

# Discretionary Reward Scheme 2018-21



## INTRODUCTION

We're committed to delivering sustainable services for our stakeholders, delivering what they want and need now and into the future. And we make sure that our delivery continues to be inclusive, safe, affordable and reliable. We've undertaken extensive work to understand the needs of the most vulnerable, and are taking action to address these.

Innovating to support the UK's transition to net zero has been a key focus, as has the wellbeing and safety of customers, colleagues and stakeholders: more important than ever during the global Covid-19 pandemic.

**Graham Edwards,**  
**Chief Executive**

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Reducing our environmental impact and evolving our operations to achieve net zero is critical and not something we consider in isolation. Working with other gas networks through 'Gas Goes Green' and the Gas Environment Group (as outlined in the collaborative DRS) and with Government, public, private and voluntary sector organisations is fundamental to our approach. We lead on several joint gas distribution network (GDN) environment related workstreams and are key partners in a range of other projects.

### Sustainability is central

We strive to be a sustainable business and have embraced the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**. We focus on seven goals identified through stakeholder feedback and colleague workshops, five of these are common to the other GDNs. We also identify and recognise our contribution to all 17 goals.

### Taking a whole systems approach

It's critical for the energy sector to work effectively together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change both nationally and locally; particularly as local authorities consider their own sustainable futures. Previously, we introduced our 2050 Energy Pathfinder simulator (funded by Wales & West Utilities) and have continued to improve it. We remain the only network to have shared a whole system model that supports the planning processes across gas and electricity networks while being able to support local net zero decarbonisation plans. **Our enhanced model is known as Pathfinder Plus.**

We invest in resources to share this tool with, among others; Welsh Government (WG) and SP Energy Networks (SPEN), as well as to the wider WG Infrastructure Group as a way of co-ordinating energy planning for Wales. After a positive reception, we subsequently engaged with WG and SPEN in more detail on the model. SPEN, which supports the Infrastructure Group, has now started to use the Pathfinder tool for scenario development.

We are collaborating on Zero 2050, led by National Grid and including representatives from academia, business, local communities and others. Our contribution is the operation of our Pathfinder Plus tool to develop entire system solutions to decarbonisation in south Wales.

We've shared our free-to-use Pathfinder simulation tool with other gas networks and other organisations including the voluntary sector and we have provided support alongside the licence to use.



### Carbon reduction all in one box

Building on the success of the Freedom Project household trial of hybrid heating systems, with a standalone gas boiler and external air source heat pump, alongside partners PassivSystems, UK Power Networks and Delta-EE, we considered how the product can be improved further. **The result is the HyCompact project\* which combines an electric air source heat pump and gas boiler with smart control software in one unit,** using the latest advances in hybrid heating technology to test a next generation product. The system is hung on the wall (see below) in place of an existing gas



boiler, flexibly switching between using renewable electricity, when it's available, and green gas at other times – enabling full decarbonisation of heat. Switching is driven by cost and carbon. In-home trials commenced in winter to spring 2020/21. Customer attitudinal research as part of this project will be used to understand the opportunities and barriers for progressing this type of net zero heating technology.

*This pioneering project is a real test in homes of new smart hybrid heating systems.*

*HyCompact builds on the success of the Freedom Project, and considers views from energy customers, who told us they wanted the units to be smaller and more convenient.*

*This trial will help us further understand the impact on gas and electricity networks of smart hybrid systems and gather more customer views on what living with a smart hybrid heating system is like.*

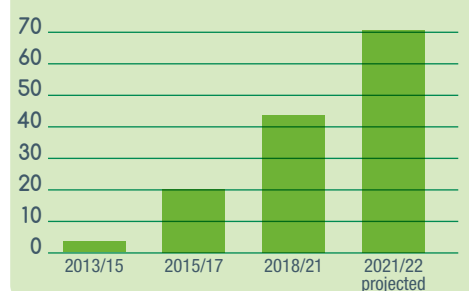
**Chris Clarke, Wales & West Utilities'**  
**Energy Strategy Director**

### Flexibility is key – a network fit for the future

Gas networks play a key role in providing the flexibility and storage to support more renewable generation. We currently have 44 peaking plants connected to our network and expect a further 27 sites to be connected in the next 18 months.

