government, Local Authorities (LAs), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), developers.	Customers, utilities, vulnerable customer representatives, developers, LAs, major energy users.	NGED leaders; Environment Manager, Community Energy Engineer, Chief People Officer.	Police, utilities, Community Energy, vulnerable/fuel poor advocates.
Tailored approach	Print, digital and social media adverts as well as radio and content marketing. New methods such as bus back adverts meant our biggest reach ever.	Tasks and focus groups generate spontaneous topic-specific insight. Online engagement allows members to reflect and interact at their own pace.	New format included one-to-one surgeries supporting LAs with local area energy planning, improving our future scenario forecast to reflect their ambitions.	Multi-location allows maximum attendance. Delegates review strategies, identify priorities from scratch and co-create actions and commitments.	Identifies new, collaborative approaches, using cross-organisational resources and expertise to solve social/ environmental challenges.	Long-term representative panel act as arbiters for customers, co-create new initiatives and influence service improvements.
Outcomes, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over five million impressions on digital comms and 717,000 radio reach (Part three, page 4). 9,561 PSR sign ups in the three month campaign period (up 95%) (Part three, page 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified 'immediate', 'long term' and 'enduring' customer priorities. Endorsed changes to our Social Contract strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved availability and granularity of data, e.g. on renewable generation (Part two, page 9). Improved bilateral engagement with LAs (Part two, page 9). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery plans created and shaped using stakeholder feedback. Reassessed immediate and future priorities to reflect emerging needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity trials at Rednock School (Part two, page 3). iPad refurbishment and redistribution to 42 charity partners (Part three, page 10). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and impact strategies and actions. 'Be Winter Ready' communications content and format shaped (Part three, page 4).



Examples of the Customer Panel adding value:

Outputs	Panel outcomes
Fuel poverty fund application assessment.	Independent assessment supported the selection of funding recipients.
Winter preparedness campaign surgery.	Informed campaign approach and gave feedback on results to support next round of communications.
'Buddy' on PSR data sharing and outreach project.	Drove a new outreach project collaborating with utilities and the Royal Association for Deaf people, providing targeted PSR customer support.

"I am very proud to Chair the Customer Panel, which remains an important overarching part of NGED's core stakeholder engagement strategy. Members are passionate, honest and critical, evaluating new and existing projects and their performance, ensuring the best outcomes for customers. This year we have worked hard with NGED to strengthen the contribution of the panel and the impact it has. We have built on our new 'buddy' approach, trialled last year, to give further tactical focus to key activities augmented by surgery deep-dives. That said, the panel has maintained a strong strategic overview through group sessions and new members ensure we remain effective and relevant in rapidly changing times."

Gabby Mallett
Chair,
Customer Panel



4. Our customer vulnerability strategy

Our strategy's sustainability comes from being able to adapt to the changing needs and the complex vulnerable situations our customers face. Whilst embedded, we must continually review its effectiveness with stakeholders. This way, we build in lessons learned year on year, so that we are able to better support customers facing increasingly severe situations, such as those driven by the current cost of living crisis.

Core mission: Support customers in vulnerable situations

Maintain a high quality, accurate Priority Services Register (PSR) with the widest possible reach. Continuously work to identify and increase our understanding of vulnerability. Deliver targeted, holistic support to customers in fuel poverty. Our enduring approach is geared to address the issues facing our customers and making positive impacts:

Key principles

Increase reach of our PSR and build customer resilience to power cuts

Tackle fuel poverty and cold homes

Ensure a fair energy transition for all

How we deliver

Deliver an effective PSR service with bespoke, proactive contact during power cuts, with end-to-end help and welfare support. Enabled by:

- Continuously improving accuracy of customer records. Contacting new registrants when they join and all PSR customers at least once every two years to update their information and offer advice and support.
- Using our social indicator mapping data to strategically expand our referral partner network, allowing partners to increase reach and target underrepresented groups and locations.
- Promoting the PSR and resilience advice across multiple channels.
- Driving towards a single PSR sign-up for customers by data sharing across utilities.
- Providing regular expert-led training, enabling colleagues to increase understanding of vulnerabilities and deliver tailored support via dedicated contact centres and 'on the ground'.

