



Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Annual Report April 2022 - March 2023

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A word from our CEO, Mark Horsley and our Customer Experience Director, Eileen Brown



The past year has seen unprecedented challenges for our industry and the communities that we serve. The economic impact of the cost of living crisis has become an every-day issue for customers and communities across our region, sending more people than ever before into poverty. Many customers who were already living in hardship have been pushed deeper into crisis, and many households are experiencing living in poverty for the first time.

We have continued to work tirelessly both within NGN, and at a national level, to respond effectively and considerately, and provide meaningful support to those who need it most.

We are mindful that many of our customers have a complex set of needs, and we need to work hard to join all our service provision up to make it easy for our customers to access.

We have strengthened our collaboration networks, both within industry through Infrastructure North and Utilities Together (see page 15), and also beyond through our role with organisations such as Leeds Anchors Networks, where we influenced the bringing together of a Cost of Living Summit in December 2022.

It's clear that the cost-of-living crisis will define our Customers in Vulnerable Situations (CIVS) stakeholders priorities for years to come, and our future engagement is already being shaped with this firmly in mind.

The trusted relationships we've built have allowed us to provide flexible and responsive support to help tackle the increasingly complex challenges that our customers are facing.

We have an embedded framework of engagement (detailed on pages 14/15), which we supplement with our broader business engagement and challenge channels, including our Citizen's Panel, Young Innovators Council, and Customer Engagement Group. We use this feedback, alongside interrogating all available data sets, to make sure that we design solutions that are right for our customers and communities in most need.

As we look back at 22/23, and look ahead to 23/24, it's evident that our vulnerable customers and communities are likely to feel a continued impact of the cost of living crisis. We are committed to working together, with both our colleagues and community partners, to provide as much support as possible to our vulnerable customers and communities. This means reaching deeper into our region, and always looking beyond our core role as a gas distributor, to the social role that we have to alleviate hardship and improve lives.

Mark Horsley

Over the last 12 months, the Vulnerability Team at NGN, together with our army of Strategic and Community Partners, have focussed efforts on developing projects that can both provide crisis support for our customers 'in the moment' as well as developing approaches that offer sustainable solutions for the future.

The most common theme we have heard is that we need to support customers in financial hardship. The majority of our VCMA projects have started with this in mind, but as always have been designed to offer holistic support including Priority Services Register (PSR) referrals and Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness, alongside connections and support through partnership organisations.

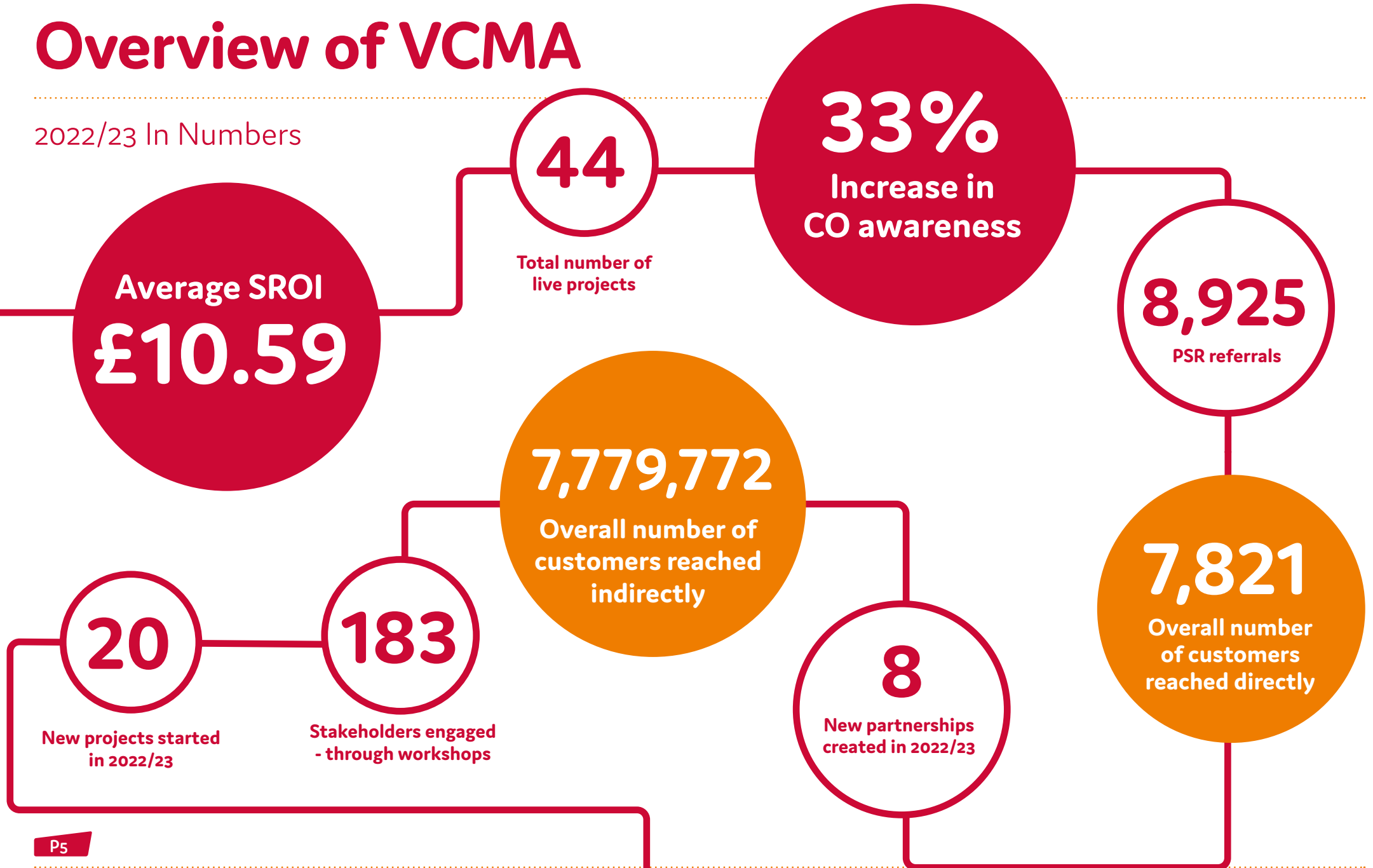
We have extended our network of partner organisations through a variety of mechanisms, including new engagement channels such as our NGN Open Day, and topic-based webinars, as well as extending our reach to plug partnership gaps, by using our long-standing Community Partnering Fund to identify grass roots partnerships that can grow and mature into VCMA projects.

We have also grown our VCMA Governance Group, both in terms of members and scope, to ensure that all VCMA projects have the appropriate level of rigour and challenge.

Eileen Brown

Overview of VCMA

2022/23 In Numbers



VCMA1 Headlines

We increased our level of spend this year 2022/23 and are forecasting to spend the full allowance by the end of March 2026 (see table below).

Of the forecast spend over the next three years, we only have c£800,000 from VCMA1 that hasn't been allocated to a specific NGN/collaborative project. This will be used to focus on CO specific projects from 2023/24 onwards.

We have ensured that collaborative spend delivers value to customers, specifically within the NGN region. Collaborative spend at end of year two is 49% of our overall allowance – this is supported by our regional stakeholders.

We have addressed geographical and needs gaps in funding that were identified in 2021/22 – we are now funding new projects within West Yorkshire (geographical gap) and have launched a collaborative partnership with Scope (addressing physical needs gap), aswell as extending our physical needs partners.

Currently we have 65 live VCMA projects ranging from small amounts of less than £10,000 to £500,000 per annum.

The Collaborative VCMA report will be published in conjunction with individual VCMA reports.

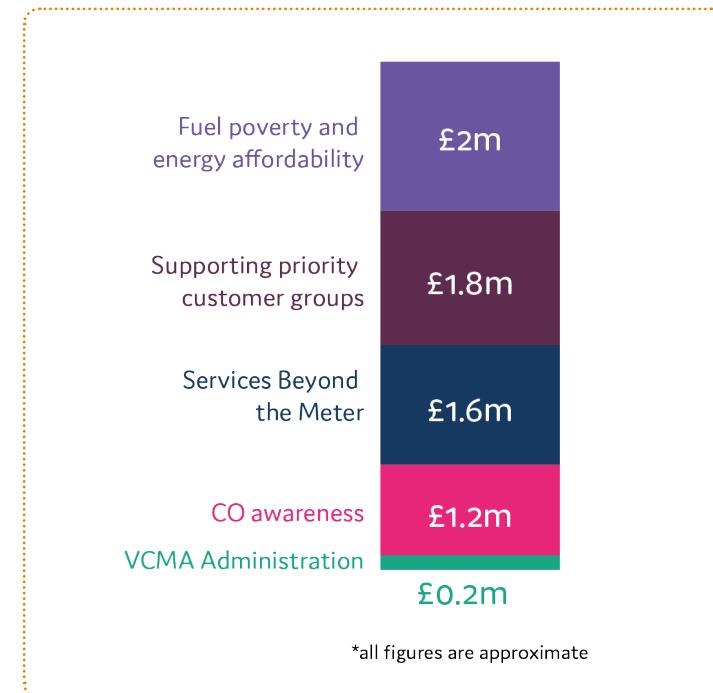
Here is a summary of our VCMA spend to date, and forecast spend for the remaining 3 years of GD2:

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Company Specific VCMA Project costs	£466,254.44	£1,151,012.90	£874,951.76	£723,583.97	£723,527.39
Collaborative VCMA Project costs	£122,332.2	£658,289.8	£1,176,357.4	£939,837.8	£466,541.6
Total VCMA Project costs	£588,586.6	£1,809,302.7	£2,051,309.1	£1,663,421.8	£1,190,068.9

Over recent months, we have been working with the GDNs and Ofgem to develop four key, over-arching themes, to offer effectiveness and consistency in reporting of projects and expenditure levels. Moving forward we will be categorising spend under these four themes.

- **Services beyond the meter** – direct operational support provided to vulnerable customers as we go about our work
- **Fuel poverty and energy affordability** – programmes designed to help customers struggling to afford energy
- **Supporting priority customer groups** – programmes targeted at supporting PSR-eligible customers
- **Carbon monoxide awareness** – programmes to increase awareness of CO and how to stay safe from CO

The chart below shows how we are spending VCMA1 against these four themes.



Vulnerability Outputs Overview

Here is an overview of key vulnerability performance outputs for 2022/23, against both the metrics defined in the Ofgem Vulnerability Reputational Incentive and NGN GD2 Business Plan (2021-2026) commitments:

Key Performance Indicator	Vulnerability Reputational Incentive (Yes/No)	NGN Business Plan Commitment (Yes/No)	Detailed commitment / target	NGN Stretch Target – per year	Apr '21 - Mar '22	Apr '22 - Mar '23	Comments
Customers reached through Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness initiatives	Yes	No	N/A	Baseline 21/22 performance	6,009,334	26,597,013	Exceeding target
Customers reached through Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness initiatives – 3% agreed proportion (customers likely to take actions as a result of the increased awareness)	Yes	No	N/A	Baseline 21/22 performance	180,280	803,186	Exceeding target
Number of CO awareness visits/ surveys with customers	Yes	Yes	10,000	Baseline 21/22 performance	17,995	17,966	On target
Average score before CO awareness visit	Yes	No	N/A	Baseline 21/22 performance	5.88/10	6.54/10	Exceeding target
Average score after CO awareness visit	Yes	No	N/A	Baseline 21/22 performance	7.55/10	8.69/10	Exceeding target
Average % increase in awareness resulting from CO awareness visits	Yes	No	N/A	Baseline 21/22 performance	28%	33%	On Track
Number of customers referred onto the Priority Services Register (PSR)	No	Yes	5,000	5,000	4,913	8,925	Exceeding target
Average customer satisfaction score for PSR customers directly impacted by GDN activities	Yes	No	N/A	Baseline 21/22 performance	9.39/10	9.32/10	On track

Key Performance Indicator	Vulnerability Reputational Incentive (Yes/No)	NGN Business Plan Commitment (Yes/No)	Detailed commitment / target	NGN Stretch Target – per year	Apr '21 - Mar '22	Apr '22 - Mar '23	Comments
Number of Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) Connections	Yes	Yes	1,000	2,000	854	185	April 2022 – funding no longer available for first-time gas central heating under ECO4. As a result, FPNES connections have significantly declined, leading to a review by Ofgem in late 2022. See FPNES update on page 9.
Energy efficiency advice	No	Yes	1,000		890	1581	Exceeding target
Customer Support Fund (renamed from Hardship Fund) (Shareholder Funded)	Yes	Yes	£150,000 per annum		£87,054	£560,991	On track. Fund increased to £600,000 for 2022/23 to support the energy and cost of living crises. Additional support provided, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased funding for benefits advisors, from 1 to 3 within Groundworks Introduced additional compensation payment for gas interruptions. Guaranteed Standards of Performance payment is applied after being interrupted for 24 hours. We introduced a payment after 4 hours recognising the increased financial burden caused by an unplanned gas interruption Supported vulnerable customers with heat the person provisions, including heated jackets, electric blankets, and heated seat covers Increased funding for repair and replacement of gas appliances beyond VCMA provision (see page 17)
Community Partnering Fund (Shareholder Funded)	Yes	Yes	£50,000 per annum		£57,500	£57,500	On track Undertook review in 2021/22 on the effectiveness of the Community Partnering Fund. Relunched in 2022/23 - moved from Leeds to Tyne and Wear to plug gaps in grass root partnerships.
Social and Customer Competency Framework	Yes	Yes	Framework in place for GD2		In delivery	In delivery	Exceeded target - higher than forecast SROI. See case study on page 28 Dedicated vulnerability trainer role throughout GD2 funded through VCMA.

