

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two men in conversation. On the left, a man with a shaved head is seen from the back, wearing a dark blue jacket. On the right, a man with brown hair and glasses, wearing a high-visibility yellow and orange safety vest over a red jacket, is smiling and looking towards the first man. The vest has the Northern Powergrid logo on it. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with buildings.

Part 1

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Our Stakeholder and Consumer Vulnerability Submission

2022-23

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Who we are

At Northern Powergrid we are proud to provide an essential service to eight million people in our region, covering an area of 25,000 square kilometres.

We take that responsibility seriously and believe that our customers should get a service that is second to none – so we provide reliable, affordable and sustainable energy solutions.

In short, our aim is to be the best at what we do.



Overview of 2022-23 submission

Part 1

Part 1 sets out our strategic approach to stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability and how we measure our impact.

Part 2

Part 2 sets out details of our engagement principles and strategy in action and demonstrates the impact on our business activities and outputs for our customers and stakeholders.

Part 3

Part 3 demonstrates how we support vulnerable and fuel poor customers and builds out how we are applying “no-one left behind”.





Our engagement in 2022-23 has been driven by three key priorities

Ultimately, success for Northern Powergrid relies on us aligning our priorities with our stakeholders' needs. To that end, our engagement in 2022-23 has been driven by three overarching priorities.

Firstly, a "step change" in our capacity to enable the energy transition. That means delivering more new connections to a network that connects new and diverse sources of renewable generation. In turn that brings with it challenges that our customers rightly look to us to address, such as dealing with increasing levels of intermittency and storage and enabling greater consumer empowerment in a way that doesn't leave anyone behind.

Secondly, we have completed major upgrades to our storm response protocols to take onboard the tough lessons learned from the storms we've experienced in recent years.

Thirdly, doing more to support customers in need. Ofgem reports median income households spend 10% of their net income on their energy bills, and for those on state pension that figure rises to 29%.

To deliver on customer priorities we needed to deliver four significant change programmes:

- Established a new Local Area Energy Planning team to further support our customers in

delivering their Net Zero plans. This approach keeps us 'ahead of the curve' with low-carbon technology take-up, guiding our investment in local network monitoring and data and analytics systems development to support parties like housing authorities delivering large scale heat pump installations.

- Delivered 38 landmark changes across 12 workstreams in our storm response programme, including increased operational resources and generator deployment, rolling out a new website and telephony system and significantly upgrading our customer communication routines. We delivered these changes in direct response to consultations and dialogue with affected communities.
- Expanded our fuel poverty programme, by increasing the number of targeted delivery partners and subsequently customers supported in 2022-23.
- Delivering enhanced engagement. We set up four Business Plan Engagement Groups that are led by members of our Executive team and aligned to our planned outputs and intentions to deliver customer benefits. The groups cover facilitating net zero, supporting customer needs, ensuring network resilience, and responding to our community needs.



Phil Jones

Phil Jones
Chief Executive

The progress we have made is significant – and is a direct result of listening to our stakeholders and remaining accountable to them for delivering on our commitments.

Engagement focus in 2022-23

We have stepped up our engagement in 2022-23 to be more dynamic; in practical terms, this has involved more co-creation. This reflects our role as a key enabler in decarbonisation and meeting customers' increased needs. At the beginning of 2022-23, 20 key initiatives were prioritised across BPEG groups with 5 additional priorities added throughout the year through our engagement.

[See Part 2 for further details](#)

BPEG groups

01. Energy Futures

Context for 2022-23 engagement

This year we have focused on enabling our region, customers, and communities to connect. The introduction of our Local Area Energy Planning team has increased the scale and depth of support. This is underpinned by innovation in data and digitisation to support tailored planning and Net Zero forecasting – responding to differing local needs and timeframes.

Our response

Our engagement has focused on:

- Whole-system collaboration with ESO to address connection and capacity issues; we are leading national and regional cross-sector working to find effective solutions.
- Our DSO role and scaling up flexibility services, encouraging customer participation in new energy markets.
- Dedicated support for early adopters of LCTs including local authorities, and housing associations, enabling the pathway, and sharing the learning widely to meet their ambitious timeframes. This insight is informing our approach to ensure no-one is left behind in the transition.

[See Part 2, pages 3-6 for details](#)

02. Resilience

Context for 2022-23 engagement

Resilience remains our customers' priority due to increasing reliance on electricity due to decarbonisation and frequency and impact of extreme weather events.