Deliver a targeted model of support using a holistic range of interventions for each customer via single touch points. Enabled by:

- Undertaking regular horizon scans to increase our understanding of issues and root causes of fuel poverty. Investigating options for increased support and interventions, the research aims to identify how emerging requirements can be integrated into the advice landscape.
- Engaging with customers and expert partners provides qualitative insights and quantitative data from customer support interactions.
- Using our comprehensive data mapping and expert research to target and support communities with the highest rates of fuel poverty.
- Identifying and delivering new methods of support through innovation to improve reach to underserved groups and increase our positive impact.
- Unlocking wider community-led support with funding matched with training and advice to maximise impact.

Deliver support so customers can benefit from opportunities in the energy transition now, building services capable of evolving and expanding to meet future needs. Enabled by:

- Using bespoke research, data and practical trials to understand the capabilities and barriers to participation across groups of customers in vulnerable situations.
- Utilising learning from our proven model of fuel poverty support to design services where customers can benefit from multiple interventions via a single point of contact.
- Delivering innovative pilots to trial new support services for customers and identify effective approaches.

Leveraging partnerships and effective collaboration

For our customers, the three key principles of our strategy are not separate. Their situations are often complex and require help across the full spectrum of support we provide. The strength in our model comes from our ability to interlink our approach so that customers can benefit from as wider support as possible – we can only achieve this by working closely with partners who are experts in supporting customers in vulnerable situations and collaborating with others to identify best practice. Examples this year include:

- Increasing our reach with housing associations, which have high proportions of customers in vulnerable situations, we are working with Bromford Homes to train neighbourhood coaches to refer customers to the PSR, developing a replicable model for tenant support.
- We collaborated with DNOs on a common approach to reporting social value this year, led by ENWL. In addition we shared our model of fuel poverty support including how our contractual arrangements ensure detailed outcomes are recorded for individual customers.
- Working closely with the Centre for Sustainable Energy and building on our 'Smart and Fair?' collaboration with SSEN, we have piloted a pioneering model of support to provide Smart Energy Action Plans tailored to customers' capabilities and priorities. The model is enabling us to build this intervention into our existing fuel poverty partner support.

5. Social value

The industry approach to social value has evolved in the last 12 months. Using the common DNO model with increased frequency and scale, we have continued to enhance its role in our decision-making processes.

To truly embed this, we measure social return on investment (SROI) year-round to drive project development and delivery, as well as conducting a biannual review to identify impact and opportunities to expand. A total of 39 projects were evaluated throughout the year using the social value model with Sia Partners, 29 of which are featured across parts two and three of this submission. Combined with a range of other metrics, as illustrated below, this provides a comprehensive picture of our impact.

In response to panel feedback, we have increased the consistency of time periods used to measure social value in this year's submission. Where activities deliver immediate benefits the social value is only measured for the year in which the initiative took place.

However, some activities take a number of years for the benefits to be wholly realised. Therefore, for some initiatives we have chosen to present both long and short term benefits.

For example, installing solar panels today will generate financial and carbon savings for years to come. To evaluate a solar panel installation using a SROI ratio that only includes the emissions captured for one year doesn't represent the benefits that will be delivered, meaning an effective decision cannot be made.

In these cases, it's important to take a longer term view, measuring the SROI over an extended time period of five years to capture the impact of our activities fully. This enables us to compare initiatives on an even basis considering all the benefits they will deliver.

Social value influences our decision making throughout the development and delivery of initiatives.