Key Performance Indicator	Vulnerability Reputational Incentive (Yes/No)	NGN Business Plan Commitment (Yes/No)	Detailed commitment / target	NGN Stretch Target – per year	Apr '21 - Mar '22	Apr '22 - Mar '23	Comments
Dedicated 24/7 PSR hotline	No	Yes	24/7 PSR hotline		N/A	N/A	<p>Revisited with NGN Citizens Panel in January 2023. Established that we shouldn't have a dedicated PSR hotline as vulnerability is now a broader issue (not just PSR). Stakeholders supported the proactive communication channels currently in place and have encouraged us to continue to develop these. We are continuing to reach out to PSR and vulnerable customers proactively through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGN Customer Care Officers (CCOs) • Making Every Contact Count referral process (MECC - see case study on page 28) • Our partners • Dedicated projects
Community partners trained each year to deliver CO awareness	No	Yes	100		162	859	<p>Exceeded target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 Community Energy Ambassadors trained by Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC • 43 people trained directly through our Vulnerability Trainer • 316 trained through Groundwork's Fuel Poverty training course

Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) Update

Our Business Plan commitment April 2021 to March 2026 was to deliver 5,000 gas connections to fuel poor homes, with a stretched target of 10,000. FPNES aims to increase affordable warmth - by providing an assisted cost (often free) gas connection, working in conjunction with customers and partners to deliver internal measures (Gas Central Heating).

During March/April 2022, as a result of changes to ECO4 funding, it became evident that there would no longer be support for first time gas central heating. As a result of this, FPNES connections significantly declined, which led to a review by Ofgem in late 2022. Due to the changing landscape and despite a continued and strengthened focus on trying to find eligible customers and schemes just 185 connections were completed in 2022/23.

Whilst FPNES will remain open to support a lower reforecasted number of FPNES connections, Ofgem have since advised that unspent FPNES funding will be re-purposed into the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance, VCMA 2 (see pages 31 onwards for more details). For the GDNs this will increase the total VCMA allowance from c£60m to c£170m. For NGN the additional allowance under VCMA2 will be £12.7m.

Our Strategy

At NGN we recognise and embrace our responsibility and moral obligation to help customers in vulnerable situations, living within our communities. As a compassionate and caring organisation, we empathise with individuals and groups who are facing difficulties, and also those organisations who are providing critical support. Through our research, partnerships, stakeholder feedback and daily interactions, we understand the challenges they face. Challenges that can arise from our day-to-day operational activities and more broadly the physical, mental, environmental and financial challenges faced by vulnerable households within the communities we serve.

Given that 1 in 5 customers may need extra support during interactions with NGN, and we only might serve that customer once in their lifetime, it is essential that we have a strategy that focusses wholly on looking after our customers in vulnerable situations. Our strategy also takes account of vulnerable situations that occur beyond and outside registration on the Priority Services Register (PSR), and also beyond our core function of managing the local gas distribution network.

We understand that vulnerability is complex and can be transitory and multi-faceted. It cannot be pigeon-holed and prescriptive, but must be looked at through a flexible, wide-eyed, and innovative lens. Vulnerability is not just singular; it could be a whole household that needs extra support, or indeed a whole community. Also, vulnerability is sometimes also not recognised by those who are most vulnerable, who simply accept their situation as the norm.

Our research has highlighted that issues around vulnerability are dynamic, particularly in a rapidly evolving landscape such as the energy sector. Changes within the energy market can significantly impact the movement of customers in and out of fuel poverty. These market factors can impact individuals, households and communities in very different ways, and we need to be mindful to consider these with the approach that we take.

VCMA¹ provides NGN with a huge opportunity to create projects that support the needs of our Customers in Vulnerable Situations (CIVS).

Our VCMA strategy supports:

- Individuals/households that have been directly impacted by our services
- Individual/households that may need extra support to access our services
- Colleagues to proactively recognise and act on indications of customers experiencing vulnerability
- Individuals/households/communities that are off grid; and
- Individuals/households exposed to a changing landscape – Pandemic/Energy/ Cost of Living Crisis

Whilst we understand that vulnerability is complex, in practical terms, we have developed 5 broad categories which support our colleagues to recognise and embed our strategy;

1. Financial hardship
2. Physical challenges, inclusive of communication issues, physical space
3. Mental wellbeing
4. Rural vulnerability
5. Temporary vulnerability (for example homelessness or bereavement)

Our NGN definition of vulnerability goes beyond the potential detrimental impact that NGN's activities can have to consider those in our communities who may never be impacted by our activities but have characteristics that could be defined as vulnerable.

We have continued to develop the building blocks of our strategy, which are:

- **Data and research**
- **Colleague capability**
- **Stakeholder engagement**
- **Evolution and scaling up of projects**
- **Measuring impact**
- **Governance**

Data and Research

We use many sets of data and research to help understand how we should be targeting investment to reach those in most need. Here are some examples of the research and data we use.

Annual Customer Perceptions Research

Each year we use our annual Customer Perceptions Research to understand the priorities of our customers and ensure we're building on the right foundations. The evidence in the most recent research indicated that keeping bills as low as possible ranked higher than in previous years and ranked significantly higher than providing a safe and reliable supply of gas. 75% of customers surveyed told us that they are rationing / choosing to use less energy. This is a clear indication about how customers continue to be concerned about the cost of energy and general cost of living.

We continue to use the Customer Perceptions Research to test and validate our Customers in Vulnerable Situations Strategy, to understand if our five core pillars of vulnerability (financial hardship, physical disability, mental health, rurality and temporary vulnerability), reflect the views of our customers, and also to understand where we should be prioritising support.

Customer Perceptions Research has helped us guide VCMA1 investment, to make sure that those in financial hardship and impacted by the energy crisis, are prioritised for support (see page 24 for case study with Middlesbrough Environment City). Whilst this focus may continue to be the driver for many of the projects we have funded, we have ensured a holistic approach to delivering against the objectives of the VCMA. Our partners are trained to provide Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness and advice and have easy routes to refer clients onto the Priority Services Register (PSR). The latest Customer Perceptions Research (wave 3) was undertaken in December 2022 and January 2023 and will be used to inform future priorities and strategic direction. You can read the report here <https://together.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/events/customer-perceptions-research-2023/>.

Social Indicator Mapping, Northern Gas Networks – June 2022

This bi-annual research presents data on the number and proportion of customers in the NGN area that could be classified as vulnerable through a range

of criteria. The data aligns to our 5 strategic themes including financial; physical health; mental health; rurality; temporary (homelessness or bereavement).

We use this data to make sure that we have the right strategic partnerships in place across our network, to help us build and deliver projects that address specific needs within each of our 5 regions.

This data is used alongside stakeholder feedback to help us develop the right partnerships to meet appropriate need. For example, our most recent set of data reported a very sharp rise in the population aged 85+ nationally and across the NGN area, where the numbers in this group are projected to rise by 58% to approx. 260,000 people (from 165,000 in 2021). This is then overlaid with rurality data, and we can see that the areas with the sharpest rise are in rural locations, specifically coastal areas. We then triangulate this with reports such as <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/involuntaryppm-supplier-code-practice> in which Ofgem have defined 85+ age group as high risk, to help guide and shape our VCMA investment. For example, using this data helped guide a new partnership with Age UK North Tyneside to build a project to support older customers living in both rural and coastal locations (see page 48).

Vulnerability Mapping Tool

Funded through the Network Innovation Allowance this NGN led project, in partnership with Egnida, is an interactive model which maps multiple vulnerabilities from ONS and other data sources. From this we can identify gaps based both on geographical location and vulnerability themes to be able to identify and target suitable projects across our network. This is now being used by both our partners and other GDNs and DNOs to provide insight to support the development of new projects and partnerships.

Citizens Advice Cost of Living Tracker

Monthly data provided by Citizens Advice predicts that debt/financial hardship will continue to worsen during 2023. Some particular groups are at risk/seeking greater levels of support including those with health issues and disabilities. We look across all these data sets to make sure we can identify areas in most need of support.

Colleague Capability

Alongside the vulnerability training that all colleagues are provided with, (see case study on page 28) we have also focussed hard during 22/23 to build colleague awareness of types of VCMA projects that we are supporting. This is both to help our thinking about the projects that can be expanded within NGN through our operational activities, but also to get ideas from colleagues about what more we could and should be doing.

To help with this, we developed a new engagement mechanism – the NGN Annual Open Day. We held our first one in May 2022 in Leeds, and will be subsequently moving around the network each year (our latest one was held on May 24th 2023 in Newcastle). It provided an opportunity for colleagues and partners to network face to face and to see first hand some of the projects that NGN has been progressing over the last year, to support customers in vulnerable situations.

It was also a chance for our stakeholders to meet up in person, with some of the wider NGN team and learn about what else is going on within the business. We had 50+ attendees on the day, including many NGN colleagues, both operational and office based. They were able to meet our Community / Strategic Partners, who showcased many of their VCMA1 projects, as well as seeing Network Innovation Projects and Partners including Affotek and Street Score. Other attendees included the Fuel Bank Foundation, who we currently have a national GDN collaborative VCMA project with, Community Action Northumberland (CAN), The Carer's Room, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, DIAL and Groundwork.

Attendee feedback:

“Great event all round especially since it’s the first of its kind, well done to all involved. Partner feedback on the day was really positive. It was fantastic to see all the partners F2F and finally put faces to names, and to see so many internal NGN employees taking part too. I would love to see an event in Doxford / up North next time with some different partners’

‘Very relaxed, nice atmosphere to be able to walk around and chat to everyone at our own pace. Nice that you could come and go as needed. Lots of ideas to engage with NGN and partners in future which we are looking forward to”

Stakeholder Engagement

The VCMA1 projects that we support are tailored to the specific needs of the communities within our region and align with our Customers in Vulnerable Situations (CIVS) Strategy. The strategy continues to be reviewed through regular engagement with our partners and stakeholders, to ensure the most efficient and effective project delivery. We meet with our key stakeholders and continue to review our priorities, to ensure that we align with their expectations, but also with the ever-changing landscape. By using our wide range of engagement mechanisms and continually inviting feedback, we can support key VCMA decisions.

Headlines from our 2022/23 engagement

Engagement opportunity	Engagement summary	Some of the key things we've heard	NGN response
CIVS Annual Strategic Workshop – March 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 delegates • Overall satisfaction 8.3/10 	Looking back at previous year's performance and understanding stakeholder and NGN priorities for the next 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More engagement is required due to energy crisis. • More CO awareness & PSR training. • Gap in projects around Physical Disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Readiness and Financial Hardship hot topic workshops held, as well as introducing new engagement channels such as the NGN Open Day in May 2022. • NGN Vulnerability Trainer delivered CO / PSR sessions to Local Authorities/ Social Housing Providers. • NGN held Physical Disability Webinar and increased the number of partners to support this need (see page 25 for case study supporting physical health).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggest concern – boiler repairs and cost to replace • Focus on short term, immediate crisis support, as well as than long term sustainable projects • Need to have consideration for digitally excluded • Heat or eat pushing people to make unsafe / dangerous heating. • Funding has always been a problem and it's going to continue – the grants and funding given are never long enough to make meaningful change (6–12-month projects). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have two projects to support customers with repair and replacement of appliances. One is funded through VCMA in collaboration with Cadent (lead network) - One Number. The other is funded from the NGN Customer Support Fund (see page 17). Both of these services are included in our operational referral process - Making Every Contact Count (MECC). • Supporting new projects that address financial hardship/fuel vouchers • National Collaborative Citizens Advice project (SGN lead network) offers face-to-face support as well as NGN specific Age UK North Tyneside project and Green Doctors. • Winter campaign and CO awareness week were used to promote safety messages (see page 17 for measuring impact). • NGN are supporting roles for greater than 1 year to increase partner capacity /retain staff. We are also, where possible, extending projects for two or more years.



