



## GDN Collaborative Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

A Warm Welcome

Eileen Brown EBrown @northerngas.co.uk

11<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Gas Network Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Eligibility Criteria

Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)					
In orde	er to qua	lify as a VCMA project, a project must:			
VCMA	Eligibil	lity Criteria	Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)		
a)	i. ii.	Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), calculated in accordance with a model which the GDNs have developed and submitted to Ofgem including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project, and have a positive, or a forecasted positive Net Present Value (NPV);	Yes		
b)	Either: i. ii. iii.	Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;	Yes		
c)		defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve the requirements in aph b;	Yes		
d)	Go be	yond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required h licence obligations; and	Yes		
e)		e delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, ng through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.	Yes		
		igibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing VCMA Project, essential gas appliance servicing must meet the following criteria:			
a)	i. ii. iii.	GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or a GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or a GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; and	N/A		
b)	afforda	usehold cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the ability criteria in the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery nent; and	N/A		
c)	sufficie and na servici	ent funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord ational, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance ng.	N/A		
replac	cement				
the foll	owing c				
a)		I has to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following bly interruption or as part of its emergency service role; and	N/A		
b)	applia	usehold cannot afford to repair or replace unsafe pipework or the essential gas nce, as assessed against the affordability criteria in the Energy Company Obligation 4) Guidance: Delivery document; and	N/A		

c) Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance repair or replacement.	N/A
Section 4 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects	
In order to qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
a) Meet the company specific project eligibility criteria set out in sections 1-3 above; and	Yes
b) Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	Yes
c) Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	Yes

## Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Registration Table 2

Information Required	Description						
Project Title	A Warm Welcome						
Funding GDN(s)	Collaborative GDN Project – NGN & SGN						
New / Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New						
For Collaborative VCMA Projects: Role of GDN(s)	Collaborative between NGN and SGN as detailed above. NGN leading GDN.						
Date of PEA Submission	02/05/2024						
VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number	Eileen Brown <u>EBrown@northerngas.co.uk</u> 07789 007719						
Total Cost (£k)	£164.473.06 + V/	АT					
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	Project costs:						
		Percentage Cont	age Contribution Overall Split				
	NGN		50%	£82,236.53			
	SGN	50% £82,236.53					
	Total		100.0%	£164,473.06			
		Year 1 payment	Year 2 payment				
	NGN	£41,118.26	£41,118.27				
	SGN	£41,118.27	£41,118.27				
	Total	£82,236.53	£82,236.53				
Problem(s)	This should outline the problem(s) which is/are being addressed by the VCMA Project.						
	<ul> <li>NICE guidance "Preventing excess winter deaths and illness associated with cold homes highlights 'pregnant women', 'children under five' 'people on a low income' as those who are particularly vulnerable to health problems associated with cold homes and are more than twice as likely to suffer from chest and breathing problems. Furthermore, there is suggested association between cold environmental temperatures and the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) four days later, in children younger than 12 month old.</li> <li>Pregnant women and families with young children are often overlooked by fuel poverty programmes, however, the arrival of a baby into a family which is already experiencing hardship can greatly increase the risk of fuel poverty. The energy crisis has drastically deepened this issue and through the delivery of A Warm Welcome in over recent months NEA has heard first hand from participants of the increased need for support through the project. The increased cost of energy, particularly keeping a home warm enough for you children, is putting more families with children under the age of 5 are eligible for the Priority Services Register (PSR). This project will ensure the women they come into contact with are signed up to the PSR if they are not already registered.</li> </ul>				r income' as those who d homes and are more furthermore, there is and the incidence of younger than 12 months poked by fuel poverty already experiencing crisis has drastically e in over recent months, for support through the e warm enough for young asing the risk of potential e eligible for the Priority		