Before	<p>We use social value to guide the development of key performance indicators when designing projects. For example, when developing our Smart Energy Action Plans, we used learnings from the social value model to drive a shift from capturing 'outputs' to 'outcomes' in customer feedback (Part three, page 9).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than only asking customers to rate the service delivered by us (outputs) we have included key questions to measure qualitative customer benefits (outcomes) that aren't captured by the project's reporting but can generate social value, e.g. how customers are using the support provided to take action on their smart energy plans. <p>This goes much deeper than the traditional approach to gauging customer satisfaction and will ensure that, as we monitor and review the benefits delivered by the project, we have the full picture of social value delivered.</p>
During	<p>We use social value in decision-making around adjusting pilot schemes and scaling across the business. For example, social value was a key factor in the decision to roll out a pilot project refurbishing and redistributing decommissioned company iPads to digitally excluded customers via trusted partners (Part three, page 10).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The added benefits of working with trusted partners to provide mobile data and digital skills training, significantly improving online connectivity for recipients, generated a high SROI of £3.91. • Compelling case studies and feedback from partner charities demonstrated the qualitative outcomes for customers. • Stakeholders confirmed direct support for digitally excluded customers should be a key priority for us. <p>Triangulating these quantitative and qualitative results demonstrated the significant value of this approach compared with trading in or donating devices in bulk without partner collaboration. As a result, we decided to embed this process into our 'business as usual' technology refresh via the Social Contract, and are scaling it up to redistribute 3,000 iPads in 2023.</p>
After	<p>We use social value to monitor and review projects to determine the full spectrum of benefits they deliver. For example, social value is used as one of many key metrics to evaluate our in-depth fuel poverty support (Part three, page 5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than using a proxy value to estimate the benefits delivered, our contractual arrangements require partners to record the number of customers who have received in-depth support, the individual interventions each customer has received and the financial benefit of every intervention (e.g. Mrs J was able to access £4,805 of benefits entitlement). • This enables us to capture the hard financial savings 'in the pocket' of each customer as a result of our interventions, while also providing the basis to calculate what additional social value has been delivered. • Proxies are then used to measure the customer outcomes over and above recorded individual savings (e.g. reduced carbon emissions and wider health benefits of living in a warm, well-insulated home). <p>Taking an evidence based approach, always using recorded data from our project partners in the first instance, supplemented by proxy values, ensures our impact measurement reveals the full extent of customer benefits.</p>

Ensuring decisions are informed by a full range of factors

This year we launched our largest ever winter preparedness campaign to help customers 'Be Winter Ready', employing a wide range of new approaches to test which were the most effective and impactful (Part three, page 4). Evaluation of the campaign demonstrated that social value is not always the most appropriate impact measure, reinforcing the importance of triangulating results for effective decision making.

Crucially, social value is one factor used in combination with a range of other data and feedback. Weighing up these results in the round is now helping us to refine which of these campaign elements to take forward in winter 2023 to achieve the best customer and business outcomes.

We used a variety of key performance indicators to measure the impact of our adverts, including data on 'dwell time' (the time a reader spent on the page) and 'click through' rates (the number of times our advert was clicked on to take a reader to relevant web pages). This was overlaid with PSR data to demonstrate the campaign's impact on PSR reach.

Consultation and review with the Customer Panel on these outcomes helped pinpoint key elements to take forward into future communications campaigns. The panel also noted the importance of wide scale communications to raise awareness of National Grid Electricity Distribution following our rebrand in September 2022.

Social value was used to measure campaign outcomes. This revealed that communications to increase PSR sign ups do generate a positive social value. However, because the benefits of customers updating their PSR records, brand awareness and wider campaign engagement cannot be quantified credibly by the model, the campaign as a whole generates a negative SROI (-£0.32).

6. Holistic collaboration drives improvement

Stakeholders urge us to collaborate with partners, in our industry and beyond, to deliver the most efficient, effective outcomes for customers. This means going beyond sharing ideas; where common challenges are identified we strive to maximise the impact of working relationships. Collaboration has played a significant role in the successful delivery of many of our projects this year and throughout parts two and three of this submission we have highlighted some key examples of this in action.

