



INVESTING IN  
NORTHUMBERLAND  
&  
COUNTY  
DURHAM



# INTRODUCING NORTHERN POWERGRID

Here at Northern Powergrid we work behind the scenes to deliver electricity to 3.9 million businesses and homes in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

Our network consists of more than 61,000 substations and around 93,000 kilometres of overhead lines and underground cables. We have more than 2,200 employees who work to keep the lights on for our 8 million customers.

Our operating zones are coordinated so we can tailor our services and our response to the needs of you and your local community. We moved from five larger zones to nine zones defined by their industrial, urban or rural landscape. This operating model demonstrates our commitment to improving service and providing locally based managers who are able to keep in touch with the local community to understand the best way we can meet your needs.

## OPERATING IN NORTHUMBERLAND & COUNTY DURHAM

This booklet provides you with a handy personalised directory of our services in Northumberland & County Durham.

We have included information about our investment schemes across the region and the full range of other services we provide. Our services complement much of the work that local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships have responsibility for, and we want to work closely with other local partners to help achieve these objectives. These include taking care of our vulnerable customers, promoting skilled careers, supporting economic growth, reducing crime and minimising our environmental impact.

As one of our rural operating zones, Northumberland & County Durham covers the main towns of Alnwick, Morpeth, Hexham and Barnard Castle.

The zone stretches from Wooler and Seahouses in the north to Barnard Castle in the south. It serves 112,000 homes and businesses and covers parts of Northumberland National Park, and includes our offices at Hexham and Morpeth.

## MEET THE TEAM

### **SEAN CASKEY**

#### **Head of Rural Zones**

Sean.Caskey@northernpowergrid.com



“Our priority is to improve the network reliability for the customers we serve across the Rural Zones, many of whom are supplied by long stretched of overhead line. On those occasions when the supply does fail, our focus is to reduce the time taken to restore supply whilst recognising the differing priorities our customers have within the area.”



# ENGAGING WITH YOU

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We want to work with you to understand how we can improve our services and support the communities of Northumberland & County Durham.

We set out to consult with you to make sure that we are delivering the service that you want.

As a member of the North East Chamber of Commerce, Our Head of Trading and Innovation, Jim Cardwell, chairs the Energy Group and partner meetings. This engagement is essential in making sure we are enabling the future growth and potential of our region.

Our stakeholder panel is a central part of our engagement process and is led by members of our board of directors. Members of the panel come from the public, private and voluntary sectors to represents a wide range of interests and expertise. If you are interested in taking part and helping to shape what we do in your community then get in touch with us at

[yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid](mailto:yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid)

## **Our stakeholder website**

We have launched a website aimed at engaging with our stakeholders by communicating about our business improvements and our community engagement achievements and plans.

We also use this website to promote our Stakeholder Report, which sets out how we performed through the first year of our business plan and describes how we've performed against our main commitments. We've tried to make it as easy as possible for those who aren't familiar with our business to understand how we've done in this last year. Visit at:

[www.northernpowergrid.com/your-powergrid](http://www.northernpowergrid.com/your-powergrid)

## **Customer Liaison Officer**

If you have any queries or concerns that you would like to discuss with us you can get in touch with our dedicated Northumberland & County Durham Customer Liaison Officer by emailing [team@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:team@northernpowergrid.com)

## **Get in touch**

If you would like to talk to us about who we are, what we do and how we can work with you, get in touch with our stakeholder engagement team at

[yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid](mailto:yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid)



cut helpline  
375 675

**RAPID RES**

# INVESTING IN NORTHUMBERLAND & COUNTY DURHAM

We are investing over £31 million in Northumberland & County Durham throughout our business plan period of 2015-2023.

Our work focuses on the replacement of assets, underground cables and overhead lines. We are also investing in flood defences and reinforcing the network to ensure that we deliver the best possible service in your area.

On the map we have highlighted our biggest investment schemes in Northumberland & County Durham. For more information you can visit our investment map at [northernpowergrid.com/investments-in-your-area](http://northernpowergrid.com/investments-in-your-area)

Our long-term investments are vital to the successful distribution of electricity in your area. Therefore, we think it's important to continue to consult and work with local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure that we consider your issues and priorities throughout our investment schemes.



