

# Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

## Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA) *Deeplish - Centre for Warmth*

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*Updated November 2024*



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

<b>Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)</b>  To qualify as a VCMA project, a project must:	
<b>VCMA Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)</b>
<b>a)</b> Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA project;	<b>Yes</b>
<b>b)</b> Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i.</b> Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or</li> <li><b>ii.</b> Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or</li> <li><b>iii.</b> Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;</li> </ul>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>c)</b> Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	<b>Yes</b>
<b>d)</b> Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and	<b>Yes</b>
<b>e)</b> Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local) funding.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair, and replacement projects</b>  To qualify as a VCMA project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	
<b>a)</b> A GDN must isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role;	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>b)</b> The household cannot afford to service, repair, or replace the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance; and;	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>c)</b> Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance servicing, repair, or replacement.	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects</b>  To qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
<b>a)</b> Meet the above company specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria;	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>b)</b> Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>c)</b> Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	<b>Not Applicable</b>

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

Information Required	Description
<b>Project Title</b>	Centre for Warmth - Deeplish Community Centre
<b>Funding GDN(s)</b>	Cadent company - specific project - Northwest Network
<b>New/ Updated</b>	Updated November 2024
<b>Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only</b>	Not applicable - Cadent company-specific project
<b>Date of PEA Submission</b>	November 2022  Updated November 2024
<b>VCMA Project Contact Name, email, and Number</b>	Name: Phil Burrows Title: Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery Email: Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com Number: 07773 545451
<b>Total Cost (£k)</b>	£100,000.00  <u>Updated November 2024</u> Centre Costs: £81,586.00 Slow cookers: £4,176.00 Leaflets: £1,763.64 Project Management Costs: £3,501.03 Total Costs: £91,026.67
<b>Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)</b>	£100,000.00  <u>Updated November 2024</u> £191,026.67
<b>Problem(s)</b>	<p>Rochdale Council's 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) analysis evidences the scale of deprivation in Rochdale and across the city. IMD is based on seven categories including income, health, employment and living environment.</p> <p>Rochdale also contains a high proportion of the highest of deprived LSOAs.</p> <p>As well as deprivation, Deeplish residents also face challenges with fuel poverty. A recent report stated that 15% of Rochdale is said to be in fuel poverty based on 2022 statistics.</p> <p>Fuel poverty can have many adverse effects on household's health, including excess winter deaths at the extremity.</p> <p>A 2022 <sup>1</sup>Entitled to statistics report that an estimated £15bn of benefits goes unclaimed by approximately 7,000,000 families. This equates to an average of £2,142 per household, a figure which would make a significant difference in helping families to meet rises in the cost of living and fuel.</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/>

	<p><b><u>Updated November 2024</u></b></p> <p>The project's continuing success has led to wider growth and increased interest from the community. This increased interest presents the Deeplish Community Centre and Cadent with an opportunity to extend the current project and enable the centre to manage more appointments and further support its community effectively.</p> <p>28% of children in the borough of Rochdale live in poverty, while the Milkstone and Deeplish ward contains the highest child poverty rates in the borough with half of all children there living below the breadline.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there has been a significant increase in the number of people asking for help as they struggle with the challenges of everyday living. The demand for benefits and energy efficiency advice is continuously growing with a requirement for more daily appointments being required with their advisors.</p>
<b>Scope and Objectives</b>	<p><b><u>Project Scope</u></b></p> <p>Cadent will provide Deeplish Community Centre with £100,000.00 of VCMA funding to deliver a two-year project.</p> <p>The two-year 2022-2024 extension replicates the current centre for warmth model whereby specialist benefits advisors and outreach workers are employed using the VCMA.</p> <p>Alongside specialist benefits advice, the centre will also offer essential information on carbon monoxide safety and the priority services register</p> <p><b><u>Project Objectives</u></b></p> <p>Cadent will measure the success of the Centre for Warmth - Deeplish Community Centre against the achievement of the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specialist benefits advisor at the centre will support around 500 clients per annum. Each client will be supported to identify all benefits that they are eligible for and will also be guided through the claims process.</li> <li>• The outreach worker at the centre will support around 2400 clients per annum. The worker will offer essential advice on carbon monoxide safety, registration to the priority services register and signposting Deeplish Centre for Warmth's wider services.</li> <li>• The centre will support around 2400 people per annum on energy efficiency advice.</li> <li>• 400 most at-risk households will receive a CO alarm.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Updated November 2024</u></b></p>

<sup>2</sup> [Rochdale News | News Headlines | 50% of children in Rochdale's most deprived area are living in poverty - Rochdale Online](#)