Collaboration achieves national benefits for customers

Joining forces with other utilities to share expertise and funds increases the reach and impact of support for customers.

This year, we worked with Wessex Water, Bristol Water and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) to share valuable insight, commissioning the Royal Association for Deaf people (RAD) to enhance their outreach with PSR sign-up and resilience advice.

RAD created and shared sign language videos, carried out workshops and provided energy efficiency support for their service users (Part three, page 3).

“We have a longstanding, successful relationship with NGED, frequently collaborating to deliver collectively better outcomes for our customers and I’m delighted to be involved as a ‘buddy’ on their pioneering Customer Panel (Part two, page 2). It is great to have recently started two-way sharing of PSR data having been receiving records from NGED for over four years now. Sharing learning and ideas enables us all to be more efficient, consistent and innovative – driving meaningful change for as many customers as possible - and that can only be a good thing.”

Kate Robbins
Head of Customer Policy, Wessex Water



Key collaboration and best practice sharing undertaken this year	Business representatives	Smart consultants /service providers	Telecoms	Community Energy Groups	Water companies /council	Government/MPs /UK regulators	Local Authorities /LEPs	Resilience partners	DNOs/GDNs/ENA and suppliers	Customer panels
Data & digitalisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DSO/future networks/flexibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RIIO-ED2 Business Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Innovation/environment/EVs/net zero	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PSR services/approach/data sharing/rural customers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Contract	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customer service and resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fuel poverty/vulnerability/affordability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Connections and Distributed Generation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Energy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safety, health and workforce resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

7. Validation through audit and assessment

Beyond validating our continued compliance, external accreditations provide independent scrutiny and benchmarking against leading companies across a wide range of sectors. Recommendations from expert assessors are used widely within the business to deliver real improvements for our customers.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE)

We are celebrating 30 years of outstanding customer service, having achieved a record number of top ratings this year. All aspects of our service are reviewed annually, including published communications, stakeholder and vulnerability strategies, policies and stakeholder engagement delivery. An assessor examines over 100 items of evidence, listens to customer calls, interviews senior managers and holds closed sessions with field staff and external Customer Panel members.

Standard for Inclusive Service Provision (BS18477)

We have been compliant with the BSI inclusivity standard for ten years – after being the first UK company to achieve this. A robust annual audit includes interviews with call handlers, senior managers and partners. In addition, the assessor thoroughly reviews evidence of inclusive service delivery, collaboration and best practice achieved through partnerships, policies and processes, staff training and published communication. Going forward we will look to transition to the new international (ISO) standard to further strengthen our accessible service delivery.

47/57
‘Compliance Plus’ ratings

Top UK performer for 30 years

No non or partial compliance

10 years of full compliance with BS18477

First company in the UK to achieve this

No non or partial compliance

“Excellent customer satisfaction and performance levels continue. Partnership arrangements and wider community activities are outstanding. Schemes for PSR customers provide holistic support for those in fuel poverty.”

CSE Assessor 2022/23

“There is an ongoing commitment to go above and beyond what is required. NGED demonstrated a high level of continuous improvement, understanding of how to identify customer vulnerability and tailoring services to make them more inclusive and accessible.”

BSI Standard Assessor 2022/23

8. Commitment at a senior level

All colleagues at National Grid are empowered to take personal responsibility for delivering exemplary customer service and our culture is one where feedback leads to action. This year, our senior leaders facilitated workshops, delivered internal webinars and attended delivery working groups. The examples below highlight just a few of the ways our leaders and teams demonstrate their commitment to listen to our stakeholders and take direct ownership to deliver improvements.

From stakeholder insights to holistic environmental outcomes

Jill Russell,
Environment Manager

I am responsible for our environmental commitments as a business, including reducing our own company carbon emissions to net zero and supporting our supply chain to do the same.

Regular engagement with stakeholders, from ecological experts working in the field, to customers who are deeply passionate about National Grid’s local impact, has proven vital to shaping these commitments and holding us to account for their delivery.