To share knowledge, best practice and to keep up to date with market conditions, **we set up the first Distributed Power Generators workshop** in 2018/19 and following its success, further workshops have been held on rotation by other GDNs. In these workshops, we lead sessions on sharing best practice and exchange of information. This improved knowledge sharing and communication, particularly between network control centres, enables better forecasting of demand and associated network reliability. We also lead on development of a joint newsletter to communicate our work to meet customer needs.

#### Peaking plants connected to our network



\* Financial contribution 10% with additional funding from NIA

We're working with National Grid Electricity System Operator, Northern Gas Networks and SPEN on the Flexible Generation Project, delivered by Delta-EE and Afry. The core objectives of the project include developing a robust model that can accurately forecast flexible generation plant operation 48 hours ahead. This can be used by gas and electricity networks in producing their short-term network strategies to ensure system optimisation. Stakeholder input was sought via Energy Networks Association Open Networks Workstream 4 and the wider advisory group, and through the Distributed Generation conferences.

We introduced **Advanced Reservation Capacity Agreements** (ARCAs) with charging statements updated to reflect the change. This provides protection for our customers as we are committing to provide the capacity requested, while it protects our business too against investing in what could become stranded assets.

### Working together to build the UK's hydrogen economy

Britain's Hydrogen Network Plan sets out the detail of activity that the gas network companies will undertake to turn the UK's hydrogen ambitions into reality. Launched in January 2021, there's a range of work under way, including preparation for safely blending 20% of hydrogen into local gas grids by 2023. This is part of the Gas Goes Green programme and further information is in the collaborative DRS. These projects are considering the technical and regulatory changes that will be needed.

In addition, at a local level, we are developing our business processes and systems to make sure we are in a position to perform robust network analysis on networks being used to transport a blend of methane and hydrogen. We are working on this in collaboration with the other GDNs and the suppliers of our network analysis models. Network analysis showing how the hydrogen blend would move across our network is essential so that we can fully understand which customers and pipelines would be impacted. This evidence will be needed for the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) so that they can sign off our safety case to allow us to proceed.

### Biomethane and Bio-SNG

We have 19 connected biomethane plants, injecting 1.82 TWh: enough to heat the equivalent of 150,000 homes. Five more plants will connect in the next 18 months, adding a further 0.37 TWh of green gas, **which means that more than 180,000 homes we serve can be heated by green, carbon neutral biomethane** – 7% of homes on our network.

We will also be connecting a Bio-SNG site in Swindon to our network, and are working with the HSE to secure hydrogen exemption certification which would allow the site to inject up to 1% hydrogen rather than the 0.1% currently permitted. This is a first step towards

introducing higher hydrogen blends into the gas network, and this site alone will decarbonise the equivalent of 2,275 homes a year, with more than 5,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions removed by hydrogen displacing natural gas.

We are part of the Energy Networks Association's Entry Customer Networks Forum, supported by networks and a range of biomethane customers and stakeholders. The group has been put together to look at areas where processes can be improved and standardised across the UK.

One area of focus is propanation requirements. Biomethane gas has to be enriched with propane by producers to meet target calorific values. This is an expensive and complex process for producers, particularly when sites are brought on-line after a period of not injecting gas. Biomethane stakeholders asked networks to review these requirements and we are leading this piece of work.

We have also been working, with some success, to proactively reconfigure local pressure settings so that when demand is low (typically overnight in the summer) **biomethane injection into the local distribution network takes priority over natural gas taken** from the local transmission network. Meanwhile, we're working with Cadent on Optinet, which will allow us to increase the green gas capacity of local networks.

### Stemming the leak

**We are focused on reducing leakage** from our 35,000km of gas pipe. This will reduce carbon emissions today and prepare our network for transporting green gas in the future, while helping us meet our commitment of our network being net zero ready by 2035. Our continual improvement is driven by investment in training and new generation IT systems to enable intelligent pressure control on our network, and a focused approach to replacing leaking pipes – using predictive analytics to target the leakiest pipes and reducing the maximum emissions per £ spent.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Shrinkage volume GWh	372	351	340	334 (forecast)

### Adapting to climate change

Our climate change impact mapping tool has been updated in line with the latest UK Climate Change Predictions (UKCP18) and continues to provide insight on flooding. It helps to support Defra climate change adaptation reporting and our operations to define the 'at risk from flooding' rivers that trigger a site visit when there is flooding. The tool was shared with other GDNs (see collaborative DRS).

