

Consumer Vulnerability Strategy



140k
new PSR
customers

1202
Support Services
Delivered

9.1/10
Satisfaction
for Support
Services



Contents

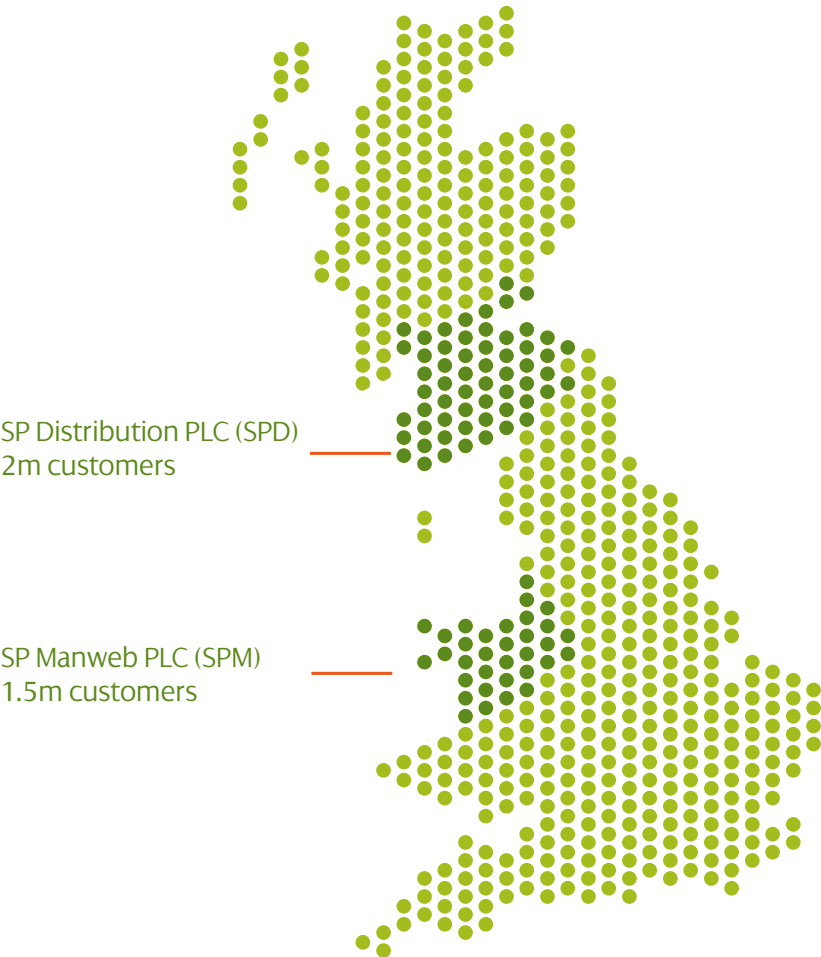
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SP Energy Networks is a Distribution Network Operator; we deliver electricity to homes and businesses in Central and Southern Scotland, Merseyside, Cheshire, North Wales and North Shropshire.

The safety and welfare of our customers, especially those who are vulnerable is our biggest priority and our Consumer Vulnerability vision is at the heart of the culture across our organisation.

SP Energy Networks exists to serve 3.5 million households across England, Wales and Scotland. We are the people who keep the lights on delivering electricity to our customers’ homes 24 hours a day 365 days a year. We use our unique position to support our customers and communities in particular those who are vulnerable in their daily lives.

The support we deliver is far broader than energy because our customers and stakeholders tell us we should. With 9 million lonely people in the UK and 14 million people living in households below the poverty line, when customers tell us they need practical help with wider social issues such as loneliness and low income we know there are ways we can help.



Approach

Our strategy and approach for Consumer Vulnerability is an integral part of the overall stakeholder strategy outlined in Our Strategy for Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability. The direction and focus of our strategy for consumer vulnerability is formed around 6 key pillars.

Direction

What

Driven by feedback and research from our customers and stakeholders.