I also sit on the Social Contract Working Group, and through these discussions with colleagues across the business, the interrelationship between community and environmental benefit is clear. As a result, we’ve trialled a range of new approaches, including donating decommissioned company iPads to charity partners, to avoid waste and directly benefit people in our community (Part three, page 10).

We’ve also worked with a local ecologist to pioneer a unique approach to assessing the ecology of our sites, employing ‘citizen science’ methods that means anyone at National Grid can play a part in our biodiversity strategy (Part two, page 4). Using this approach, we’ve engaged with students at a local secondary school, to give their A-Level Biology lessons the real world context of its application in our business.



Jill Russell, presenting at our stakeholder workshop in Bristol.

Neil James,
Distribution Manager, Gloucester

As a local manager my fundamental responsibility is to keep the power flowing to homes and businesses in Gloucester. Speaking to local stakeholders, I know their expectations of National Grid are shifting, and ensuring our network is ready to meet net zero goals is a key priority. I sit on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Gloucestershire, helping drive the Sustainable Energy Strategy for the region by collaborating with key stakeholders, and feeding insights from the group into our approach at National Grid.

Like many of the stakeholders I meet, I am passionate about developing the workforce of the future, and personally visit schools to discuss careers at National Grid and the importance of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills.

Hearing from these future customers about issues that matter to them, particularly around the environment, reinforces my focus on improving our sites - for our colleagues, communities, and for nature. That’s why I jumped at the opportunity to host our first biodiversity workshop in Gloucester, working with the Environment Team to test a unique approach to ‘citizen science’. This has given my team first-hand experience of the rich assortment of species that live around our substations, to help bring to life the important role we can play in protecting the environment.



Neil James, engaging with stakeholders at a workshop in Bristol.

Evolving our staff training with new learnings



Mike Wigmore,
Distribution Manager, Worcester

I am one of 27 local managers who keep the lights on, oversee the operation of the network and ensure excellent service for the customers in my region. This includes regular engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders including businesses, domestic customers and Local Authorities.

I personally attend our annual stakeholder roadshows and know how much value our stakeholders place on us looking after customers in vulnerable situations. This is why, when one of my team, Paul, attended a property where a customer was struggling with mental health issues and appeared to be in crisis, I felt compelled to use the situation to improve our already comprehensive training.

“Every year we have PSR training, so when we recently encountered a customer who was in distress, it was clear that they were at risk of causing harm to themselves. During the incident, my colleagues and I stayed to reassure the customer until the emergency services arrived and ensured the property and network were safe.” Paul Farley, Linesman

The safety of my team and colleagues across the business is paramount, so in the aftermath of the event, we developed additional information and signposting.

This allowed us to improve our resilience and provide the best possible support and advice to customers with mental health issues should similar situations arise. The training was so well received by the field staff that we also shared it with the Contact Centre teams.

“The level of commitment was as impressive as ever - notably the additional training on mental health made it clear that the customer remains at the heart of everything NGED does.”

There is strong leadership and a culture that continues to be highly customer-focused with a strong emphasis on team working and use of customer insight to improve service delivery.”

BSI and CSE assessors, 2022/23 Assessment

9. Feedback leads to measurable outcomes

Engagement must drive measurable benefits for customers. Wide ranging, tailored approaches provide a breadth of stakeholder feedback and perspectives. The examples below demonstrate the variety of outputs we have delivered this year, and the positive outcomes they have brought to customers.

We have invested £11 million this year delivering these 308 outcomes and feedback from customers and stakeholders proves significant value is placed upon them (Part one, page 10). Furthermore, we have measured a substantial net social value of £23 million across 29 key initiatives over five years which has also shaped our delivery and achievements.