Our response

Our engagement has focused on:

- Engaging with customers to prioritise our investment plans to maximise customer benefits.
- Working with local resilience partners, civic leaders, community groups and the communities across the region to improve and tailor their own local resilience plans and improve our approach to extreme weather events.
- In partnership with our environmental stakeholders, targeted improvements to flood defences and energy resilience to minimise disruptions to other essential services.

[See Part 2, pages 7-8 for details](#)

03. Meeting the Needs of Customers

Context for 2022-23 engagement

The dual priorities of supporting our customers in the cost-of-living crisis, whilst developing future services to enable their journey to Net Zero have required close engagement and understanding of complex needs.

Our response

Our engagement focus has included:

- Working closely with our partner network to increase their capacity and capability to deliver affordability services and support our customers most in need.
- Improving and co-creating our small works connection services to meet the increasing demand for LCT connections.
- Improving the accessibility and flexibility of our services, to meet changing intergenerational needs of our customers through a wider variety of channels and out of hours services.

[See Part 2, pages 9-10 for details](#)



Spotlight: Issues that have framed our engagement in 2022-23 and who we engaged

Focus area	Outcomes for stakeholders	Stakeholders
Meeting the Needs of Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we improve customers' experience through greater choice and flexibility? What expansion to customer services would best meet customer needs? What can we do proactively to provide onsite support and better understand the needs of vulnerable customers? How can we raise awareness of fuel poverty support? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection customers Domestic customers Business customers Customers' representatives Medically dependent (MDE) PSM prioritised customers Customers at risk of fuel poverty and affordability challenges
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we translate learnings from LV data analysis to facilitate greater innovation? How can we scale micro-resilience projects to more customers? How do we learn from major severe weather events and restore the confidence of our customers and stakeholders? How can we scale more climate resilience projects, eg flood defences, to target high priority areas? How can stakeholders influence our investment plans and delivery to reduce the length and incidence of power cuts; improvements for WSCs and improve communication with customers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic and business customers (location specific for micro-resilience) Technical developers Academics – Bath, Bristol, Newcastle, Warwick and Strathclyde universities Civic leaders – MPs and local authority (LAs) DNOs & ESO Water utilities – Yorkshire, Northumbrian Local Resilience Forums (LRF) partners Sustainability partners
Energy Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we use our knowledge of conditions at supply points to proactively work with customers to facilitate connections? How can we best facilitate participation and make available capacity to deliver Flexibility First? How can we extend our reach and develop consensus on Energy Futures scenarios to test that we are targeting expenditure on assets and flexibility to meet customer needs? How do we best support the supply chain to achieve emissions reductions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection customers, those: 1) connected; 2) in the process; 3) at project stage Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMS) National Grid/ESO Local authorities/local enterprise partnerships (LEPS) Future Energy utilities Independent networks Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) Aggregators DNOs Environment Agency/Central Government
Our People, Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What careers are future customers looking for and how can we align with their aspirations? What are the skills we need to operate and meet customer needs? Delivering a positive impact for communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Skills and National Skills Academy for Power TIDE taskforce Colleges and schools Leeds University/Newcastle University

Cross cutting engagement topics in 2022-23

Topics	Framing	Stakeholders
Data and digitalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we innovate to improve and streamline business processes? How can we make our Digitalisation Strategy inclusive of customers who don't prefer digital services? How can we measure and demonstrate the customer benefit of data and digitalisation? How do we co-create products and services with our stakeholders so they are fit for purpose? <p>See Part 2 marked "D&D" for details of co-creation with stakeholders to make data products fit for their purpose*</p>	<p>Local authorities, data scientists, academics, housing associations, community energy groups, connection customers, other utilities</p>
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we provide better services and value for customers? How can we reduce costs? How do we ensure vulnerable customers are not at a disadvantage? <p>See Part 2 marked "Innovation" for detail</p>	<p>Academics, other utilities, community groups, vulnerable customers, civic leaders, small/medium enterprises (SMEs), supply chain</p>



In 2022-23 our strategy was based on three objectives: 1) to engage with stakeholders on priority issues and use that engagement to inform our decision-making and deliver our business outputs for, and co-created with, our stakeholders and customers; 2) to ensure our engagement improved to be more

comprehensive and impactful so that it met stakeholder needs; in particular, customers in vulnerable circumstances and those impacted by the energy price crisis; and 3) to deliver benefits to customers and stakeholders and continue to build trust with them.