### Getting our house in order

**Our Environmental Action Plan sets out our plans to reduce our overall impact on the environment.** This not only covers our work to reduce leakage through mains replacement, but support activities too.

We made changes to our company car policy in December 2018 and again in September 2020. This has driven a rapid decline in the number and proportion of diesel cars and a rise in plug-in hybrids, while we have increased the number of electric vehicle charging points across our sites from four to 47. Every one of our current orders is for a 'plug-in' hybrid or electric car.

	Average of confirmed CO <sub>2</sub> emissions g/km from V5C
1 April 2019	110.35
1 April 2020	101.53
1 April 2021	85.91
Confirmed future fleet orders	70.54

The table (above) shows a significant reduction in average car fleet CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 2019.

During Covid-19, our work-related mileage has reduced substantially with many meetings taking place virtually. During 2020/21, non-fleet car business mileage reduced by 35%, even without taking into account reduced colleague commuting. We anticipate adopting a hybrid working model in the future, and estimate a reduction in mileage, including colleague commuting, from pre-Covid levels of up to 50%.

### Greening the workplace and our day-to-day operations

**We have continued to improve the environmental impact of our daily operations.** Early in 2021 we opened our new Redruth depot – fitted with solar panels, electric vehicle charging points, and equipment to reduce the amount of water consumed. The new depot received an A+ Energy Performance Certificate – indicating it generates more energy than it uses, within the parameters of the EPC assessment. This is compared to another of our existing depots – which received a D EPC rating.

Between 2018 and 2021, we implemented a replacement programme of preheat boilers at 55 Pressure Reduction Installations and offtakes from the National Transmission System. These new condensing boilers are more than 90% efficient and meet the very latest emission standards, with a significant reduction in their emissions of nitrogen oxide.

We have also implemented measures to avoid the need for recycling. This includes switching to electronic payslips and an online only colleague magazine, following a colleague survey. Switching to an online magazine has saved 1.6 metric tonnes of paper alone, alongside associated cost savings. Our bilingual annual stakeholder report is also sent to stakeholders digitally, but with an option to receive a physical copy. Our annual innovation report is also electronic and in 2019/20 we introduced a monthly stakeholder e-newsletter. These measures have reduced paper consumption, saving trees and reducing costs, while evolving our communication channels.

## A strategic approach delivers sustainable energy solutions

### Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy's objective is to:

*Safeguard all vulnerable customers by proactively identifying stakeholders' needs to deliver innovative and tailored support that goes above and beyond our obligations. Working with diverse partners, we will continually monitor and annually review the success of our safeguards to ensure they regularly evolve to deliver ongoing value.*

Six key focus areas and actions support our delivery of the best and most cost-effective outcomes.



Between 2018/21, through our Warm Home Assistance fuel poor network extension scheme, we have connected more than 3,200 homes to our gas network and funded a further 303 connections by third party companies. This has connected more than 3,500 households, reducing the numbers of people living in fuel poverty.

At the same time, we have developed our services to tackle fuel poverty and help improve energy efficiency, including with existing gas users.

## Partnership working, using 'mapping' tools and local knowledge, are delivering energy solutions for people in fuel poverty

### CASE STUDY: HEALTHY HOMES, HEALTHY PEOPLE

Working with Warm Wales/Warm West, we evaluated our Community Energy Champions three-year pilot project, supporting households in fuel poverty in Cornwall, north and south Wales. The benefit of this approach was shown through our social return on investment model, and the initiative was rebranded Healthy Homes, Healthy People (HHHP), refined and evolved as it was rolled out to more homes in the same regions, and expanded into the Severn Wye area. This holistic approach to solving householders' financial, health and other home-repairs challenges, has delivered better outcomes for families and been hailed a success – winning an innovation award for best social impact in 2019. The Warm Wales/Warm West partnership was a key contributor to this success including the development and expansion of local authority and, now increasingly, local health board partnerships.

