

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

2021-2028



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks



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FOREWORD



Lisa Doogan
Head of Customer Service
and Stakeholder Strategy

“I’m really proud of the progress we’ve made throughout ED1 against the core activities that customers and stakeholders told us were important to them. This has enabled us to focus and drive improvements in customer satisfaction and complaint resolution timescales, creating a culture of continuous improvement. We also recognised that we have a role to play in identifying and supporting those most vulnerable in our society and, throughout ED1, we have evolved our services to make them inclusive and accessible for all. Of course, a lot has changed in the past six years; we’ve seen a digital revolution, with more people turning to channels like social media and websites to interact with businesses, customer expectations have changed dramatically and our dependence on electricity has moved from powering the basics of the home, to powering most things we do in our lives, from appliances, and smart phones through to Electric Vehicles. We know we’ve got more work to do and that we must make sure the service we provide keeps pace with our customers’ ever-changing needs and, by using their valuable feedback, we can ensure this is met, keeping customers at the heart of everything we do as move forward into the next price control period.”



Hayley Joynson
Head of ED2 Customer Service and
Consumer Vulnerability

“I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to co-create our future ED2 Customer Service and Consumer Vulnerability Strategy, engaging with a diverse range of customers, stakeholders and industry experts. We understand the crucial role we play in providing power to homes, business and local communities and it’s a role we take very seriously. I see the passion and dedication our teams have for the customers and communities they serve, which creates a solid foundation to build upon as we enter our next price control, ED2. Our customers are placing their trust in us to create a strategy that not only responds to their needs and expectations now, but also considers what the world will look like in five years’ time. I’ve heard first-hand that our customers’ needs, and expectations are rapidly changing, and we would be naive to think that this will not continue at the same pace. It’s so important that we provide a service that recognises and supports the individual needs of our customers, offering tailored, personalised solutions whilst also delivering value, convenience and being inclusive and accessible to the diverse communities we serve.”

When contacting us, our customers expect to receive the same consistent level of service regardless of how or when they do so. We are applying significant investment into technology, such as increasing our digital options, and upgrading the traditional contact channels for those who prefer to speak to us by telephone. The transition to Net Zero will also present many exciting opportunities which will begin to change the way we use electricity, from charging electric vehicles to heating homes through ground source heat pumps, our plans include how we’ll support both new and existing customers through a range of dedicated services. Our Strategy sets our clear intent and shared vision, co-created and prioritized by our customers and stakeholders, delivering a customer obsessed culture that delivers for all.”

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND





CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The energy sector is undergoing seismic transformation. Rising energy costs, changing customer expectations and the decarbonisation of our economy is having a profound effect on the energy sector and how we work with our customers. This customer experience strategy sets out our own commitments and leadership in support of these changes and the work we have embarked on to become a:

“customer-driven, digitally-empowered and highly-innovative organisation, committed to building a better world for the diverse communities who depend on us to power their lives.”

Doing the right thing and looking after our customers is at the heart of all that we do, from decisions taken at senior management and board level, to the day-to-day support our frontline advisors and field-based staff provide the 3.8m homes and businesses we serve. This strategy details what we have and continue to learn from our stakeholders and details the challenges we face and need to address.

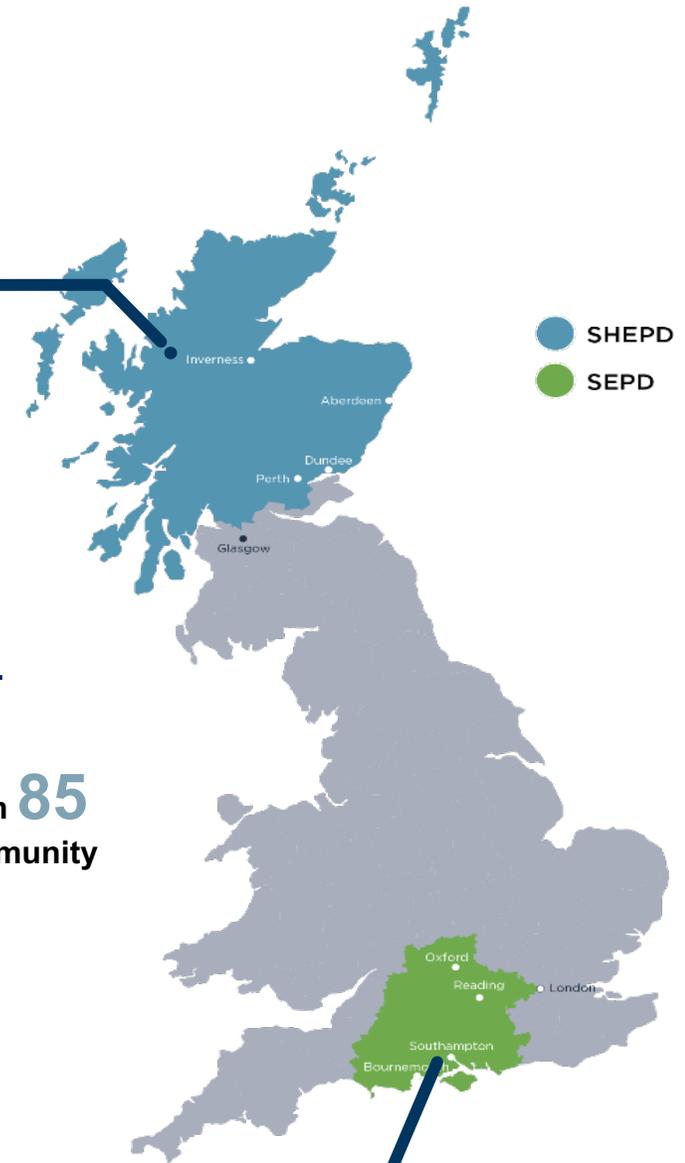
Through our two licensed electricity distribution network areas, **Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD)** and **Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD)**, we operate and invest in an essential part of the UK's electricity system, delivering power to over 3.8 million homes and businesses.

Over **3,700** employees, working from **85** depots and offices in the heart of the community

130,000km of overhead lines and underground cables

106,000 substations

Over **100** subsea cables, powering island communities

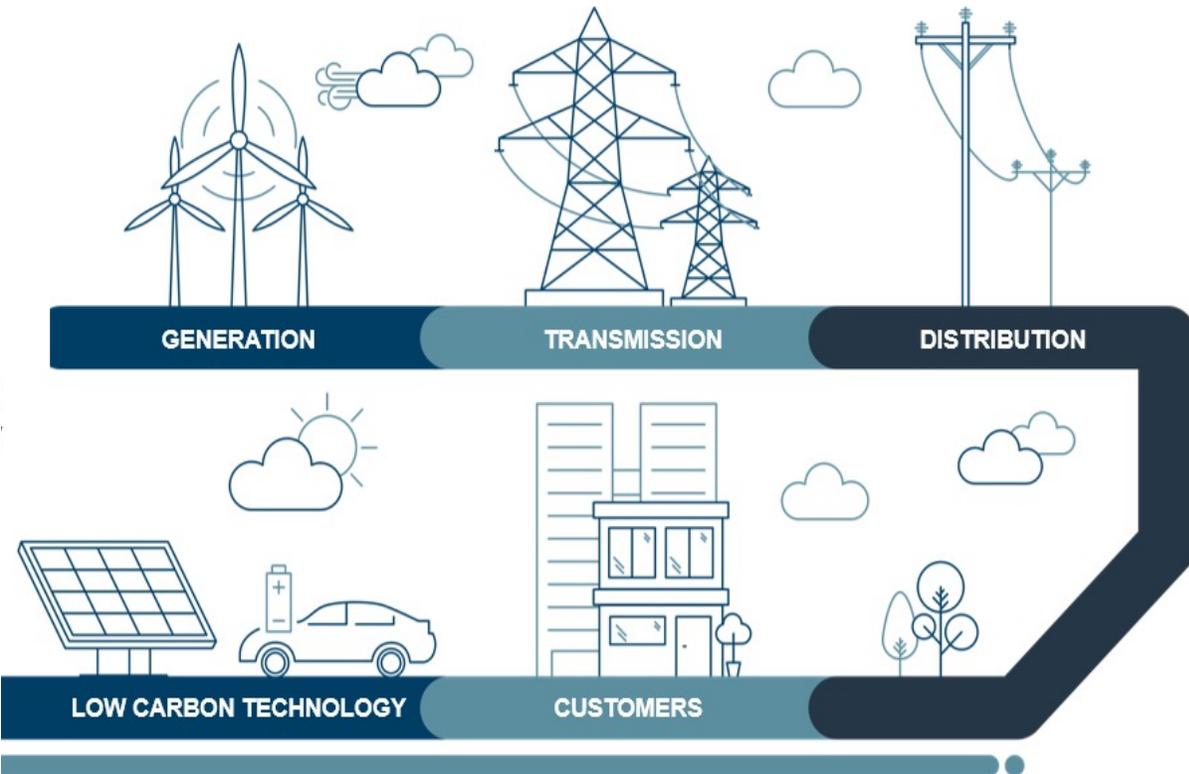




CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Supporting the move to net zero

With the move towards net zero there will be a greater reliance on electricity. Coupled with the added impacts created by the Covid-19 pandemic, we know we need to engage and partner with organisations that will help us to understand how this will impact our customers. The UK is setting out to achieve a net carbon future by 2050 with many milestones in our sector coming much sooner. The SSE Group has set three sustainable development goals that we will need to achieve by 2030. These include:



- Cutting our carbon intensity by 60% - Reduce the carbon intensity of electricity generated by 60% by 2030, compared to 2018 levels, to around 120gCO₂/kWh.
SSEN Distribution will support this by setting an ambitious 1.5 degree Science Based Target requiring at least a 35% reduction in our carbon footprint by 2028.
- Treble renewable energy output – Develop and build by 2030 more renewable energy to contribute renewable output of 30TWh a year.
SSEN will support with readying the network with a total of 8GW of distributed energy resource, such as windfarms, solar and energy storage connecting by 2028
- Help accommodate 10m electric vehicles – Build the flexible electricity network and infrastructure to help accommodate 10m EVs in GB by 2030.
Our aim at SSEN is to facilitate the connection of up to 1.3 million electric vehicles on our network by 2028.