Engagement opportunity	Engagement summary	Some of the key things we've heard	NGN response
<p>CIVS Hot Topic Workshops</p> <p>Winter Readiness & CO – September 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 delegate Overall satisfaction – 9.3/10 	<p>Deep dives into hot topic areas prioritised by our stakeholders at the annual workshop. Each workshop includes a partner spotlight session where a project is showcased.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage young people to raise awareness of energy issues. Could NGN's winter campaign be extended to target warm spaces/places? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Young People with Energy project and working with universities to raise CO awareness. Messaging already passed through Warm Hubs. NGN supported collaborative Energy Roadshows with Local Authorities/Citizens Advice, offering face-to-face information and advice on CO and PSR.
<p>PSR – November 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 delegates Overall satisfaction – 8/10 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSR information needs to be accessible and communication with third parties of vulnerable customers is vital. PSR and CO awareness needs raising. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGN have ISO 22458 Kitemark (Inclusive Service - Energy Provision). We have also worked collaboratively on a number of PSR projects including ThePSR.co.uk initiative. We have developed a 'Dealing with Third Party Responsibility' Policy and this is now included in our vulnerability training. NGN and Collaborative communications campaigns delivered to support targeted PSR and CO awareness. (See Outputs Summary page 7 and CO/PSR research page 17).
<p>Financial hardship – February 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 delegates Overall satisfaction 8.6/10 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a perception that the problem with fuel poverty, financial hardship and cost of living crisis is increasing and not getting better and that strategies to help people are required. Provide help with costs of debt relief and bankruptcy fees along with financial support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGN designed holistic support for repair/replacement/servicing of appliances by using both VCMA and NGN funding (see page 17). Working with Citizens Advice to develop a project focusing on debt relief.
<p>NGN Open Day – May 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 delegates Overall satisfaction – 9.2/10 	<p>Face to face networking opportunity on the back of stakeholder feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders advised this is the best way to engage New partnership connections – this has provided a fantastic opportunity to do this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 2 Open Day scheduled 24/5/23 - Supporting Our Communities Together. New connections made e.g. linked up Stockton & District Advice & Information Services with Community Action Northumberland. Groundwork linking up with Home Group and also Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC (see page 16 for more information).
<p>Additional CIVS workshops</p> <p>upon request</p>	<p>Physical Disability Webinar arranged to discuss projects in this area - held June 2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice agencies are being overwhelmed and not able to cope and support people with different disabilities. Long waiting lists for people to get support – organisations have less capacity to deal with problems that affect disabled people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGN increased support with Green Doctors/Citizens Advice and now working with Scope as collaborative VCMA project NGN have supported additional roles / funding with partners to increase capacity.

All of the reports relating to the above engagement workshops, can be found on NGN's Together Now website - together.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/

Other regular stakeholder engagement

Strategic Partner Roundtable	Monthly	Meeting with NGN's 9 Strategic Partners to monitor and review progress of VCMA1 projects. Ofgem metrics reviewed, and lessons learnt, future opportunities also discussed
Customer Engagement Group	Bi-monthly	Include deep dive sessions around vulnerability themes. Update group on VCMA1 progress and opportunity to challenge and review against performance and delivery
Infrastructure North	Quarterly	Collaboration with utility partners across the NGN region – Northern Powergrid, Yorkshire Water and Northumbrian Water
Utilities Together	Quarterly	Collaboration with utility partners across Cumbria / Northwest of England - Cadent, Electricity Northwest and United Utilities
CIVS newsletter	Quarterly	Updates for stakeholders on VCMA1 projects and other funding streams. The newsletter also includes business updates and future engagement activities

Evolution and Scaling up of Projects

It has always been our ambition to identify and support projects that are scalable, replicable and can draw on collaboration. The four projects summarised below demonstrate the strengths of our partners and illustrate our ambition.

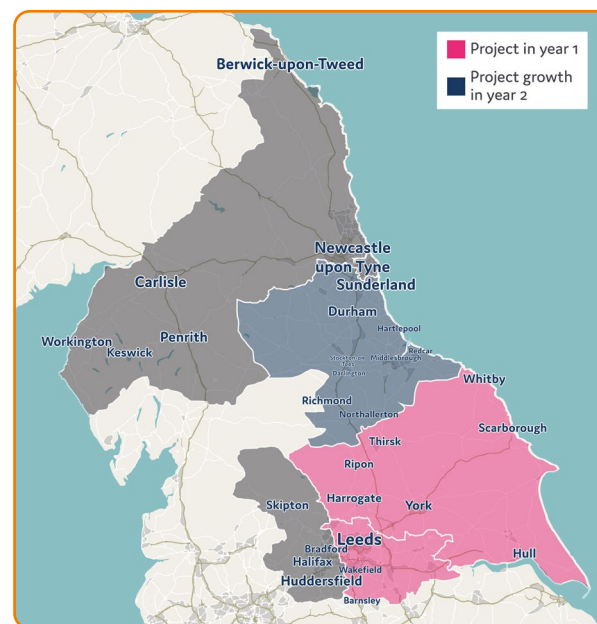
Warm Homes, Healthy Children - Local to regional growth

The Warm Homes, Healthy Children project originated within the Yorkshire area during 2021/22, delivered by the Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC (YED). The project supported low income, vulnerable families, living in fuel poverty. Through stakeholder feedback and partner networking opportunities, it was identified that the benefits of this project could be realised within a wider area across the NGN network. At the time fuel poverty was measured at 13.2% nationally, however, in Middlesborough this figure was 16.8%, evidencing the need to scale up in this area. As a result, the Warm Homes, Healthy Children project commenced this year in the north of the NGN network.

Delivered by Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC), in collaboration with YED and additional support from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, this project demonstrates successful **local to regional growth**. The aim of this project is to help families to be better able to afford to heat their homes and to stay safe, warm and well. MEC provide one to one energy advice including tariff and switching information, fuel debt repayment advice, understanding smart meters, damp and

condensation advice, and understanding energy bills. Further energy efficiency guidance can be offered that may benefit local households.

A case study on Warm Homes, Healthy Children is on page 24.



Warm Hubs - Regional to national growth

The Warm Hubs model was initially introduced by Community Action Northumberland (CAN), in partnership with NGN, within rural Northumberland.

The model consists of 3 strands which are: supporting community buildings; supporting a network of sustainable volunteers; and addressing a community need. There is a golden thread of energy running through everything. The model is now trademarked and supports both rural and urban communities to help address rural and social isolation as well as supporting those in fuel poverty.

Within a short space of time, the model grew significantly with 28 Warm Hubs being established and when VCMA funding became available, NGN were able to support the further development and evolution of the model.

Stakeholder feedback from CAN highlighted that they were being approached by members of ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and other organisations to establish Warm Hubs across England, Scotland and Wales. NGN worked with CAN to develop a Warm Hubs Toolkit and introduced a Warm Hubs Coordinator role, to be able to support any organisation wishing to utilise the toolkit and become an accredited Warm Hub. Both the toolkit and role have been funded through VCMA and a number of Warm Hubs toolkit users have now been approved across the UK. This is a fantastic example of how VCMA funding enables the opportunity for **regional to national growth**.

Young People with Energy - Connecting partners

This project began in Yorkshire, delivered initially by the Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC; one of our nine Strategic Partners. Having proven its success in 2022/23 another of our nine Strategic Partners, Groundwork, was approached by YED to replicate the project in the Northeast of England. The project in the Northeast evolved further, with the introduction of a toolkit that could be used more broadly by front line workers supporting vulnerable people. This project is a great example of **connecting partners** to broaden and maximise the reach.

Young People with Energy supports young people aged 16-25 who are starting to live independently, however, have no education around energy and how to use it effectively and efficiently in the home. This could result in them paying more for energy and put them at risk of falling into fuel poverty. The opportunity for young consumers to access education around their energy bills, empowers them to reduce the longer term impacts of energy affordability.

Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT) - Beyond VCMA

We use other NGN support funds alongside VCMA, to plug gaps in services for vulnerable customers that VCMA cannot fund, therefore delivering an inclusive service across the whole of our network. We prioritise the use of alternative NGN funding according to stakeholder feedback, and data and research.

One of our key alternative funding streams is the NGN Customer Support Fund (CSF). This fund is generally £150,000 per annum. However, this was increased to £600,000 in 2022/23 in response to the energy and cost of living crises.

Measuring Impact

Common SROI Tool

All GDNs measure Social Return on Investment (SROI) to understand both financial and societal benefits to customers. The models used are based on an agreed set of proxy values. In order for a VCMA project to move forward we must be able to demonstrate that the net benefit is greater than the investment.

Over the last 12 months we have been working with the Energy Networks Association (ENA), DNOs and transmission companies to create a single SROI model that we can all use. This common model and associated proxy bank will be launched in September 2023.

Alongside SROI we also use other methods to assess the impact of our projects. These include:

- Topic based customer research - For example see detail below provided on CO/PSR research.
- In depth customer case studies - See pages 24-30

CO & PSR Research - August 2022

NGN continues to measure impact through gathering data/vulnerability mapping and to ensure that the appropriate projects are supported, in the areas where the data illustrates there are gaps. Each year we conduct an independent piece of research to understand the levels of CO and PSR awareness across our region.

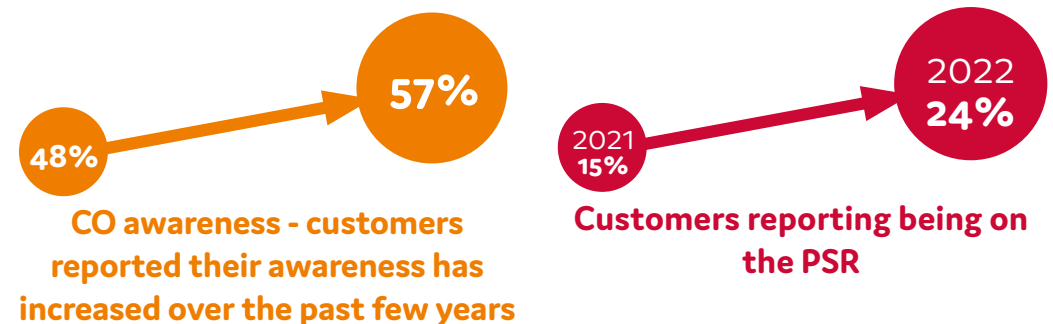
Through the CSF we have partnered with the Gas Safe Charity / Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT) to support customers with the repair, replacement, and servicing of appliances, when no gas emergency intervention has taken place. This contract has been in place since April 2021, but due to the increased CPF funding we increased support to reach more customers in need during 2022/23. This is an example of how we go **beyond VCMA** to provide holistic support to our customers in greatest need.

Awareness of CO increased in 2022 from 2021, with more customers reporting their awareness has increased – from 48% to 57%.

More participants in 2022 recalled specific campaigns that raised awareness of CO.

More customers in 2022 reported being on the PSR – now 24%, compared to just 15% in 2021.

As a result of this research and working with our partners, it is clear that the messages around CO and PSR are being cascaded and consequently delivering significant benefits. This is evident from the Ofgem metrics table, whereby there have been large increases in both CO and PSR awareness over the past 12 months (see page 7 for full overview of all performance metrics against Ofgem and NGN targets).



Governance

NGN has a well-established, independent VCMA Governance Group to review NGN regional projects. The panel is made up of colleagues from Water Companies, Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and Citizens Advice (CA), currently meeting every quarter. Project proposals are shared in advance of the meetings. Each project is reviewed against a series of criteria including:

- Does the project proposal meet VCMA eligibility criteria?
- Does the proposal align with NGN’s current Customers in Vulnerable Situations Strategy?
- Cost per beneficiary
- What is the SROI value?

Feedback is provided to organisations on projects that are rejected and a follow up action plan drafted, to help identify and address gaps in each proposal. The most common reasons for a project being rejected are that it does not align to VCMA criteria and/or outputs and outcomes are not clearly defined or measurable.

We work hard with all partner organisation to improve project proposals in line with feedback, or to refer projects to other funding mechanisms that might be more appropriate, such as the NGN Community Partnering Fund, NGN Customer Support Fund, or Network Innovation Allowance.

During 2023/24 we will be developing the VCMA Governance Group to include

approval of collaborative projects, and also review of in-flight/completed projects. We are also going to extend membership beyond utility partners and increase the frequency of meetings.

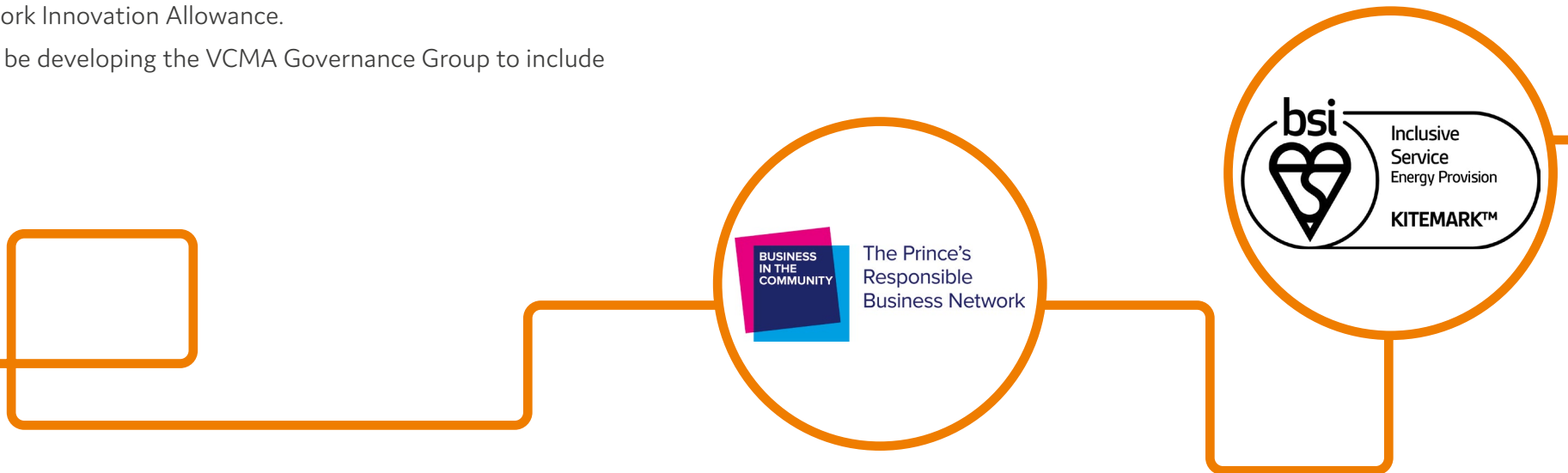
In addition to the VCMA Governance Group, we also have additional external and internal assurance on our overall Customers in Vulnerable Situations Strategy, including:

ISO 22458 – Inclusive Service - Energy Provision Kitemark (evolved from BSI 18477, which NGN has held since 2015) - awarded in 2023

Business in the Community – Responsible Business Tracker. Assess against this standard since 2020. Engagement with community partners recognised as best practice.