Soons and	The energy crisis has added even more pressure on these vulnerable families, increasing the need for ongoing support, with over 6.5 million UK households currently living in fuel poverty, meaning people are living in cold, energy inefficient homes that are expensive to heat. Fuel poverty can lead to poor physical and mental health, increased inequality, and a reduced quality of life.				
Scope and Objectives	The scope and objectives of the VCMA Project should be clearly defined including the benefits which would directly impact customers on the participating GDNs' network(s), and where the benefits of the VCMA Projects lie.				
	A Warm Welcome aims to support new and expectant parents and families with young children to not only survive, but thrive in a safe, warm and healthy home.				
	The project aligns with the VCMA criteria by supporting energy consumers in vulnerable situations, both before and after the arrival of a new child. Supporting vulnerable consumers is at the heart of A Warm Welcome and a holistic package of assistance has been developed to ensure new and expectant mothers are supported at this most critical time in a child's life.				
	NEA will collaborate with trusted community groups and organisations to support delivery. Working with organisations such as the digital midwives, Sure Start Centres, specialist charities such as Tiny Lives, Food Banks and Baby Banks, NEA will target low-income families in areas of high indices of multiple deprivation within the networks regions to provide energy advice at a time when increased support is desperately needed.				
	In partnership with NGN and SGN's Southern network, NEA will look to deliver the following activities in order to combat the issues outlined above.				
	Across the network's regions, A Warm Welcome, will identify expectant mothers and families with young children with a low income and NEA will:				
	Deliver training to 540-750 frontline professionals working with families with young children, reaching around 11,000 families with information about fuel poverty and referrals for additional support (training cascade of 22 families per professional trained).				
	<ul> <li>Deliver energy advice and support directly to 480-600 vulnerable families with young children.</li> <li>Deliver energy advice and support via family fun days to 80-160 vulnerable</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>families with young children.</li> <li>Provide hardship grants to around 80 households with a £50-£75 per grant per household to buy warm blankets and essential warm clothing for babies or, where other funding is not available, to top up their energy meters.</li> </ul>				
	Distribute Winter Warmth Support Packs (added value funded through other NEA programmes).				
	Provide information of carbon monoxide and access to a free carbon monoxide alarm in the event that they do not have one				
	Support families to sign up to the Priority Services Register via thepsr.co.uk or directly with the regional DNO.				
Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA	This should include an explanation of why the VCMA Project meets the VMCA eligibility criteria, and how it aligns with the GDN's VCMA strategy.				
	This project meets all of the VCMA criteria for funding, as it will support vulnerable customers, provide safeguarding services including direct advice and support to vulnerable families with young children including those at risk or living in fuel poverty. It also includes raising awareness of CO and generating PSR referrals.				
	The aim of the programme is to enhance the life skills of vulnerable families with young children, equipping them with understanding and knowledge on how to manage their energy and critically stay warm in their homes.				
	This project will also engage on key matters to build energy resilience, increase awareness on the dangers of CO and key support services including the Priority Services Register whilst delivering a forecast positive Social Return on Investment.				