The table below demonstrates some examples of the key outcomes delivered over the last year including a range of new, enhanced and 'business-as-usual', embedded initiatives. A comprehensive summary is available at nationalgrid.co.uk/outcomes

42,000 stakeholders engaged

At over **4,000** activities

Leading to **308** positive outcomes

Domestic, business, utilities/industry and parish councils			
Stakeholder driver	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)	
Analysis of customer survey responses tells us speed of response is vital in a power cut.	'Ping' function provides instant confirmation for customers with smart meters on whether a supply can be detected to the property.	This provides crucial context to inform customer calls and dispatch engineers to the property, improving the quality and efficiency of customer service.	
Repeat attendees (interested experts), shape our commitments.	Six in-person and hybrid workshops attracted 198 stakeholders.	Round-table discussions helped us update our view of stakeholder priorities as well as negotiate and refine RII0-ED2 delivery plans in light of the changing external landscape.	
96 domestic, business and future customers provide insight into our long-term challenges.	18 focus groups sought customer insights on their priorities for National Grid.	Building the knowledge of members over time gives a stronger voice to future and end-user customers and generates invaluable insight into our long-term challenges.	
29 expert Customer Panel members influence our strategic thinking.	Quarterly Customer Panel meetings - includes new representation from Fuel Poverty Research Network and Community for Renewables.	Collaborative decision-making on communications, fuel poverty funding and connections strategy. Independent review of NGED's delivery and engagement provided through a member-written assurance report.	

Total outputs: **52** New 9 Enhanced 4 Embedded 39 Collaboration 21

Customers in vulnerable situations, hard to reach and fuel poor			
Stakeholder driver	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)	
Customer Panel members shaped campaign at topic-specific surgeries.	Proactive winter preparedness advice provided to all PSR customers.	Gave customers power cut advice and encouraged them to update their details, with 44,623 PSR records updated as a result.	
PSR customers surveyed told us we should establish more rural partners.	Rural Vulnerability Research report produced on community agents in collaboration with other utilities.	The report has enabled us to identify Community Agent schemes in rural areas, understand the services they offer and barriers preventing them from providing PSR support.	
54 vulnerability experts shaped our fuel poverty programme.	Customer vulnerability workshop led to outputs including updated Social Indicator Mapping .	Expert stakeholders supported us to triangulate insights, share best practice and enhance our understanding of customers' immediate needs.	
Industry collaboration led to improved PSR customer journey.	Two-way data share in place with water companies - 293,140 records shared with water companies in the last year.	Provides a one-stop-shop service for customers, where PSR registration with one company unlocks support from multiple utilities.	
Vulnerability experts at our workshops emphasised the need for trusted local partners to tackle fuel poverty and provide tailored support for those with specific needs.	Power Up Smart fuel poverty collaboration scheme supports customers who have recently had a smart meter installed.	Enables customers to access the core interventions along with tailored advice on how to use their smart meter, monitor energy use and adapt behaviours to reduce waste. 1,770 customers saved £1,712,193.	
	Power Up Health fuel poverty collaboration scheme is tailored to support customers with oxygen tanks.	Enables customers using oxygen equipment, to be added to the PSR, receive fuel poverty support and access home measures and grant support. 550 customers saved £237,708.	
Customer feedback on our power cut response underlines the importance of accurate PSR data.	Proactively contacted over two million PSR customers (931,879 data cleanse team and 1,078,662 during power cuts).	410,462 records updated, enabling more proactive and targeted support to PSR customers in power cuts.	

