

Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)
*Direct Access to Wellbeing Services -
DAWS Birmingham Community Health
Care Foundation Trust Charity*

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

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

Information Required	Description
Project Title	Direct Access to Wellbeing Services - DAWS
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent
New / Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New
Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only	N/A
Date of PEA Submission	January 2024
VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number	Name: Phil Burrows Title: Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery Email: Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com Phone: 07773 545451
Total Cost (£k)	Project funding £1,697,517.00 Project management costs= £67,900.68 Slow cookers £139,200.00
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	£1,904,617.68
Problem(s)	<p>Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK, with a population of 1,144,900. It has the highest unemployment rate in England with the rate of people claiming out of work benefits higher than anywhere else in England and Wales.¹ The level of inequality across Birmingham is highlighted by the difference in life expectancy across the city, with a nine-year difference between the best and worst-off which are only six stops apart on the intercity train.</p> <p>Cold homes cost the NHS in England £1.36 billion per year.² Those living in cold homes place increased pressure on already stretched health and social care services. For a vulnerable person, living in a cold home increases their chance of serious illness or death. They are at higher risk of a heart attack or stroke, respiratory problems, and the flu.³ This occurs not just in extreme winter weather but also in moderate conditions and particularly when outdoor temperatures drop below 6°C. For those with care needs, being housebound increases both the exposure to an underheated home and the cost of heating it. Returning from hospital to a poorly heated home can lead to new illnesses, worsen existing health conditions, and increase the chance of readmission.⁴</p>

¹ www.birminghamworld.uk/news/birmingham-unemployment-rates-4144201

² Cold homes cost NHS £1.36 billion | News | Age UK

³ [Helping to prevent winter deaths and illnesses associated with cold homes | Quick guides to social care topics | Social care | NICE Communities | About | NICE](#)

⁴ [Health professional's cold homes toolkit.pdf \(citizensadvice.org.uk\)](#)

	<p>The Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Charity (BCHC) is an official charity (registration number 1069427) to raise and receive legacies and donations. Charitable funds are a way of providing ‘extras’ not funded as part of core NHS services. Their mission is to make a real difference for their patients, their families and the staff who treat them.</p> <p>One of the charity objectives focuses on supporting health inequality initiatives and ensuring those most vulnerable are accessing as much support as possible from health appointments to support with benefits to accessing food banks. The aim is to ensure patients and the people of Birmingham ‘live healthier, for longer’.</p>
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p><u>Project Scope</u></p> <p>Cadent will provide BCHC with £1,697,517.00 of VCMA funding to deliver a project over 27-months. The project aims to support people suffering from the cost-of-living crisis and those in fuel poverty by providing advice on benefits /income maximisation and offering advice on energy efficiency in the home.</p> <p>Community Wellbeing Officers (CWOs) would be embedded within the community services with access to the most vulnerable individuals and their careers. Nine CWOs would sit within the Adult Community Division supporting those in the community nursing those accessing specialist care (such as diabetes, Parkinson’s disease). Additional CWOs would work across other divisions including the Adults Specialist Rehabilitation Division supporting those most vulnerable being discharged, Children and Families Division supporting school nursing, palliative care, children in care teams, learning disabilities and dental services.</p> <p>The CWOs will provide a complete holistic wellbeing package including having conversations around energy advice, carbon monoxide education and provision of a carbon monoxide alarm. They would raise awareness of the PSR and support sign-on where appropriate. The package would also offer support around accessing health services and support including health appointments and appointment portals, signposting for support around foodbanks, social isolation and general wellbeing. The CWOs will be able to refer individuals onto the specialist within the Direct Access to Wellbeing Services (DAWS) team who will support further with energy advice and benefits support where possible.</p> <p>The DAWS will be supported and led by a dedicated service manager as well as allocated time from a head of service, communications, legal, governance, administration and other Trust wide charity services to ensure delivery of the project. A full volunteer programme will support the project also to further extend the reach and the benefit for the citizens of Birmingham in most need.</p> <p>An events team and community connections lead will enable the overall profile of the project to be raised and support the education of individuals most vulnerable not yet known to the service. This would include, but not limited to, high profile events with workshop/drop-in sessions for those residents in Birmingham fitting the vulnerability criteria.</p>

