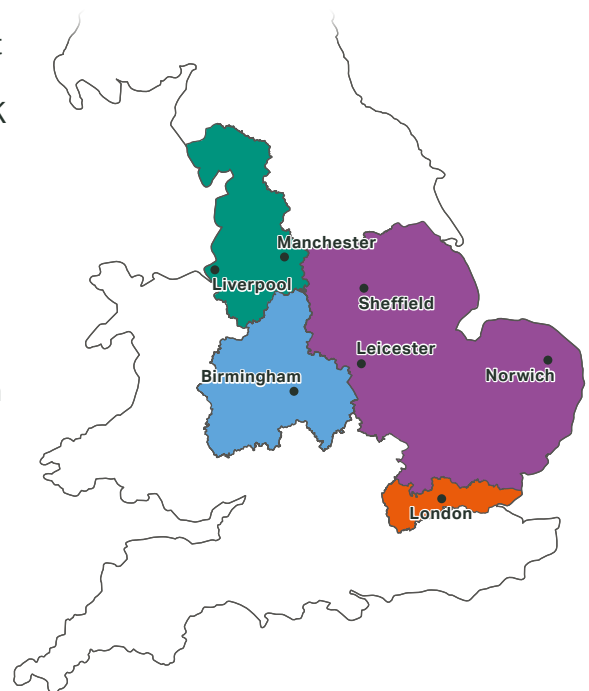


# 3

# Our

# communities

We operate across four gas distribution networks: East of England, North London, North West and West Midlands, providing services to a diverse range of customer and stakeholder groups. Almost 50% of UK gas customers are served by our pipelines and we provide them with the energy they need to stay safe and warm. Each area has its own geographical and social requirements and we are committed to improving our levels of service by creating a more localised customer-centric operating model that is able to respond to the specific needs of the communities we serve. This approach is described in **Chapter 9, Costs and Efficiency.**



## North West

Our North West network covers around 2.7m customers in the third most populated region of England. It consists of the five counties of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside, and has a mix of rural and urban landscape.

The south of the region is mainly centred on the cities of Liverpool and Manchester. The north of the region, comprising Cumbria and northern Lancashire, is largely rural, as is the far south which encompasses parts of the Cheshire Plain and Peak District. Focusing the workforce and depot locations around the major conurbations, with smaller supporting depots throughout the rural areas, supports our customer service across the network. Around 40% of the gas distributed into the North West network is used for business and industrial purposes; far higher than any other gas distribution network in the UK.

**Making a difference: HyNet North West could save over 1 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year.** HyNet North West is a hydrogen energy and Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage ('CCUS') project. It aims to reduce carbon emissions from industry, homes and transport, whilst supporting economic growth in the region.

## West Midlands

Our West Midlands network is centred on the UK's second largest metropolitan area of Birmingham and includes a number of smaller urban areas that effectively constitute local sub-networks within the network. It serves around 1.96m customers.

Although the network is relatively small, it covers some rural areas outside of the major towns, which dictate strategic depot locations to enable the supply of materials to these areas.

The individual nature of each urban area ranges from towns like Telford, a fairly new town with relatively new network assets, to Stoke-on-Trent, which has a significant proportion of steel mains to negate the effects of ground movement due to historical mining activities. This level of new infrastructure means the resourcing model is less focused on reactive workload and focuses more on maintenance activities.

**Making a difference: We are enabling CNG Fuels to build a public access filling station at our National Distribution Centre in Birmingham, which is due to be complete in early 2020.** Using renewable biomethane instead of fossil fuel delivers an 80% saving in carbon dioxide emissions.

## East of England

East of England is our largest network serving 4m customers across East Midlands and East Anglia, having significant levels of customers in rural locations from Humberside down through Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

The network also serves customers in the relatively high density cities of Sheffield in the north of the network, Derby, Nottingham and Leicester and Cambridge in the south, as well as customers in the north of London, including the Tottenham area.

Depots have been positioned in close proximity to all main population groups and the spread of engineers' home locations is closely aligned to the general population. The combination of these factors enables the network to operate effectively across the regions.

**Making a difference: Innovating in the field with green gas.** Our field trials involve installing temporary monitoring equipment 'green cabinets' across our Cambridgeshire network. The equipment tells us how much green gas is coming through the pipes, and how far it is travelling all through the year.

## North London

Our North London network, serving around 2.3m customers, extends from Central London, covering north of the River Thames, to High Wycombe in the west and Southend-on-Sea in the east.

North London, with the highest urban density in the UK, has additional operational challenges to our other networks, including the highest concentration of multi-occupancy buildings in the UK, more severe road congestion, greater 24-hour-life, and a higher number of emergency jobs per customer (based upon requests from customers associated with gas escapes within their buildings).

**Making a difference: Using robotics to keep the energy flowing in the capital.** 'CISBOT' undertakes pipeline rehabilitation from inside the pipe. Through a single entry point, the CISBOT can travel up to 240 metres in each direction, eliminating the need for lengthy large-scale excavation work and so reducing road congestion caused by our work.