	This partnership aligns to the GDN commitment to deliver support services for customers aligned to our four strategic pillars:
	<ol> <li>Services Beyond the Meter</li> <li>Supporting Priority Customer Groups</li> <li>Fuel Poverty &amp; Energy Affordability</li> <li>Carbon Monoxide Awareness</li> </ol>
	This project aligns to strategic pillar 2 (with outcomes in 3 and 4).
Evidence of Stakeholder/ Customer Support	This should provide information of the customer engagement that has taken place in the development of VCMA Projects where appropriate. If there is no evidence of stakeholder engagement or customer support, this should justify why it was not appropriate to engage with stakeholders and customers
	NEA A Warm Welcome
	NEA has already successfully delivered A Warm Welcome through Energy Redress funding, supporting new and expectant parents in vulnerable energy situations. Through the delivery of this project, NEA has established effective partnerships with organisations across the country and delivered life-changing support to families in need, including:
	<ul> <li>Energy advice and support to families to manage their energy bills, information on support available and what to do in fuel debt</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Emergency funding grants for households to top up energy meters or purchase warm clothes for their children</li> </ul>
	- Training of frontline staff working with new and expectant parents, so they understand the plight of fuel poor families, provide basic energy advice and know where to refer for support.
	Some of the feedback received from professionals and families supported include:
	"I received an air-fryer, it has been very useful as it enables me to cook food more quickly and it takes less energy than the conventional oven."
	"We got a duvet, pillow and covers for my daughter as she was transitioning from a cot to a bed. Very helpful, something that we needed, and it keeps her warm"
	"We received a kettle and toaster and a onesie for my daughter. It was very helpful as it replaced a broken toaster and as winter is coming it is good to keep my daughter warm."
	"Just after the webinar I had a call from a parent who told me their heating has not been working for a month. I spoke to them about some of the ways they can try to keep warm whilst this is being fixed, I used several ideas from the webinar and felt confident."
	NGN Stakeholder feedback
	Asking our stakeholders what's important – using our wide range of engagement mechanisms from strategic workshops to customer perceptions, we asked stakeholders to prioritise what is most important to them. We have held multiple workshops with our stakeholders throughout the year, on the subject of Customers in Vulnerable Situations.
	Spending allowances well – health focus CIVS workshop
	At this workshop The Carents Room, phase 1 project was discussed, and stakeholders agreed that NGN and Cadent should look to fund this project further. The aim of the workshop was to gather as much feedback from stakeholders, to inform the development of future health projects. Stakeholders were asked a number of questions around preventative and proactive solutions to prevent health conditions.
	Stakeholders told us that one of the biggest concerns was health, specifically the link between living in a cold, damp home and the impact on health.

Health projects are a priority for NGN this regulatory year and we have already started engaging with NEA and other partners on this issue. We are also engaging with the charity Noah's Ark, in relation to financial hardship and mental health. Through extensive engagement with stakeholders, we are seeing a number of key themes coming through consistently in terms of the impact of health and increased risks associated with cold, damp homes. Some notable observations and key areas are: > We're seeing evidence of more expensive fuel costs for those with disabilities and those living with specific health conditions We're seeing a rise in mental health issues within our network – and acknowledging this as a barrier to engagement in longer term support We're acknowledging increases in the risk of CO poisoning – and looking at ways to identify and address this **Research:** Recent social indicator mapping research carried out in June 2022, indicated that Bradford, Hull, Scarborough, South Tyneside, and Sunderland were the top five places, to emerge as having the greatest concentration of vulnerabilities within NGN's network. This was based on a combination of the following vulnerability factors: Fuel poverty Financial Vulnerability o Benefit claims Unemployment **Physical Health** Long term health problem / disability 0 **Disability Living Allowance claimants**  $\circ$ Mental health Rurality and no access to services Ageing populations **Unpaid carers** Ethnic minorities and language challenges Unskilled / no qualifications Each year we use our annual Customer Perceptions Research to understand the priorities of our customers. Amongst a set of general tracker questions i.e., same questions that are asked year on year, the evidence in the most recent research (March 2023), indicated that keeping bills as low as possible ranked more highly, than providing a safe and reliable supply of gas. This is a clear indication, as to how concerned customers are about the cost of energy and the subsequent impact this will have on other bills. Customers were also asked to prioritise the list of vulnerabilities listed below: Mental wellbeing Rurality Temporary vulnerability • Physical challenges • Financial Hardship This was the order of priority from the customers surveyed: Financial Hardship Physical challenges Mental wellbeing • Rurality Temporary vulnerability Through the research carried out, the findings show that the 5 original NGN vulnerability categories have now evolved to 10 categories. These are: 1. Physical challenges, inclusive of communication issues, physical space 2. Mental wellbeing 3. Financial hardship 4. Temporary vulnerability - including post hospital recovery and pregnancy / maternitv 5. Socio Demographic 6. Household composition Rural Vulnerability 7.