Customer Engagement Governance Group and Social Issues Subgroup. VCMA1 strategy v delivery is a key topic area for challenge and review. This is discussed quarterly through deep dive sessions with the Social Issues Subgroup, feeding into the main quarterly CEG strategic meeting.

NGN Board. VCMA1 delivery is detailed in monthly management reports, and any changes in approach/strategic direction are discussed.



Project Summaries for 2022/23

Lead partner organisation	Project	Priority need group	Region	Duration	Forecast SROI	Total NGN committed spend – up until 31st March 2023	Status	Priority theme
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Foodbanks	Vulnerable customers that are living in rurality	Northumberland	2021-2024	£1.31	£10,000.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Rural Food Kitchen	Vulnerable customers that are living in rurality	Northumberland	2021-2023	£1.10	£32,000.00	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Slow cooker roadshow	Vulnerable customers that are living in rurality	Northumberland	2021-2024	£3.34	£4,000.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
DIAL Leeds	Energy Confident	Disabled people	Leeds	2021-2024	£3.24	£12,000.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Durham County Council	Building Research Establishment (BRE) Data Targeting Pilot	Vulnerable community	County Durham	2021-2023	£1.14	£67,520.00	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Durham County Council	GP Partnering Pilot	People with health-related issues	County Durham	2021-2023	£2.09	£91,000.00	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited	Groundwork's Energy Management Services (GEMS)	Vulnerable community	Yorkshire	2021-2023	£3.63	£18,200.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Carbon monoxide awareness
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited	Green Doctor – Fuel Poverty Training Course	Front line workers that deal with vulnerable customers	Network wide	2021-2024	£6.33	£17,250.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited	Green Doctors - Energy matters	Financial hardship	Yorkshire, leeds	2021-2024	£1.02	£228,850.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Services beyond the meter

Lead partner organisation	Project	Priority need group	Region	Duration	Forecast SROI	Total NGN committed spend – up until 31st March 2023	Status	Priority theme
Highfield CO-OP	Community Energy and Carbon Monoxide Awareness Project	Refugees and asylum seekers	Bradford	2021-2024	£33.67	£2,500.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Carbon monoxide awareness
Highfield CO-OP	Community Energy Cafe	Refugees and asylum seekers	Bradford	2021-2024	£4.52	£2,500.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Services beyond the meter
Highfield CO-OP	Visually Impairment Energy Project	Refugees and asylum seekers that have a physical disability	Bradford & Airedale	2021-2024	£4.38	£2,500.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Highfield CO-OP	Community Energy Matters Magazine	Refugees and asylum seekers	Bradford	2021-2023	£2.13	£2,500.00	Complete	Carbon monoxide awareness
Highfield CO-OP	Vulnerability Film Festivals - Using Film To identify Vulnerable Communities	Refugees and asylum seekers	Bradford	2021-2024	£3.83	£4,750.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Highfield CO-OP	Community STEM Events	Refugees and asylum seekers	Bradford	2021-2024	£10.36	£4,250.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Highfield CO-OP	Mental Health Film and Conversations Project	Refugees and asylum seekers with mental health issues	Bradford	2021-2024	£4.26	£4,250.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Hull & East Yorkshire Children's University	Reading Van – bringing reading to the community	Disadvantaged children	Hull and East Riding	2021-2024	£1.20	£40,500.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Carbon monoxide awareness
Lake District Foundation	Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Environmental Impact Awareness in Cumbria Campaign	Visitors to the National Park	Cumbria	2021-2024	£2.19	£38,120.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Carbon monoxide awareness

Lead partner organisation	Project	Priority need group	Region	Duration	Forecast SROI	Total NGN committed spend – up until 31st March 2023	Status	Priority theme
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC	Community Energy Ambassadors	Vulnerable communities	North Yorkshire	2021-2023	£2.33	£48,100.00	Complete	Carbon monoxide awareness
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC	Young people with Energy	Young people	North Yorkshire	2021-2024	£1.10	£30,000.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC	Heating for Health	Vulnerable communities	North Yorkshire	2021-2024	£1.53	£40,000.00	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Services beyond the meter
Northern Gas Networks	NGN VCMA Project co-ordinator	Supporting VCMA projects	Network wide	2021-2026	£3.62	£62,954.2	In progress	Services beyond the meter
Northern Gas Networks	NGN VCMA Vulnerability Trainer	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2021-2026	£4.86	£67,160.4	In progress	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Harvey & Hugo Ltd	Engaging with Vulnerable Customers PR project	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2021-2024	£1.64	£44,593.2	In progress – extended for 2023/24	Carbon monoxide awareness
Harvey & Hugo Ltd & Northern Gas Networks	Harvey and Hugo - Kidde CO Alarms	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£12.00	£89,308.4	Complete	Carbon monoxide awareness
Harvey & Hugo Ltd & Northern Gas Networks	Harvey and Hugo - Mailing & fulfillment - CO alarms	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£1.64	£38,108.99	Complete	Carbon monoxide awareness
Harvey & Hugo Ltd	Harvey and Hugo - Radio advertising for VCMA campaign	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£1.64	£10,433.59	Complete	Supporting priority customer groups
Harvey & Hugo Ltd & Northern Gas Networks	Harvey and Hugo - Safelinks CO Alarms	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£12.00	£78,000.00	Complete	Carbon monoxide awareness
Harvey & Hugo Ltd	Harvey and Hugo - CO Awareness Reporting - Year 1	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£1.64	£800.00	Complete	Carbon monoxide awareness
Language Line Solutions	Harvey and Hugo - Language Line Solutions	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£1.64	£3,160.09	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability

Lead partner organisation	Project	Priority need group	Region	Duration	Forecast SROI	Total NGN committed spend – up until 31st March 2023	Status	Priority theme
Language Line Solutions	Harvey and Hugo - Language Line Solutions	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2023	£1.64	£327.69	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Warm Hubs Toolkit	Rural communities	Network wide	2022-2025	£4.88	£17,300.00	In progress	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited	Young people with Energy	Young people	Northeast – Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland	2022-2024	£2.60	£20,000.00	In progress	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC	Warm Homes Healthy Children	Vulnerable communities	North Yorkshire	2022-2023	£3.04	£25,500.00	In progress	Services beyond the meter
Northern Gas Networks	Customer Care Advisor - MECC	Vulnerable customers	Network wide	2022-2026	£1.57	£26,932.64	In progress	Supporting priority customer groups
Sirio	IAT-SROI Tool	Helping potential projects to use the toolkit before applying for VCMA funding	Network wide	2022-2023	£1.87	£8,000.00	Complete	Supporting priority customer groups
Northern Gas Networks & Safelincs	VCMA CO Alarms	Vulnerable communities	Network wide	2022-2026	£12.00	£9,890.00	In progress	Carbon monoxide awareness
Stockton and District Advice And Information Service	Energy Max Project	Financial hardship	Stockton	2022-2025	£3.48	£64,899.00	In progress	Services beyond the meter
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Warm Hubs Extension	Rural communities	Northumberland	2022-2023	£14.58	£10,000.00	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Middlesbrough Environment City	Warm Homes Healthy Children	Vulnerable communities	Middlesbrough and Redcar	2022-2024	£7.51	£10,000.00	In progress	Services beyond the meter
DIAL Leeds	Energy Confident! Pilot expansion	Disabled people	Leeds	2022-2023	£14.10	£1,887.38	Complete	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited	Noah's Ark	People with mental health issues	West Yorkshire	2022-2024	£2.95	£76,000.00	In progress	Services beyond the meter Fuel poverty and energy affordability

Lead partner organisation	Project	Priority need group	Region	Duration	Forecast SROI	Total NGN committed spend – up until 31st March 2023	Status	Priority theme
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited & Aware Technologies	Awaretag	Physical health	Leeds	2022-2024	£260.93	£149,000.00	In progress	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Heat and Eat	Vulnerable rural communities	Northumberland	2022-2023	£16.97	£6,960.00	Complete	Services beyond the meter
Community Action Northumberland (CAN)	Warm Hub National Co-ordinator Role	Vulnerable rural communities	Network wide	2022-2024	£2.10	£60,769.23	In progress	Supporting priority customer groups
Age UK North Tyneside	Information and Advice Role	Financial hardship	North Tyneside	2022-2024	£15.20	£42,000.00	In progress	Services beyond the meter
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC	Community Energy Ambassadors extension	Vulnerable communities	North Yorkshire	2022-2024	£2.33	£22,800.00	In progress	Services beyond the meter
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC	Community Energy Ambassadors extra sessions	Vulnerable communities	North Yorkshire	2022-2023	£2.33	£2,500.00	Complete	Services beyond the meter
Hope 4 U Ltd	NHS Support Service	People that are pregnant	Airedale & Bradford	2022-2024	£13.34	£82,000.00	In progress	Fuel poverty and energy affordability
Tom, Dick & Harry Ltd	VCMA annual reports, NGN and GDN collaborative report	Vulnerable customers	Network wide	2022-2022	N/A	£8,040.00	Complete	Supporting priority customer groups
Northern Gas Networks	Back-office staff costs	Vulnerable customers	Network wide	2021-2026	N/A	£2,643.14	In progress	Supporting priority customer groups
					Average:	Total: £1,742,757.95		
					£10.59			

Project Case Studies

Middlesbrough Environment City – Warm Homes, Healthy Children

KEY THEME: FUEL POVERTY AND ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

Why we're working together

Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC) began working alongside Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC after research commissioned by NGN provided evidence that fuel poverty levels in the Middlesborough area (16.8%) were significantly higher than the national average (13.2%). This project embeds knowledge and information around energy advice, the Priority Services Register (PSR), CO, and other sources of support, into the consciousness of all family support services and their communications. This is with the ultimate aim of helping families to better manage their bills and to be safe, warm and well.

The lead organisation is Middlesbrough Environment City's Affordable Warmth Team who cover the Redcar and Cleveland area. As detailed earlier in the report they provide one to one support with energy related issues (see page 15). MEC also manages a fuel voucher scheme that assists fuel poor households in emergency situations. They have developed a close working relationship with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council by specifically engaging with a range of Children's Services teams including Early Help, Children's Hubs, Changing Futures, and those leaving care. This approach has the potential to provide advice, guidance, and support to some of the most vulnerable individuals and families at a time of need.

Case study:

Miss X was referred to MEC by the Social Prescribing team based in Redcar & Cleveland. There were a lot of concerns for this customer as she has cerebral palsy and is paralysed from the neck down, but, has some use in her arms. She struggles with verbal communication as her speech is now slurred, and must use a specially adapted wheelchair which she spends most of her time in.

The referral from the Social Prescriber stated, "In need of full assessment of need please due to health issues and cold presenting further decline of health - Cerebral Palsy, along with other health issues, anxiety /concerns around

using the heating – currently using hot water bottles /microwavable heating equipment to manage pain and is returning to bed to stay warm".

MEC liaised with the referrer and prioritised a home visit for Miss X. They provided tailored energy advice on keeping warm at home, as well as leaving a MEC hints and tips sheet as a reminder towards further energy savings in the home. The adviser was able to fit the contents of a warm pack provided by MEC. They also provided Miss X with a double electric blanket, donated by Trading Standards. It was felt that this additional support was much needed to help Miss X, given the amount of pain she suffered as a result of the cold temperatures.

Miss X was overwhelmed with the support MEC were able to provide, which has also enabled a closer working relationship to be established with the Social Prescribing teams, and an increased number of referrals from this source. Middlesbrough Environment City would not have been able to offer any of this crucial support if it wasn't for the VCMA project.

Project outcomes:

Number of people signed up to the Priority Services Register	19
Number of people more informed (e.g. attendance at events, workshops)	207
Amount of additional benefits unlocked	£18,153.74
Number of people in the following categories, who have directly benefitted from this project:	
People with physical disabilities	10
People with mental health conditions	30 +
People living in rural isolation	31
People facing poverty or financial hardship	306
Number of people this project has reached	568
SROI	£7.51

Durham County Council – GP Partnering pilot

KEY THEME: SUPPORTING PRIORITY CUSTOMER GROUPS

Why we're working together

As County Durham has lots of ex-mining communities there is a prevalence of respiratory problems associated with this. Living in a cold home can significantly compound these existing health issues. The targeting of GP patients was done by working with Clinical Commissioning Group partners and targeted mail-outs to patients.

The GP Partnering pilot also targeted local communities with vulnerable and low-income households, for assistance for grants and services to help support those who may be in fuel poverty. This included raising awareness of the dangers and health risks of CO and increasing applications to the Priority Services Register (PSR).

The overall aim of the project was to reduce the number of individuals with a long-term health condition who are living in fuel poverty within County Durham. By working with health professionals and accessing environments with key customer touchpoints, it will ensure that vulnerable households are safe, warm and have a sense of well-being.

CASE STUDY CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...



Case study:

Mrs X's husband passed away in 2021 and she hadn't had an energy statement/bill from her Energy Supplier since 2021. She was worried about her energy usage and was reluctant to put on her heating in the Autumn of 2022. Her home was heated by an old gas-powered air duct heating system.