	<p>The VCMA funding will be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide advice on benefits entitlement. • To provide debt advice. • To raise awareness of CO and PSR. • To provide energy efficiency advice. • To offer slow cooking classes. • To provide access to food through the social supermarket. • To provide access to employment and training resources. <p><u>Objectives of the project</u></p> <p>The success of the project will be measured by meeting the following objectives over a 27-month period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25,000 customers will receive advice on benefits /income maximisation and debt. • 100,000 customers will receive advice on energy efficiency. • 100,000 customers will receive advice on Carbon monoxide awareness. • 100,000 customers will be given advice on the PSR. • 1,000 people will be assisted to sign up to the PSR. • 5,000 customers will receive advice on slow cooking and receive a slow cooker to help reduce energy usage in the home. • Approximately 10,000 customers will be prevented from returning to hospital. <p>As well as achieving the above forecasts for the number of clients benefitting from the project's services, the partnership will also deliver the following positive indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers will report decreased levels of stress and financial worry due to improvements in the level of disposable household income. • Customers will report improved levels of comfort from being in their own home and able to heat it to a healthier temperature. • Customers will report improved feelings of safety from receiving free CO alarms and improving their awareness on the signs, symptoms, and dangers of CO. • Customers will report feeling more secure and happy due to being safe and warm in their own home.
<p>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</p>	<p>We believe that the project meets all of the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance eligibility criteria:</p> <p>a. Have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project:</p> <p><i>The project delivers a positive forecasted social return on investment. This is based on achieving the target reach for, registrations to the PSR and education on carbon monoxide and Energy efficiency. More information can be found in the relevant section below.</i></p> <p>b. Either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or, ii. Provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or, iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO.

	<p><i>The project delivers services that meet all three elements of this criteria. The project will also raise awareness of the dangers of CO and promote registration to the PSR and offer.</i></p> <p>c. Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these:</p> <p><i>Cadent and BCHC have entered into a service agreement that will contain the project objective and actions. Further detail can also be found below.</i></p> <p>d. Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations, and,</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>e. Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding,</p> <p><i>This project will be solely delivered through Cadent's VCMA funding.</i></p>
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</p>	<p>Cadent conducted and continues to obtain extensive stakeholder and customer engagement on its RIIO-GD2 business plans and subsequent VCMA delivery. For instance, we regularly seek to obtain the feedback of stakeholders such as Citizens Advice and National Energy Action (NEA) to understand the needs of customers in vulnerable situations. These regular conversations allow Cadent to gain feedback on the initiatives we are, or should be supporting, and ensure that our VCMA-funded projects are in the best interests of our customers.</p> <p>Stakeholders have provided consistent feedback on the need for energy networks to focus their funding on supporting households most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>This project takes this feedback into account by creating a partnership with a trusted local charity, positioned in an area with levels of deprivation and fuel poverty significantly higher than the national average. Additionally, the customer demographic of >65 years old can be disproportionately impacted by fuel poverty, due to factors such as being more at risk of cold related illness, generally having lower levels of household income, and spending a greater proportion of time at home.</p> <p>In terms of customer engagement, we asked customers for their views on which of the below statements best described their health and financial situation in 2022-2023, when compared to 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My current household's health or financial situation is worse off compared to 2021. • My current household's health or financial situation is the same compared to 2021.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My current household's health or financial situation is better off compared to 2021. <p>60% of participants responded that their households' health or financial situation was worse off this year compared to 2021 levels.</p> <p>This project aims to act upon this customer insight and feedback, through supporting customers in Birmingham impacted by a downturn in their financial health. This will be achieved through offering services such as income maximisation and benefit entitlement checks along with a wraparound support service.</p> <p>The partnership with BCHC will enable Cadent to provide a holistic approach to supporting fuel poor residents that have recently been discharged from hospital and are in a vulnerable situation.</p>
Information Required	Description
Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria	<p><u>Project Outcomes</u></p> <p>The VCMA project will be delivered in partnership with BCHC and aims to support 100,000 people with benefit/income maximisation advice, carbon monoxide advice, energy efficiency advice and PSR awareness.</p> <p>The DAWS project aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice to customers on numerous topics including benefit entitlement checks, energy advice and income maximisation. • Provide customers with advice on CO and offer free alarms to vulnerable customers. • Slow cooking advice to customers to promote the potential affordability, efficiency, and health benefits. • Provide customers with awareness and a means of registering to the priority services register. • Support to help keep patients in their own home and from a further stay in hospital. <p><u>Associated Actions</u></p> <p>BCHC will utilise Cadent's VCMA funding to deliver the following associated actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a service manager who will oversee the project and manage the community wellbeing officers. • 14 community wellbeing officers who will deliver CO, PSR, energy efficiency advice, benefit checks within the patient's home. • A specialist lead who will give 1:1 advice on benefits, form filling, energy efficiency including understanding bills, etc. • Employ events lead and assistant to organise large scale awareness events. • A volunteer co-coordinator who will oversee the training of volunteers within the NHS to give advice on CO and the PSR. <p><u>Success criteria</u></p>