## WEST WYLAM

Condition data suggests that our equipment is in need of work. From 2016 we're investing £1.4 million over two years to replace our assets.

## KEY



ASSET REPLACEMENT



MULTIPLE REPLACEMENTS



OVERHEAD LINE REPLACEMENT



## LINTON

In 2015 we started our investment. We're inspecting and, where needed, replacing overhead lines, we're replacing ten circuit breakers, and we are investing in flood defences to protect our site. We will work until 2023, investing £2.9 million in Linton.



## BLYTH TO FAWDON

In 2022 we will invest £1.1 million in refurbishing 28 towers because our data suggests the overhead lines are in need of improvement.



## SPENNYMOOR

In 2016 we started a three year project to replace eight circuit breakers. The £12 million investment will improve our supply.

ALNWICK

MORPETH

HEXHAM

CONSETT

BISHOP  
AUCKLAND

BARNARD  
CASTLE



# PROVIDING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

We want you to feel like we deliver the high quality customer care you expect and deserve every time you contact us. Through our customer service improvement programme we are keeping your needs at the forefront of how we do business.

Our Penshaw based customer contact centre is open 24-hours a day, every day, with a team of professional advisors who are ready to respond to the needs of our customers across our nine operating zones.

With text services, social media and online services, face-to-face, telephone and e-mail, you can choose how you want to engage with us.

By going out into the community with our customer support vehicles, sending proactive communications to share details of our investment schemes and creating opportunities for people to have their say, we continue to improve the day-to-day customer experience.





# OUR DIGITAL SERVICE

We are continuously working to deliver high quality customer service. We've seen a huge growth in contact with our customers through digital channels and we've invested in significant improvements to this service.

Our online power cut checker and power cut reporting service lets our customers directly alert us if they're experiencing a power cut and see updates on when their power will be restored for both planned and unplanned power cuts. This allows our contact centre advisors more time to help customers who wish to contact us via the telephone.

We also text customers, where we have contact details, to keep them up to date on when we will restore their power.

To help local authorities and other public organisations manage the situation if there is a power cut, we have a system that allows them to access live information on power cuts and restoration times using a personalised login to an online map.

If you would like to have access then please get in touch with us at [yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid](mailto:yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid) and we'll set you up and guide you through our easy to use system.



# CARING FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

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Although we are always working to maintain our electricity network, sometimes power cuts do happen; therefore we have created online resources to make sure that you are prepared.

These resources include; home safety tips, videos on what to do in a power cut, our power cut reporting service and our power cut checker. Not only do we make sure these online resources are up to date and as useful as possible, we also go out into the community to help you with resilience planning.

We take part in regular meetings with the Northumbria and Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forums to support and contribute to their work in preparing the region for an emergency.



# OUR PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

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We understand that a power cut can be extremely inconvenient to our customers, but for some people it is so much more than that. In order for us to provide additional support to those who need it the most, we have a Priority Services Register.

Our customers can choose to register themselves, a family member or friend, if they feel they need extra support in a power cut.

We are always trying to find new ways to tailor the services we provide to customers' individual needs, as we understand that a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate for customers needing additional support.

Our contact centre will be able to offer additional information, advice and regular updates over the phone. We may be able to arrange for our partner, the British Red Cross, to provide emotional and practical support to you as needed.

We also have a Customer Support Vehicles, which we send out during power cuts to provide refreshments, blankets and the chance to talk to one of our team face-to-face.

It's a priority for us to make sure that we know who needs this extra support and so we actively seek to promote our Priority Services Register. We work with care professionals and businesses to make sure that we are reaching our customers who need us the most.

If you work in Social Care, for the Health and Wellbeing Board or in other care professions, you can help us to promote our register, improve our service and help us to identify those who will benefit from being on our register. Please get in touch to help us to provide the best support for our customers.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

- ▶ Call us 24 hours a day on: **0800 169 2996**
- ▶ Email us at: [priorityservices@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:priorityservices@northernpowergrid.com)
- ▶ Visit our website at: [northernpowergrid.com/priority](http://northernpowergrid.com/priority)

# POWERING YOUR COMMUNITY

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We invest in our communities by working with stakeholders to ensure that we use our local presence and resources to deliver a positive impact. We are committed to being an active member of the community and we strive to ensure that our investment has a sustainable benefit.