The electricity meter was an Economy 7 meter and her annual usage was 2394 kwh (1936 for day usage and 428 for night units) so the E7 meter was still a viable option and wouldn't achieve any savings by switching to a single rate tariff. Energy efficiency advice was given at this first visit. Durham County Council (DCC) took meter readings and gave these to the customers supplier to send out an up to date statement. This was promised within 7 working days.

A month later a second visit was carried out and a statement had still not been received from the customers supplier. The meters were still not picking up any signal so DCC gave more up to date readings, and requested quarterly visits from the DCC Priority Services team until the metering issues were resolved.

DCC attended a third home visit in October when they raised a formal complaint regarding the lack of any work regarding the metering issues, an appointment was made for a smart meter to be installed and provided more readings. The Advisor forced through the readings and advised the account was £107.77 in credit on the gas and £19.84 in debit on the electric. Mrs X was hugely relieved as she had been worried she hadn't been paying enough and that she wouldn't be able to afford to put her heating on over the winter.

Another visit was carried out in November 2022 when the Smart Metering Engineers were at the property. Closing meter readings were provided to her supplier from the old meters and they were able to bill the account up to date and register the new smart meters. DCC requested that the direct debit was reversed back to the original payments as they were enough to cover her usage, and agreed £50 compensation was acceptable.

While discussing the gas air duct heating, Mrs X said it had not been serviced for a few years, so referred to DCC's Warm Homes Team who arranged for Mrs X to have a free boiler service. A few days later the customer text saying "Hi, the men came to service my heater today. They did a brilliant job, the best service ever. I'm very pleased. Thank you so much for all your help and support"

Mrs X was delighted with the service she has received. The financial savings were less than the peace of mind Mrs X has in being able to turn on her heating and knowing she can discuss her concerns with the Council.

"I want to thank you once again for your involvement in these matters appreciate that it's not quite your job, and that you have gone above and beyond. Your support has been nothing short of fantastic at a time when we needed that support in the family! If I need any further support in the future we will have no doubt in reaching out. Our sincere thanks, Regards, Mrs X"

Project outcomes:

Number of people signed up to the Priority Services Register	541
Number of CO pre and post awareness surveys completed	1028
Number of people reached through CO awareness (leaflets, social media)	2554
Number of CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers	60
Number of people in the following categories, who have directly benefitted from this project:	
People with physical disabilities	328
People with mental health conditions	181
People living in rural isolation	123
People living with a temporary vulnerability	30
People facing poverty or financial hardship	712
People in education	117
Number of people this project has reached	1066
SROI	£2.09

Stockton & District Advice & Information Service (SDAIS) – Energy Max Project

KEY THEME: FUEL POVERTY AND ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

Why we're working together

This project enables SDAIS to provide specialist welfare benefits, energy costs advice and support for people who have received energy advice from community-based agencies in the region. It will also enable SDAIS to look at where potential unclaimed welfare benefits have been identified and to speak with customers who may have concerns regarding fuel poverty and/or financial instability in the household.

Case study:

Mr & Mrs X were referred to the Energy Advice project as they needed specialist welfare benefit advice. They had made an application for Attendance Allowance but this had been refused by the DWP and they wanted to know if there was anything that could be done about it.

Mr & Mrs X are in their seventies and live in their own home in Billingham with a teenage grandson that they care for. They have a range of health problems including arthritis, cancer, and some other physical problems that limit their mobility.

Mr X had claimed Attendance Allowance as he was finding it difficult to care for himself due to his health issues and the extra money would have enabled him to keep warm and well at home. However, he had been turned down and expert advice was required as to whether there were grounds to challenge this decision.

After discussing the situation in depth with Mr X about how his illness impacted upon him, the Adviser considered that there were grounds to get the decision looked at again. The adviser prepared a Mandatory Reconsideration letter for Mr X, setting out the reasons why the matter should be looked at again. This has been submitted to the DWP and the customer was advised that if he is turned down again he should return to the project as it could provide further assistance in making an appeal to a tribunal.

The Adviser felt that Mr X may be entitled to the lower rate of Attendance Allowance of £61.85 per week, which would mean an additional £3,216 a year. There was also a possibility that further benefits could be available if the Attendance Allowance was awarded.

The Adviser also discussed the Priority Services Register- Mr & Mrs X were already registered- and Carbon Monoxide safety- they already had two CO monitors, one near the gas fire and one near the boiler. Mr X received full energy efficiency advice, enabling him to feel more confident using energy at home and minimising energy costs where possible.

Mr X returned to SDAIS after his mandatory reconsideration was rejected. SDAIS are now supporting Mr X in making an appeal to a tribunal and are confident that his entitlement will be awarded. If awarded Attendance Allowance, Mr & Mrs X would be entitled to make a claim for Pension Credit, which will then passport them to automatically receive additional benefits including Council Tax Reduction, Housing Benefit, Warm Home Discount and help with health related costs.

Project outcomes:

Number of additional grants/donations secured, as a result of this funding including amounts:	£13,061
Please indicate the number of people in the following categories, who have directly benefitted from this project:	
People with physical disabilities	41
People with mental health conditions	12
People facing poverty or financial hardship	131
People in education	3
Number of people this project has reached	131
SROI	£3.48

NGN VCMA Vulnerability Trainer

KEY THEME: CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS

NGN has developed a Vulnerability Competency Framework to make sure that we can identify and fully train all our NGN colleagues and partners on the wide-ranging vulnerabilities that exist within our network. The training includes Carbon Monoxide (CO) and vulnerability awareness, fuel poverty, energy efficiency, Priority Services Register (PSR) and promoting the locking cooker valve service. This training is delivered by our in-house VCMA funded Vulnerability Trainer.

Training summary for 2022/23

Training session	Engineers trained	External partners trained	Referrals made
Making Every Contact Count (MECC) 1 or 2 (including Dementia Friends)	1760 - NGN and Direct Service Providers (DSP) colleagues		MECC follow up calls made by Customer Team - 157: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 requested home safety visits from Fire & Rescue • 9 requested energy advice • 5 requested debt advice
Deaf Awareness sessions	21 – mix of engineers and customer care officers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Winter Warmer Packs issued • 3 referred to Northumbrian Water's PSR
CO & PSR awareness sessions	41	43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76 Fuel Bank Foundation referrals received since go live on 3/10 • 43 repair/replacement/servicing referrals since go live – 16/1/23
Operational Response Engineer (ORE) and site manager briefings about customer vulnerability and CIC projects	45		

Based on the figures in the table above we have calculated an updated SROI for the vulnerability trainer role from £4.86 to **£6.06**. This is an increase of £1.20 (24.69%).

Project outcomes:

Number of people signed up to the Priority Services Register through partners as a result of training	1443
Number of CO pre and post awareness surveys completed through partners as a result of training	2722
Number of people trained	1894
Number of people this project has reached	4165

Groundwork – Noah's Ark

KEY THEME: SUPPORTING PRIORITY CUSTOMER GROUPS

Why we're working together

The overall aim of this project is to engage with customers who have mental health issues and are living in fuel poverty in the Calderdale region. Subjects such as understanding of energy use, energy bills, income maximisation and CO safety are also addressed through this project.

Project outcomes:

How many people have directly benefitted from this project to date against?	127
Number of new jobs created	2
Number of people trained	16 (including delivery of monthly Fuel Poverty training course)
Number of people in the following categories, who have directly benefitted from this project:	
People with physical disabilities	12
People with mental health conditions	25 (households)
People facing poverty or financial hardship	127
People in education	52
SROI	£2.95

CASE STUDY CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE...



Case study:

Halifax - March 2023

Mr X was referred to Noah's Ark by the Jobcentre for help with a food parcel. He'd recently lost his job and was finding it impossible to manage his finances. He has a history of poor mental health which has been massively exacerbated by his money and debt problems.

Groundwork spoke with him on the phone at first (to establish what support they could give him) and asked him to complete a referral form. Part of the referral process is to evaluate the client's mental health by the use of a client outcome measuring tool called CORE. This creates a clinical score in regards someone's emotional wellbeing. Mr X scored was in the "very high" range indicating high levels of stress, anxiety and depressive illness.

Groundwork also asks clients to tell them how their debt and money problems are making them feel. Mr X said:

"Very depressed, continuous worrying and feeling of no way out of it. I lack sleep a lot because of it. That's affected me at work." He told us his money and debt issues were a factor in him losing his job.

When Groundwork carried out checks, they found that Mr X was in over £16,500 of debt (£8,700 of priority debt) and was insolvent: he had no means of paying. His debts included the following priority bills:

- Together House, £700 – rent arrears
- SSE Energy, £2,900 – gas & electric arrears
- Calderdale Council, £4,291 – council tax arrears
- Yorkshire Water, £831 – water arrears

Coupled with the stress of being in debt, Mr X was having to deal with Jacobs Enforcement agents attending his property trying to collect his council tax arrears. The solution to his money and debt problems was very straightforward, MB needed:

- A Debt Relief Order (DRO)
- To attend a budgeting course
- Short-term food support until he got back on his feet
- Help and to reduce his energy costs

The Groundwork Green Doctor provided support via a home visit, where they identified that there were no extractor fans and a broken window. Together Housing have been contacted regarding these issues. Groundwork were able to install draught-proofing, give a blanket, thermal mug & issued 2 x £49 fuel vouchers, as Mr X was in emergency credit. They also advised about moisture management and damp, and gave him a clothes dryer to prevent excess moisture accumulating by drying clothes directly on radiators.

The work already in progress from Noah's Ark, such as with Yorkshire Water, allowed the Green Doctor to focus on giving tailored energy advice, talk about CO risks, the PSR & how to reduce energy consumption whilst being able to keep warm.

Noah's Ark arranged a DRO for Mr X. This immediately brought to end all recovery action. In 12 months his debts will be gone forever. This brought massive relief to Mr X and immediately improved his mood and overall mental health.

Mr X attended Budget Like a Boss!!!! (Groundwork's financial capability training course). He picked up valuable skills that will enable him to manage his money going forward and hopefully stay on top of his bills and stay out of debt in the future.

Overall Mr X said that he felt much happier, that he could look forward to the future knowing he was debt free. His confidence levels were much higher, and he hoped to be back into employment very soon.

Look Ahead to 2023/24

We have engaged widely with our stakeholders to understand views about our approach to VCMA1, so we can take this learning forward to inform future spend and support targeting. With this feedback in mind, our look ahead over the next year will focus on maintaining spend on and further development of VCMA1 projects, with remaining VCMA1 spend dedicated towards Carbon Monoxide safety and awareness. We will also be prioritising setting up strategic VCMA2 projects and partnerships.

2023/24 VCMA1 projects in the pipeline (including examples of Network Innovation Allowance projects)

Organisation name	Project Title	Number of beneficiaries	Duration	Vulnerability theme
South Tyneside Homes	Environmental Energy Officer	1,000	2 years	Financial Hardship
Communitas Energy CIC (CE)	Home Heating Hub	650	1 year with an opportunity to extend	Financial Hardship
Groundwork	Awaretag	3,000 per year	2 years	Financial Hardship, Physical Health, and Mental Health
Lind Limited	Low to no power heat alternatives – researching options to power gas boilers when the electricity supply is interrupted	Network Innovation Allowance – research project	2 years	Physical health
CRESR	Off Grid Customers – researching energy solutions for off-grid customers	Network Innovation Allowance – research project	14 months	Financial Hardship / Physical Health and Mental Health

VCMA2

We will continue to be led by stakeholder feedback and our plans for VCMA2 spend reflect the priority areas outlined during recent engagement with key stakeholders around the direction of VCMA2 funds.

The six key themes identified by our stakeholders on areas to prioritise for VCMA2 are summarised below.

1. Increased focus on health

Including provision of support for those at greater risk those with more complex health vulnerabilities; using data to inform health categories most at risk and least able to achieve affordable warmth.

2. Collaboration and linking up partners and funding

Including targeting specific geographical areas mutually identified with partners as areas of high deprivation/risk but underserved by way of current projects. This could be achieved by joint stakeholder engagement; and building on existing northern networks, such as Infrastructure North, to maximise reach.

3. Increasing capacity for support within partner organisations

Including scaling up to reach more people in fuel poverty within areas of poverty; funding longer term projects to increase sustainability/certainty; ensuring consistency of service provision across the network in terms of advice and information.

4. Connecting and responding to different aspects and complexities of vulnerability

Including targeting support to reach those who may not have access to or knowledge of support available; those who may not ask for help; those seeking support for the first time; young people who may be living independently for the first time and struggling to meet/understand their energy needs/requirements; acknowledging digital inclusion, household and community resilience.

5. Financial hardship

Including support for those who are “just about managing”; acknowledgement that financial hardship is more widespread therefore the need to access support is greater in general (debt advice); improving knowledge of services/ access to services/digital exclusion/ language or communication barriers for those experiencing greater risks/depth/ complexity of vulnerability.