	<ol> <li>Accessibility Including language</li> <li>Medical Dependant on Energy</li> <li>Cultural</li> </ol>
	Enhanced Maternity Care for vulnerable families – NGN only project funded through VCMA
	On average 5 babies die suddenly and unexpectedly, every week in the UK and no cause will be found. This is known as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Increased awareness of safer sleep practices has led to a significant reduction in the number of deaths and rates have fallen by 80% since the 1991 Back to Sleep campaign.
	This project provides a safe place for the baby to sleep is essential to reduce the risk of SIDs. Recent figures show that, in contrast to the rest of the UK, rates of SIDs in the North East rose between 2018 and 2019. Included with the baby essentials would be easy to read material informing parents of safe sleeping advice. Promotion of a safe and healthy environment for the family will be a key theme in the items provided, we will also include a baby thermometer, a room thermometer and a carbon monoxide monitor if required (some families will live in accommodation where these are already provided).
	Guidelines from the NHS state - a room temperature of 16C to 20C, with light bedding or a lightweight baby sleeping bag, will provide a comfortable sleeping environment for your baby – this is why the thermometers for included in the packs we provide to new vulnerable parents through this project.
	This feedback fully supports the need for A Warm Welcome project.
	SGNs Vulnerable Steering Group (VSG) Our VSG has helped us shape our vulnerability strategy and our priorities for GD2 and how best to utilise the VCMA to help those most a risk of living in a cold and unhealthy home. It is with guidance and support from our dedicated VSG that SGN use data to prioritise and target communities most likely to be living in a cold and unhealthy home, including young families. This partnership is built on data and covers both geographic areas where there is compelling data that identifies where families who are most vulnerable, both due to fuel poverty and health indictors.
	As we've progressed our portfolio of projects throughout GD2 our strategic steering group reiterated the vital impact we could have by co-ordinating our activities with others to support those most in need, those most impacted by the cost of living and energy cost crisis. The VSG have recommended that we look at ways in which we can build stronger links with other organisations including collaborating with local authorities, utilities, health services and charities to deliver support services that tackle the fuel poverty gap and the underlying causes of fuel poverty.
Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria	Details of the VCMA Project, outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these, interim milestones and how the Funding Licensee will evaluate whether the project has been successful. Each action should have a proportion of the funding allocated.
	<ul> <li>Across the network's regions, A Warm Welcome will identify vulnerable expectant parents and families with young children with a low income to:</li> <li>Increase the number of families which can manage their energy bills, keep warm and healthy at home</li> <li>Increase the number of frontline professionals and healthcare professionals with awareness of the impacts of living in a cold home and how to support families with young children</li> <li>Strengthen family resilience by relieving stress about fuel debt or problems with their energy supplier</li> <li>Reduce the number of families in extreme hardship by providing emergency funding grants</li> </ul>
	Success criteria
	A minimum of 540 healthcare professionals working with expectant mothers and young families attended half day training sessions. Training attendance will be tracked using a database. This includes four face-to-face sessions with the rest delivered via webinar.