We know our customers are increasingly environmentally conscious. Therefore, understanding our customers and how we best support and serve them is central to us achieving these 2030 goals.



CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Building on our track record

Our focus during RIIO-ED1 has been on placing customers at the heart of everything we do. Through changes to our operating model and the introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, our colleagues are closer than ever to the people we serve, and we are able to provide more tailored frontline services and enhanced digital capabilities. We have also introduced a greater focus on root cause analysis for complaints.

As a result, we have improved customer satisfaction levels since the start of RIIO-ED1 increasing from 84.5% in 2015 to 89.3% in March 2020, across both our networks. Our northern network has consistently ranked in the top five performers across all 14 DNOs. We have also improved our complaints handling performance across both our networks and are resolving 89.06% of complaints within 24 hours, up from 68.54% at the start of RIIO-ED1.

Enhanced services fit for the digital age

We reached over 14,000 stakeholders during our largest ever stakeholder consultation process. Through this engagement we recognise that customer expectations are continuously evolving, shaped by the increased digitalisation of our daily lives and the fact more and more people are working from home. Therefore, we are investing in technology to offer an improved range of innovative contact channels, and our ambition is to become industry leaders in customer service across both our network areas. We'll achieve that through stretching our ambitious goals. We recognise that being there when our customers need us most is vital. We are committed to improving our average speed of answering the telephone from 40 seconds to 20 seconds and achieving a customer satisfaction score of at least 9.2 across all categories, rising to 9.3 for digital channels.

A key enabler of our improved performance is a proposed telephony modernisation supported by our Digitalisation Strategy and Action Plan (DSAP) sets out our aim to be at the forefront of the energy system transformation.



CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

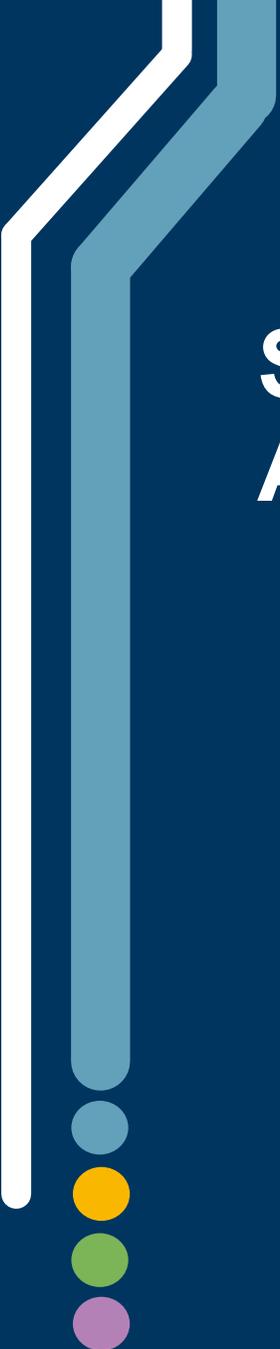
Committing to continuous improvement in our service and operations

But we also know customers expectations on ensuring the safety and reliability of electricity supply and keeping customer bills low. Therefore, delivering operational efficiency and increased performance is central to our strategy of keeping cost increases to a minimum. This has kept us accountable, delivered unprecedented levels of scrutiny and has driven us to co-create a series of changes in our services, operations and business plan that will drive real change for our customers today, as well as future generations.

We will digitalise more of our services, offering customer choice and improving the consistency of our service, achieving a customer satisfaction score of at least 9.2 in every contact area. We will also significantly increase our support for customers in vulnerable situations, providing proactive measures to 200,000 households through fuel poverty and energy efficiency measures to ensure no one is left behind.

Our [vulnerability strategy](#) will help ensure we continue to support those in vulnerable circumstances as our communities face new opportunities and challenges.





SETTING OUT OUR PURPOSE AND VISION





A CHANGE IN FOCUS

Our new **purpose** – we power communities to thrive today and create a net zero tomorrow – sets out our dual aim to support the communities we serve, beyond keeping the lights on, and work collaboratively with them to reach their zero carbon goals.

Our new action-led **vision** – powering change with every connection – places the importance of service and engagement right at the heart of our business and makes clear that every connection we make, be it an infrastructure asset or connection with a customer, stakeholder or colleague, matters.

Our new purpose and vision will be delivered through four clear priorities directly linked to our strategic RIIO-ED2 outcomes. This means our short- and long-term decision-making is focused on the requirements of our RIIO-ED2 plan and what needs to be achieved for our customers.

Supporting these, we have four strategic outcomes:



Delivering a safe, resilient and responsive network



Providing a valued and trusted service for customers and communities



Accelerating progress towards a net zero world



Making a positive impact on society



OUR CUSTOMER PROMISES

Only by truly understanding what was important to our customers could we confidently offer a service that not only meets, but exceeds our customers expectations. We engaged with customers, key stakeholders and local community representatives to set about the task of agreeing a set of clear priorities.

During our engagements we learned what was important to them and how this informed our customers expectations of our role as a Distribution Network Operator in their local communities. This led to the co-creation of our Customer Promises, consisting of 6 Service Promises supported by an additional 5 Vulnerability promises ensuring that these are at the heart of our decision making.

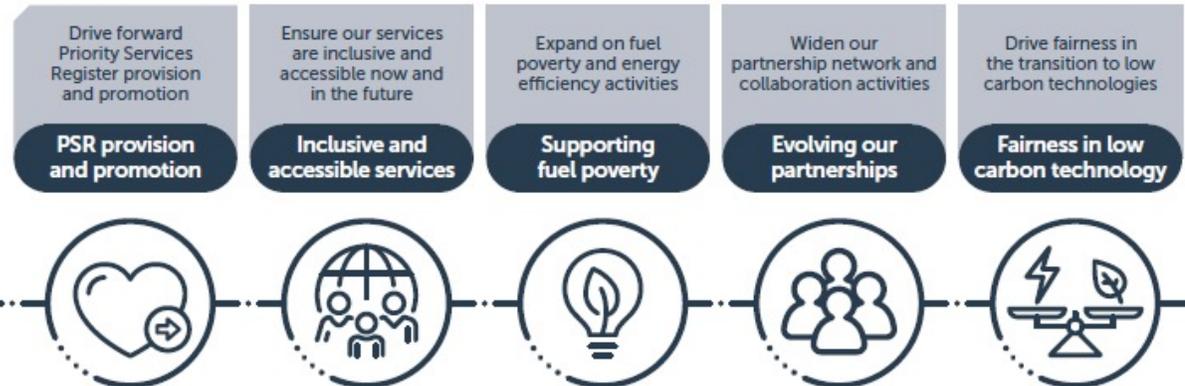


OUR CUSTOMER PROMISES



PROVIDE A VALUED AND TRUSTED SERVICE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES

PROMISING MORE FOR THOSE IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS





HOW WE ARE WORKING TO UNDERSTAND OUR CUSTOMERS

Stakeholders have had a far stronger voice in shaping our strategy and business plans than ever before. Since 2019, we have delivered a programme of inclusive, insightful and iterative engagements which has enabled our stakeholders, customers and consumers to co-create our Business Plan with us. This transformed approach to stakeholder engagement was enabled by a focus on online methods to be as accessible as possible.

Over an 18-month period we undertook an extensive programme of Consumer and Stakeholder engagement. It was important for us that our Customer Service and Vulnerability commitments outlined in our business plan, were driven by insight. During this period, we engaged through a number of mediums, whilst also navigating the Coronavirus Pandemic, engaging with over 14,000 stakeholders during 49 dedicated events, including customers in vulnerable situations, business customers, community representatives, charity groups and customer service experts.

The strength of our plan and our engagement programme, has been improved by our Customer Engagement Group (CEG), established in 2019. The group, chaired by Tracey Matthews, and with expertise from across sectors and segments, has been a valuable critical friend providing scrutiny and challenge to all aspects of our business planning and future approach.

We have also used human-centred design and agile approaches to deliver continuous improvement in our operations and service delivery. Extensive market and best practice research, and tools such as customer journey maps, service blueprints and personas keep us accountable to delivering premium services for all our stakeholders. This approach has culminated in us developing a Service Design Authority which is explained in Section 6 *Keeping our promises*.





WHO WE ENGAGED WITH TO DEVELOP OUR PLANS



14,604

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED



36

ED2 ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



343

INSIGHTS



CONSUMERS	Domestic customers	Customers in vulnerable situations	Transient customers	Next generation bill payers	SMEs	Major energy users
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CUSTOMERS	Distributed generation customers	Builders and developers	Community Energy Schemes	Landowners/ Farmers
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POLICY MAKERS AND INFLUENCERS	Government	Research bodies, policy forums and think tanks	Media	Consumer groups	Regulators
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COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL DECISION MAKERS	Local authorities	Charities	Academic institutions	Housing associations	
	Vulnerable customer representatives	LEPs	Emergency response	Healthcare	Community interest bodies



WIDER INDUSTRY AND VALUE CHAIN	DNOs	Transmission	GDNs	Water	Telecoms	IDNOs	
	ICPs	Consultants	Energy suppliers	EV charging	Other supply chain	Storage & renewable providers/installers	Transport and Highway agencies

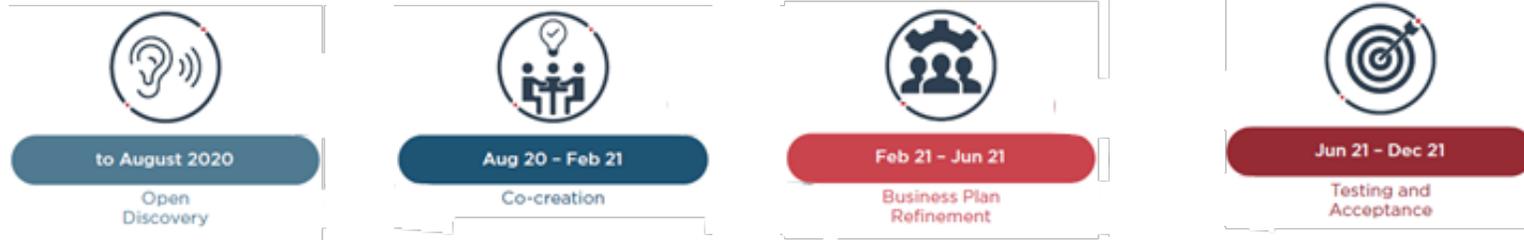


PARTNERS AND ENABLERS	Current and future employees	Contractors	Service partners	Shareholders	Investors	Business advisors	Trade Unions
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N.B. For the benefit of this document, we have used the term customers to denote everyone who uses our network. In the segmentation inserted above, we breakdown in detail who we spoke with.



ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT



Our Customer Experience strategy is based on our Enhanced Engagement programme, which is described in Annex C_03.1. This began with three phases of engagement to co-create the strategy and outputs with stakeholders that were published in our Draft Plan. Details of this engagement can be found in Appendix A.

Final Customer Experience Strategy Testing and Acceptance

Following the submission of the Draft Plan to Ofgem, we moved to Phase 4 of Enhanced Engagement in which we tested the strategy and outputs with 2,025 stakeholders through 11 events. This led to further enhancements and refinements, which are included in the final strategy and are detailed in the table below. Where we were unable to accord with stakeholder views, this is noted.

77%

Final acceptability testing of our strategy and outputs demonstrated that 74% of consumers find them acceptable and affordable



Draft Plan triangulation outcome key

-  Findings converge to support proposals.
-  Findings generate new insights that lead to further refinement of proposal.
-  The proposed approach diverges from the findings.

TRIANGULATION AND CHANGES BETWEEN DRAFT AND FINAL PLAN

NEW/ENHANCED/REFINED indicates the scope of change to each output between Draft and Final Plan.

Strategy/Output	Phase 1-3 Enhanced Engagement	Phase 4 Outputs and cost testing	Acceptability
Overall Customer Experience strategy	<p>Stakeholders said They want more transparency on the customer bill and for this to include information about where their money is spent and SSEN branding.</p> <p>Our response  Information on the bill components and how this is conveyed to customers' needs to be addressed at an industry level.</p>	<p>Stakeholders said Showing transparency and accountability for delivery of the plan is important and should be considered.</p> <p>Our response We investigated creating a 'standards of service' commitment that would outline our minimum levels of service and voluntary compensation. Whilst we will believe this is the right thing to do, we are unable to commit to delivering this without investment in our infrastructure. We will explore this further in ED2.</p>	77% for A Valued and Trusted Service for our Customers and Communities strategic outcome
	<p>Stakeholders said Customers should be able to select their communication preferences.</p> <p>Our response  The customer services strategy will offer opportunities for self-service as well as traditional phone contact channels. We put greater emphasis on expanding telephony options as a result of stakeholder feedback that highlighted the existence of 'Generation Landline'.</p>		
	<p>Stakeholders said They don't understand who we are or what we do and how the services we provide impact them.</p> <p>Our response  We will create a Customer Focus Group with domestic, SME and vulnerable customers, which will meet quarterly to review our approach and strategies and gain their insight to inform our ongoing plan</p>	<p>Stakeholders said That our customer service plan was very important and felt having a dedicated plan demonstrated care and commitment.</p> <p>Our response We formalised our Customer Experience Strategy outlining our vision and approach for customer service.</p>	



TRIANGULATION AND CHANGES BETWEEN DRAFT AND FINAL PLAN (Cont'd)

Strategy/Output	Phase 1-3 (pre-Draft)	Phase 4 refinement (post-Draft)	Acceptability
<p><i>Unchanged</i></p> <p>Output: Meet our targets through our plan and strive to further achieve a customer satisfaction score of at least 9.2 across all categories</p>	<p>Stakeholders said Increasing our Broad Measure of Customer Satisfaction scores to 9.4/10 in both regions, rather than 8.9/10 in the South and 9/10 in the North (noting that current scores are 8.67/10 in the South and 9.19/10 in the North) is a medium priority.</p> <p>Our response We selected a target of 9.2 to reflect stakeholder views and balance ambition with cost.</p>	<p>Stakeholders said 25% of customers in the south and 24% in the north said this is high priority, 54% in the south and 60% in the north said it is medium priority.</p> <p>Our response We retained this level of ambition.</p>	77% (tested with digital satisfaction)
<p><i>Unchanged</i></p> <p>Output: Maintain/ improve our industry-leading 9.3 digital satisfaction score</p>		<p>Stakeholders said 25% of customers in the south and 24% in the north said this is high priority, 54% in the south and 60% in the north said it is medium priority.</p> <p>Our response We retained this level of ambition</p>	77% (tested with overall customer satisfaction)
<p><i>Unchanged</i></p> <p>Output: Improve average speed of response to 20 seconds on the telephone for power cuts and to five minutes on social media.</p>		<p>Stakeholders said 30% of customers in the south and 39% in the north said improving social media response to 5 minutes was high priority, and 48% in the south and 42% in the north said it was medium priority. SME's said rated telephony response as important.</p> <p>Our response We are committed to improving our speed or response and have a full package of investment to deliver this improvement</p>	86%
<p><i>Unchanged</i></p> <p>Output: Meet our targets through our plan and further strive to reduce complaints by 5%, resolve 75% of complaints at first contact, 90% within 1 day and 99% within 1 month by 2028</p>	<p>Stakeholders said Customers gave medium priority to increasing the number of complaints resolved within a day from 85% to 92%.</p> <p>Our response We selected a target of 90% to reflect stakeholder views and balance ambition with cost.</p>	<p>Stakeholders said Expert Stakeholders scored our level of ambition of resolving 75% of complaints on first contact and 90% within a day as 8.6/10, rating the benefit to customers of being able to raise and track a complaint online 8.6/10</p> <p>Our response We remain focussed on delivering our complaint targets, with the introduction of a partnership with an independent complaint platform, to help simply raising and tracking a complaint.</p>	83%



DEFINING OUR CUSTOMERS AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR NEEDS





DEFINING OUR CUSTOMERS AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR NEEDS

To support the delivery of our services and drive continuous improvement we have created a series of personas that represent a significant portion of the customers we serve in the real world. These personas remind us of the customers that rely on our services and help us empathise with their needs so that we can create different experiences and services for a specific somebody, rather than a generic everybody.

In the next section we introduce five typical SSEN customers in two key customer segments – domestic and business.

N.B. These personas represent just a few of our customers and is by no means an exhaustive representation of all the customers we serve.





OUR DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS



Peter The home working professional

Working from home, Peter's work performance and income rely heavily on devices that require power supply. For him, unexpected power cut may result in lost working hours and damaged reputation, as he might not be able to provide to his client the documents he promised to deliver within their agreed timeline.

SSEN provides Peter with information about planned power cuts upfront, so that he can prepare and plan his work day accordingly.



Kate The low-income senior

Kate lives by herself in a small village. She relies on electricity for oxygen supply and for watching TV which is both entertainment and company for her. That is why she feels anxious about the next potential power cut. She calls SSEN when she needs us and always wants to speak to a person.

Kate receives advice on energy efficiency and fuel poverty support based on her financial situation.



Adesh The energised family

As a father to two young children, Adesh wants to switch his car with an electric vehicle. He feels a sense of duty to act more thoughtfully towards the environment and the world his children are growing and living in. He contacts SSEN as a first step of preparation for having an EV charger installed at his home. He wants to discover more details about the process and to find out what backup options he might have in case of a power cut.

SSEN provides him with the comfort that in case of an outage, he will have information about and access to the closest working charging point.



OUR BUSINESS CUSTOMERS



Clare
The small business owner

As a small business owner, Clare wants to make sure the café she runs meets her customers expectations. Located in a busy area full of offices, Clare knows that her customers often rely on her sandwiches and salads for lunch. She is worried that if she fails to meet those expectations, her disappointed customers will turn to other restaurants in the area, and she will lose a significant part of her income.

To maintain the level of service she wants to provide, Clare keeps track of updates about outage, and prepares well in advance with a generator for alternative power supply. She is interested in reducing her energy costs and carbon footprint and wants to connect solar panels to her café, speaking with SSEN to get advice on connection options



Bruce
The low carbon installer

As an installer of low carbon technology, Bruce has built his network of customers over the years by building and maintaining great relationships and offering timely high standard of work delivery. Often Bruce is not able to provide customers with updates because he is awaiting work to be done by their DNO. He wants to reduce the dependency on DNO data which can delay the process.

To answer Bruce's needs, SSEN is providing a self-serve portal, through which Bruce can raise applications to connect EV charging points and heat pumps. In addition, Bruce is able to book load checks and other services with us.



OUR CUSTOMER PRINCIPLES INFORM OUR FUTURE STRATEGY

By building a better understanding of our customers through the personas, we have drawn up a set of experience principles which will unify our approach. These principles were co-created with our customers as a way to keep their interests front of mind when designing services. This checklist will act as a criterion for designing effective customer experiences:

1

Help customers feel confident to proceed at every step of their journey. Identify the required knowledge at all stages of the experience and help customers cross knowledge gaps with ease.

2

Don't make customers second guess what we tell them. Earn the trust of customer by clearly explaining actions and decisions throughout the process.

3

Never leave the customer wondering about what is happening. Tell customers what is happening and what will happen through proactive notifications at each step of the journey.

4

Do the heavy lifting for the customer. Don't make customers work hard to progress their journey. Reduce customer effort throughout the journey from application to payment to managing third parties.

5

Own the customers' problems and keep them moving forward. Help customers make progress on their journey regardless of the stage. Do more to ensure customer issues are your teams' issues. Nothing should be someone else's problem.





A CHANGING WORLD AND EVOLVING PREFERENCES





EXTERNAL FACTORS ARE INFORMING OUR CUSTOMER-LED APPROACH

The world is changing and we must support customers in the transition to a smart, flexible net zero future. This has required us to consider a level of policy and system change in the energy sector that has, arguably, never been greater.