● **Analyse and identify** – The FRESH (Foundation data for Robust Energy Strategies for Housing) mapping tool is a Warm Wales initiative with Cardiff University that we helped to fund to support with the identification of homes most in need. Big data relating to health, income and fuel poverty is analysed and overlaid to maps of poor housing to identify street clusters of energy inefficient housing and people living in fuel poverty with other vulnerabilities. We've built on this to incorporate datasets for off-gas properties, energy performance certificates and Experian data.

● **Partner** – Partnership working here is crucial. By combining information from multiple datasets with local knowledge and building on the success of GP referrals, partnerships can better support identification of hard-to-reach fuel poor households.

● **Deliver** – HHHP advises on a range of energy and money-saving measures, personalised to household circumstances. Advice includes reducing energy consumption and costs; benefits review; energy tariff-switching options; water-debt advice in Wales, and CO safety awareness.

● **Engage** – HHHP advisors engage by pre-booking appointments to deliver whole person and household surveys.

● **Facilitate** – During the first Covid-19 lockdown, referrals from health partners continued in north Wales. In south Wales, where the HHHP team was more dependent on local authorities, referrals greatly reduced. Taking a flexible approach, links were established with health providers in south Wales and referrals picked up. Delivery was adapted to more of a telephone-based service. This works in many cases, but the value of the face-to-face contact to help people sort through paperwork and identify key facts and figures is not underestimated, and a return to this style of contact is envisaged, when appropriate.

*A separate project with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) in Bristol has seen 174 people referred to them either directly from our customer services colleagues and engineers or from other partners such as Fire & Rescues.*

● **Evaluate** – Quarterly reporting supports evaluation of individual area projects, and project output measuring – such as numbers of people helped and financial savings (see below) helping to lift people out of fuel poverty. We also calculate the wider social return on investment.

	Project – Partner	Number of homes helped	Savings e.g. from unclaimed benefits energy advice	Wider social return on investment – net benefit per £ spent
2018 to 2021	Healthy Homes Healthy People – Warm Wales / Warm south west	2,723	£2.3m	2018 – £11.66 2019 – £9.55 2020 – £11.25
May 2019 to Dec 2020	Centre for Sustainable Energy	174 referrals Able to help 109	£65,743	N/A

### We have achieved wider outcomes, and these include:

- Improved knowledge of people living in fuel poor and vulnerable situations, so we can reach and help more people, through better mapping and local knowledge
- Better value for money by working with partners with local knowledge and expertise
- Better tailoring of our services and energy saving solutions by working with organisations that directly help and support people living in vulnerable situations in their own communities. This could be by geography or communities of interest, with local organisations having an in-depth knowledge of the circumstances of the people they are working with.

### Real-life example: Support for Mrs F means she is £3,980 better off

*A referral by our Priority Customer team to CSE meant Mrs F received support and advice. Mrs F, who had a 36-year-old boiler, received ECO grant support to replace it, helping reduce fuel bills. A benefits review resulted in her receiving higher rate attendance allowance. Mrs F also received home adaptations information and a blue badge.*

## Insight, research and partnership working identify how best to support people most in need

We carried out extensive engagement over two years, working with our research partner Mindset Research, **to improve our knowledge of the needs and circumstances of people living in vulnerable situations.** Once we understood their needs, we tested a range of support services with participants to find out what offered the best support. We discussed this insight with colleagues, leading to refinement of our services and support, and further colleague training.

This was a three-phase research project. We interviewed 100 people in vulnerable situations in their own homes to truly understand the impact of their vulnerabilities and held focus groups with professional carers who gave insight into requirements for people with certain vulnerabilities who would be difficult for us to access or inappropriate to interview. Interviews with general customers gave additional context and perspective on our safeguarding services.