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
	<ul> <li>Confirmation that each professional trained will pass on advice to 22 people per year. (Therefore, around 11,000 further households will benefit.)</li> <li>Advice sessions and community workshops delivered providing support directly to 480 – 600 families with young children across the network's regions. Attendance will be tracked using a database and client management system.</li> <li>Deliver energy advice and support via family fun days to 80-160 vulnerable families with young children.</li> <li>Provide hardship grants to around 80 households with a £50-£75 per grant per household to buy warm blankets and essential warm clothing for babies or, where other funding is not available, to top up their energy meters. Distribute Winter Warmth Support Packs (added value funded through other NEA programmes).</li> <li>Training targets will be monitored by capturing the number attendees and their feedback. NEA's training is ISO:9001 and CPD accreditation ensuring high quality and consistent training courses.</li> <li>NEA has a client management system (Advice Pro) which logs crisis fund client's details and defining characteristics for eligibility. NEA will monitor the number of people attending events, topics of advice given to the group and the outcomes of any interventions.</li> </ul>
Project Partners and Third Parties Involved	Details of Project Partners or third-party involvement.
	> NGN – Lead gas network
	SGN – Collaborating gas network
	<ul> <li>NEA – NEA will lead delivery of the project working closely with NGN and SGN. NEA will also engage with third party organisations, including but not limited to: Sure Start Centres, specialist charities such as Tiny Lives, Food Banks and Baby Banks, NEA will target low-income families in areas of high indices of multiple deprivation within the networks regions to provide energy advice at a time when increased support is desperately needed</li> </ul>
Potential for New Learning	Details of what the GDN(s) expect to learn and how the learning will be disseminated.
	During the project implementation, there will be a range of monitoring activities established to ensure robust evaluation of the project. NEA will measure the outcomes of the project using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data will be collected on:
	<ul> <li>the number of professionals attending half day training sessions</li> <li>the number of families with young children accessing advice sessions</li> <li>the number of families with young children accessing family fun days</li> <li>the number of families with young children accessing the hardship fund.</li> </ul>
	Training targets will be monitored by capturing the number attendees and their feedback. NEA's training is ISO:9001 and CPD accreditation ensuring high quality and consistent training courses.
	NEA has a client management system (Advice Pro) which logs hardship fund client's details and defining characteristics for eligibility. NEA will monitor the number of people attending events, topics of advice given to the group and the outcomes of any interventions.
	The data and information collected from the project activities will be collated and analysed to create a post-project report with findings and recommendations and to show the real difference that has been made.
	This project report will be published on NEA portals, such as the charity website, and disseminated to project partners, and relevant members and stakeholders in the sector through the VCMA showcase and the Annual Report.

Scale of VCMA Project and SROI calculations, including NPV	<ul> <li>The Funding Licensee(s) should justify the scale of the VCMA Project – including the scale of the investment relative to its potential benefits. As part of this, it should provide the SROI calculation, including NPV. Note: The value in numbers of the SROI and NPV must be provided, rather than confirmation of positive impact.</li> <li>This project has a positive SROI return – based on a formal assessment conducted by NGN.</li> <li>Overall Social Return on Investment (SROI) &amp; Payback:</li> </ul>			
	NPV	Payback Years		
	VCMA Project	£11.93	£1,942,231.99	1
VCMA Project Start and End Date	Detail start and end date of the VCMA project and, where relevant, the VCMA project that proceeded this initiative. 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026			
Geographical Area	Details of where the VCMA Project will take place. If the VCMA Project is collaborative, the Funding Licensee area(s) in which the project will take place should be identified. NGN regional area and SGN's Southern Network			

## Internal governance and project management evidence

leeting c	GDN Collaboration Group PEA Review late review completed: completed by:	N
GDN:	Name:	Job Title:
NGN	Laura Ratcliffe	Social Strategy Programme Manager
SGN	Kerry Potter	Group Social Impact and Vulnerability Manager
to an 2. (	DOCVC Donal Davian	
leeting o eview co GDN:	BD2CVG Panel Review late sign off agreed: ompleted by: Name:	Job Title:
leeting c eview c	late sign off agreed: ompleted by:	Job Title: Social Strategy Programme Manager Group Social Impact and Vulnerability

GDN	Name:	Job Title:	Signature:	Date:		
NGN	Eileen Brown	Customer Experience Director	Elbon	13/06/24		
SGN	Maureen McIntosh	Director of Customer Services	Vance 49	12/06/24		
Project management:						
This project will be managed by NGN						
Step 4: Upload PEA Document to the Website & Notification Email Sent to Ofgem (vcma@ofgem.gov.uk)						
Date that PEA Document Uploaded to the Website: 13/06/2024						
Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: 13/06/2024						