We have worked with stakeholders and customers to identify the key external drivers – economic, social and technological – that must be addressed as we develop our network, manage our organisation and serve our customers. These can be summarised into 10 core drivers that have and will continue to frame our thinking in relation to how we serve all customers and plan for the future.

Others challenges and considerations may emerge and we will continue to review and refresh this perspective in our ongoing engagement and planning activities.



1, Meeting the net zero challenge is a central focus
UK Government has committed to reaching net zero by 2050 and is targeting a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 compared with a 1990 baseline. The Scottish Government has committed to net zero by 2045 and emissions reduction of 75% by 2030 when compared with the same base.

Stretching targets have been set for EVs and heat pumps. This is driving significant changes to the way we operate our network; accelerating action to reduce our own emissions and radically changing the way we plan for load growth. The increased decentralisation of our network, connection of new technologies and required pace of change could impact levels of network reliability. We must be prepared and plan to avoid this outcome.



2. A local and just transition

Every customer, consumer and community will have a role to play in meeting net zero. In managing the energy transition, we must be responsive to local impacts while simultaneously helping secure benefits for all customers, particularly those most vulnerable.



3. Ongoing impact of Covid-19

The social and economic impact of the pandemic is expected to be felt into RIIO-ED2. We must plan and respond appropriately, particularly in our services for the most vulnerable, and by ensuring our actions continue to support a green recovery and match consumer expectations.



4. Digitalisation and open data

Digitalisation will lead to a deeper understanding of our network. We must use open data platforms and find new ways of generating data insights that will drive better asset management, integrate with the whole system for energy, and support emerging markets.



5. Strategic resilience

Climate change is normalising previously exceptional weather events that test network resilience. Cyber crime is growing and our increasingly digitally enabled assets must be protected. Energy transformation is driving increased demand for finite skills. We must manage these and other issues to maintain reliability for customers.



6. Affordability for consumers

We cannot deliver net zero at any cost. Through continued innovation, efficiency, balanced decision-making and stakeholder support, we must find a way to keep bills affordable, while implementing the scale of change and investment required. This focus on cost has amplified due to the energy price crisis.



7. Whole system working and delivering a DSO

The frameworks and structures that will define Distribution System Operation will be put in place during RIIO-ED2. We must collaborate across vectors and sectors to develop shared plans and address common challenges to deliver change at pace, always with the customer in mind.



8. Changing customer expectations and needs

How we heat our homes, power our transport and adapt to working from home has put greater dependency on the electricity system. We must configure our services to meet these changing requirements in line with customers' needs.



9. Serving our most remote communities

The communities we serve are diverse and each face different challenges. We must be flexible to amend our proposals and activities to meet local needs. Our most remote communities in the Scottish islands rely on us to provide reliable essential services.



10. Safety and compliance

Safety remains our number one priority. We must stay vigilant around new technologies, ways of working and changing customer behaviours that might introduce new safety risks. Regulation will also evolve and we must be ready to act and stay compliant with current and future legislation.



SERVICE TOUCHPOINTS



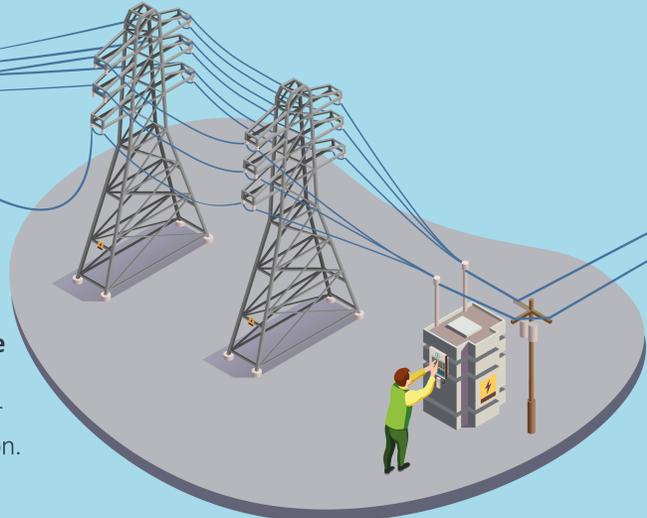
KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON

Extreme weather response

SSEN goes out and fixes the disrupted cables or any other faults to get electricity back on.

Planned power cuts for maintenance work

When power needs to be temporarily cut due to maintenance work, customers in the planned area are informed well in advance.



CONNECTING TO OUR NETWORK

Connections

SSEN helps to connect homes or developments to electricity, or increase supply to existing connections.



SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

Maintenance services

SSEN offer free of charge maintenance and safety services.

Priority services

SSEN proactively reach out to vulnerable customers to ensure they have the right support. ▶



TOWARDS A NET ZERO WORLD

SSEN facilitates the connection of low carbon technologies to the electricity network. We operate a flexible network of distribution grids to meet the future energy demands with the increase of services such as electric car charging and low carbon products.



Community Engagement

Our Community-based Customer and Community Advisors proactively engage with local community groups, parish, and district councils as well as local residents to offer advice and guidance. SSEN also provides face-to-face information and additional support during power cuts.

How we will interact and provide services to our customers now and in the future.



**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR
FUTURE STRATEGY AND WHAT
WILL CHANGE FOR OUR
CUSTOMERS?**





OUR APPROACH TO HORIZON SCANNING

Customer input was at the centre of our approach to developing our future strategy and plan. In order to do this effectively we partnered with a customer insight and service design agency, Experience Lab, and with customer service experts through our membership with the Institute of Customer Service.

This enabled us to build an authentic understanding of the people we serve by talking to them directly; and understand best practice, what the service offering in other industries looks like, as well as building in changing behaviours and expectations. An overview of our approach is shown below:



PARTNER

We partnered with experts to build our own capability and understanding.



UNDERSTAND

We spoke and surveyed a range of stakeholders to thoroughly understand needs and opportunities.



DESIGN

We ran a series of design sprints and workshops to co-create service improvements and new initiatives



DELIVER

Alongside the co-creation of a strategy and plan, we worked with ExperienceLab to build our own capability in innovation and continuous improvement



2021 - 2023 Embedding the foundations

As we finish our current price control, it's important the foundations of brilliant service are embedded within our business.

We will ensure our processes are fit for purpose, our people are trained to provide an excellent standard of service and our customer-facing digital services serve the needs of customers.

- Fully mapped customer journeys of core services, helping us understand our current state journeys, and a future state design of how journeys will look – providing a north star for optimal customer experience
- We will train all 3,974 employees in SSEN distribution through our Empowered to Care Programme – a customer service training programme endorsed and accredited by The Institute of Customer Service, focused on providing our teams with the skills, knowledge, tools and behaviours to provide a world-class standard of service.
- We will launch a new website, optimising digital journeys and improving self-serve functionality.



2023 – 2026 Evolving our services

Moving into a new price control won't change our service standards overnight, but within the first three years, we plan to evolve our services to meet our customers growing needs and expectations.

We will invest in our technology solutions to evolve the standard of service provided, continue to develop our people's skillset and enhance service offerings we provide.

- We will introduce our Customer Contact Strategy, evolving our telephony systems, improving our digital channels and providing more self-serve functionality than ever before.
- We'll continue to invest in skills of our people, empowering them to serve our 3.8 million customers.
- We will deliver a programme of tailored support and education focussed on helping customers transition to the new Low Carbon Technologies.
- We will expand our customer facing roles within the communities we serve to be there when our customers need us most.



2026 – 2028 Service of the future

The past 7 years has taught us that the services we offer to customers are transforming at a rapid pace, and as this pace accelerates, we need to be ready for the service of the future.

Our customer journeys will be fit for the future, and serve the growing needs of our current and future consumer base.

- Our Customer Contact Strategy will be enhanced to move to a Omni-channel model, making it easier than ever to interact with us.
- We will continue to invest in our data and digitalisation programme, ensuring we're one step ahead of changing customer needs and expectations.
- We will understand the skills our workforce need to support our customers with the new and advancing technology.
- A clear understanding of how we can use advancing technology and innovative solutions to drive forward our offering of the future.