The research highlighted a range of circumstances and issues, specifically that vulnerability is rarely binary – many interviewees were living with multiple vulnerabilities. Common across all phases of the research was the presence and impact of emotional vulnerability with a number of contributory factors including: living alone/loneliness/isolation; disruption to routine; age; physical and other tangible vulnerabilities, needs and priorities; and financial vulnerability/fuel poor/debt. This manifests itself as anxiety about the unknown and is commonplace – and severely impacts individuals' lives.

### Direct physical impacts

e.g. loss of heating – incl hot water and cooking

### Indirect physical impacts

Concerns about road and pavement access for themselves and visitors who may be supporting with care needs

### Mental / emotional impacts

Anxiety or emotional turmoil potentially with disruption to routines  
Even a notification communication could result in some feeling fearful and anxious

The impact of our work generally fell into three categories of direct physical, indirect physical and mental/emotional. Our colleague training now includes modules on 'softer' skills like emotional intelligence, while maintaining focus on safety, including access around our sites, remains a top priority. When supplies are interrupted, we provide alternative heating and cooking equipment with stickers to clearly show their hourly running costs – helping alleviate customer concern about large electric bills. Keep Warm packs and heated seat

covers are available during emergency interruptions. We have 15 hot water boilers and 45 insulated carriers, so customers with medical conditions requiring constant access to hot water for bathing are not inconvenienced. During ongoing incidents we enabled customers to access hot food through local companies and be compensated where they need to buy food themselves. A free voucher scheme has now been put in place.

Our research insight showed that while the range of support we can provide was deemed excellent, awareness of these services and how Priority Services Register (PSR) registration would support their access was relatively low. To address this, we continued working with partners, including all the Fire & Rescues in our area and Care & Repair in Wales, and since 2018, more than 21,600 people have signed up to the PSR, around 40 customers have been helped through our hardship fund and 378 free alterations have been completed to the value of more than £241,600. Our targeted feedback

campaigns have driven significant increases in PSR sign-ups, broadening the focus so that relatives, friends and carers of eligible people are made aware of the PSR and additional support services.

Research to understand customers' concerns during the pandemic evidenced increased levels of concern about mental wellbeing and anxiety – which would inevitably be raised by our gas pipe replacement work. **Before restarting our programme, we conducted research with people living in vulnerable situations and those shielding, to understand their specific situations and the best approach.** Since then, we found that enhanced early engagement with customers has improved our customers' service experience.

Our research on vulnerability has been hailed as innovative and best practice, and we produced a vulnerability research guide, **sharing this engagement approach with other utilities, businesses and organisations.**

## UNDERSTANDING HOW BEST TO SUPPORT PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

Effective communication to understand customers' specific needs is vitally important in our day-to-day work. More than half a million people (525,315) in the UK were diagnosed as living with dementia last year, but the actual figure including those without a diagnosis is higher. There are regional differences too, with a particularly high proportion of people living with dementia in areas where we operate; notably Devon and parts of Cornwall. Our colleague priority customer training includes identifying people with signs of dementia and how best to help when working in their homes and locality.

Dementia confusion is common, particularly when people's routines are disrupted and careful case management is needed pre, during and after our pipe replacement schemes. Through links with the Alzheimer's Society, our 'Dementia Champions' trained colleagues to become 'Dementia Friends'. Pre-Covid-19, we ran face-to-face training to provide opportunities to discuss a range of different circumstances and share experiences and best practice. Since April 2018, we've trained more than 320 colleagues as Dementia Friends. Colleagues attended dementia cafes to hear first-hand from carers and people living with dementia about how best to provide support. We also take the opportunity to explain support services such as locking cooker valves (LCVs) and information about the PSR, installing 164 LCVs since 2018.

During the pandemic, we continued virtual group training to share experiences using Alzheimer's Society adapted materials and guidance and are continuing this into 2021, following positive participant feedback. Dementia awareness was a key feature of our own Priority Customer Awareness Week with a Dementia Champion-led interactive virtual session.

We take a broad, inclusive approach, working with a range of organisations to improve colleagues' understanding of need and service delivery, e.g. The National Autistic Society, Language Line, Marie Curie, Mind and SignVideo.