Why we engage

Build trust	Meeting the Needs of Customers	Collaborate to facilitate Net Zero	Just transition	Positive social impact
Fosters relationships and brings about collaboration, constructive dialogue, sharing of information to develop deeper understanding of our role and common goals.	To meet customers' changing needs we need to engage to understand those needs and continuously review and improve our services through agile processes and systems.	Achieving Net Zero requires a transformation in our business and we need stakeholders to work with us at project level and co-create new solutions and define our new role.	We need to tailor mechanisms to meet customers' different abilities to interact with and access affordable low-carbon energy.	We engage to support sustainable development in our region and attract talent, particularly future consumers who we know value environmental responsibility and social action.

Transforming the quality of our engagement to meet our evolving role in 2022-23

STRATEGIC

We have embedded engagement principles which guide our strategic approach. In 2022-23 significant enhancements were made to transform the quality of our engagement to meet our evolving role.

Principles	Enhancements
Inclusive	Community stakeholder workshops were introduced this year with the objective of scoping the role that we should play in ensuring that no customer is left behind in the energy system transition.
Relevant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Independent scrutiny and challenge by the Customer Engagement Group (CEG) to ensure our engagement is transparent and we are accountable to make the improvement we commit to. 2) Testing our engagement priorities with our Citizens Panel who gave us feedback on what topics were relevant for their level of knowledge and interest and suggested certain topics were more relevant to other stakeholders.
Accessible	Resilience is a key priority for stakeholders and our Citizens Panel have told us they wish to be engaged but find it challenging due to the technical nature. Resilience is a key priority for 2022-23 and to make it accessible we have tailored our material "from the ground up" so that stakeholders find it easy to use.
Continuous improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Engagement led by senior executives reporting to the Executive Leadership team, underscoring a change in our engagement approach from a transactional "they said, we did" to a co-creation approach, underpinning a more mature role for stakeholders and ourselves. 2) Continued improvement to mature our processes, infrastructure and capacity of our communities and customers.

Improvements to our engagement in 2022-23

OPERATIONAL

Our engagement programme is underpinned by the annual engagement framework, which is a series of stakeholder events which we plan; we then consolidate and synthesise feedback to incorporate into our change projects and business decision-making.

Our engagement activities	Planning and adaptation	Feedback and synthesis	Action plans and decision-making
Enhancements in 2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased range of stakeholders including: Housing Associations, Warm Hubs Outcome: more hard-to-reach stakeholders involved Use of new communications channels including: whatsapp; what3words; replies to tests Outcome: more innovation and real-time feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement feedback is collated, independently reviewed and triangulated and this is reviewed by the executive monthly Outcome: more innovative and hard-to-reach stakeholders involved Full mapping of BPEG priorities to key business activities Outcome: alignment between business activities and the stakeholder voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly CEG meetings are now part of BAU engagement activities and planning Outcome: independent scrutiny of how we involve stakeholders in business decision-making Outcome: We are more responsive to customer needs



