

A small icon of a heart with a white outline and a red-to-white gradient fill, positioned to the left of the main heading.

Making you our priority

Our arrangements for providing Priority Services to those customers on our Priority Services Membership

Our arrangements for providing Priority Services

We are committed to providing the best possible service to our customers and we strive to go above and beyond the minimum standards for identifying and supporting vulnerable customers, as set out in this statement.

<p>Priority Services Membership</p>
<p>We operate and maintain our Priority Services Membership, which covers a wide range of support needs, including, but not limited to, medical dependency on electricity, mobility needs, communication needs (including difficulties communicating in English), other medical illnesses, the elderly and households with children under the age of 5.</p> <p>Customers who require such additional support during a power cut can be included in our Priority Services Membership, free of charge. Some customers may have transient support requirements that may only be applicable for a short period of time and, as a result, are able to register for a period to suit their needs. This period is limited to a maximum of 18 months, at which point customers may re-join if they wish.</p> <p>We are committed to contacting every member a minimum of once every two years and they will be sent a communication asking them if they wish to remain on the Priority Services Membership and also be given the opportunity to refresh, update or remove their information.</p>
<p>In order to support our vulnerable customers, it is important that as many eligible customers as possible are registered as Priority Services Members. We run targeted recruitment campaigns based on data analysis to help us reach customers with information about the Priority Services Membership. These campaigns include face-to-face outreach, social media advertising and direct email communications.</p> <p>In addition to this, we have data sharing agreements in place with energy suppliers, Gas Distribution Network Operators and water companies, allowing us to share information about vulnerable customers. Please see below for further information about this. We also partner with a range of charities and voluntary sector organisations who promote the Priority Services Membership on our behalf to users of their services who are eligible.</p> <p>Customers who wish to sign up for the Priority Services Membership, or a person acting on their behalf, can register directly via our website www.northernpowergrid.com/care or by calling our Contact Centre on 0800 169 2996.</p>
<p>Information and advice provided to Priority Service Customers</p> <p>Priority Services Members receive a welcome information pack on registration, which provides essential information on what to do in a power cut, tailored support for different vulnerabilities and access to other services we offer, including alternative communication channels and energy advice services.</p> <p>We provide enhanced communication updates to our Priority Services Members. This includes information about winter preparedness, advanced warnings of weather-related events and information about new services that could support them.</p> <p>In the event of a planned power cut, all Priority Services Members will be contacted in advance by letter and either by telephone or in person by our Priority Services Team so that we can assess their needs and provide any additional support that may be required.</p> <p>In the event of an unplanned power cut, our Priority Services Team will endeavour to contact anyone with an enhanced medical dependency on electricity within one hour and all other Priority Services Members within three hours to provide a welfare check and deliver additional support, if required. If a power cut lasts more than six hours, all Priority Services Members will be visited by one of our Proactive On-site Responders to provide any further assistance that may be required. All services are provided free of charge.</p> <p>All Priority Services Members will also receive updates to the Estimated Restoration Time for the power cut, regardless of the time of day or night, as well as having access to our Live Power Cut Map to track our progress in restoring the power. Priority Services Members can give us their mobile phone number and receive these updates via text message so that we do not cause a disturbance through the night.</p> <p>We offer a range of communication channels for those customers with additional communication needs, including Recite Me, the text-relay service for British Sign Language users and a wide range of other languages. These needs can be recorded when a customer signs up as a Priority Services Member. More information about the additional communication channels we provide can be found below.</p> <p>We review our Priority Services communications and services annually to ensure that they meet the needs of our Priority Services Members and reflect, where possible, feedback received from those customers and other key stakeholders.</p>

Sharing our priority service records with the relevant Energy Supplier, Gas Transporter and Water Company

We and our partners are committed to meeting our obligations under data protection legislation and ensuring that all customers’ personal data is handled and stored securely. Consequently, we have policies and procedures in place which support that compliance.

We share priority service records with the relevant energy supplier, gas transporter and water company either through the electricity industry’s secure data transfer network or by encrypted means so those companies can provide priority services in the event of a power cut or a similar incident resulting in the loss of the gas or water supply. Please see our Privacy Policy at www.northernpowergird.com for more information about how we process personal data.

Password scheme and support services for customers with additional communication needs

Priority Services Members can ask to be part of our password scheme to help them feel safe and comfortable when someone visits their home on our behalf by calling 0800 169 2996. However, we do advise Priority Services Members not to let anyone into their home if they doubt that the caller is genuine.

Priority Services Members’ passwords are held within our Customer Relationship Management system which is accessible to all of our colleagues and contractors working on our behalf who may be required to visit Priority Services Members in their home. We also have a code of practice on visiting customers at their home, for which training is provided to all of our employees and contractors.

All customers can contact us by telephone, email, letter, WhatsApp or in person at one of our offices should they require more information or wish to complain about a service that they have received.

We also offer multiple communication channels for those customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, are visually impaired or whose first language is not English. These services are free of charge and are detailed in our communication materials. Alternative channels of communication include:

- British Sign Language live interpreter;
- Text phone;
- Text relay;
- Language line;
- Braille/large print; and
- Recite-me - web accessibility, languages, size, colours, speaking and underlining.

The current version of this statement is always available to download from our website www.northernpowergird.com and is also available in alternative formats (including as a hard copy) for those customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, are visually impaired or whose first language is not English. Please call us on 0800 169 2669 if you would like a copy of this statement in one of those alternative formats.

This statement is prepared in accordance with Paragraph 10.12 of Standard Licence Condition 10 of our electricity distribution licence.