How

Strategic Stakeholder Panels influencing our Executive decision making.
Social Working Group – helping us with our vulnerability strategy, plans & priorities.
Research to engage our customers, consumer groups and wider stakeholders in key decisions.
A clear vision of who we want to be based on the things our customers say are important to them.
Clear outcomes defining what change will happen as a result of our actions.

Data

What

Understanding our customer base & continuously improving our data.

How

Segmenting & mapping our customer base to understand who our customers are.
Assessing which customer groups are the most vulnerable and least resilient.
Understanding against nationally available data where we have not yet reached people so we can close the gaps.
Improving and maintaining the data we hold for customers through external sources and business processes.
Tracking and understanding performance against our initiatives & take informed decisions to continuously adapt our strategy.

Culture

What

A whole business approach embedded in our people, training and accreditation.

How

Vulnerability embedded into every process.
Clear roles and responsibilities.
Clear targets for each process and governance to drive performance.
Embedded into Service Partner contracts to ensure our partners are aligned to our outcomes.
Targets for staff embedded into performance management and linked to pay.
Deliver exceptional customer satisfaction and measure ourselves against the Best in the UK.

Partnerships

What

Partner with trusted organisation who help us to deliver our key outcomes.

How

Resilience partnerships to help us deliver support in Power Cuts and Major Events.
Partnerships to help us deliver support services wider than energy to our customer on the services they say they need.
Partnerships that are self-funded through existing schemes or low costs to allow us to offer free support services to our customers.
Partnership coverage for all areas to allow us to make services available to all.
Continuous review of service partners to check service delivered, any limitations in service and customer satisfaction.

Costs

What

Delivering services at a cost our customers feel is appropriate.

How

Continuous research with our customers to test their priorities and view on the level of costs they feel is appropriate for us to deliver vulnerable services.
Being innovative in the ways we deliver services to keep costs down for all customers.
Understand through data what works best in terms of awareness and reach and adapt our strategy accordingly.

Assurance

What

Externally Assured and Evaluated. Continual assessment of our offering, feedback and limitations.

How

External Assurance to test our strategy, approach and delivery.
Well trained staff, continuously developed and accredited
Review of our costs, performance, awareness and partnerships to continuously update our strategy based on what works and what our customers say.

Direction

Our consumer vulnerability strategy is embedded in our wider stakeholder engagement strategy. Our strategy and plans have been formed through engagement, feedback and research.

- The feedback has been clear. We should...
- 1. Avoid having power cuts and supporting customers well when we do
 - 2. Support our communities with the practical help they say they need



Vision

As a result of our engagement & direction we have created a Vision and 3 clear outcomes to define the specific change we will drive as a result of our actions.

Our vision and outcomes have been tested with customers, consumer bodies and stakeholders through independent research & independently facilitated focus groups. Our activities and outputs feed into these outcomes to give us a clear purpose and line of sight.

Our Vision

SP Energy Networks is recognised by our customers for the support we provide in the communities we serve, treating everyone as an individual with respect and care.



Outcomes

We have 3 outcomes which outline the specific changes we will drive as a result of our actions

Outcome 1

Our communities are more resilient in vulnerable situations

Outcome 2

Our customers feel cared for and supported

Outcome 3

More people are accessing services to support their daily lives

Our actions and initiatives are aligned to these outcomes to ensure we have a clear purpose and clarity as to why we do what we do. We deliver this in a different way, making sure our approach is inclusive and reaches across our customer base.



Our activities and outputs are delivered through 5 routes which feed into our 3 outcomes

- 1 Supporting customers on our PSR (Priority Service Register) in 12 ways during power cuts.
- 2 Delivering free practical support services based on the things our customers need.
- 3 Targeting areas by using national data to get to hard to reach customers not yet on the PSR.
- 4 Supporting the communities we know are least resilient in power cuts through network improvements and support.
- 5 Initiatives out in our communities to find hard to reach customers, target front line professionals and contribute our resources.

Our Outcomes – the changes we will drive

1

Community Resilience

Our communities are more resilient in vulnerable situations

Why is this outcome important?