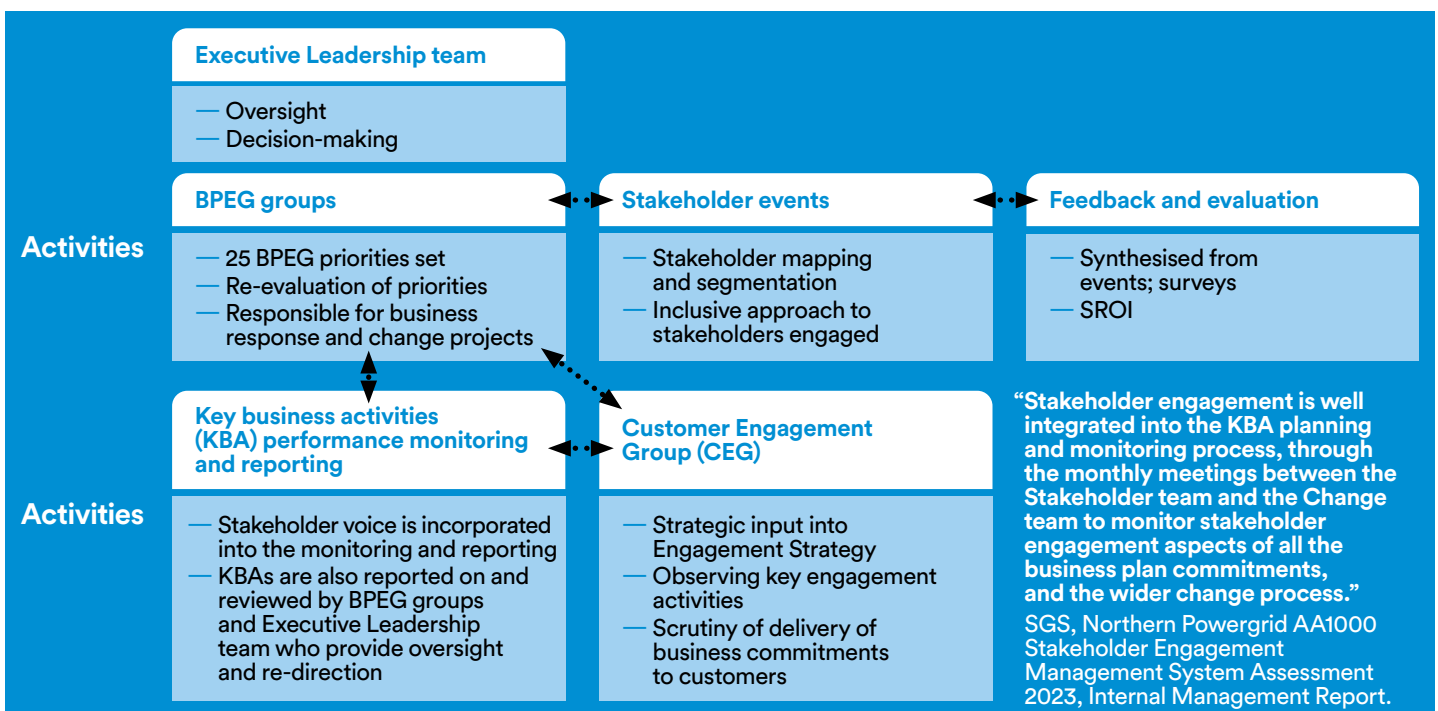
Our stakeholder engagement is planned on an annual basis, with topics reflecting priorities informed by stakeholders.

Our 2022-23 engagement programme

Forum	Purpose	Adapted/extended in 2022-23
1. Cross utility: panel of experts	To identify common priorities and challenges and deliver an enhanced service for our shared customers. Collaborate on strategies and actions to enable individual Net Zero and resilience plans.	Additional topics: winter resilience; DSO; upskilling the third sector; and knowledge sharing.
2. Citizens Panel: representative group of 50 consumers (SMEs, PSM, Rural, Urban, intergenerational customers)	To gather the views and challenge from a group of diverse, engaged and knowledgeable customers on business priorities and decisions.	Quarterly; additional topics: community resilience and voltage optimisation for Boston Spa micro-resilience project.
3. Deliberative round tables – cross representation of stakeholders	Focused discussions around specific issues to inform detailed delivery plans.	Electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.
4. Regional forums	Strategic regional leaders discussing place-based priorities and challenges to understand different local requirements regarding Net Zero.	Rotating around our six regions. Topics: focus on vulnerable customers.
5. Stakeholder panels – long standing forum running quarterly since 2013	To shape and challenge the strategic direction of our plans and strategies.	Sub-groups tested in 2022-23 to understand how we can do more.
6. Civic engagement – local authorities and MPs	Key regional issues and shaping national policy, e.g., PSR UK, storm response, decarbonisation and community resilience.	Extended topics: fuel poverty and further collaboration.
7. Annual surveys – survey of 7,000 customers	To understand stakeholder priorities and satisfactions.	BPEG groups requested additional topics for surveys: data and digitalisation requirements and open data.
8. Expert stakeholders – vulnerable and fuel poor customers	The Future Fairness and Social Issues Expert Group provide detailed guidance on our Vulnerability Strategy and actions.	Advised us to collaborate with Utilita to support advice hubs in fuel poor areas.

Our 2022-23 engagement – embedded with key business processes

We have enhanced how stakeholder engagement is embedded in 2022-23 by establishing more formal processes involving senior personnel and our independent Customer Engagement Group (CEG). We have introduced a governance process to report stakeholder engagement which is linked to strategic business planning and decision-making. Our new process is illustrated in the diagram below.