Activating Community Engagement (ACE) is a project that rewards our customers for making small changes to how and when they use electricity. We started ACE in 2015 and from the success of our pilot we took the ACE project to all County Durham residents.

The innovative project uses an app called the GenGame aims to help customers to reduce their whole home energy usage during peak times. Through the app, which looks like a mobile game, we've integrated a puzzle game for players to earn bonus power-ups and score boosts! Players can invite and compete with friends, for prizes, charity, or just for fun!

If you would like to learn more, take part, or if you are already involved in an innovation project that you would like to share with us then get in touch or sign up to join the ACE project at: [www.thegengame.com](http://www.thegengame.com) and [www.npg-ace.com](http://www.npg-ace.com)

Our volunteering programme gives our employees the opportunity to support their local communities. Our volunteers attend events that we hold in partnership with the Trussell Trust and Ahead Partnership, where staff can support their local food banks and inspire school students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and maths subjects.

Through our schools safety programme we promote safety and raise awareness of the dangers surrounding electricity distribution to school students. Our Safety Advisors visit more than 25,000 school children every year and we have a fantastic interactive website that educates children through fun online resources. You can sign up to organise visits to local schools on our dedicated website: [thefusebox.northernpowergrid.com](http://thefusebox.northernpowergrid.com)



## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES HELP TO SHAPE OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS:

- ▶ **Vulnerability to power cuts** – using our knowledge and local presence to help customers most vulnerable during power cuts
- ▶ **Energy affordability** – to help improve the homes and lives of our customers by providing far reaching and innovative solutions to energy affordability challenges
- ▶ **Strengthening communities** – to make a positive difference to the communities where we live and work
- ▶ **Public safety and education** – to develop skills and nurture talent to improve the lives of our communities through education and safety programmes and projects
- ▶ **Employee engagement** – to invest in our people and create a positive culture within our organisation and in the communities where we live and work

# GETTING CONNECTED

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We are continuously improving our connections service without increasing cost; we're doing this by adapting our local operations and making better use of digital channels and technology to provide a personally tailored service.

► **New connections** - If you need a connection to a premise, our design team will work with you to provide a connection tailored to your requirements. We have a quick calculator at [northernpowergrid.com/getconnected](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/getconnected) to get a more site specific guide to the price of your new connection. You'll also be able to apply for a formal estimate or quotation.

► **Changing connections** – If you are installing additional electrical equipment and need to increase the size of your electricity supply, we will help you understand the process of connecting this equipment to our network.

► **Supporting independent connections** – Customers can contract an Independent Connection Provider to provide and install certain aspects of their connection infrastructure. We actively promote this competition and if you want to get a quote from an alternative provider, we'll help you understand the process.

► **Supporting local generation schemes** - Supporting you throughout the planning stages of generating electricity from renewable and energy-efficient sources is a key part of what we do. We can help you to understand the connections process and provide you with a quotation that suits your project needs, whether it's small or large scale generation.

One of the first steps you can take in deciding whether you want to talk to us about a connection is by taking a look at our generation availability map; it provides an indication of our network's capability to connect large-scale developments to major substations and you can access this via our website: [northernpowergrid.com/generation-availability-map](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/generation-availability-map)







## FOR GUIDE PRICES, TIMESCALES AND TO APPLY FOR YOUR CONNECTION

- ▶ Visit our website at: [northernpowergrid.com/getconnected](https://northernpowergrid.com/getconnected)
- ▶ You can 'Ask the Expert' online and discuss your project and timescales with our technical specialists
- ▶ Alternatively call us Mon-Fri: 8am – 8pm or Sat: 9am – 5pm on: 0800 011 3433
- ▶ Write to us at: Northern Powergrid Network Connections, Alix House, Falcon Court, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 3TU
- ▶ We host regular connections surgeries at our offices to offer expert advice and guidance on planning for connections projects. Visit [northernpowergrid.com/customer-events-and-surgeries](https://northernpowergrid.com/customer-events-and-surgeries)



# FUTURE NETWORKS

Innovation is central to the way we do business every day. We look for new ways to improve the quality and range of services we provide to ensure that our network can meet current and future demands.