6. Scaling up existing projects

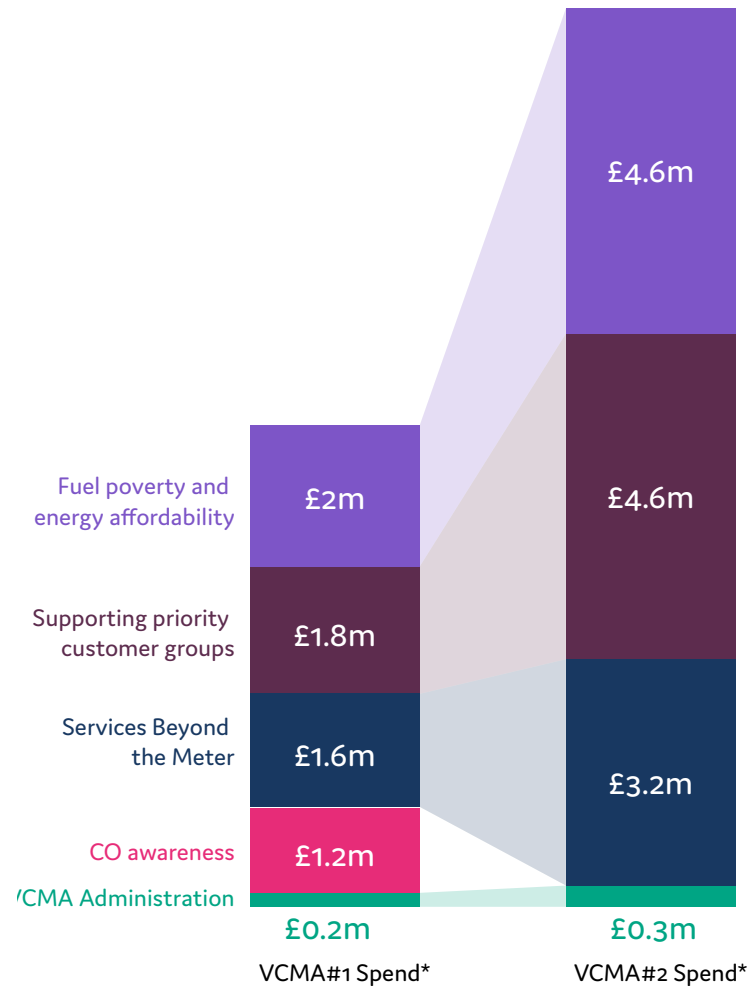
Including building on successful projects; continuing to learn and share from each other - where a project may have concluded within one region, it may be that the approach can be effectively used in another region.

We plan to enhance governance around our VCMA projects to ensure that they meet eligibility whilst aligning to our aims and stakeholder feedback. This will include increasing the frequency and widening the membership of our governance panel.

We will continually review all projects and needs to ensure that we are able to provide support where necessary through one of our existing funding mechanisms, including VCMA, NGN Customer Support Fund or NGN Community Partnering Fund.

We have taken the detailed feedback from our stakeholders and aligned this against the four consistent categories agreed with Ofgem and the GDNs, as referenced on page 6. Moving forward all VCMA projects will be grouped into those four categories for consistency on reporting.

The graphic below demonstrates how we will use the additional VCMA2 funding to align to the detailed feedback received from our stakeholders.



*all figures are approximate

- Establish greater relationships with the health sector to ensure that there is a hard-wired link between energy savings, affordability and warm homes
 - Support those at greater risk and with more complex health vulnerabilities, by using data to support projects for those who are least able to achieve affordable warmth
 - Identifying areas to introduce outreach programmes and onboard more partners in areas of poverty, to target the hardest to reach and building on our Warm Hubs model
 - Work to ensure consistency of service provision across the network, in terms of advice and information and helping to increase partner capacity, through key strategic referral networks
- Reviewing and extending our community and strategic partnership networks
- Connecting and responding to different aspects and complexities of vulnerability through our networks
- Targeting support to reach those who may not have access to or knowledge of support available, as well as those who may not ask for help and those seeking support for the first time
- Work with partners to ensure reach into geographical areas of greatest need (e.g. coastal and rural) to maximise the support we can offer
- Build on and increase our current service offering around repair/replacement and servicing of appliances
 - Increased training of our front line workers and engineers, to offer a service that is more flexible and adaptable
 - Continue to work with GDNs to ensure a consistent approach to eligibility checking, around qualifying criteria and benefits
 - Work with GDNs to establish a mechanism which helps to prevent appliance issues occurring, in advance of them happening

For the purpose of VCMA2, CO awareness will continue to be supported through the other themes shown, rather than on projects that are specifically related to CO

Upcoming engagement

As we move through 2023/24 we will continue to work with our stakeholders through our embedded engagement programme. Here is a snapshot of our key engagement events over the next 12 months.

Date	Workshop topic
25th April 2023	CIVS Annual Strategic workshop online – 10am – 1pm
24th May 2023	NGN and Partners - Supporting Communities Together (open day) Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne - 11am to 1pm. Stalls showcasing VCMA projects.
20th July 2023	VCMA Annual Showcase (online)
12th September 2023	CIVS Hot Topic workshop online - Spending allowances well – health focus – 10am to 12pm
21st November 2023	CIVS Hot Topic workshop online – Energy affordability - Staying warm and healthy at home – 10am to 12pm
6th February 2024	CIVS Hot Topic workshop online – Meeting demand – capacity and resilience – 10am to 12pm
April 2024	CIVS Annual Strategic workshop online – 10am – 1pm
May 2024	NGN and Partners - Supporting Communities Together (open day) Venue TBC - 11am to 1pm. Stalls showcasing VCMA projects.

We hope you have found our VCMA 2022/23 report useful. There is additional detailed information on each of the VCMA projects in the appendix to this report.

We would love to hear your views on this report and feedback on our approach. You can do this by contacting any member on the NGN Vulnerability Team (contact details on page 4) or at stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk

Thank you to all our colleagues and partners for their continued support in providing essential services to our customers and communities.

Appendix - VCMA Detailed Project Table:

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Foodbanks	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	<p>NGN CIVS Workshp – Feb 21. Stakeholders said that fuel poverty, particularly linked to rural isolation, should be priority area, and that fuel poverty should not be addressed in isolation.</p> <p>NGN CIVS Workshop – August 20 (CV-19). Stakeholders said that those living in rural are being more significantly impacted by CV-19, and that NGN should look to support services that reach the most isolated. Support should be holistic, so where existing support mechanisms exist i.e. food banks, NGN should promote PSR/CO messages.</p>	£10,000.00	£5,000.00	<p>246 indirect beneficiaries</p> <p>174 beneficiaries - target 100</p> <p>62 CO awareness surveys - target of 50</p> <p>35 PSR referrals - target of 35</p>	The geographical area of the project has been extended this year. Newcastle and Redcar are now covered as the project was originally targeted in Northumberland only	1
Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Rural Food Kitchen	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 22.</p> <p>Stakeholders expressed that more should be done to spread the message about using alternative heating or cooking and the dangers around this. They also said due to this there is an increased risk of other fuels that cause CO – NGN could raise more awareness of this as it's not just gas that causes CO</p> <p>Stakeholders also mentioned that NGN could work with wider partners outside gas networks to address this issue</p>	£32,000.00	£16,000.00	<p>1019 direct beneficiaries - target 600 for full project</p> <p>649 meals have been provided - target 600</p> <p>112 PSR referrals - target of 100</p> <p>107 CO awareness surveys completed</p> <p>60 volunteers trained</p>	This project is now complete. Once the project was established it picked up pace and as you can see from the outcomes all the targets were exceeded.	Complete
Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Slow cooker roadshow	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 22.</p> <p>Stakeholders expressed that more should be done to spread the message about using alternative heating or cooking</p>	£4,000.00	£2,000.00	<p>308 volunteering hours in total</p> <p>114 slow cookers were given out at 6 events</p> <p>27 PSR referrals were submitted</p>	The events were rescheduled to August and September to enable CAN to advise and provide support in preparation for the October 1st price cap	1

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
DIAL Leeds Energy Confident	Vulnerable customers living with physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities and / or long-term conditions including mental health issues	NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022. Our stakeholders said - Big focus on being more energy efficient in the home however those with physical disabilities and wheelchair users can't always implement efficiencies so are not able to work to reduce costs	£12,000.00	£6,000.00	Over 200 indirect beneficiaries 141 direct beneficiaries 105 CO leaflets handed out 89 customers signed up to the PSR 12 CO awareness sessions carried out	Ongoing issues with the claiming of benefits are impacting the clients supported through this project. Although this is creating some anxiety, other elements of the project, such as energy advice and CO awareness raising have been successful	1
Durham County Council Building Research Establishment (BRE) Data Targeting Pilot	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation, with little or no access to sustainable localised support services	NGN CIVS Annual Strategic Workshop – March 2022. Stakeholders said there is a concern from councils, already struggling to cope with referrals and worry about the demand for their services. They also mentioned about focusing on how we signpost families for help	£67,520.00	£33,760.00	667 CO pre and post awareness surveys completed 335 referrals made to the Priority Services Register – target 20 111 referrals were made to the fire safety visits from the Fire and Rescue Service.	By working with external partners and utilising their capabilities within communities, enabled a large number of door-to-door promotions to be achieved. Awareness sessions were embedded into their interactions with social tenants and ECO contractors	Complete
Durham County Council GP Partnering Pilot	Households at risk of cold-related ill health and carbon monoxide poisoning	NGN Customers in Vulnerable Situations Touchpoints workshop - October 2020 - Stakeholders told us that to tackle fuel poverty, we need to maximise opportunities at every-day touchpoints and daily interactions, such as GP surgeries, clinics and hospitals. NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022. Stakeholders said - Physical disability and long-term health conditions are linked and create barriers both physical and societal to accessing services	£91,000.00	£45,500.00	21,097 patients received the Warm Homes Letter from their GP 1,715 received advice and literature on the dangers of CO poisoning 896 PSR referrals made 786 home visits were carried out by DCC's Managing Money Better Service 219 referrals were made to the Fire and Rescue Service 32 GP practices across County Durham in low-income localities participated in the pilot	The significant increase in the energy price cap resulted in DCC, producing a new Energy Advice / CO leaflet to distribute to residents countywide All energy related literature and the DCC web site has been updated to include CO safety and PSR information. This will be able to be accessed through GP surgeries	Complete
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited Groundwork's Energy Management Services (GEMS)	Community/charitable organisations, who are based in buildings that have poor thermal energy efficiency and high running costs	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders said the energy crisis will result in unsafe heating practices – fires are a particular risk, could be a bigger risk to the older generation. They also said there is a potential for people to resort to older ways – using candles and open fires	£18,200.00	£9,450.00	Target of 6 reports per year – delivered 13	The project itself has been very successful in keeping community buildings open and to a very good standard. The future ambition of Groundwork is to secure additional funding to enable the organisation to progress towards even greater sustainability	In progress – Possibly extended for 2023/24

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited Green Doctor – Fuel Poverty Training Course	Frontline key workers, such as housing officers, debt advice workers, health professionals, social prescribers, engineers and community representatives	NGN CIVS Annual Strategic Workshop – March 2022. Stakeholders said equipping as many as possible through training to give people in need advice Build trusted network of people, continue to work with health and social care professionals Peer support groups, continue to understand the link between fuel poverty / low income / health and respiratory conditions. Create wrap around services / share data so others can access their customer information to benefit those in vulnerable situations	£17,250.00	£5,850.00	Groundwork have met the target of 10 sessions, in excess of 300 people have been trained	Over this year the energy market has been very volatile, so it has taken a lot of work to keep the course up to date and ensure the advice given is accurate. This has provided Groundwork with opportunities to continue to make adaptations to the course to improve online engagement	1
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited Green Doctors - Energy matters	Vulnerable customers living in fuel poverty	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Customers are putting off safety checks / measures. Not calling out engineers for servicing etc. CA advised from surveys they undertake, greater concerns on tenures that are not rented through social landlords / LAs. Greater concerns around owner occupiers and private rented sectors Point raised by CA that it needed to be an easy process for customers on PSR to access free appliance safety checks. Currently difficult to contact suppliers due to energy crisis and increased customer bases as a result of suppliers going into administration.	£228,850.00	£76,687.50	1581 home visits & telephone advice calls delivered against the overall target of 1092 1245 CO leaflets issued 346 PSR registrations 68 CO awareness sessions delivered 64 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers	The demand for this service is significant due to the current landscape, with up to 50 referrals being received per day. This has provided an opportunity for Groundwork to increase their capacity in terms of resource, through support from an alternative NGN funding stream	1

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Highfield CO-OP Community Energy and Carbon Monoxide Awareness Project	Refugees, low-income families, elderly and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue – already seeing changes e.g. using disposable BBQs and camping stoves indoors. Unserviced appliances is a concern (low level CO). Do recommend that should use a CO detector as there is a fire risk associated with this as well. CO and PSR research commissioned by NGN - the top actions identified for the Bradford area were to target increasing awareness of the dangers of CO	£2,500.00	£1,250.00	135 CO awareness leaflets issued 85 beneficiaries 52 CO awareness sessions completed 14 people trained as CO awareness trainers 11 PSR referrals 2 new volunteers	This project has reached new audiences in small towns around Bradford. The project has targeted community centres in small villages to run workshops on CO awareness	1
Highfield CO-OP Community Energy Cafe	Vulnerable people who are unemployed and claiming benefits	NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022. Stakeholders told us that there are more long-term health conditions leading to higher unemployment and more reliance on welfare benefits	£2,500.00	£1,250.00	170 CO awareness leaflets issued 132 beneficiaries 55 CO awareness sessions 13 PSR referrals 3 new volunteers	Highfield CO-OP have supported the community with opening a Warm Space, where community members can receive advice and support A Warm Space hub will also be re-introduced this winter	1
Highfield CO-OP Community Energy Matters Magazine	Refugees, low-income families, elderly and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders told us that Citizens Advice are receiving lots of requests for small community groups to have awareness raising sessions around energy efficiency etc. (Age UK). Currently don't have capacity, could do with dedicated resource. Some attendees are digitally excluded	£2,500.00	£1,250.00	190 CO awareness leaflets issued 143 beneficiaries 50 CO awareness sessions 10 PSR referrals 4 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers 2 new volunteers	Highfield CO-OP are currently working on a visual impairment podcast which talks about energy saving tips for visually impaired people in the Bradford and Craven district	Complete
Highfield CO-OP Vulnerability Film Festivals - Using Film To identify Vulnerable Communities	Refugees, low-income families, elderly and ethnic minority communities	NGN CIVS Workshop – November 2022. While the customer journey has good comms in the early touchpoints, people's situations can change quite quickly (increasingly so now a days). It's important that at every single stage, customers are given a reminder about the PSR and an opportunity to access support and help if needed.	£4,750.00	£3,500.00	263 CO awareness leaflets issued 168 beneficiaries 65 CO awareness sessions 14 PSR referrals 4 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers 2 new volunteers	This project has had a huge impact, due to the cost of living & energy crises. More customers have attended the events than before, 8 events have taken place in the last 12 months with more scheduled this, Summer.	1