Our commitment

Putting our
commitment
into **action**



EMBEDDING OUR FOUNDATIONAL ECOSYSTEM

How our key investments will improve the level of service to our customers

2021 - 2023

OUR PEOPLE

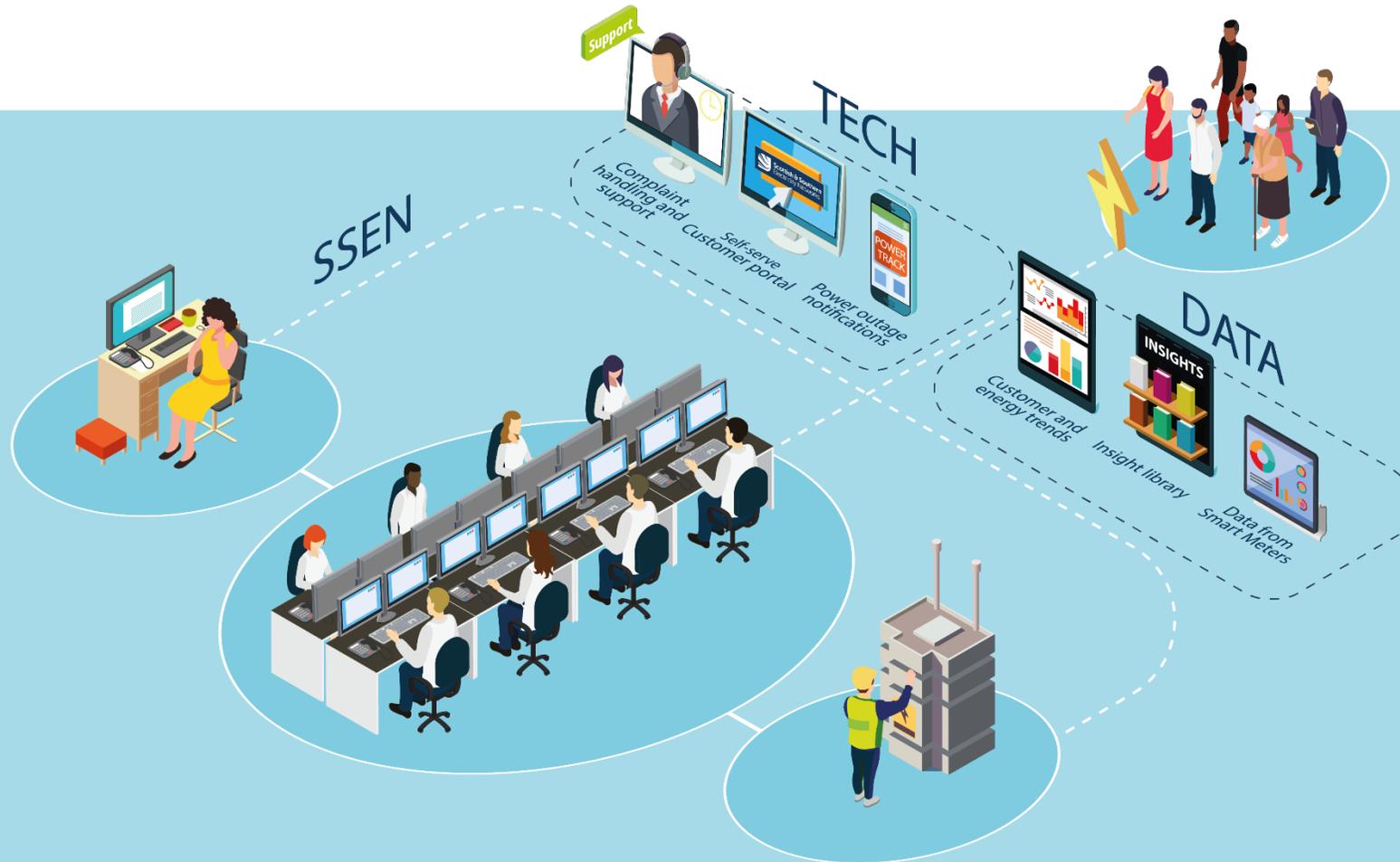
A fully trained, **customer-obsessed workforce** of 3,974 people working from home or across our regional depots.

They are able to understand customer needs, expectations, and behaviours as we as recognise and support vulnerability and resolve complaints.

OUR PROCESSES

A fully established Service Design Authority, providing ownership, governance and accountability for customer journeys and development of service standards.

Baseline standards of service embedded across all services, enabling a strong foundation to build upon as we progress into RIIO-ED2.



OUR TECHNOLOGY

A new website, built with customer input and putting user experience and digital accessibility first. It will enable customers to easily self-serve if they choose to, whilst providing simple routes to human customer contact, ensuring no customer gets left behind.

We will enhance our Power Track app and website to enable customers who have a Smart meter installed to use our power check. This will identify if the power outage are due to an internal fault on the property or a fault on our network. We will then provide appropriate advice or log a fault with our engineering teams depending on the outcome of the power check.

OUR DATA

We will build a strong suite of customer data and insights, helping us to make informed decisions to improve the services we offer.



LOOKING FORWARD

The roadmap into the future

2023 - 2026 Evolving our services



OUR PEOPLE

A team of over 300 customer service specialists who are provided with an advanced training and support programme. This is to empower our people to deliver above and beyond for our customers.

A specialist vulnerability team, able to provide extremely high standards of support to our growing Priority Services Register.



OUR PROCESSES

Visible progression of service standards for our customers in improvement of our core customer journeys.

Established routes of support to offer to our most vulnerable customers, including easy access to energy efficiency advice for fuel poor customers.



OUR TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

Replacements for legacy systems in place, providing a single source of truth of customer relationship management, improved capability for fault response and enhanced and open data provisions.

An enhanced telephony platform, which will provide a more tailored service based on preferred contact methods. We will also introduce artificial intelligence and virtual assistant which will further improve the speed, accuracy and level of information to customers who contact us.

2026 - 2028 Service of the future



OUR PEOPLE

We will have instilled a customer obsessed-culture which defines our DNA as an organisation.

A suite of professional qualifications will be offered to our teams, enabling a workforce of highly trained individuals in customer service.



OUR PROCESSES

Industry leading journeys will be in place, measured externally and co-created with customers.

We will have Individualised service offerings, providing flexibility in our services depending on an individual's needs.



FUTURE

Understand how technology, innovation, and data can help us create an offering which is sophisticated and anticipates customers needs in advance so as to provide a tailored solution.

How our investments will change the way our customers interact with us

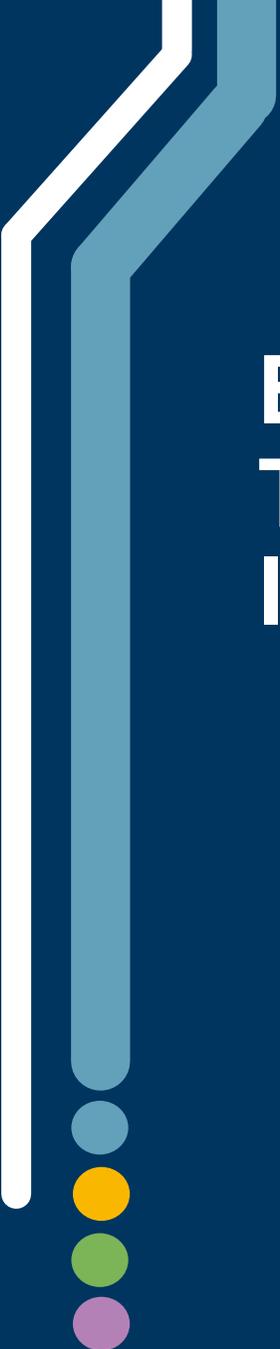
Persona	The home working professional 	The energised family 	Low-income senior 	The small business owner 	The low carbon installer 
2021 - 2023 Embedding the foundations	Relies on electricity to work remotely	Finds their nearest live electric charging point in a power cut to charge their vehicle	Relies on electricity for oxygen supply and for entertainment/company (TV)	Relies on electricity to keep his business going	Raises applications to connect EV charging points and heat pumps via our self-serve portal
	Uses the Power track app to check on planned power interruptions	Calls SSEN if further support is needed during a power cut	Call's SSEN when they need us and speaks to a person	In a power cut calls the SSEN service hotline	Is able to book load checks and other services with us
	Is able to self-serve online for most of their needs and receives proactive notifications when his power is affected		Receives advice on energy efficiency and fuel poverty support to help with low financial stability	When applying for a connection can take advantage of the online application portal, saving time having to call SSEN.	
2023 – 2026 Evolving our services	Tracks the progress during a power cut on their app, getting real time proactive updates	Receives tailored notifications of upcoming maintenance affecting their power	Takes advantage of digital upskilling training funded by SSEN	Makes a complaint via 'resolver' enabling him to self-serve complaint resolution and track progress	Receives a visual view of EV and Heat Pump uptake across our regions, helping them inform decisions over best placed locations
	Uses the self serve portal to request an automated quote to install the supply for their electric vehicle touch point.	Children engage in the future careers programmes learning about STEM subjects	Receives a Personalised Resilience plan with tailored advice on managing during a power cut. Including battery back up options for her oxygen supply	Is on our Business Support Register receiving extra support on resilience and business planning	Is able to receive an 'ok to connect' through a simple postcode search
2026 – 2028 Service of the future	Accesses a live stream of the fault affecting their power, being repaired by the SSEN team	Receives an alert that they have lost power to the home due to a internal issue as there is no network issue	Using Smart data, SSEN identifies additional needs that the customer may require support with	Receives a priority service from us based on business needs	When more complex works are required, such as reinforcement, is able to self-quote and design these through our website
					Has the ability to integrate with our core systems to streamline own operations



OUR HIGH LEVEL OUTPUTS FOR ED2

Output	Type	Ambition level	Consumer benefits
Customer Satisfaction Survey	ODI-F	Meet our targets through our plan and strive to further achieve a score of at least 9.2 across all categories.	Improved service for all our customers across a number of different channels, including diversified self-serve options alongside traditional means of communication
Digital Satisfaction	ODI-F	Maintain/improve our industry leading 9.3 digital satisfaction score.	
Average speed of response	SSEN Aim	Improve average speed of response to 20 seconds on the telephone for power cuts and to five minutes on social media.	
Resolving complaints and simplifying our processes	ODI-F	Meet our targets through our plan and further strive to reduce complaints by 5%, resolve 75% of complaints at first contact, 90% within 1 day and 99% within 1 month by 2028.	Simplified processes and quicker resolution of complaints
Meeting the needs of small/medium businesses	SSEN Aim	Introduce a Business Support Register.	Reduce the impact from supply interruptions: SMEs will receive extra support to ensure better resilience and communication to cope in power cuts
Personal Resilience Plans	CVP	Proactively provide PSR customers with Personal Resilience Plans containing specific advice tailored to a customer's individual needs, helping them know what to do during power cuts. As part of the review we will also assess if further resilience is required in the form of battery back-up specifically for medically dependant customers.	Increased service to customers in vulnerable situations through bespoke Personal Resilience Plans, providing £3.9m net consumer benefits

More detail on the complete set of Customer Experience and Consumer Vulnerability outputs can be found in our vulnerability strategy and ED2 Business Plan.



**ENSURING WE OFFER SERVICES
THAT ARE ACCESIBLE AND
INCLUSIVE FOR ALL**





DIGITAL EXCLUSION

We understand that digital exclusion is a reality for many of our customers and wider communities. We are committed to providing additional support to enable our customers to get the most out of our online services.



Digital skills

Being able to use digital devices (such as computers or smart phones and the internet.)

Government data highlights that 11.3m adults in the UK do not have the full range of basic skills to operate effectively in day to day life, with 5.4m working adults being without basic digital skills.

Introducing our Digital Ambassadors Programme:

Through our extensive engagement, we know that digital exclusion is a real concern, especially as the transition to Net Zero introduces increased use of smart technology.

Therefore, we have committed in our RIIO-ED2 business plan, that from 2023, our Digital Ambassador programme will be introduced. They will be available to support our customers who may need a little extra help accessing our online services and will be trained to offer advice and hints and tips.