Our communities have different make ups and characteristics and can respond very differently in vulnerable situations such as natural disasters. Some customer groups may be able to manage well for short periods of time but may struggle over longer periods due for

example to having no family network or being socially isolated in the community. Whilst others may be well supported by family over longer periods but may need immediate support when something happens. We have used data to understand which of our communities cope less well in events such as power cuts so we can proactively target our initiatives.

How we measure this	
Key Outcomes	Why
Total Households on our Priority Services Register.	Because customers are proactively supported in 12 ways during a power cut if they are on our register.
Customers registered against individual categories on PSR.	Because we know some customers have multi layered needs. This also allows us to accurately measure how we are closing the gaps in each category where national data is available.
New Households on our Priority Services Register this year.	Because we need to reach customers not previously on our Register to bring them support.
% customers on our PSR in 1,100 Low Resilience Communities.	Because we need to reach the communities we know are the least resilient when the power goes off.
% of PSR customers whose power was cut for less than 6 hours or not at all this year.	Because we do not want to make customers vulnerable for long periods.
% of PSR customers whose power was cut for less than 6 hours or not at all this year. in our 1,100 lowest resilient communities.	Because we do not want to make customers vulnerable for long periods and know this group of customers cope less well.
% of PSR customers in our 1,100 lowest resilient communities who had no interruption or an improved service in the year.	Because we do not want to make customers more vulnerable through Power Cuts and know this group of customers cope less well.
Services Delivered to Support customers through our 10 Support Services Scheme.	Because customers tell us they struggle in their daily lives and our services make them more resilient.



2

Cared for customers

Our customers feel cared for and supported

Why is this outcome important?

Our customers are why we exist and we want our initiatives to have an impact and really matter. We don't want to tick a box but to genuinely spend time on things that are important to the people we are here to serve and we want them to make a difference. It's also good business sense, when the things we

do reach out to people and genuinely help. Our teams are more engaged and motivated because they can see it making a difference and they know what they do matters to people. As a result we have a much more engaged and motivated workforce who look for ways to make improvements and continuously take our business forward.

How we measure this	
Key Outcomes	Why
PSR Satisfaction	Because customers registered for Priority Services need to feel cared for and supported.
PSR Satisfaction – Faults	Because when we make customers more vulnerable it is important we support them well.
PSR Satisfaction – Planned	Because in a planned outage we have an opportunity to proactively support customer well.
Support Service Satisfaction	Because we should deliver the things customers find valuable and do it well.
Institute of Customer Service Score UK Benchmarking	Because it is important to us to measure ourselves against the best in the UK.
Institute of Customer Service ALL Service Sector Ranking	Because it is important to us to measure ourselves against the best in the UK.
Institute of Customer Service Utilities Ranking	Because it is important to us to measure ourselves against the best in the UK.
Institute of Customer Service Customer Effort Score	Because it is important customers find it easy when they contact us and we do the hard work for them.
Institute of Customer Service Customer Effort Ranking	Because it is important customers find it easy when they contact us and we do the hard work for them.

3

Accessing Services

More people are accessing services to support their daily lives

Why is this outcome important?

Our society is changing and evolving and new technologies mean we can communicate quicker and easier than ever, however face to face communications are reducing and globalisation means family structures can become fractured. Almost 7 million adults in the UK, thats more than 1 in 8 of us report having no close friends and nearly half of older people say that television or pets are their main form of company.

Income and illness are also a problem and with services such as our NHS stretched like never before it is more important than ever people have strong support networks and accessible services in the community. Children in low income will increase sharply between 2015 and 2022 assuming no government policy change and so it is vital people can access the services, benefits and income they are entitled to and build their own independence and resilience as a result.