We have a high prevalence of vulnerable customers in our region with around 1.5 million (38%) meeting Ofgem's definition.

In 2022-23 we placed responsibility for vulnerable customers and their requirements under our Customer Services team, acknowledging that these services are core business activities. All customers can be at increased risk of vulnerability when experiencing a power cut and our role

in providing additional support for vulnerable customers who request it and who we also pro-actively identify is an essential service. Ongoing monitoring of our programmes has been assured by our Social Issues Expert Group.



1.5 million
customers



1. Customer and stakeholder feedback

- Dedicated improvement research for vulnerable customers
- Surveys of vulnerable customers
- Feedback from expert stakeholder groups

2. Set objectives

- Set clear expectations for interventions, including income maximisation, energy efficiency, health and wellbeing improvements
- Set KPIs

3. Deliver schemes with partners

- Select projects based on our objectives
- Identify lead partners with expertise and proven delivery ability
- Develop and deliver programmes tailored to local conditions

4. Measure benefits

- Evaluation against three common metrics agreed across the sector
- Evaluation against KPIs
- SROI evaluation

Our service to customers

Partnerships

Our partnerships enable us to access hard-to-reach customers and provide support and also increase our understanding and knowledge of the issues faced by vulnerable customers. In 2022-23 we collaborated with the Centre for Sustainable Energy to map the network of existing and potential partners to deliver fuel poverty, LCT and energy efficiency services and PSM referrals. This has underpinned an increase in partnerships and an increase in fuel poverty support.

See details in Part 3, page 10

Priority services membership

Investment in data gathering and social indicator mapping has (in conjunction with partners) enabled us to expand our recruitment to the PSM in 2022-23. We have focused on offering tailored services to customers on the PSM to better meet their needs.

See details in Part 3, page 5

Fuel poverty

We have affordability outreach programmes to alleviate the impact of fuel poverty in our region, supporting 8,998 customers in 2022-23. With the support of our stakeholders we will double the size of our programme in 2023-24, reaching a predicted 17,209 customers.

See details in Part 3, pages 6-7

No-one left behind

Consumers don't necessarily know what decarbonisation will mean for their home or living situation. For example less than 40% of people think they need to change the way they heat their home, yet the Climate Change Committee has "predicted that 90% of homes will need to install low-carbon heating systems", demonstrating a knowledge gap. Different consumer groups have different needs.

See details in Part 3, pages 8-9

How we engage with vulnerable customers

Direct engagement with priority services members

To uplift our vulnerable customer sign-ups, we introduced two new engagement channels through which to interact with customers – iVans and radio adverts – these have raised visibility and played a role in helping us achieve a 156% increase in direct PSM sign-ups in 2022-23.

See details in Part 3, page 5

Research

Targeted research with our vulnerable customers highlighted that they find it especially difficult to cope with power cuts exceeding six hours and this finding has underpinned our improvements which include the introduction of an onsite Customer Support team where we anticipate power cuts may be longer than six hours.

See details in Part 3, page 4

Expert stakeholder groups

We engage with several expert stakeholder groups including: Social Issues Expert Group; Citizens Panel; and Future Fairness Panel. Each of these groups provide essential guidance and support for our teams.

See details in Part 3, page 2

CEG

Provides ongoing monitoring and challenge on delivery of services to vulnerable customers.



Power cuts	<p>Support for vulnerable customers during power cuts was one of our stakeholders' top priorities. Customers want to see increased outreach and communication campaigns – targeted at the vulnerable – to enhance awareness of the PSM and the support available during power cuts. The support needs to be proactive and accessible, with human contact preferred where possible.</p> <p>See Part 3, pages 3-4</p>
High prevalence of vulnerability in our region	<p>We have around 970,000 households on our PSM. We decided to progress further and hold ourselves accountable to meet stretching targets.</p> <p>See Part 3, page 3</p>
Looking after vulnerable customers as core service	<p>Stakeholders have told us that supporting vulnerable customers should be a business as usual activity for us. Therefore, in 2022-23, responsibility for vulnerable customers is part of the core Customer Services team. We will also continue to deliver vulnerability training to all staff which has helped us identify 'vulnerability champions' and created ownership of vulnerable customer issues in the business and across our region.</p>
Partnerships	<p>Working with partners enables us to increase our reach and support across our region and enhance our access to hard-to-reach customers. We selected partners (including those beyond the energy sector) based on the impact that we can have working together in our region. The partners will use responses and knowledge to enable intervention. We will continue to deliver programmes through a mix of in-house teams and partners, working proactively on issues such as affordability and responsiveness to power cuts.</p> <p>See Part 3, pages 10-11</p>
Alleviating the impact of fuel poverty	<p>We have used data to access hard-to-reach and seldom-heard customers. Using social indicator mapping aligned to Ofgem's vulnerability needs codes, we acquired additional data that provides an accurate view of fuel poverty and low energy homes, and also established a Future Fairness Consumer Panel. Most importantly, we have developed a successful programme in partnership with Citizens Advice.</p> <p>See Part 3, pages 4-5</p>