In addition, we will also have Digital Ambassadors placed in the communities we serve, who will be offering free digital upskilling workshops.

25 trained per year **125 in total over ED2**





RESPONDING TO CHANGING NEEDS, NEW TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Keeping up with the pace of change is important, whether that be customer expectations, advancing technology or revisions to net zero and related policy.

We have defined a Customer Discovery allowance which will enable us to create a programme of work, this will allow us to research, test and respond flexibly to these changing needs. This reinforces our commitment to keep our customers at the forefront of our plans also establishing a dedicated budget for our customer focus group to ensure their input and suggestions are enduring throughout ED2.

We will use the Customer Discovery allowance to invest in research and development into changing customer expectations driven by economical impacts such as the energy price crisis and Net Zero, to truly understand the impact on our customers every day lives. This will enable us to keep pace, adapting, enhancing and refining the services we offer, reviewing the technology we use and taking advantage of innovation so that we deliver a valued and trusted service for our customers and communities.



Customer Focus Group

Our Customer Focus Group will represent a range of customer personas across the SSEN network including representation from our SEPD and SHEPD licence areas. The Focus Group will;

Meet quarterly with key SSEN representatives to;

- Review SSEN customer service performance, using metrics such as our customer satisfaction score, complaints score
- Share our progress on continuous customer service improvement projects
- Revisit the customer service strategy and accompanying roadmap
- Engage on key topics that are important to our customers to gain further insight, input and engagement

Interact with frontline teams to gain insight into the role of SSEN;

- Members will have the opportunity to visit key SSEN sites to understand how we operate, such as our Customer Service Centres
- Have the opportunity take part in operational visits to see how our engineers undertake their work in real life situations

Hold SSEN to account against the Customer Promises and ensure we provide a service that meets the needs of our customers;

- Through collaboration the group will ensure that customer voices are heard and that the introduction or improvement of new or existing services are co-created with the group
- Support with wider customer engagement, with the group providing real, impartial insights, helping SSEN to focus on building a valued and trusted service

DELIVERING ON OUR AMBITION TO BECOME A:

“customer-driven, digitally-empowered and highly-innovative organisation, committed to building a better world for the diverse communities who depend on us to power their lives.”





BUILDING A CUSTOMER-OBSESSED CULTURE

By developing our people we also transform our customers' experience. Our teams will be highly trained with the right skills to deliver for our customers. We will make sure our people are equipped with the skills, knowledge, tools and behaviours to deliver a world class standard of service to our customers.

Our cultural initiatives:

Employee Volunteering – Be The Difference days

Employee Skills Based Pay

Empowered to Care Culture Change Programme

Business Support Register

Personal Resilience Planning (CVP)

Customer Standards of Service

Through cultural initiatives and staff training ...

... we inspire staff and a change mindset ...

... which delivers customer-led services.





MAKING THE MOST OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS

We recognise in order to deliver the breadth of services required we need create partnerships to ensure we have the support in place for our customers. These partnerships serve a dual purpose: to help shape and inform our approach and to support us to deliver.

Partnerships that help inform our approach for customers:

Our partnerships with Citizens Advice and the Institute of Customer Service identify where further support or services are required to meet the needs of our customers,

Furthermore, we have formed a Inclusive Service Panel (ISP) which was formed in 2017, to challenge thinking and provide innovative suggestions and practical ideas to ensure we continue to deliver progressive, inclusive and accessible services to all our customers.

Partnerships helping to deliver:

Through partnering with **Be the Business** we will strengthen the support offered to our SME customers so that they are given the same opportunities and access to tailored resilience plans as our domestic customers.

Through signposting to Be the Business our SME customers will have access to a range of coaching, information and tailored support.

Resolver offer free and impartial advice for customers who wish to raise a complaint, providing easy to use tracking and step by step process on the journey of their complaint.

This service also provides rich data on the root causes of complaints enabling SSEN to quickly understand areas requiring improvement.



OUR PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Like our customers, our partnerships are continually evolving; and our partnerships model is a framework that guides our approach to forging the right partnerships to solve specific customer needs as they emerge. The model outlined below will support our approach continuous improvement.

Define outcome

Through customer insights identify where further support or services are required to meet the needs of our customers, which require specific knowledge and therefore are best delivered through a partnership.

Partners

Identify partners that will support the delivery of positive outcomes for customers.

Framework

Agree partnership framework including targets and KPI's to ensure the best outcomes for customers

Management

Forge partnerships that are underpinned by clarity, commitment, trust, accountability, governance, sharing, joint planning, best value, and evaluation

Outputs

Measure of outcomes/benefits which add value to stakeholders/customers financially and non-financially through agreed DNO SROI model





DELIVERING ON OUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CONSUMER VULNERABILITY STRATEGY (1)

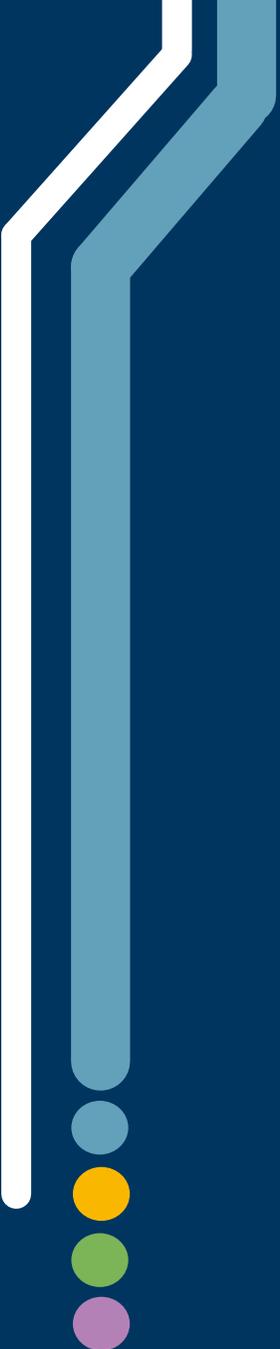
Between our draft and final Business Plans we have undertaken detailed deliverability assessments, to ensure that our anticipated people investment reflects the requirement driven by our outputs. It is important for us to demonstrate how we intend to scope out new roles, enhance new and existing skills required, supported by an operating model that complements our plan. We will also support deliverability by the introduction of new IT and Digital systems.

Commitment	Overview
Board Level Vulnerability Sponsor	We will introduce a Vulnerability business sponsor at board level
New Leadership role	We recognise the that delivering our newly created Vulnerability Strategy requires governance, accountability and dedicated focus. Therefore we are proposing to onboard a new role - Head of Consumer Vulnerability.
Managing our partners	It's clear that Partnerships are key in the successful delivery of our business plan. Therefore we are proposing to onboard a new role – Partnership Manager to identify, implement and manage new partnerships between SSEN and specialist 3rd parties.
Supporting Education Initiatives	We are excited to play a role within our local communities providing education. Therefore we are proposing to on-board a number of Educational Liaison Officers who possess specialist skills to deliver meaningful education to our communities.
Additional Community Vulnerability Support	We have listened to our customers and stakeholders and understand the desire to have dedicated vulnerably operational experts within our local communities, as well as our current dedicated strategic vulnerability experts. Therefore we are proposing to on-board a number Vulnerability Delivery Managers to work locally. We are also increasing the number of Customer Community Advisors across both licence areas, to further enhance the face to face support provided for our most vulnerable.
Priority Services Support	We want to enhance the support to customers in vulnerable situations, and ensure that where we increase registrations we have flexibility in our resourcing model to cope with increased capacity. Therefore we will be increasing our Priority Service Register in-house team.



DELIVERING ON OUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CONSUMER VULNERABILITY STRATEGY (2)

Commitment	Overview
Customer Service Support	We will be increasing our In-house Customer Service Advisors to support our Customer Service commitments.
Customer Complaints Support	We will be increasing our in-house Complaints Advisors to support the reduction in timescales when things go wrong.
Training and On-going Education	We will be providing newly created training for all Customer roles around energy efficiency, fuel poverty and our new standards of service.
Service Design Authority	To support the transition into ED2, and strengthen deliverability, we will in the last year of ED1 create a dedicated Service Design Function, focused on managing our customer experience strategy, overseeing continuous improvement in core customer journeys and working with all other transformation programmes to establish a route back to customer journey impacts and processes.
We will introduce 4 new key systems	These new systems will enhance our capability to improve our customer experience and supports our desire to offer more tailored service offerings. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tailored Insights2. Customer Omni Channel3. Outage Notifications4. Enterprise Data lake



KEEPING OUR PROMISES





BEING TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

Internal governance

We have established designated corporate functions, capability and governance structures to innovate and drive the customer-led strategy outlined in this document. These arrangements will ensure the words outlined in this document are translated into action; and SSEN's future work is more inclusive and customer-led, and delivers the economic impacts and decarbonisation for the communities we serve. Below is a summary of how we will ensure the work we have committed to is completed.



Service design authority will drive the work

We will establish a designated innovation function within our corporate structure to continuously improve our service delivery and operations.

This functions will contain a number of skillsets. From customer experience to operational efficiency; service design to accessibility and change management, this team will be responsible for delivering innovation and customer focussed services, as well as oversee the delivery of our customer experience road map.



Institute of Customer Service

We understand the importance of working with experts to continue to drive us forward in our journey to become a customer obsessed organisation.

Through our membership with the Institute of Customer Service, we will continue to strive to achieve the prestigious 'service mark' accreditation through meeting the rigorous criteria set by the institute.



British Standard Institute – Inclusive Service Provision

Through our membership with the British Standard Institute we will strive to maintain our 6 years accreditation the BS 18477 Inclusive Service Mark.

We will continue to take part in the annual review undertaken by BSI in order to check that our services meet the required standard. Its important that we are accessible and inclusive to all of our customers.



Additional corporate governance will hold us to account

We will take a more formal approach to change management to ensure we truly understand how changes may impact our customers.

We will implement a hierarchy, using a new Objectives and Key Results (OKR's) framework. Supported by a change forum which meets regularly to ensure all initiatives are aligned to our strategic outcomes and Customer Promises and that synergies are maximised.