How we measure this	
Key Outcomes	Why
Number of support services delivered	Because these services are helping more people in the community become more resilient in their daily lives
Benefits the support services have delivered	Because the services we deliver need to have a tangible benefit to customers
Increase in Elderly Customers to our PSR	Because we are measuring ourselves against nationally available data to understand if we have reached everyone who needs us
Reduction in the Gap for ELDERLY customers against National Data	Because we need to know our strategy is working
Increase in DISABLED Customers to our PSR	Because we are measuring ourselves against nationally available data to understand if we have reached everyone who needs us
Reduction in the Gap for DISABLED customers against National Data	Because we need to know our strategy is working
Increase in DEMENTIA Customers to our PSR	Because we are measuring ourselves against nationally available data to understand if we have reached everyone who needs us
Reduction in the Gap for DEMENTIA customers against National Data	Because we need to know our strategy is working
Increase in BLIND & PARTIALLY SIGHTED Customers to our PSR	Because we are measuring ourselves against nationally available data to understand if we have reached everyone who needs us
Reduction in the Gap for BLIND & PARTIALLY SIGHTED customers against National Data	Because we need to know our strategy is working

Using data

We undertake data profiling of our customer base every 2 years to understand the makeup through data mapping and mosaic profiling.

This profiling allows us to understand:

- Which areas we are still to reach through our Priority Services Register
- Identify the communities least resilient during events and disasters such as power cuts
- Compare our Priority Service Registrations against National Data to understand if we have reached everyone in the vulnerability categories where national data is available

We use data in 5 ways to drive our activities:

- 1 Reach** Increasing the reach of our Priority Services Register to ensure we support everyone who needs help.
- 2 Low Resilience** To identify those communities who are least resilient in a disaster – such as a power cut and provide additional focus in these areas.
- 3 National Data** To compare our vulnerability categories against national data to understand if we are reaching customers.
- 4 Channel Success** To measure which of our channels and initiatives work best for our customers.
- 5 Customer Benefit** To measure the success of our strategy and what this delivers both financially and socially and in terms of customer satisfaction.

Partnerships

We work with Partners in 4 different ways



Informing our Strategy & Plans

We have partnerships with consumer groups, charities and social organisation who work with us as part of our Strategic Panels and Social Working Group to help inform our strategy and plans. Our strategic panels and working groups inform our executive team and senior managers supported with research and feedback from consumer groups, stakeholders and customers.

Delivering Support to customers on our Priority Services Register

Our Partnerships help us deliver support to those customers registered for Priority Services during a power cut.

We have Resilience Partnerships who help us deliver support in events such as social care, hot food and welfare support.

Delivering Services to tackle wider social issues

We have a network of partnerships in place across all areas of our business to deliver wider support services (not necessarily energy related) to our customers. We do this because our customers tell us they need practical help and our stakeholders and customers tell us they feel we should use our unique position to support wider issues.

Referring into our services

Customers are referred into our services in various ways:

- Through their Energy Suppliers
- By our front line staff
- By our network of partners
- Through our events and awareness campaigns

When customers are signed up to our Priority Services Register they are automatically sent details of our wider support services as part of their welcome letter. In addition to this a check is made with customers registered for Priority Services every 2 years to ensure their data remains accurate and to confirm they still require to be on the register. As part of this check our wider services are promoted.



How we assess partners

Before we start to work with a new partner we assess them against a criterion to ensure they fit our strategy. We also continuously review the performance of the partner to ensure they deliver the standards we require and enable us to drive high levels of customer satisfaction.

Assessment of Partners – Pre-Engagement

Does the Partner deliver the service requested by our customers/ stakeholders

Which postcodes does the Partner cover

Is the partner a national trusted organisation

If not has the partner been recommended to us by a national/ trusted partner

Are the services funded and free of charge from partners

Is the organisation part of the Protection of Vulnerable Customers Scheme or Equivalent

If SPEN needs to make a contribution to the cost of the service – what would the level of contribution be?

Assessment of Partners – Post Engagement

Is partner delivering to agreed SLA's

Are we receiving outcomes within agreed SLA to a high standard

Any funding required by SPEN

Partner Feedback

Staff Feedback

Customer Satisfaction

Help in a power cut

When customers sign up to our Priority Services Register we support them in 12 ways when they experience a power cut.

1

Welcome Pack

Sent to new PSR customers so they know what to expect from us and tell them about our services.

2

Proactive and Ongoing Contact

Updating customer at least every 3 hours in a power cut.