Our consumer vulnerability targets

Customer outcomes	Targets and performance in 2022-23	Future targets
Targeted recruitment to PSM	<p>63% of eligible customers recruited to PSM</p> <p>100% proactive PSM customer contact for data cleanse every two years</p> <p>12% PSM sign-ups from referrals</p>	<p>78% of eligible customers recruited to PSM</p> <p>100% proactive PSM customer contact for data cleanse every two years</p> <p>25% PSM sign-ups from referrals</p>
Enhanced support during power interruption cuts	<p>89% broad measure of customer satisfaction score</p>	<p>93.1% broad measure of customer satisfaction score</p> <p>100% proactive contact of high-risk customers within one hour (new target)</p> <p>95% proactive contact of all PSM customers within three hours (new target)</p>
Access to hard-to-reach – use of data and partnerships	<p>Refresh regional demographic/social indicator mapping every two years</p>	<p>Refresh regional demographic/social indicator mapping every two years</p>
Support for customers in fuel poverty	<p>8,998 of fuel poverty interventions in 2022-23</p>	<p>20,000 pa average number of fuel poverty interventions over 2023-28</p>
Working with partners to overcome barriers to energy transition targeting	<p>2,000 customers engaged nationally in energy transition research</p> <p>40 stakeholders engaged in workshops</p>	<p>5,000 pa over 2023-28</p>
Embed vulnerability across our business	<p>2,700 staff trained in a 24 month period</p>	<p>100% number of staff trained in vulnerability</p>

Our partnerships and collaboration

Look out for our collaboration and partnering “badge” in Part 2



Part 1

We collaborate and partner to achieve greater success for our customers and stakeholders. We see three key tangible outcomes from collaboration:

1) increases available skills and capabilities, enabling us to solve problems for our customers;

2) builds our internal capabilities as we learn from those we partner with; and

3) opens up new channels of communication with customers and stakeholders, building trust between us. We set out below some case studies demonstrating these outcomes.

Collaboration delivering benefits for customers

Smart local energy systems: Partnering with TNEI and LCP Delta Energy Futures

Why?

The SLES project has the potential to demonstrate the viability of a new local energy market framework, enabling communities to implement their own decarbonisation projects. This will lead to local governance structures and management and result in potential savings for customers. However, while the ultimate aim is to roll out community SLEs, it is a complex project as local networks will each have different

economic and technical effectiveness and impacts on the broader network.

Who?

We partnered with TNEI and LCP Data, who are energy market experts bringing modelling techniques, so that we can understand the implications of different local approaches and then identify how communities and local stakeholders can best work together, with their local DNO, to deploy SLES.

Community energy: Partnering with Regen No-one left behind

Why?

We identified that supporting the advancement of community energy could help us reach vulnerable customers as community energy organisations tend to be trusted intermediaries supporting them on financial aspects of their energy usage and also the environmental and social aspects. Our aim was to be a proactive, trusted partner providing support and capacity building, and developing positive relationships with community and local energy organisations, benefitting us all.

Who?

Our expertise is not a perfect match for meeting our objectives so we partnered with Regen, a community energy expert organisation, meaning we didn't start from scratch but could build on the learnings, experience and capability they have to deliver greater benefits.

“It's clear that Northern Powergrid is taking its role as an enabler of community energy seriously. The company is demonstrating its commitment to delivering meaningful environmental, social, and local economic benefits across Yorkshire and the North East and we look forward to working with them to make that happen.”