Total outputs: **95** New 15 Enhanced 29 Embedded 51 Collaboration 42

Smart networks, flexibility, connections, innovation, DSO, storage, EVs, community energy			
Stakeholder driver	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)	
LA delegates at our investment events fed in to our future scenarios.	Distribution Future Energy System Stakeholder Engagement Reports published.	Summarised four webinars (221 attendees) sharing our forecasting data and discussing local plans for low carbon technologies.	
Our Connections Customer Steering Group challenged us to digitise the customer journey.	New online connections portal, with 'budget estimate' and electric vehicle (EV) application self-serve tools.	Customers can apply for an EV connection online and receive an immediate response, with 57% of applications approved instantly.	
Consultations and industry engagement illustrated the need for inclusive services to drive domestic participation in flexibility.	Substantial domestic participation achieved in a growing flexibility market.	20.5% (159MW) of flexibility contracted came from domestic households, meaning our investment in flexibility provides direct financial benefits to customers.	
Collaboration with trade bodies, banks and Government identified support was needed for businesses.	Zero Carbon Business portal helps small businesses and Community Energy groups transition to a low carbon future (with NPG, the Federation of Small Businesses, HSBC and NatWest).	Enabling users to browse topics, access sector specific advice and a webinar focusing on immediate actions small businesses can take to cut bills through energy efficiency.	

Total outputs: **86** New 33 Enhanced 23 Embedded 30 Collaboration 11

Emergency response, resilience and security			
Stakeholder driver	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)	
Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) urged us to provide real-time data during power cuts.	Power Cut API produced , enabling LRFs to integrate real-time power cut alerts and updates into their systems.	Customers receive better, targeted support during an outage as LRFs have access to live data updates.	
Insights from partners helped identify key focus areas for funding.	Community Matters Fund provided targeted funding to 759 organisations.	395,370 customers supported by grassroots organisations, in key areas of needs such as holiday hunger and festive giving.	
Workshop participants confirmed end-to-end help and welfare support should remain a top priority.	British Red Cross welfare and National Caterer's Association provide support during planned and unplanned interruptions.	Customers benefit from welfare support and hot food/drinks, available 24/7 during a power cut (e.g. catered for 62 customers affected by a fault in Northampton).	
Customer Panel members design crisis pack contents.	1,900 power cut crisis packs distributed.	Free, practical items useful in a power cut, e.g. torches, issued to customers via field staff and partners to increase resilience ahead of a power cut.	

Total outputs: **31** New 9 Enhanced 6 Embedded 16 Collaboration 8

Other: e.g. education, environment, Government and staff			
Stakeholder driver	Action (output)	Benefit (outcome)	
71% of employees took part in the annual 'Grid:voice' survey - with 37 key actions identified in response.	Series of six mental health videos delivered to all 6,600 colleagues.	Videos enabled wider reach of key hard-hitting important safety messages.	
	'Ask the expert' sessions delivered to colleagues on smart meters, EVs and heat pumps.	Ensures employees receive consistent information at sessions where they feel they can ask questions openly.	
Participants reported a 9.1/10 enjoyment rating - endorsing future engagement.	School education programme adapted to target locations without established school safety programmes, while expanding STEM programme.	90,943 students were engaged on electrical safety. A new project saw a 30 minute assembly promoting safety, energy efficiency, smart networks and the PSR. This was followed by a classroom workshop for 12,000 children.	
Stakeholders ask us to advocate for their key priorities at a government and policy level.	Parliamentary Reception held in the House of Commons for 23 parliamentarians.	Engagement with MPs gave visibility of our investment plans and key enabling role in the UK's net zero ambitions.	

Total outputs: **44** New 27 Enhanced 7 Embedded 10 Collaboration 3

10. Measuring the impact of our engagement

The outcomes achieved for customers this year demonstrate the effectiveness of our engagement with stakeholders.

In addition to mandated industry customer satisfaction surveys, we seek independent views from stakeholders through our own voluntary, bespoke surveys. Commissioning additional research ensures as many stakeholders as possible have the opportunity to influence our approach and positively impact our delivery.