	<p>The success of the project will be evaluated against the meeting of the project's objectives. These objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will reach 100,000 individuals with tailored advice based on the customers' needs throughout the 27-month duration. • 25,000 customers will receive in-depth 1-2-1 advice on income maximisation. • 100,000 people will receive energy efficiency advice. • 100,000 customers will receive advice on CO safety. • 50,000 customers will receive support to sign up to the PSR. • 100,000 customers will receive an awareness conversation on the benefits of the PSR. • 5,000 customers will receive slow cooker advice and a slow cooker. • Approximately 10,000 customers will avoid returning to hospital with cold related illnesses. • Customers will report decreased levels of stress and financial worry due to improvements in the level of disposable household income. • Customers will report improved levels of comfort from being able to heat their homes to a healthier temperature. • Customers will report improved feelings of safety from receiving free CO alarms and improving their awareness on the signs, symptoms, and dangers of CO. • Customers will report feeling safe and secure from staying safe and warm in their own property. <p>This project will deliver a positive social return on investment.</p>
<p>Project Partners and Third Parties Involved</p>	<p>This project will be delivered by BCHC in partnership with Cadent.</p>
<p>Potential for New Learning</p>	<p>The partnership between BCHC and Cadent will allow Cadent access to the most vulnerable people in Birmingham who have recently been discharged from hospital care. This will help to prevent patients of BCHC being re-admitted to hospital due to returning home to cold damp homes with no one to look after them. Many of these patients will be in poverty and struggling to heat a very cold home that may have been empty for long periods whilst they have been in hospital.</p> <p>The intervention of the DAWS team means that fuel poverty, lack of sufficient income, risk of CO poisoning and vulnerability can all be addressed in the patient's home. There will be no time limits for how long they can spend with the person, which other health care professionals come up against, the CWOs will be able to allocate as much time as required, on an individual basis to ensure the patient is left in a safe warm home.</p>
<p>Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations</p>	<p><u>Scale of VCMA Project</u></p> <p>Cadent and BCHC will enter an initial 27-month project.</p> <p>The project aims to support 100,000 households across the project area with a variety of income maximisation, energy efficiency, carbon monoxide safety, and PSR advice.</p> <p>The project's total reach will be divided as below:</p>

- 25,000 customers will receive advice on income maximisation = £42,927,750.
- 100,000 customers will receive in-home energy efficiency advice = £36,777,000.
- 100,000 customers will receive advice on the signs, symptoms and dangers of CO = £873,000.
- 50,000 customers will receive support to sign up to the PSR = £7,194,500.
- 100,000 customers will receive a conversation that improves their awareness of the benefits of the PSR.
- 5,000 Customers will receive advice on slow cooking to enable them to cook more efficiency on a budget and reduce their usage of fuel = £1,182,100.

Total Investment = £1,904,617.68

Five Year Gross Present Value = £88,954,350

One Year Gross Present Value = £17,790,870

Five Year SROI = £87,049,732.32

One Year SROI = £16,838,561.16

SROI ratio = £1:45

Cadent has conducted its own research and has worked with specialists from energy and utilities consultants at SIA Partners to evaluate the gross present value generated by activities typically funded through the VCMA.

The SIA Partners-led work offers Cadent a library of average social values that can be used to produce a forecasted SROI in the absence of partner data.

Supporting households to maximise their income.

SIA Partners based their analysis on data from a three-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

SIA Partners pointed to various 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 five-year gross present value of a carbon monoxide educational conversation to be £8.73 - this is based on a 1-2-1 conversation with an 80% retention rate.

Supporting households to register to the Priority Services Register

SIA Partners based their analysis on the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) proxy bank value for an avoided stress

	management course. SIA Partners evaluated an average five-year gross present value of £143.89 for a single PSR registration.
VCMA Project Start and End Date	Start Date 2 nd January 2024 End date 31 st March 2026
Geographical Area	This project will be delivered on Cadent's West Midlands Network and support the people of Birmingham.

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

In order 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: 19/12/2023	Review Completed By: Kate Ravenscroft
Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review	
Date Management Review Completed: 19/12/2023	Review Completed By: Gurvinder Dosanjh
Step 3: Director of Sustainability & Social Purpose Sign-Off: Mark Belmega	
Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off Date: 19/12/2023	
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: February 24	
Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: February 24	