BEING TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

External governance

We also recognise the importance of being open and transparent with our customers and stakeholders, and this is why we believe its right to have in place that enables customers and to hold us to account. As with our internal governance, we strongly believe that these arrangements will ensure the words outlined in this document are translated into action; and SSEN's future work is more inclusive and customer-led.



Our Customer Promises

In the first section of this strategy, we talked about the Customer Promises which were co-created with our customers and stakeholders.

These will be at the heart of the decisions we make when thinking about how we best help our customers. They are purposefully clear and unambiguous, so that should our customers feel that our actions are not centred around these promises they can ask us to explain why.



We will co-create our future with our customers through our Customer Focus group

Customers will continue to play an important role and influence us in our decision making.

We will maintain the size and scale of our engagement with our customers and stakeholders, making use of online channels to ensure more people can contribute.

We will establish a customer focus group in RIIO-ED2 to challenge and inform us as we continue to shape our service offering.

We will also ensure the focus group is a good representation of our customer base and includes Domestic Customers, Business Customers and Customers in Vulnerable Situations



Engaging within the community

We are increasing the number of frontline facing colleagues who work in our local communities.

Our Customer and Community Advisors are based in the local communities we serve, attending local engagements, supporting our customers when they need us most through services such as additional welfare during a power cut.

They are available for advice and support and on hand to help with any part of our service that you need further help and support with.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ROAD MAP

We will create a standalone road map that sits alongside this strategy document, it will detail our aims and objectives and what we will do to achieve them. The road map will be refreshed annually, to ensure it keeps pace with changing needs and expectations, whilst also reflective of the challenges faced, such as Net Zero.

The road map will be customer and stakeholder led, which is why we will engage continuously on our proposed commitments and service offerings to ensure they meet the needs now and in the future. Our Customer Focus Group will play a key role in the creation of the plan, providing input and guidance, whilst reviewing what we have committed to so far and reviewing our progress.





APPENDIX A: ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT





APPENDIX: ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT

- **Overview: To improve customer services by offering a range of communication channels for our customers and quicker response times**
- **Total cost: £26.1m**
- **Contribution to annual customer bills: £0.61 (South), £0.95 (North)**

RIIO-1 context

RIIO-ED1 has been a period of positive transformation for us, with significant improvements delivered for our customers through investment in those systems and processes that form the backbone of our business.

Our operational colleagues are now embedded in our local communities and closer to the customers we serve. We have also developed an in-depth understanding of our customer needs and are well placed to tackle new issues as they emerge.



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS

Engagement details

Insights derived

Next generation bill payers, fuel-poor customers, customers in vulnerable situations and medium business customers

We tested our **Consumer Service outputs and costs** through qualitative focus groups to get insights into the **acceptability and affordability** of our Draft Business Plan.

General points

- **Future customers** in both regions agreed that the customer service area of the plan was very important and broadly acceptable especially those outputs related to vulnerable customers and agreed that it demonstrated a high level of ambition. [E156]
- Scottish participants liked that part of our business plan was dedicated to customer service and felt that this demonstrated care and commitment. [E156]
- **Future customers** found the costs associated with customer services and vulnerability surprisingly low and found this generally acceptable. [E156]
- Participants in the **fuel poor category** across both regions thought that aims related to customer service and vulnerability were acceptable and going in the right direction. [E156]
- One customer in the **fuel poor category** expressed concerns about the balancing act between delivering a better service and keeping costs low. They wanted to see service improvement but not at the expense of customer bills. [E156]
- **Business customers** liked the focus on decreasing contact waiting times, stating that this is particularly important for them as their businesses rely on electricity, however, some participants noted that the small improvements made to customer service already were sufficient, and questioned whether their efforts might be better focussed elsewhere. [E156]

Customer service scores

- A few **future customers** questioned the need for reducing telephone waiting times as well as improving customer satisfaction. They felt that the targets seemed negligible especially considering current waiting times and levels of satisfaction were already good. [E156]
- Some **fuel poor participants** felt that increasing customer satisfaction was a good area to improve but a few expressed concerns around targets. One participant in Scotland felt that customer satisfaction targets should aim for 10, while one in England felt that the difference was so small on an already good score that it didn't matter. [E156]



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

Speed of phone answer

- Many **future customer** participants particularly liked reducing telephone answer times and felt this showed a commitment to customer service and communicated that we are trying hard to support our customers. [E156]
- Participants in the **customers in vulnerable situations** category were in favour of Improving response times as they felt that communicating online felt easier for some people. [E156]
- All **business customers** agreed that reducing telephone answering times was a good area of focus for business customers in particular, because they often rely on uninterrupted power. However, a few felt that telephone answering times were already acceptable and the proposed targets would not make much difference. [E156]

Speed of social media answer

- Many **future customer** participants particularly liked social media answer times and felt this showed a commitment to customer service and communicated that we are trying hard to support our customers. [E156]
- One **fuel poor customer** felt that improving digital contact services was a particularly good idea as some people are more comfortable making contact that way. [E156]
- Participants in the **customers in vulnerable situations** category were in favour of Improving social media response times as they felt that communicating online felt easier for some people. [E156]
- Reducing social media contact time was considered a good output area by **some business customers** as its often the easiest way to contact large companies. However, there was no consensus on targets. Some found current wait times acceptable whilst others suggested it should be quicker. [E156]

Complaints

- Among **future customers**, attempting to reduce and resolve complaints was also widely accepted. Both regions felt that this was an important area and a good target, as participants shared the frustration of getting problems resolved when things go wrong. [E156]
- Many **business customers** felt that solving complaints faster and reducing them overall was an acceptable target, especially as having to chase a company up for information in a crisis can be stressful and time consuming. [E156]



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Institute of Customer Service members

We engaged with five expert representatives of GDNs, water utilities and energy suppliers who are IoCS members via a survey about customer service and LCTs, and via bilaterals

Insights derived

- Expert IoCS members told us that 'excellent' customer service involved dealing with issues efficiently and effectively, good communications with communities/customers through different channels (providing reassurance and sharing positive stories), timely responses to queries and keeping people informed were expected, and that the most important aspects of customer service are: treating customers as individuals and being understanding/ empathetic; and being clear and transparent with customers and enabling trust [E051].
- In terms of the future of customer service, experts suggested we should focus on providing more self-service options and 24/7 access to services and information, contact through multiple channels, but also noted that availability of agents for customer service should remain. They told us that we should continue to offer traditional methods such as phone and mail as well as local community hubs for those customers who are unable or unwilling to use digital communication methods [E051].
- Stakeholders generally agreed that our customer service offering is comprehensive, but suggested it could be simplified to ensure awareness and trust is built e.g. customers being concerned about power cut but don't know who to contact; could do more to promote channels and services; provide financial support/work with those struggling with poverty [E051].
- HM Passport advised that 60-70% of their customers choose the self-serve online option, as this provides an interactive, guided application service. This stakeholder also collects customer feedback or sentiment at every touchpoint during their journey, which allows for better understanding where parts of the journey require change or intervention [E050].



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Domestic and SME consumers

We engaged stakeholders via focus groups and surveys to understand consumer priorities and the impact of Covid-19, via in-depth thematic customer engagement on power cuts, and via our robust Willingness to Pay study. Later, domestic customers gave us their views on the **acceptability of our customer service outputs and costs** in our Draft Business Plan via online surveys

Insights derived

- Stakeholder suggested we could work with suppliers and provide more information on bills eg where money is spent, work being done to help the environment [E118].
- Stakeholders wanted multiple ways to contact us (not just by phone) [E118].
- For communications relating to power cuts, customers told us they wanted us to work with suppliers to provide greater visibility of what URL to go to or number to call for information, put Facebook posts on local community pages, provide reasons for the cut and explain whether it will recur, and use a more apologetic tone of voice. [E098]
- The PowerTrack app was praised, but customers are unaware of it so called for greater promotion of it, and also for it to be clearer that there is useful information on tabs away from the map; the power cut report form feels cumbersome. [E098]
- Generation digital (mostly younger and SME customers) are looking for:
 - real time service updates, easily accessible via mobile
 - ability to interrogate to understand when, why, ETA
 - ability to sign up for proactive updates. [E098]
- Generation landline (older customers and those in areas with poor mobile signals) are looking for:
 - proactive contact (in-office hours)
 - stay on phone to reassure if necessary
 - contact someone on their behalf if in vulnerable situation. [E098]
- SMEs indicated that the term 'worst served' is more applicable to them, expressing a desire for tailored 'Business Resilience Plans' to provide a practical fix and emotional reassurance. They also provided the following insights:
 - COVID presents distinct challenges for businesses and anything else is an additional problem
 - Indicated a very low tolerance for repeat power cuts

Impacts with high load/3 phase electrics is significant and can be split into three groups:

- Practical – fridges, floodlights, heating, beer cellars etc
- Financial – loss of income, proactive compensation for customers
- Reputational/brand damage



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

- SMEs reported a loss of confidence in us and were unhappy with lack of or low compensation offered
- Reported a lack of backup solutions in place beyond emergency low voltage lighting [E098]
- Increasing the proportion of complaints that are resolved in less than a day from 85% to 92% is a high priority relative to other initiatives tested for non-domestic customers in the south, and a medium priority for non-domestic customers in the North and for domestic customers in both regions [E126].
- Increasing our target Broad Measure of Customer Satisfaction scores to 9.4/10 in both regions, rather than 8.9/10 in the South and 9/10 in the North (noting that current scores are 8.67/10 in the South and 9.19/10 in the North) is a medium priority, relative to other initiatives for domestic customers in both regions and for non-domestic customers in the south, and a low priority for non-domestic customers in the North who nevertheless indicated some willingness to pay for this enhancement [E126].
- Customers want the options for both simple enquiries by chatbots/digital assistants and complex enquiries with a person. [E173]
- Relevant information to share in an online self-service portal would be: the contact details, history of power cuts, vulnerability needs, ongoing work that may affect the customer and investments on the network nearby. [E173]
- A small survey of 3 customers rated the level of ambition of resolving 75% of complaints on first contact and 90% within a day as 8.7/10, but the ability to raise a complaint online and track its progress, and the importance of reducing complaints by 5% each year as 10/10. [E173]
- When asked to prioritise the output 'We will meet our targets through our plan and further strive to reduce complaints by 5%, resolve 75% of complaints at 1st contact, 90% within 1 day and 99% within 1 month by 2028', 42% of customers in the South and 35% in the North said it was high priority, 46% in the South and 35% in the North said it was medium and 11% in the South and 15% in the North said it was low priority. [E170]
- All three respondents to a small survey felt that achieving a Customer Satisfaction Score of at least 9.2 out of 10 across all categories by 2028 was sufficiently ambitious. [E173]