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Highfield CO-OP Community STEM Events	Refugees, low-income families, elderly and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities	<p>2020 workshop - stakeholders told us some of the main impacts have been associated with mental health issues around isolation, lack of jobs due to redundancies, home-schooling concerns and other educational challenges. Many young people from disadvantaged and BAME backgrounds, have been significantly impacted by not being able to attend school, college or university.</p> <p>NGN Customers in Vulnerable Situations workshops - August 2020 CV-19 specific workshop - stakeholders also identified that the education issue and home schooling, has created even more of an education gap for disadvantaged children and young people. Some vulnerable children and young adults will have received little or no education during lockdown, due to lack of access to services, the internet and technology which are provided in the school, college and university environments. This has therefore significantly impacted social, literacy and development skills.</p>	£4,250.00	£3,000.00	<p>167 CO awareness leaflets issued</p> <p>85 beneficiaries</p> <p>59 CO awareness sessions</p> <p>11 PSR referrals</p> <p>6 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers</p> <p>2 new volunteers</p>	Highfield CO-OP have achieved 2 milestones with this project - participation and education. Highfield CO-OP have also signposted customers to colleges and learning institutions for enquiries about STEM related courses	1
Highfield CO-OP Mental Health Film and Conversations Project	This project is aimed at people with mental health issues within the community who may struggle to understand fuel poverty and the dangers of CO	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – November 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders said communication with 3rd parties of vulnerable customers is key, especially those with dementia and mental health struggles as it's often relatives who will be responsible for progressing PSR and paperwork rather than the vulnerable customer themselves</p>	£4,250.00	£3,000.00	<p>132 beneficiaries</p> <p>123 CO awareness leaflets issued</p> <p>58 CO awareness sessions</p> <p>11 PSR referrals</p> <p>3 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers</p> <p>2 new volunteers</p>	9 films have been screened this year, which were a mixture of films and documentaries. The themes of the films were mental health, loneliness, substance misuse and other addictions. The project has reached new audiences in Saltaire, Shipley and Bingley	1

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Hull & East Yorkshire Children's University Reading Van – bringing reading to the community	Children in care	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders raised concerns that families are going to cut corners during the winter and use unsafe appliances. Families were already struggling before recent increases.	£40,500.00	£6,500.00	1012 beneficiaries 937 children have attended CO awareness workshops 240 books have been provided to children To date 50 hours of sessions have taken place in the van 75 people signed up to the PSR	Hull & East Yorkshire Children's University have been given a stand at the VW Festival (Leeds) which is taking place in August. They will be able to showcase the van and speak about the CO awareness raising sessions. As this is a festival there is a potential to further educate around the awareness of CO and camping	1
Lake District Foundation Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Environmental Impact Awareness in Cumbria Campaign	Family groups from northwest. Adult only groups aged 25-34 including Stag and Hen dos etc.	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders highlighted the increased risk of other fuels that cause CO – NGN could raise more awareness of this as it's not just gas that causes CO – NGN could work with wider partners outside gas networks to address this issue	£38,120.00	£19,060.00	114,000 indirect beneficiaries - social media and newsletter reach 1,000 beneficiaries 46 CO awareness sessions 16 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers	This year Lake District Foundation have a presence at least three festivals in Cumbria over the summer months to promote CO awareness to campers and festival attendees.	1
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC Community Energy Ambassadors	The project aims to support vulnerable residents by using trusted social networks within communities	NGN CIVS Annual Strategic Workshop – March 2022. Stakeholders told us that training is more vital than ever to support those most in need	£48,100.00	£22,800.00	Cost savings - £44,663 Number of people more informed (excl training) – 4,484 CO survey forms – 335	The project has been very successful and has exceeded all of the targets	Complete
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC Community Energy Ambassadors extension	The project aims to support vulnerable residents by using trusted social networks within communities	NGN CIVS Annual Strategic Workshop – March 2022. Stakeholders told us that equipping as many as possible through	£22,800.00	£22,800.00	Staff trained up – 338 PSR signups – 197 Deliver Energy Ambassador training courses – 17		1
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC Community Energy Ambassadors extra sessions	The project aims to support vulnerable residents by using trusted social networks within communities	training was a priority to give people in need advice.	£2,500.00	£2,500.00	Mini Energy Ambassador courses – 9		Complete

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC (YED) Young people with Energy	Young people aged 16-25 who have responsibility for paying gas and electricity bills in their home	<p>NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders suggested that NGN could help to assist young adults with understanding energy costs, how energy meters work and what support is out there from NGN or similar</p> <p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders highlighted the need to engage younger people to spread the awareness messages – targeted at younger people and use real life case studies</p>	£30,000.00	£5,000.00	<p>Cost savings - £2,606</p> <p>Beneficiaries – 72</p> <p>Staff training – 26</p> <p>1-2-1 advice – 24</p> <p>Awareness sessions – 22</p> <p>PSR signups – 18</p> <p>CO surveys – 33</p> <p>CO alarms - 8</p>	YED are on track to achieve their targets over the next 5 months of the project	1
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC Heating for Health	Health professionals, who work with some of the most vulnerable residents in local communities	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – November 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders told us that communication with 3rd parties of vulnerable customers is key, especially those with dementia and mental health struggles as its often relatives who will be responsible for progressing PSR and paperwork rather than the vulnerable customer themselves</p>	£40,000.00	£20,000.00	<p>Financial savings - £44,529</p> <p>Beneficiaries – 901</p> <p>Staff training – 332</p> <p>Community engagement</p> <p>a) Via events - 199</p> <p>b) Via GP project - 128</p> <p>Referrals to Warm and Well North Yorkshire – 86</p> <p>1-2-1 advice – 108</p> <p>PSR signups – 201</p> <p>CO survey forms – 108</p>	To reach staff from certain parts of the NHS, YED are currently looking at alternative training offers. They are looking to liaise with partners from the NHS around this going forward	1

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Northern Gas Networks NGN VCMA Project co-ordinator	VCMA partners	<p>NGN Customers in Vulnerable Situations workshops - October 2020 workshop - our stakeholder's mentioned communication was a priority. This role therefore aligns to this specific need as partners will have one, dedicated point of contact for their projects. A quarterly newsletter will be produced by the Project Coordinator to keep stakeholders up to date with what is happening within the business and provide stakeholders with an update on VCMA projects.</p> <p>NGN Customers in Vulnerable Situations workshops - January 2021 workshop - our stakeholders said we need more streamlined ways of working together. This role addresses that needs as the Project Coordinator will ensure that the</p> <p>projects are progressing as they should be (quarterly reporting), will have oversight of all projects and facilitate the linking up of project partners. This will be achieved through regular partner round table sessions and networking opportunities at the workshops.</p>	£62,954.2	£34,797.79	<p>Project coordination of all VCMA projects</p> <p>Preparing reports to Ofgem</p> <p>Facilitate / support an annual showcase event for stakeholders</p> <p>Regular meetings with all project partners (at least quarterly)</p> <p>Tracking budget v spend</p> <p>Achieve outputs and outcomes as agreed with partners and Ofgem, via quarterly reporting</p> <p>Case studies evidencing project achievements</p> <p>A full review undertaken of all projects on an annual basis – identification of those for replication and scaling up</p> <p>Comprehensive risk register and lessons learnt log with actionable outcomes</p> <p>Producing the VCMA company specific annual report</p>	<p>This role was introduced to oversee all VCMA activities. It has been essential for a single point of contact for our partners as well as other external and internal stakeholders. It has been pivotal in looking at collaboration opportunities and engagement around new project ideas.</p> <p>The role has involved collating information for CIVS workshops, webinars, and all administrative duties in relation to VCMA. The role has also involved working alongside the CEG.</p>	3

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Northern Gas Networks NGN VCMA Vulnerability Trainer	VCMA partners and NGN internal colleagues	Making Every Contact Count (MECC) - research 2018-19 - a research project was undertaken in partnership with the national fuel poverty, National Energy Action (NEA). The research sought to safeguard vulnerable domestic customers who are impacted by a gas disconnection. The project reviewed current practice and made recommendations for a good practice protocol, for those vulnerable customers who were disconnected. The findings also recommended additional support to align with the updated protocols and this role was introduced to fulfil this recommendation	£67,160.4	£37,342.27	<p>Deliver training sessions to NGN staff and partners both online and face to face</p> <p>Robust training plan for internal colleagues, in line with the Customer and Vulnerability Competency Framework</p> <p>Number of NGN staff members trained</p> <p>Number of partner organisations trained</p> <p>Pre and post training questionnaires</p> <p>Increased number of PSR referrals</p> <p>Increased number of CO awareness surveys</p> <p>Training provision for new partners identified through other VCMA funded projects / NGN's Strategic Partners</p> <p>Increased awareness and promotion of the locking cooker valve service and other services during training sessions</p> <p>Monthly referral numbers for customers identified as requiring additional support, via NGN's front-line workers</p>	<p>Making Every Contact Count (MECC) 1 or 2 (including Dementia Friends) - 1760</p> <p>Deaf Awareness sessions - 21</p> <p>CO & PSR awareness sessions – 41 internal colleagues, 27 external partners</p> <p>Operational Response Engineer (ORE) and site manager briefings about customer vulnerability and CIC projects – 45</p> <p>157 MECC follow up calls and referrals</p>	3

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Harvey & Hugo Ltd Engaging with Vulnerable Customers PR project	Young, older people, those with health conditions, those on low incomes and non-English speaking communities. Those living in rural isolation to have access to many services, including access to the internet and other essential services	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders said NGN could do more around spreading the message about the dangers of using alternative heating or cooking methods Concerns were raised regarding the cost of CO alarms and unsafe landlords – even though the regulation has changed some landlords still aren't installing CO alarms NGN CIVS Workshop – November 2022. While the customer journey has good comms in the early touchpoints, people's situations can change quite quickly (increasingly so now a days)... It's important that at every single stage, customers are given a reminder about the PSR and an opportunity to access support and help if needed.	£44,593.2	£89,308.39	7,735,831 reached through the CO awareness campaign via social media, radio, email, PR and through our website 2,366 CO awareness sessions carried out from a target of 500 836 CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers from a target of 500	Harvey and Hugo adapted the campaign to reach out to NGN partners to share their stories through the case studies. They also had to update campaign messaging across social media and PR to ensure this reflected the change in incentive from weekly £100 voucher prize draws to a free CO alarm with each survey completion (in accordance with the Ts and Cs outlined)	1
Harvey & Hugo Ltd & Northern Gas Networks Harvey and Hugo - Kidde CO Alarms	Vulnerable customers that do not have a CO alarm		£89,308.4	£18,333.26			Complete
Harvey & Hugo Ltd & Northern Gas Networks Harvey and Hugo - Mailing & fulfillment - CO alarms	Vulnerable customers that do not have a CO alarm		£38,108.99	£38,108.99			Complete
Harvey & Hugo Ltd Harvey and Hugo - Radio advertising for VCMA campaign	Vulnerable customers across NGN area		£10,433.59	£10,433.59			Complete
Harvey & Hugo Ltd & Northern Gas Networks Harvey and Hugo - Safelinks CO Alarms	Vulnerable customers across NGN area		£78,000.00	£78,000.00			Complete
Harvey & Hugo Ltd Harvey and Hugo - CO Awareness Reporting - Year 1	Vulnerable customers across NGN area		£800.00	£800.00			Complete
Language Line Solutions Harvey and Hugo - Language Line Solutions	Vulnerable customers across NGN area where English is not their first language		£3,160.09	£3,160.09			Complete
Language Line Solutions Harvey and Hugo - Language Line Solutions	Vulnerable customers across NGN area where English is not their first language		£327.69	£327.69			Complete