	<p>Cadent will provide Deeplish Community Centre with an additional £91,026.67 for a 17-month extension. The funding will enable the centres to provide additional services as listed below.</p> <p>The VCMA funding will be used to continue to employ specialist advisors to provide advice and support relating to energy efficiency, benefits, and debt, raise awareness of CO and the PSR. The following staff will be employed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community outreach and development Coordinator</li> <li>• Multilingual community welfare advisor</li> <li>• Project manager</li> </ul> <p><u>Project Objectives</u></p> <p>The success of the project will be measured against achieving the additional below objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,020 individuals will receive energy advice.</li> <li>• 1,500 individuals will receive income maximisation and benefit advice.</li> <li>• 1,200 individuals will receive CO education to improve their CO safety awareness.</li> <li>• 400 individuals will receive CO alarm.</li> <li>• 625 individuals will receive advice on the PSR with the aim to register 167 households to the register.</li> <li>• Provide 150 slow cookers at dedicated events and as an individual needs emerge.</li> <li>• 1,500 will attend the centre, therefore 172 individuals will have a conversation with others that will have otherwise felt lonely, alleviating loneliness, and isolation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</b></p>	<p>We believe that the project meets all the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance eligibility criteria:</p> <p><b>a. Have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project:</b></p> <p><i>The project delivers a positive forecasted social return on investment. This is based on achieving the target reach for income maximisation, registrations to the PSR and education on carbon monoxide. More information can be found in the relevant section below.</i></p> <p><b>b. Either:</b></p> <p><b>i. Provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or,</b></p> <p><b>ii. Provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or,</b></p> <p><b>iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;</b></p> <p><i>The project delivers services that meet all three elements of this criteria. For example, the specialist advisors will help households maximise their income, enabling residents to afford the cost of heating their home to an adequate level. The project will also raise awareness of the dangers of CO and promote registration to the PSR.</i></p> <p><b>c. Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these:</b></p>

	<p><i>Cadent and Deeplish Community Centre have entered into a service agreement that will contain the project objective and actions. Further detail can also be found below.</i></p> <p><b>d. Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations, and,</b></p> <p><i>This method of delivering support to customers in vulnerable situations falls outside of Cadent's BAU activities and other licence conditions.</i></p> <p><b>e. Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local) funding,</b></p> <p><i>This project will be solely delivered through Cadent's VCMA funding.</i></p>
<b>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</b>	<p>The Deeplish Community Centre - Centre for Warmth project aims to offer customers in vulnerable situations support, particularly those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Cadent and Britain Thinks conducted research on customer's attitudes towards energy in 2022. The research focussed on measuring customer's attitudes towards energy and understanding any shifts in perception since the development of Cadent's RIIO-GD2 business plans.</p> <p>The research evidenced that customers are making changes to household spend and energy. For example, the Cadent study found similarities with the ONS February 2022 survey where 79% of customers said that their cost of living had increased due to price rises in energy and food.</p> <p>Additionally, the same survey found that 26% of customers had needed to use their savings to pay for household essentials such as energy and food.</p> <p>This VCMA project is aimed at helping Rochdale households who are finding the need to eat into savings or reduce energy and food consumption because of the cost-of-living crisis. The project will offer essential support through helping households to maximise their income and use their energy more efficiently.</p> <p>Cadent also conducted customer and stakeholder feedback on its 2021-2022 VCMA delivery. Cadent asked participants for feedback on its 4 key VCMA project areas: Identifying customers' needs and joining up support services, tackling affordability and fuel poverty, protecting our customers from the dangers of CO, and Going beyond to never leave a customer vulnerable without gas.</p> <p>81% of customers and 78% of stakeholders supported Cadent continuing its funding of community-based projects such as Centres for Warmth and Warm Hubs. For instance, one customer participant (aged &gt;70) commented:</p> <p><i>"Some interaction is vital for people on their own - giving them a safe and warm place to meet up is vital for many people's mental health"</i></p> <p><b><u>Updated November 2024</u></b></p>