**Unprompted call:** *A gentleman called to thank us for supporting a 101-year-old lady with dementia, for whom his wife is her main carer. A Wales & West Utilities' emergency team found a leak on her gas fire and had to switch it off. A team member stayed for some considerable time with the lady, reassuring her and explaining what was happening. He kept her carers informed and they all wanted to let us know how pleased they were with the support we provided.*

## Supporting the wider community

Recognising the key role colleague volunteering and fundraising plays in communities, we introduced a match-funding scheme. In 2018, colleague fundraising and company top-up exceeded £57,000, reaching £81,000 in 2019. With Covid-19's negative fundraising impact on many support organisations and charities, we aimed to offer a helping hand through **colleague and company donations of £137,000 in 2020.**

Last July, we established a Safe and Warm Fund, with 21 local organisations and charities receiving a total of £55,000 to support the most vulnerable in communities during the pandemic. Colleagues were also offered two days paid volunteering leave during the year. In December 2020, our colleagues also opted to donate £48,000 normally spent on Christmas celebrations to three UK charities – Marie Curie, Mind and Crisis.

# CARBON MONOXIDE

## Leading on a strategic approach to improve outcomes for those most at risk from carbon monoxide (CO)

We work collaboratively with the other GDNs building awareness of CO and encouraging people to take action to stay safe. While each GDN has its own regional strategy, we were aware that a clearly defined approach was required to focus joint work and we led on bringing the CO gas network representatives together, facilitating a workshop to develop a joint evidence-based strategy. Our own strategy complements this, focusing on how we identify and effectively target:

- people who are most at risk of damage to health from CO poisoning in our communities, e.g. older people, pregnant women, young children and people with certain health conditions
- people whose behaviour or knowledge puts them at greater risk of CO poisoning.

We are now confident our approach to CO awareness-raising is less 'broad-brush' and more targeted – supported by a wide range of our stakeholders. **We carefully measure the broader impact of this work through our social return on investment tool.**

### A FOCUSED AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE TO EXPLAIN THE DANGERS OF CO

The GDNs commissioned research in 2020 into attitudes towards the importance of certain aspects of gas safety with a sample of 8,023 respondents across England, Wales and Scotland. This showed a relatively low proportion of young adults (16-24-year-olds) and students:

- are likely to have a working audible CO alarm (26.2% of 16-24-year-olds, 28.6% of students compared to an overall total of 41.6%)
- consider the servicing of their gas heating appliances to be very or quite important (78% of 16-24-year-olds, 81.1% of students compared to an overall total of 88.6%)

We discussed these findings with regional representative stakeholders to seek their views and engaged our colleague Young Persons' Network for ideas on the best engagement channels for this age group. Their suggestions included advertising on Spotify, use of a 'social media blogger' to promote our campaigns and activities appropriate for post Covid-19 such as attendance at Freshers' Fairs, landlord leaflets and festivals.

We then worked with a specialist creative agency to explore how we could raise awareness/knowledge about the risks of CO and how to stay safe. In the target audience of 16-25-year-olds, we focused on those living in private rented accommodation – while studying or first moving away from home. We explored various concepts and, based on insight, our campaign 'Game Over' was chosen, focusing on computer gamers, but agreed to have a wider appeal. The campaign was built around a film used in various edits to be relevant to social media platforms, streaming services and digital radio and TV. **We shared this concept with the other GDNs** and plan to work on a proposal for all networks to collaborate on in the future that incorporates engagement for this age group being trialled by SGN.

Our 'Game Over' targeted campaign achieved a unique reach of 646,716: the total number of people viewing the campaign content, with 894,849 impressions showing how many times the content was displayed and an impressive 12,934 clicks to further information mainly through social media.

### Expansion of our schools programme

Recognising the importance of delivering 'for life' messages to young people, we have continued to recruit and train more colleague Gas Safety Ambassadors – we now have 37, who have delivered circa 75 gas safety sessions to around 3,200 pupils. Alongside the other GDNs, we use superhero Safety Seymour resources to deliver these sessions to children aged 5 to 8 (more in the collaborative DRS report about the successes of this, including JayDee Lee from Wales). In 2018/19, we developed our own online resource to promote CO awareness to primary schools across a broad age range and through the medium of Welsh, tested with teachers and pupils prior to launch.