VCMA Title/Name& PEA	Target Audience (PSR where applicable)	Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Total Cost	Spend in Yr2	Update against agreed milestones in PEA	Learning and dissemination activities	Remaining Timescales (Years)
Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Warm Hubs Toolkit	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders asked could NGN's winter campaign be extended to target warm spaces / warm places venues to target those people attending the venue. The development of the Warm Hubs Toolkit aligns with this feedback and enables a more robust and sustainable model to be adopted by community venues with the aim of keeping people warm and connected throughout the year, not only in winter.	£17,300.00	£14,300.00	The website has been developed and is now live - https://warmhubs.com/ Training has been provided by the developer, 4 CAN staff have undertaken the training for accessing and changes/amendments to the site, this will ensure no additional costs are needed and that the project is sustainable.	The project encountered no issues, and the toolkit has now been launched and is available for eligible organisations to access to set up a warm hubs scheme	2
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited Young people with Energy	Young people aged 16-25 who have responsibility for paying gas and electricity bills in their home	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders highlighted the need to engage younger people to spread the awareness messages – targeted at younger people and use real life case studies	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	Total beneficiaries: 138 Staff Training: 85 Young People Engaged: 37 CO leaflets provided: 20 Home visits: 11 Youth Workshops: 5 PSR registrations: 4	With the energy crisis becoming more prominent they have seen an increase in demand for energy advice and support across all age groups. They have been speaking to under 25 year teams in the key housing associations, as well as the larger colleges and Universities across the region all of whom are keen that they work with their students	1
Yorkshire Energy Doctor CIC Warm Homes Healthy Children	Families and vulnerable children	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders raised concerns that families are going to cut corners during the winter and use unsafe appliances. Families were already struggling before recent increases.	£25,500.00	£25,500.00	Financial savings to date - £36,526 Engagement through social media – 349 Advice to families in a community setting – 309 CO awareness surveys – 234 Staff training – 145 1-2-1 advice – 113 PSR signups – 114 Provision of CO alarms – 36 Recruitment of new staff member - 1	Everything is on track regarding the targets for this project, the project is running smoothly and is now established	1

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Northern Gas Networks Customer Care Advisor - MECC	Vulnerable customers	Making Every Contact Count (MECC) - research 2018-19 - a research project was undertaken in partnership with the national fuel poverty, National Energy Action (NEA). The research sought to safeguard vulnerable domestic customers who are impacted by a gas disconnection. The project reviewed current practice and made recommendations for a good practice protocol, for those vulnerable customers who were disconnected. The findings also recommended additional support to align with the updated protocols and this role was introduced to fulfil this recommendation	£26,932.64	£26,932.64	MECC follow up calls made by Customer Team - 157: 13 requested home safety visits from Fire & Rescue 9 requested energy advice 5 requested debt advice 8 Winter Warmer Packs issued 3 referred to Northumbrian Water's PSR 76 Fuel Bank Foundation referrals received since go live on 3/10 43 repair/replacement/servicing referrals since go live - 16/1/23	The role is vital to support the continuity of making every contact count when NGN personnel interact with a customer. This service is required when a First Call Operative (engineer) / FCO from NGN, disconnects an appliance / isolates a gas supply to a customer's home when they have been identified as living in vulnerable circumstances. The FCO signposts the customer to the relevant third party for additional support / appliance repair / replace. A follow up process is then invoked whereby the admin assistant contacts the customer to close the loop.	3
Sirio IAT-SROI Tool	VCMA partners	NGN Strategic Partner Roundtable Session – December 2021. The proposal was presented to our strategic partners during this monthly roundtable session where they all commented on how the toolkit would be useful to them and would help them when applying for VCMA projects.	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	Step 1: Obtain and analyse NGN's SROI model / framework – completed. Step 2: Produce a tailored set of options for the development of the merged tool – completed. Step 3: Hold a workshop to identify the preferred option – completed. Step 4: Build phase – completed. Step 5: Present NGN with a first draft of the tool and obtain any feedback via usability testing – completed. Step 6: Produce a final draft and deliver the tool – completed.	There was a delay in completing this project to the timescale initially given, however the project is now complete and the new IAT SROI toolkit is now live and VCMA partners have all received training on how to use the toolkit	Complete
Northern Gas Networks & Safelincs VCMA CO Alarms	Vulnerable customers that do not have a CO alarm	NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022. Stakeholders said NGN could do more around spreading the message about the dangers of using alternative heating or cooking methods Concerns were raised regarding the cost of CO alarms and unsafe landlords – even though the regulation has changed some landlords still aren't installing CO alarms	£9,890.00	£9,890.00	The funding will see alarms being purchased over the 5-year period of RIIO-2. NGN will continue to issue alarms to customers in vulnerable situations as per the OFGEM VCMA guidance on vulnerable customers. We will continue to use our strategic, community and charity partners, to target communities in the highest areas of deprivation, whilst providing CO awareness surveys and measuring customer's knowledge both pre and post awareness survey.	Legislation changed in the UK on the 1st of October 2022 which meant every rented household is required to have a CO alarm fitted by their landlord	3

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Stockton and District Advice And Information Service Energy Max Project	Vulnerable customers living in fuel poverty	<p>NGN CIVS Annual Strategic Workshop – March 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders told us that the biggest concern was around affordability</p> <p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders told us that people are scared to switch on their heating, creating a risk of self-disconnection</p> <p>This project aligns with stakeholder feedback by directly addressing issues around affordability through income maximisation.</p>	£64,899.00	£32,188.00	<p>Number of additional grants/donations secured, as a result of this funding - £13,061</p> <p>Beneficiaries – 131</p>	The project has made good progress towards the success criteria. The project has been live since January 2023. It has exceeded the expected number of individuals assisted	2
Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Warm Hubs Extension	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders asked could NGN's winter campaign be extended to target warm spaces / warm places venues to target those people attending the venue.</p> <p>The extension of this scheme aligns with stakeholder feedback and enables further roll out of the Warm Hubs model with the aim of keeping rural customers warm and connected throughout the year, not only in winter.</p>	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	<p>189 CO awareness surveys</p> <p>161 people registered to the PSR</p> <p>10 CO alarms issued</p> <p>36 new volunteers</p> <p>5 New warm hubs opened as part of extending the existing scheme</p> <p>5 events with 154 attendees, everyone received information on CO and PSR</p>	There has been a huge interest in warm hubs due to the energy crisis. Due to the high demand of Warm Hub applications CAN have had to introduce a waiting list and refer back to the Warm Hubs Toolkit to enable community halls to open up their own Warm Hub	Complete
Middlesbrough Environment City Warm Homes Healthy Children	Families and vulnerable children	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders raised concerns that families are going to cut corners during the winter and use unsafe appliances. Families were already struggling before recent increases.</p>	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	<p>Number of people this project has reached – 568</p> <p>Number of CO alarms provided to vulnerable customers - 55</p> <p>Number of CO pre and post awareness surveys completed – 50</p> <p>Number of people signed up to the Priority Services Register – 30</p>	The project has received a greater response than anticipated by residents, therefore an extension for the project has been put forward already	1

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DIAL Leeds Energy Confident! Pilot expansion	Vulnerable customers living with physical and sensory impairments, learning disabilities and / or long-term conditions including mental health issues.	<p>NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022.</p> <p>Our stakeholders said - Big focus on being more energy efficient in the home however those with physical disabilities and wheelchair users can't always implement efficiencies so are not able to work to reduce costs</p> <p>Stakeholders also suggested in this webinar to work with foodbanks to address the link between fuel and food poverty.</p> <p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders suggested to provide CO alarms to more organisations e.g., foodbanks for vulnerable clients</p>	£1,887.38	£1,887.38	<p>45 direct beneficiaries</p> <p>40 customers signed up to the PSR</p> <p>26 indirect beneficiaries</p> <p>23 CO leaflets issued</p> <p>5 CO awareness sessions</p>	Foodbanks are overwhelmed with people at the moment which has provided an opportunity for the project to gain more interest and grow within the community	Complete
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited Noah's Ark	Vulnerable customers with mental health issues	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – November 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders said communication with 3rd parties of vulnerable customers is key, especially those with dementia and mental health struggles as it's often relatives who will be responsible for progressing PSR and paperwork rather than the vulnerable customer themselves</p>	£76,000.00	£76,000.00	<p>Beneficiaries - 127</p> <p>People trained - 16</p>	The Green Doctor's have had challenges coping generally with demand across West Yorkshire, receiving up to 60 referrals in a month. The Green Doctor's have overcome this issue and created an opportunity to recruit more Green Doctor's into the business	2
Groundwork Yorkshire Limited & Aware Technologies Awaretag	Vulnerable customers with respiratory concerns	<p>NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders told us that physical disability and long-term health conditions are linked and create barriers both physical and societal to accessing services</p>	£149,000.00	£149,000.00	<p>There are currently 50 houses on board with this project and another 150 have been contacted.</p> <p>The project only started on the 1st March 2023.</p>	Groundwork have learned that projects of this kind require coordination with the landlord and have used this as an opportunity to liaise with more landlords across the region	1

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Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Heat and Eat	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	<p>NGN Physical Disability Webinar - June 2022.</p> <p>Our stakeholders suggested in this webinar to work with foodbanks to address the link between fuel and food poverty.</p> <p>Each year we use our annual Customer Perceptions Research to understand the priorities of our customers. Amongst a set of general tracker questions i.e., same questions that are asked year on year, the evidence in the most recent research (February 2022), indicated that keeping bills as low as possible ranked more highly, than providing a safe and reliable supply of gas, for the first time. This is a clear indication, as to how concerned customers are about the cost of energy and the subsequent impact this will have on other bills.</p>	£6,960.00	£6,960.00	<p>Indirect beneficiaries – 2,000</p> <p>Direct beneficiaries – 429</p> <p>371 CO awareness leaflets issued</p> <p>185 CO surveys carried out</p> <p>106 PSR referrals</p> <p>10 CO alarms provided</p>	Demand is higher than anticipated, CAN delivered 15 sessions instead of 12	Complete
Community Action Northumberland (CAN) Warm Hub National Co-ordinator Role	Vulnerable customers living in rural isolation and fuel poverty	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders asked could NGN's winter campaign be extended to target warm spaces / warm places venues to target those people attending the venue.</p> <p>This role aligns with stakeholder feedback and support the roll out of the Warm Hubs toolkit on a national basis.</p>	£60,769.23	£60,769.23	<p>Warm Hubs and Toolkit presentation given at Northern Power Grid Partnership Network Meeting - Booked to attend ACRE national conference to speak about Warm Hubs and the Toolkit</p> <p>Demonstration of the toolkit at National Village Halls week</p> <p>6 new volunteers recruited</p> <p>The co-ordinator has travelled across Northumberland as well as other parts of the country to promote and guide organisations through the toolkit</p>	The project is going to plan, and the co-ordinator is working alongside the toolkit project	2
Age UK North Tyneside Information and Advice Role	Elderly customers	<p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders raised concerns around unsafe heating practices – fires are a particular risk, could be a bigger risk to the older generation</p>	£42,000.00	£21,000.00	The project has only started in March 2023 therefore we currently do not have any project outcomes as of yet	The project has only started in March 2023 therefore we currently do not have any project outcomes as of yet	2

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Hope 4 U Ltd NHS Support Service	Pregnant women & families that have just had a baby	<p>NGN CIVS Workshops - January and September 2021, fuel Poverty specific workshops.</p> <p>During these workshops our stakeholders said that fuel, food and general poverty are all linked, and we need more streamlined ways of working together. Partners can help raise awareness of different funding and support available. This project fully aligns with the need to help vulnerable customers in fuel poverty.</p> <p>NGN CIVS Workshop – September 2022.</p> <p>Stakeholders raised concerns that families are going to cut corners during the winter and use unsafe appliances. Families were already struggling before recent increases.</p>	£82,000.00	£41,000.00	The project has only started in March 2023 therefore we currently do not have any project outcomes as of yet	The project has only started in March 2023 therefore we currently do not have any project outcomes as of yet	2
Tom, Dick & Harry Ltd VCMA annual reports, NGN and GDN collaborative report	VCMA	<p>Each year we use our annual Customer Perceptions Research to understand the priorities of our customers. Amongst a set of general tracker questions i.e., same questions that are asked year on year, the evidence in the most recent research (June 2022), indicated that keeping bills as low as possible ranked more highly than anything else, than providing a safe and reliable supply of gas, for the first time. This is a clear indication, as to how concerned customers are about the cost of energy and having to prioritise how they spend their money.</p> <p>The NGN annual report showcased the different types of projects NGN committed to in year 1 of GD2 to help with the emerging energy and cost of living crises. It also demonstrated how we have invested the VCMA spend in the previous 12 month and the different projects that cover the subjects of CO, PSR and vulnerability.</p>	£8,040.00	£8,040.00	<p>Year 1 annual VCMA reports and showcase presentation designed and ready to present to Ofgem and our stakeholders. Providing a dedicated service in assisting the delivery of the VCMA annual report and the presentations.</p> <p>Delivering a cohesive portfolio of initiatives built upon the principles of collaboration, inclusion and innovation that deliver the strategic ambitions of NGN and the collective ambitions of the GDN's</p> <p>Working closely with the NGN to help review / amend the report content</p>	This project went to plan and the reports and presentation were registered with Ofgem	Complete
Northern Gas Networks Back-office staff costs	VCMA	The VCMA allowance is new to all GDN's in GD2. The allowance enables GDN's to deliver on their business plan commitments to support customers in vulnerable situations and raise awareness of the dangers of CO	£2,643.14	£2,643.14	The costs are associated with admin costs to deliver VCMA projects within NGN. The costs cover staff time that is required to undertake VCMA associated activities. These tasks are above and beyond their normal day to day duties	NGN have been collating the costs throughout the last 12 month to cost these back to VCMA	3

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