3

Customer Service on Site

Our nominated person on site process means that there is always someone to support customers.

4

2 Year Information Check

To confirm customer data and tell them about our services.

5

Vulnerable Packs

Issued during power cuts and storms. Includes an analogue phone.

6

Hot Food and Hotels

Provided for customers in prolonged outages and significant events. Extended to all customers after 48 hours.

7

Dedicated Number

Our calls are answered in an average of 6 seconds. In storms and significant events we have a dedicated welfare lines for PSR customers.

8

Resilience Partners

Providing additional services such as social care support, opening community buildings, catering vans and emotional support.

9

Generators

Provided for vulnerable customers to minimise impact during a power cut and planned works. Provided 100% of vulnerable customers with a generator if requested on our proactive contacts.

10

Accessibility

A range of services to improve accessibility such as:

- Large print information
- Information in braille
- Translation services
- Text relay.

11

Short Term Vulnerability

Customers can register with us for support for a specific period of time.

12

Being Safe

Customers can request a password from us to safeguard against bogus callers.

Wider support services

Our customers and stakeholders have told us we should support with practical help where we can. We have therefore built a network of partners to deliver 10 support services customers tell us they need across both our licence areas.

We review these regularly to understand which services are being most used and how our partners are performing. Our strategy is to offer all services free of charge to customer to ensure vulnerable customers are not disadvantaged by requiring additional help. We have undertaken research with customers, consumer groups and stakeholder to understand how much customers feel we should spend on the things we do to ensure our costs are appropriate and to understand if ALL customers feel they should pay for the services we provide our vulnerable customers.



The wider support services we deliver feed into our 3 outcomes and help support wider social issues



Friendship & Hot Meals

Linking neighbours to provide hot food and friendship



Best Tariff

Impartial independent advice on the best tariff and help to switch



Maximising Income

Practical help to receive the right income and benefits



Help in a Power Cut

Advice on what to do in a power cut



Debt Advice

Help and advice with debt



Befriending Service

Building friendships to combat loneliness



Staying Safe at Home

Advice and equipment to stay safe at home



Help for Dementia

Advice and practical support for dementia sufferers and their families



Help with Weekly Shop

Help with weekly grocery shop and unpacking



Energy Efficiency Advice

Advice on staying warm and saving money

Community initiatives

In order to ensure we get to customers who may be harder to reach and who may not seek out our services we have initiatives targeted across our communities to ensure these customers are not disadvantaged.

Health
Targeting front line health professionals and GP/Hospital Patients.



Existing Local Initiatives
Supporting local initiatives with our resources and promoting our services.



Low Resilience Communities
Understanding which of our communities are most vulnerable in a power cut and focusing targeted improvements and support in these areas.



Network Investment
Prioritising vulnerable communities for network investment to reduce the likelihood of a power cut.



Community Groups
Face to Face engagement with community groups in the areas we know we need to reach more people based on national data.



Volunteering
Volunteering programmes aimed at supporting our network of partners deliver free services on our behalf.



Wider Customers
identifying customers not currently served by us but part of our communities – working with homeless charities to support people back into homes.



Costs

The costs passed onto our customers for everything we do though our Transmission and Distribution price controls are an average of £127 per customer per year – That’s 35 pence per day.

Our strategy based on research and feedback is to build partnership networks to allow us to deliver wider support services to our customers and to do this by accessing funded schemes so we can minimise the cost we spend to deliver these. This ensures no additional costs are passed onto customers and we are able to offer services to customers free of charge.

It is important vulnerable customers are not disadvantaged because they require additional support but it is equally important our wider customer base are comfortable that all customers pay for those services offered to vulnerable customers albeit within the costs of £127 outlined in our price controls.



Mr N contacted us looking for safety advice at home. Mr N is elderly and lives on his own and has restricted movement as well as hearing difficulties and was worried about what would happen if there was a fire in his home.

What we did – We referred Mr N to our partner North Wales Fire and Rescue and they visited him at home. They fitted a new smoke detector and because Mr N is deaf, also fitted a vibrating repeater which goes under his pillow.