26,306 customers surveyed in 2022/23

An overview of our current customer and stakeholder satisfaction levels can be found below:

Satisfaction survey results		Reach	Example actions survey measures impact of
1. Bi-annual workshops	Surveys following workshops cover overall satisfaction, information coverage and the standard of facilitation/presentations. Satisfaction 8.5/10	401	Feedback from stakeholders shaped our Business Plan commitments following Ofgem's draft determinations.
2. Connections workshops	Surveys following our hybrid workshop. As above, questions cover all aspects of the event. Satisfaction 7.7/10	111	Digital tools such as instant quotes and virtual site visits revolutionising the customer journey (Part two, page 8).
3. Customer vulnerability workshop	Surveys for partners and interested organisations at the annual event. As above, questions cover all aspects of the event. Satisfaction 8.4/10	54	Smart Energy Action Plans pilot delivered by CSE and shaped by further Customer Panel feedback (Part three, page 9).
4. Local network investment events	Surveys following events hosted by local Distribution Managers with questions covering all aspects of the event. Satisfaction 8.8/10	102	Allowed stakeholders to share local energy plans with local teams, and respond to our projected scenarios for their region (Part two, page 9).
5. Distributed Generation (DG)	DG connections customers who had a quotation or completed works, but are not covered by Ofgem's surveys. Satisfaction 8.5/10	384	Investing in flexibility maximises our existing network allowing customers to connect quicker (Part two, page 5)
6. DG Owner Operator Forum	Questions cover all aspects of the forum. Satisfaction 9.0/10	75	All outputs (Part one, pages 8-9)
7. Overall customer satisfaction	Customers surveyed at random as part of Ofgem's Broad Measure of Customer Satisfaction on: Power cut (planned/unplanned) 9.0/10	19,886	Expert training from organisations such as the Samaritans ensures Contact Centre agents can provide empathy and support to those customers who need it most in some difficult circumstances (Part three, page 4).
8. Power cuts	Connections (quotation/completed work) 8.9/10		
9. Connections	General enquiries 9.2/10		
10. General enquiries	We scrutinise responses, undertaking detailed analysis on all scores under 8/10, to identify improvements.		Updated PSR training on mental health awareness allows staff in the field and in contact centres to best support those in crisis (Part one, page 7).
11. Major connections	Large connections customers who had a quotation or completed works, but are not covered by Ofgem's surveys. Satisfaction 8.4/10	1,744	Tailored data allows LAs to create their net zero roadmap more efficiently (Part two, page 9).
12. Vulnerable /PSR customers	Monthly survey of PSR customers contacted proactively to update PSR details and offer power cut advice. Satisfaction 9.1/10		Power Up: 7,886 customers supported through a cost of living crisis to save £2,972,941.
13. Power Up fuel poverty schemes	Survey of customers referred to Power Up schemes for fuel poverty assistance, or identified by Affordable Warmth outreach. Surveys capture the type of benefits achieved (financial savings and qualitative outcomes), as well as satisfaction with service from us and our partners. Satisfaction 8.4/10	1,985	Affordable Warmth: 12,243 customers supported through a cost of living crisis to save £12,379,301. (Part three, page 6).
14. Affordable Warmth fuel poverty schemes			
15. Web chats	Customers surveyed following a web chat interaction. Satisfaction 9.4/10	1,564	New online self-serve tool for EV connections means applicants receive an instant response (Part two, page 8).

Feedback drives event format

Feedback from customers and stakeholders in 2022/23 contributed to enhancements in our engagement approach including new one-to-one surgeries for Local Authorities to discuss Local Area Energy Plans (Part two, page 9), and an evolving 'buddy' system to facilitate collaboration and best practice sharing (Part two, page 3).



Previous feedback from stakeholders led to the development of the format of the local network investment events. This year they evolved and were tailored to allow detailed discussions in valuable one-to-one surgery sessions offered to Local Authority planners responsible for LAEPs.

"LEPs should be at the table in all future engagement events."
LEP, Devon event

"We see good, meaningful engagement at the right level now. Engagement on our Local Plan has ramped up."
LA, Hinckley event

"Engagement is crucial... we are approaching net zero by looking at our immediate plans and talking to those connected to our network. It's absolutely key that you continue to engage."
LA, Stoke event



Stakeholders prioritising commitments at our engagement workshop in Bristol in September 2022.

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