Emma Bridge

Chief Executive, Community Energy England

Whole systems collaboration: Partnering with Northern Gas Networks Energy Futures

Why?

We recognised that to decarbonise the energy system, the electricity and gas networks could collaborate and co-ordinate actions as we have key common stakeholders. Co-ordination will also help both networks understand the immediate and future energy demands on a regional level and support Future Energy planning.

Who?

As an energy sector leader in the region, Northern Gas Networks was a natural partner as we have shared ambitions for our businesses and the region. We also have shared stakeholders so it enables us to communicate with them through a new channel with a focus on linking regional decarbonisation objectives with funding.



Enabling rural electrification No-one left behind/Energy Futures

Why?

As part of our “no-one left behind” approach we are considering pathways for agricultural and rural transition to Net Zero by investigating:

- 1) the use of agricultural sector flexibility;
- 2) novel ways to increase rural reliability; and
- 3) identifying opportunities to reduce connections and capacity network costs through use of technology.

Who?

We are partnering with the University of Leeds and EA Technology to undertake operational modelling to understand the impact of different low carbon technologies on the network to identify and accelerate a pathway to rural sector decarbonisation. The first step is to engage stakeholders to understand the potential technology pathways.



Partnerships are a key enabler to successful implementation. In 2022-23 we overhauled our approach to partnerships to enhance the benefits of our Vulnerable Customer Strategy with the support of the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE).

Through the work with CSE, the full ecosystem of partners was mapped for the third sector and wider partners. We did this to identify more partners that can deliver support and to scale up our fuel poverty support services as customers were impacted by the energy price rises.

Collaboration delivering benefits for customers

Delivery partners

- Citizens Advice
- Green Doctor
- Barnardo's

We partner with organisations to support in achieving our goals and delivering projects, training or services on our behalf. In 2022-23 we moved from 5 to 9 delivery partners to deliver fuel poverty support including:

- 1) immediate support through food and fuel vouchers and grants;
- 2) longer-term support including income maximisation, debt services and supplier dispute support.

In 2022-23 we supported 8,998 customers and, with the increase in delivery partners, we forecast to support 16,209 customers in 2023-24. [See Part 3, pages 9-10 for further details](#)

Industry partners

- NGN
- Cadent
- Yorkshire Water
- Northumbrian Water

We work with 4 utility partners to identify opportunities to partner to support vulnerable customers and identify and resolve inter-dependencies. For example, customers with a medical reliance on three services; electricity, gas and water. In 2022-23 we collaborated with NGN to map incidences fuel poverty and

- 1) identified 2 communities without access to fuel poverty support – Bradford and Middlesbrough;
- 2) extended support with delivery by Citizens Advice into Middlesbrough and are in planning with Bradford Council and NGN to pool funding to deliver fuel poverty support in Bradford in 2023.

Referral partners

- NHS
- Charities
- Local authorities
- Parish councils
- Community groups

We work with referral partners who refer customers to our PSM and wider support services. In 2022-23 we expanded our vulnerability partnership network by 134 contacts, including the NHS, charities, community groups, local authorities and parish councils and now have 774 partner network members.

[See Part 3, pages 9-10 for further details](#)

Delivery partners



Industry partners



NWG
living water

Referral partners



NHS
England



GREEN
DOCTOR

citizens
advice



As part of our learnings from our RIIO-ED2 enhanced engagement we have significantly improved our approach to assessing the impacts of our initiatives and making our

performance more transparent for our stakeholders, enabling us to refine business outputs to achieve customer and stakeholder benefits.