The decarbonisation agenda and technological progress present the electricity system with new challenges. In order to keep our knowhow and our services up to speed with the market evolution and with our customers' expectations, we invest in research projects.

We are particularly pleased to have led the Customer-Led Network Revolution project, one of the most significant smart grid projects ever undertaken in the UK. Learning from this project has enabled us to develop a smart grid route map for the future, and we are making changes to our business accordingly.

We also work to maximise the use of available capacity on our network to the benefit of our connections customers, and are involved in storage and demand side response trials.

Finally, we take part in consultations on transformational changes to the energy industry. We are happy to share our views and take suggestions and feedback from our stakeholders.

If you would like to learn more or discuss our low-carbon and innovation plans then get in touch with us at [yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid.com)



## OUR INNOVATION STRATEGY FOCUSES ON FOUR OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Maximise the value of smart meters
- ▶ Develop digital services
- ▶ Deploy smart grids
- ▶ Address affordability issues



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENERGY

Community energy projects rely on strong local roots, collective action, knowledge, and good leadership. Our Community Energy Seed Fund offers support to community energy groups in the early stages of their projects. The fund can help to provide initial support such as expert advice and feasibility studies.

The winner in our Northumberland & County Durham zone for 2016 is Allen Valleys Enterprise Limited for their feasibility study for small-scale hydropower.

We have also taken an active role in promoting Community Energy by supporting Community Energy England, hosting community energy events and through our Community Energy Connections Guide, which is available on our website at [northernpowergrid.com/your-powergrid](http://northernpowergrid.com/your-powergrid)



# CONTACT US

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## Our website

Access a range of services at [northernpowergrid.com](http://northernpowergrid.com)

Use our website to:

- ▶ pay an invoice
- ▶ request a new connection
- ▶ arrange a network diversion
- ▶ request a refund for a new connection
- ▶ find out about connecting distributed generation
- ▶ move your electricity service
- ▶ request a disconnection
- ▶ report a problem
- ▶ find your supplier
- ▶ find out about known power cuts in your area
- ▶ request the fitting of shrouding
- ▶ apply to be on our Priority Services Register.

## Complaints

We acknowledge that sometimes, despite our best efforts, things can go wrong. The best way to register a complaint with us is through our online form, which is available at: [northernpowergrid.com/complaints](http://northernpowergrid.com/complaints)

Call us 24 hours a day on:  
**0800 781 8848**

Write to us at:

**FREEPOST RSXE-RCZX-XKBL**  
Northern Powergrid,  
Manor House, Station Road,  
Penshaw, Houghton-Le-Spring,  
Tyne and Wear, DH4 7LA

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## In an emergency

To report a power cut, or if you are concerned about damage to or safety of our equipment, call our 24 hour emergency number on:

**105**

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## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

- ▶ For any general enquiries email us at [team@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:team@northernpowergrid.com)
- ▶ Call us 9am – 5pm (Mon-Fri) on 0800 011 3332
- ▶ Mail us at FREEPOST RS XE-RC ZX-XKBL Northern Powergrid, Manor House, Station Road, Penshaw, Houghton-Le-Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7LA

# KEEP IN TOUCH

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Keeping the network running safely, reliably and efficiently is our business. We are open for business every hour of every day of the year – no matter what the circumstances. We want to make it easy for our customers to contact us, whether they need to call us in an emergency, get connected to our network or find out who their electricity supplier is.

In an emergency you can call us 24 hours a day on: **105**



Visit Your Powergrid to keep up to date about our work in Northumberland & County Durham

**[northernpowergrid.com/your-powergrid](http://northernpowergrid.com/your-powergrid)**



Find us on Facebook

**[facebook.com/Northern-Powergrid](https://facebook.com/Northern-Powergrid)**



Follow us on Twitter

**@northpowergrid** (for power cut updates)

**@powergridnews** (for stakeholder updates)



[northernpowergrid.com](http://northernpowergrid.com)