Our customers scored us 8.86 out of 10 when asked if the level of spend was appropriate.

92% of customers felt ALL customers should contribute to the services provides to vulnerable customers.

£35
Transmission costs

+

£92
Distribution costs

=

£127
Per customer per year

11 pence

per customer per year of this £127 is spent on delivering services to vulnerable customer – over and above our BAU activities.

Culture, Training, Qualification & Assurance



We have a whole business approach to consumer vulnerability, it's everyone's role to look after our customers and our results are delivered by ensuring we have embedded processes and our people from the Executive Team through to Front Line Staff including our Contract Partners are fully engaged. Consumer vulnerability is a focus for all our processes from Investment on our network through to faults and emergencies.

A Performance Management structure underpins our organisation to ensure we have a clear line of sight from our CEO through the organisation. Our staff and contract partners are aligned to our 3 key outcomes and through our management information performance is tracked, feedback given and continuous improvement driven. To ensure Customer Services and supporting vulnerable customers is given the importance it requires, we have embarked on a programme of training for our staff through the Institute of Customer Service. This training is aimed at front line staff, team managers and operations managers and combines customer service training with a focus on customer

vulnerability. Staff who go through the training successfully will achieve an ICS qualification. We have an annual programme across our organisation to support our Customer Service and Vulnerability Programme to ensure our staff are suitably qualified. An annual benchmarking exercise takes place to test our customer satisfaction performance. This measures how we stack up against the best service leaders in the UK. A health check is also carried out annually by AccountAbility the owners of the globally recognised AA1000SE standard to assure our wider strategy and plans.

Governance & Measurement

A governance structure is in place across SPEN to ensure results and performance is monitored and improvement actions tackled quickly.

Governance Type	Frequency	Purpose
Results Shared	Weekly	Customer Satisfaction Results, including Satisfaction for Vulnerable Customers shared every week with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exec Team• Senior Management Team• Operational cross Business Teams
CEO Review	Monthly	Review of performance with the CEO to ensure our performance is in line with targets and strategy.
Exec Review	Monthly	Review of performance with Exec Team to focus on performance and identify any actions requiring focus.
Senior Manager Review	Monthly	Review of performance with Senior Management team to review performance and focus on any outstanding issues.
Business Calls	Weekly	Cross business calls to review customer feedback, agree actions and share learnings.
Interface Meetings	Monthly	Meetings with each individual District to review their underlying performance on the key metrics driving performance and delivery of our 3 outcomes.



5 Year Plan – Targets

We have set ourselves stretching targets for the next 5 years to drive our 3 key outcomes.

Community Resilience	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
PSR Households	0.924m	1m	1m	1m	1m
PSR Households in Low Resilience Communities	13,900 (28%)	14,700 (30%)	15,600 (32%)	16,600 (34%)	17,100 (32%)
Low Resilience Communities with no or improved interruptions	80%	85%	90%	95%	95%
PSR Household with power cuts less than 6 hours or not at all	99.5%	99.6%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%
Volunteers supporting our network of partnerships through training, resource and delivery of services	100	125	150	170	200

Cared for Customers	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
PSR Satisfaction	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.45	9.5
Support Service Satisfaction	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.45	9.5
Institute of Customer Service Customer Effort Score	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4
Institute of Customer Service Benchmarking Score	85	85.1	85.2	85.3	85.4
Cost per customer to deliver support services (over & above business as usual power cut support)	11–16p	11–16p	11–16p	11–16p	11–16p

Accessing Services	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Support Services Delivered	2,500	3,500	4,000	4,500	5,000
Financial Benefits delivered from Support Services	£500k	£700k	£800k	£900k	£1m
80% of customers on PSR vs National Data Dementia	21,300	30,000	40,000	50,000	60,000
80% of customers on PSR vs National Data Blind/Partially Sighted	31,700	33,000	34,000	35,000	36,000
80% of customers on PSR vs National Data Disabled	267,400	342,400	417,400	492,400	557,400
80% of customers on PSR vs National Data Elderly	910,900	990,000	1,070,000	1,150,000	1,219,000



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