Reinforcing the CO messaging delivered through this programme, we have continued the promotion of the joint GDN Get Creative, Stay Safe CO Safety Competition, where children are encouraged to produce posters, poems, models, films and songs with CO awareness messages. Since April 2018, **we received almost 1,100 entries**, the GDN total being 2,070, the highest number of entries. We have increased our competition entries by making sure to introduce the competition at the end of Safety Seymour sessions, to encourage entrants, and have shared this approach with the other networks. We are proud that schools and children across our area have embraced this, including having national winning entries for four consecutive



years. Not only have children taken important CO messages home and shared with their wider networks, but our social media coverage has reinforced messages.

*I really enjoyed taking part in the challenge. We learn about gas safety in school and this was a great way to put down in design all that we've learnt.*

*I didn't expect to win, so to be named both regional and national competition winner is fantastic!*

**Shaun, Get Creative, Be Safe 2020 Winner**

*The competition was a fantastic exercise for us all – not only did the pupils enjoy taking part and putting their creative skills to use but they all learnt a lot about the serious dangers carbon monoxide presents and the steps to take to eliminate them. Shaun's poster entry was fantastic, and we are all very proud of him.*

**Mrs Alexandra Riordan, Headteacher at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School**

We have continued to promote our online CObreakers 'Crack the Code' competition via social media to reach a broader age range – National Energy Action is supporting our reach by promoting this competition through its own channels.

## Targeting those most at risk through partnership working

Since early in GD1, we have built relationships with partners who help us to target CO awareness and free CO alarm installation to those most at risk. We have increased our partnerships since 2018, and now partner with all the Fire & Rescues in our area. As trusted community members, our partners can identify people at risk and install CO alarms in the homes of the most vulnerable customers during home safety visits. We also partner with Care & Repair and Warm Wales/Warm West in a similar way, as part of the holistic support provided through our Healthy Homes Healthy People programme (see social outputs), this includes CO awareness advice and installation of CO alarms.

Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2021, 7,559 alarms were distributed by partner organisations, with more than 11,500 alarms issued overall. Awareness increased from an average of 5.62 to an average of 8.66, based on 6,473 responses showing a 54% increase.

We support our partners with training sessions on CO awareness and alarm installation, also providing information on our priority services, and pre-Covid-19, our sessions included



## BUILDING BETTER PARTNERSHIPS TO DELIVER MORE AND BETTER SERVICES

We established a partnership with Care & Repair Cymru in 2017, which has enabled distribution of thousands of CO alarms and PSR referrals. The partnership was formally recognised at a Welsh government event in 2019 introduced by Dai Lloyd MS, with a supportive speech by David Melding MS, shadow Minister for Health and Social Care.

The partnership brings benefits to all parties – customers, Care & Repair and ourselves. We have promoted Care & Repair's inclusive services alongside our own, and our Stakeholder Engagement Manager has become a Trustee Director on its Board. In 2019/20 we helped evaluate the social return on investment of Care & Repair's home de-cluttering Attic Project, which supported in demonstrating the wider success and impact of the project, supporting its ambition to become a social enterprise.

Working with Care & Repair helps us reach people who could be at significant risk from the dangers of CO and who we would have difficulty accessing as a gas network alone.

*Our strong partnership with Wales & West Utilities is a winning combination. Sharing our knowledge, skills, experience and respective organisational tools makes great sense. It increases our effectiveness and enables us to reach more vulnerable older people than we could do alone, helping to keep them safe and warm in their own homes.*  
**Chris Jones, Chief Executive, Care & Repair Cymru**

partner network sessions, so partners from different organisations and regions could share best practice. We also provide easily updateable partner pack folders, so the latest information can be issued to update partners' binders. Since April 2019, we have trained 84 case workers and Fire & Rescue crew and awareness of our support measures has risen by 42%. In 2020, a partner survey helped us understand how we could best deliver virtual training during Covid-19 and this formed the basis of the development of an updated training approach.

### Working with safety centres

We have continued support for safety centres DangerPoint in north Wales and Lifeskills in Bristol, who raise awareness of safety, including CO safety, through interactive activities for children and vulnerable adults. Since April 2018, the centres had more than 40,000 visitors and more than 23,000 visited the DangerPoint website. During Covid-19 restrictions, the centres focused on alternative delivery, including 115 schools subscribing to Lifeskills' safety video resource.