	<p>Recent research was completed with our Centres for Warmth, and they were asked “what are the challenges you are facing within your centre and community?” The key trend from this was financial struggles – increasing costs and debt. Many respondents mentioned the burden of rising living costs, including energy bills and food prices. There is a significant struggle with direct debits, standing charge debts, and overall financial instability.</p> <p><b>Quote from the centre manager:</b>          “We are facing serious challenges in our town and neighbourhood which is not only the most deprived, where people are facing poverty, challenges to life and difficulty to survive, but having difficulty to access essentials support and help for life. It is very upsetting and gives our charity much improved confidence and motivation to deliver and reach out to many members in need of help and support.</p> <p>Our services, support, sessions, open days, coffee mornings, and wellbeing activities are oversubscribed. We want to continue to be hope and support for many community members and families require basic to considerable support to sustain during cost-of-living crisis.”</p>
<b>Information Required</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</b>	<p>The partnership Deeplish Community Centre will form part of Cadent's wider Centres for Warmth network. The Centre for Warmth project model relies on the provision of VCMA funding, materials and resource to a community centre located in an area of high deprivation, fuel poverty, and carbon monoxide risk. The increased levels of funding, resource and materials enable the community centre to ramp up its existing support for customers in vulnerable situations.</p> <p><u>Project Outcomes</u></p> <p>The Deeplish Community Centre - Centre for Warmth Project aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre clients report increased levels of household income.</li> <li>• Clients will report reduced levels of anxiety in fearing a utility outage.</li> <li>• Clients will report an increased awareness on the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) and have a reduced risk of harm caused by CO.</li> <li>• Clients will receive general gas safety awareness</li> </ul> <p><u>Associated Actions</u></p> <p>Cadent Deeplish Community Centre will implement the following associated actions to deliver the project's outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients will report increased levels of household income through working with the centre's specialist benefits advisors. The specialist benefits advisors will support households to identify and access previously unclaimed benefits.</li> <li>• Clients will report reduced levels of anxiety in fearing a utility outage through be assisted to register to the Priority Services Register (PSR). Centre staff will all receive an awareness on</li> </ul>

	<p>the PSR and will help eligible households through the registration process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients will report an increased awareness on the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) and have a reduced risk of harm caused by CO. This will be achieved through the centre's staff providing CO awareness conversations and distributing CO alarms to the most at-risk households.</li> </ul> <p><u>Success Criteria</u></p> <p>The success of the project will be measured against meeting the below criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 500 clients will receive specialist advice on identifying and accessing previously unclaimed benefits.</li> <li>• Around 2400 clients will receive an awareness conversation on the dangers of CO and receive general gas safety advice. Approximately 400 of the most at-risk households will also receive a CO alarm.</li> <li>• Around 2400 households will improve their awareness of the PSR. 800 - 600 eligible households will also be supported to register.</li> </ul> <p><u>Updated November 2024</u></p> <p>The services listed below will be provided by Deepish Centre for Warmth. A community coordinator and advisors will deliver services and activities to address all the vulnerabilities experienced by people within the community.</p> <p>These will include, individuals reporting increased levels of household income, further education on energy efficiency measures, increased awareness on the dangers of CO and report reduced levels of fear of a utility outage.</p> <p><u>Associated Actions</u></p> <p>The additional funding will enable the centre to extend the community coordinator and welfare advisor contracts for an additional 17 months, to ensure the centre can continue delivering the 'Centre for Warmth' project.</p> <p>The advisors will offer advice on energy efficiency, CO, the PSR and income maximisation. They will also distribute CO alarms to the most at-risk households. The centre staff will help eligible households through how to register to the PSR.</p> <p>Individuals will work with the centre's advisors on a one-to-one basis to receive support in a trusted environment.</p> <p><u>Success Criteria</u></p> <p>The success of the extension will be measured against achieving the additional objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,020 individuals will receive energy advice.</li> <li>• 1,500 individuals will receive income maximisation and benefit advice.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,200 individuals will receive CO education to improve their CO safety awareness.</li> <li>• 400 individuals will receive CO alarm.</li> <li>• 625 individuals will receive advice on the PSR with the aim to register 167 households to the register.</li> <li>• Provide 150 slow cookers at dedicated events and as an individual needs emerge.</li> <li>• 1,500 individuals will attend the centre and have a conversation with others. Alleviating loneliness and isolation in 172 individuals that will have been feeling isolated otherwise.</li> </ul> <p>These figures are included in the SROI calculation below.</p>
<b>Project Partners and Third Parties Involved</b>	Cadent will work in partnership with Deeplish Community Centre to deliver the project.
<b>Potential for New Learning</b>	<p>Cadent expects this VCMA project to offer several opportunities for new learning.</p> <p>This project is a two-year extension of an initiative previously delivered in year one of RIIO-GD2. Like the 2022-2024 extension, the past iteration of the project had a large focus on supporting clients to access previously unclaimed benefits. The 2022-2024 agreement will offer Cadent learning on whether there is a saturation point for supporting clients to access unclaimed benefits</p> <p>Several other Centre for Warmth projects support households to access unclaimed benefits, and the learning from the Deeplish Community Centre project will be disseminated across the Centre for Warmth programme.</p> <p>The national landscape is quite different at the time of project registration, versus the start of RIIO-GD2. There have been significant rises in the cost of living and fuel in 2022, and it is important that Cadent's support through the VCMA meets these changes. This Centre for Warmth agreement will offer Cadent insight on the new challenges faced by communities in 2022. This new learning will be circulated across Cadent's entire VCMA programme beyond just Centre for Warmth.</p> <p><u>Updated November 2024</u></p> <p>Every area within Cadent's network sees households suffering from the same issues, fuel poverty and low-income. Cadent have learned that each area also has issues specific to them and these are dealt with differently.</p> <p>The Deeplish Community Centre have found that many of the services are oversubscribed so the continuation of this project is vital. The centre will continue to be hope and support for many community members and families requiring basic to considerable support to sustain during cost-of-living crisis.</p>
<b>Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations</b>	<p><u>Scale of VCMA Project</u></p> <p>Cadent will invest £100,000 in partnership with Deeplish Community Centre over 2 years.</p> <p>This VCMA project will be delivered across a two-year partnership with Deeplish Community Centre. The project will support approximately 2,400 households with a range of services.</p>

The project will benefit households near the community centre, and those in the wider area through the specialist benefits advisors and community outreach worker.