Our tools for measuring impact

Customer and stakeholder feedback	We continually synthesise and assess customer and stakeholder feedback to inform changes.	Our targets are linked to the benefits we have committed to deliver to customers. We monitor progress against these targets to internal and external stakeholders, facilitating transparency and enabling us to receive valuable stakeholder feedback on options to improve performance and benefits for customers.
Social return on investment	In 2022-23 we screened a list of 20 potential projects for SROI assessment and undertook analysis on 12 projects where there was clearly identifiable customer benefits. The remaining projects are subject to other means of measuring impact.	In 2022-23 we have improved our approach by detailing the identified benefits to customers and society. We have also used a measurement period of 5 years to reflect that most initiatives are likely to change post ED2. Longer estimation periods were used where we expect the benefits to be enduring, for example, microgrids.
Dedicated research	We undertake annual customer priorities research, as well as bespoke research to understand changes in our stakeholders' priorities over time, and respond to changes in need.	Our dedicated research provided insights on our performance in sustainability and the introduction of new communication channels and led us to change outputs to meet customer needs.
Performance monitoring	<p>Associated with each area of our business, capturing all key business activities (KBA) including stakeholder engagement, defined targets have been set based on stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>The targets are linked to benefits which we have committed to deliver to customers. Progress against our targets is reported weekly to teams; monthly to our Executive team and scrutinised quarterly by the CEG, our Citizens Panel and Stakeholder Panel. They facilitate transparency and enable us to receive valuable feedback on options to improve our performance.</p>	<p>In 2022-23 we have improved our performance monitoring to embed stakeholder priorities and how customers are benefitting into the process. With the scale of upcoming change across the 242 plan deliverables, including DSO, Access SCR and Data & Digitalisation, we have formed a Change team to embed stakeholder voice, change management and communications to ensure we meet customer needs.</p> <p>Improvement initiatives are driven by key business activities (KBAs) which include stakeholder engagement and feedback to ensure they are achieving improvements we have promised and are agile to the needs of our customers.</p>

Measuring our stakeholder impact in 2022-23

We set out the improvements to our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy on page 3. In 2022-23 we measured our performance against output measures to assess the impact of our improvements to facilitate the enhancements to our engagement and set stretch targets for the future. Meeting the target is indicated by ✓.

Customer outcomes	Output measure – 2022-23 target	2023-24 future targets
Inclusive: engagement includes a broad range of stakeholders, locations and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent assessment of inclusion and reach (on target) 7 community engagement events ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment completed 12 community engagement events
Accessible: new communication and engagement channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 community capacity programmes ✓ 1 utility forum ✓ 1 industrial representatives meeting ✓ 2 DNO/GDN forums ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 community capacity programmes 3 utility forums 4 industrial representatives meetings 4 DNO/GDN forums
Relevant: additional ways to discuss complex topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFES updated ✓ 2 local area planning forums ✓ Formal LA consultation – 100% ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFES updated 4 local area planning forums Formal LA consultation – 100%
Continuous improvement: real time performance engagement and impact driven analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder engagement survey – 85% Independent AA1000 internal management report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder engagement survey – 90%



Performance monitoring

Self-service connections journey

- We introduced a self-service connections process, identified as a **key customer priority** to cope with the increasing number of small customer connection requests.
- During 2022-23 our **performance monitoring** of the new system continued to reveal the complex and detailed customer requirements that the system was not yet delivering.
- **Key feedback** included that:
 - 1) customers need additional support through the customer journey;
 - 2) customers were experiencing difficulties in logging onto the system;

3) customer were experiencing issues with the payment process.

- By including this project in our performance monitoring process we ensure that **the customer feedback is shared** with the CEG, our Stakeholder Panel and internal stakeholders.
- We have **introduced an improvement programme** to address customer concerns and will continue to report progress to the CEG, the Stakeholder Panel and internal stakeholders, providing transparency, accountability and demonstrating the benefits we are providing to customers.



Stakeholder feedback LCTs

- We have seen the demand for fuse upgrades to enable the **uptake of low-carbon technologies** increase considerably in 2022-23.
- Customers want this process to be both **efficient** and **low cost** to enable decarbonisation.
- On the back of this feedback we have **removed customer charges** for fuse upgrades ahead of the removal of charges for other load categories in ED2.

- We also identified an opportunity to trial delivery of the fuse upgrades during the quotation visit where the customer accepts the quotation.
- Both of these will make the process **more efficient** and **cheaper for customers** to decarbonise through the uptake of low-carbon technologies.



Social return on investment

- We measured the net social return on investment through our Fuel Poverty Support programme and estimated that it would achieve net benefits to customers and society of £2.2m (NPV) in 2022-23.
- In addition we have set a target of achieving net benefits of £4.5m (NPV) in 2023-24 through increasing the number of customers we support through our Fuel Poverty Support programme.

- Not only does using SROI to estimate the benefits of scaling up our Fuel Poverty Support programme it also provides a transparent target against which we can report progress to our stakeholders.



£2.2 million

Fuel Poverty measures
delivering net benefit
to customers in 2022-23



£4.5 million

Fuel Poverty measures
delivering net benefits
in 2023-24