DangerPoint checks pupil retention of safety messages with a feedback form sent to parents/carers via schools about a month after their visit to the safety centre.

**100% said that their child had shared information about what they had learnt during their visit.** Examples included:

- What to do when someone had an electric shock, what to do when there is a leak of a gas or fire present
- About smoke and CO alarms, about boiler danger as well as how to avoid fires.

**48% of parent/carers stated that they have changed their own behaviour/actions as a result of what their child told them.**

Examples included testing that their CO alarms were working.

### Engaging with elected members

We continue to work with and support the All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group and this is reported in the collaborative DRS.

At a local level, we engage extensively with local councillors who contribute to our interactive

regional events. We seek advice from stakeholders from their regional perspective to focus our CO awareness campaigns and at our most recent events, these stakeholders told us the valuable work that we undertake with schools around CO awareness promotion would be a suitable model to replicate for understanding the importance of the transition to net zero.

## Adapting to change

Over the last three years, we have increasingly used targeted social media as a mechanism to reach a large population in a cost-effective way.



**Our CO safety message social media reach from April 2018 to March 2021 is more than 1.7 million** through Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. While some of this will be multiple viewings by individuals – this serves to reinforce the message.

During the pandemic, social media helped us provide critical safety messages and in summer 2020, when restrictions started to ease and many people planned 'staycations', we ran a

## EMERGENCY ENGINEER IS QUICK TO RESPOND

When her CO alarm went off in the middle of the night, a 78-year-old lady called her electrician neighbour for help. The neighbour told her to turn off the gas, open her windows and call the emergency number 0800 111 999. She turned off the gas and opened the windows but didn't call the emergency number. Fortunately, the neighbour also called the emergency number, in case his neighbour hadn't, and a Wales & West Utilities engineer went to the lady's home. When our engineer arrived, the house was ventilated and the gas turned off, which is likely why his personal alarm didn't sound.

Our engineer isolated the supply to make it safe and the lady explained she felt unwell. While working, our engineer realised the lady's health was deteriorating quickly, and as she didn't feel well he called an ambulance and took the lady outside as requested by the emergency call-handler. The lady became unconscious and our engineer prepared to begin CPR, until the paramedics arrived to take over. Our engineer said it's all part of his day's work to keep customers safe.

social media campaign to alert people to the dangers of CO in holiday accommodation and from barbecues.

We worked with other GDNs to provide information and resources in different accessible formats – including the Safety Seymour website and Fun Kids Radio (see collaborative DRS) and when Covid-19 stopped school Safety Seymour visits, we directed students and parents to the activities on the Safety Seymour website.

We continued to promote the gas safety competition on social media and in the last year received our highest number of entries yet (647). We ran a day-long training session for Gas Safety Ambassadors to deliver virtual Safety Seymour sessions to whole classes in a fun and interactive way and commenced delivery, but home learning meant this was soon no longer possible. We started to promote sessions again in 2021 as plans to return to school were being made, and following feedback we identified that our model needs to be flexible and adapt to suit new learning and school requirements following the pandemic. We are planning a strategy review for teachers.

*The online training was superb and I was confidently able to deliver virtual sessions to pupils.*

**Daniela Rodrigues, Gas Safety Ambassador**

## Safety first

Safety is the number one priority for our stakeholders and when Covid-19 struck, our priority was to maintain the essential gas emergency service in a safe way. Taking on board customer feedback, our engineers gradually returned to recommence critical planned pipe replacement work wearing appropriate PPE. This meant our colleagues, through their presence in communities, were well placed to identify customers in vulnerable situations that may be susceptible to the risks of CO. We equipped our engineers and customer service officers with CO alarms, and they were able to provide free-of-charge alarms to those most in need. Following engagement with our colleagues, customers reported an overall increase in awareness about the risks of CO, from an average of 6.9/10 to 9.4/10.

*Providing CO alarms to customers most in need identified through our day-to-day work really does make a difference.*

**Dan Brooks, First Call Operative**

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