#### SROI Calculations

- Investment = £100,000.00
- 500 per year families supported with benefits and debt advice - £1,717,110
- 2400 per year families given advice on energy efficiency – £3,360,480
- 2400 families advised on CO £41,892
- 400 CO alarms issued to families £4363.87
- 600 per year PSR sign-ups £172,668
- 5-year Social Return on Investment = £5,296,513.87 gross
- 5-year net Present Value = £5,196,513.87

#### Supporting households to maximise their income

Cadent worked with SIA Partners to evaluate the average 5-year gross present value of supporting households to maximise their income. SIA Partner's based their analysis on the "actual" data from a 3-month project between Cadent and NEA, and historic data from NEA over the past 3 years.

SIA Partners calculated an average 5-year gross present value of supporting households to maximise their income of £1,717.11.

#### Educating customers on the dangers of carbon monoxide

Cadent also employed SIA Partners to evaluate the forecasted social return on investment of several RII0-GD2 business plan elements. These elements included CO education, CO alarm distribution and the repair/replacement of gas appliances.

SIA Partners pointed to several factors that influenced the social value generated by educating customers on the dangers of carbon monoxide:

- A reduction in A&E visits linked to CO;
- A reduction in long term hospitalisations linked to CO;
- A reduction in deaths caused by CO;
- A reduction in time of work due to injury caused by CO;
- A reduction in ambulance call outs linked to CO;

SIA Partners calculated the average 5-year gross present value of a CO educational conversation to be £8.73 - this is based on a 1-2-1 conversation with an 80% retention rate.

#### Distributing carbon monoxide alarms to the most at risk households

Approximately 400 of the most at risk households will receive a free CO alarm over the course of the two-year project.

	<p>SIA Partners calculated the average 5-year gross present value of issuing a CO alarm to be £10.91. This equates to a total 5-year gross present value of £4,363.87 across the 400 households.</p> <p><u>Supporting households to register to the Priority Services Register</u></p> <p>Cadent worked with SIA Partners to evaluate the average 5-year gross present value of supporting households to register to the PSR. SIA Partner's based their analysis on the DNO proxy bank value for an avoided stress management course.</p> <p>SIA Partners evaluated an average 5-year gross present value of £143.89 for a single PSR registration.</p> <p><b><u>Updated November 2024</u></b></p> <p>Cadent will provide The Deeplish Community Centre with £191,026.67 of VCMA funding to deliver a four-year project.</p> <p>The additional reach of the extended project has been combined with the actual reach of the project so far and will be divided as per below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,203 individuals will receive advice on energy efficiency = £810,197.31</li> <li>• 3,688 individuals will receive in-depth on-to-one advice on income maximisation = £6,332,701.68</li> <li>• 2,337 individuals will receive education on the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning = £20,402.01</li> <li>• 368 individuals will be aided to register to the PSR = £52,951.52</li> <li>• 361 individuals will be provided with a slow cooker = £85,347.62</li> <li>• 172 individuals will alleviate isolation and loneliness (for additional 17-month extension period) = £146,200.00</li> </ul> <p>Five-year gross present value = £7,447,800.14 One-year gross present value = £1,563,520.03</p> <p>Five-year net present value = £7,256,773.47 One-year net present value = £1,515,763.37</p> <p>SROI Ratio: £1:38</p>
<b>VCMA Project Start and End Date</b>	<p>Project start date: 15/10/2022 Project end date: 31/03/2026</p>
<b>Geographical Area</b>	<p>The project will be delivered in Cadent's Northwest network and will provide benefit to customers located in the Deeplish area of Rochdale.</p>

## Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - PEA Control Table

To ensure that a VCMA project is registered in accordance with the Ofgem VCMA governance document (incl. project eligibility assessment), the below table should be completed as part of the project registration process.	
Stage 1: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team PEA Peer Review	
Date Immediate Team Peer Review Completed: 22/02/25	Review Completed By: Emma Turnbull
Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review	
Date Management Review Completed: 22/01/25	Review Completed By: Guv Dosanjh
Step 3: Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programmes Sign-Off: Phil Burrows	
Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off Date: 21/01/25	
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: March 2025	
Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: March 2025	