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

- When asked to prioritise the output: 'We will meet our targets through our plan and strive to further achieve a score of at least 9.2 Customer satisfaction across all categories by 2028', 37% of customers in the south and 30% in the north said it was high priority, 47% in the south and 49% in the north said it was medium priority, and 16% in the south and 21% in the north said it was low priority. [E170]
- Many customers commented that excellent customer service especially for vulnerable customers or during an interruption is essential. [E170]
- Many customers felt the cost of providing customer service was nominal, affordable and they would be happy to pay for it, but some customer did not wish to pay more for us to maintain service. [E170]
- When asked to prioritise the output 'We will maintain our industry leading 9.3 digital satisfaction score', 25% of customers in the south and 24% in the north said it was high priority, 54% in the south and 60% in the north said it was medium priority, and 21% in the south and 16% in the north said it was low priority. [E170]
- When asked to prioritise the output 'We will improve our average speed of answer for social media contacts to five minutes', 30% of customers in the south and 39% in the north said it was high priority, 48% in the south and 42% in the north said it was medium priority, and 20% in the south and 18% in the north said it was low priority. [E170]
- During a power cut, domestic customers noted that an update every two hours would be sufficient, through either email, the PowerTrack app or by text. It was stated that automated calls late in the evening should be avoided. [E173]
- A few domestic customers pointed out that mobile applications such as Power Track are hard to access in remote areas/areas with poor internet connections. [E149]
- Domestic customers were concerned about the move away from analogue phones by BT especially to those in vulnerable situations during power cuts. [E173]
- When asked to prioritise the output 'We will decrease our average speed of answer to 20 seconds on the telephone for interruptions', 36% of customers in the south and 37% in the north said it was high, 51% in the south and 47% in the north said it was medium, and 13% in the south and 16% in the north said it was low. [E170]



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Domestic customers and contractors

We engaged stakeholders about their customer service requirements and LCTs via a Facebook survey

Insights derived

- Customers told us that 'excellent' customer service meant contact with us should be easy, friendly, and accessible, with employees being accurate and informative. They also wanted to be kept informed and for us to be transparent and honest, and to make customers feel valued and a priority [E044].
- Participants identified the following customer service and customer expectation trends which we should be aware of:
 - Provision of generators for customers who need them
 - Regular communication and keeping people informed and up to date
 - More autonomy to front-line customer service operatives, to ensure response tailored response to consumers
 - Customers don't want to have to contact us – we should know about faults before customers do and be addressing issues straightaway
 - Customer service staff need to be motivated, efficient and provide a more personalised/ specialised experience
 - Use of automation/technology but also having staff to contact if required [E044].



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

Non-consumer stakeholders

We engaged a broad range of non-consumer stakeholders to understand their views on the customer experience outputs and costs in our Draft Business Plan via an online consultation event and surveys, and with expert stakeholders via bilaterals

- A supply chain stakeholder applauded reduction in call answering but suggested there should be outputs involving more modern channels such as chat bots. [E151]
- Another stakeholder proposed that the key contact channels to encourage a wider range of customer engagement would be two-way texting, telephone numbers that are easy to find and utilising the website chat. [E151]
- Stakeholders scored our level of ambition of resolving 75% of complaints on first contact and 90% within a day as 8.6/10. [E159]
- Expert stakeholders scored how beneficial the option to raise a complaint on-line and track the progress until resolved as 8.5 /10, and the importance of reducing complaints by 5% each year as 8.6/10. [E159]
- Expert stakeholders felt 9.2 CSAT was ambitious compared to current score (and scored this as 8.6/10) but appreciated there is still two years before we need to achieve this. [E159]
- On average, expert stakeholders rated the customer service and vulnerable customer outputs as 8.7 out of 10. [E159]
- One stakeholder felt that our customer satisfaction target of 9.2 was not ambitious enough compared to other DNOs. [E151] [Other DNOs' Draft outputs for BMCS are 9.0 (WPD and ENWL), 9.3 (NPg and UKPN), and 9.4 (SPEN.)]
- One local authority stakeholder called for greater ambition on daytime powercut compensation to reflect the greater impact then. [E151]
- "Does our package of output for customer service/vulnerable customers represent a sufficient level of ambition?" scored 3.00/5. [E151]
- "Is our package of outputs customer service/vulnerable customers comprehensive enough to meet the needs of our customers" scored 3.50/5 [E151]
- "Does our package of outputs customer service/vulnerable customers represent a sufficient level of ambition?" scored 3.75/5. [E151]
- "Is our package of outputs customer service/vulnerable customers comprehensive enough to meet the needs of our customers" scored 3.50/5 [E151]
- "Does our package of outputs customer service/vulnerable customers represent a sufficient level of ambition?" scored 3.75/5. [E151]



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

Local authorities, housing associations, vulnerable customer representatives, community energy groups, housing developers.

We co-created a range of solutions with these stakeholders via online workshops

Vulnerable customer representatives

Citizens Advice provided their views on all DNO's draft Business plans via a published report

- Stakeholders said we should always be trying to improve customer service and that customer service must remain a high priority with many people stuck at home due to the pandemic [E071][E072]
 - Housing developers reminded us that customer service requirements are always changing so improving it does not have an end point [E072].
 - A community energy group in the South was impressed with fuel poverty work and thought we should broadcast it more widely, potentially on social media in order to reach different demographics [E071]
 - Stakeholders were impressed with the weight of literature translated into different languages [E071].
-
- UKPN's proposal for customers to rate services after every interaction should be considered more widely. [E176]



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

Current and future employees

We engaged colleagues via a survey on creating a future energy system that is fair, inclusive, sustainable and affordable for all customers. Later, we sought their views on the customer service elements of our Draft Business Plan via a survey following webinars and another small survey.

- Colleagues told us that, to them, 'excellent' customer service meant 'communication', 'personalised', 'honesty', 'keeping promises' and 'listening', and that being prompt, accurate and consistent with answers, being personal and efficient, managing expectations/being realistic, and tailoring services to individual needs are important aspects of customer service [E043].
- Based on feedback they'd had from customers, colleagues told us that introducing provision of on-site support for customers, and regular updates for customers on the progress of a fault was important and suggested a tracking app/live automated updates for engineers and remote appointments for site visits using video/head cams [E043].
- Colleagues suggested providing a welcome pack for customers and using better branding/identity to raise awareness of who SSEN is and what we do [E043].
- Employees thought we should be looking to communicate with customers unwilling/unable to adapt to digital comms through phone/text, written and email channels, and many proposed that customers should be able to select their communication preferences [E043].
- The top ways to contact us that employees recommended in the survey were 'Telephone' (58%), followed by 'self-service - mobile app' (53%) and 'self-service - website' (50%) [E043].
- Colleagues suggested internal communication of values to all SSEN staff to understand importance of customer service [E043].
- Colleagues suggested we should explain to the wider community about activities (eg upgrades) to everyone (not only to those who complain), in order to be proactive, rather than reactive [E043].
- Colleagues suggested that we should create another value specifically to focus on understanding new forms of vulnerability, in particular by identifying barriers to participating in a smart flexible energy system [E043].
- 90% of survey respondents thought that we should embed 'maximising opportunities to identify and deliver support to consumers in vulnerable situations through the smart use of data' into all of our values [E043].
- Employees felt there should be more updates on changes in situation for planned outages and that customers aren't contacted enough, need to ensure service across faults and connections is consistent [E043].



ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS CONTINUED...

Engagement details

Insights derived

- Employees scored of 8.27 out of 10 in terms of how important to customers and stakeholder they felt our pledge to reduced complaints by 5% each year was sufficiently ambitious. [\[E172\]](#)
- Many employees noted the commitment to reduce faults was good but that additional work could be done here to avoid complaints altogether and employing additional self-service options [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees gave a score of 8.out of 10 for how important it is for customers and stakeholders to set targets to reduce our number of complaints and scored our level of ambition of resolving 75% of complaints on first contact and 90% within a day 8.05 out of 10. [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees gave a score of 8.68 out of 10 in terms of benefit to customers for the introduction of the option to raise a complaint online and track progress until it is resolved and using technology to identify common complaints and provide pre-defined responses. [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees scored our ambition in terms of achieving a broad measure score of at least 9.2 across all categories by 2028, 8.08 out of 10. [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees noted that an increase in staffing levels should be a commitment in Customer Service to help achieve the targets set. Another employee noted that teams were already stretched. [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees felt the path to delivering the commitments were unclear and identifying resource issues would be a key to success. [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees gave a score of 8.55/10 for how essential it is to provide (excellent customer service) to small business customers. [\[E172\]](#)
- The majority of employees felt our pledge to provide at least 30 days notice of planned interruptions is sufficient to allow businesses to plan for an interruption to their supply. The remainder felt that 40-60 days would be better, appreciating that needs can vary in different circumstances. [\[E172\]](#)
- Almost all employees felt that adding an icon to our customer service system to identify business customers who could be impacted by planned works or unplanned interruptions was a good idea. [\[E172\]](#)
- Employees thought the response time for the Customer Service commitment was ambitious as it may be forced to reduce the quality of the response to increase the speed. [\[E172\]](#)



EVIDENCE ASSESMENT

Engagement scoring key

The engagement score assigns a weight to each source accounting for the robustness of the engagement event and the relevance of the feedback to the topic.

Score	Description
1-1.66	Limited evidence of good event planning, methodology or data collection. Feedback provided is high level with tangential relevance to the topic.
1.67-2.33	Good evidence of engagement planning and discussion of data collection methods, but limited depth of feedback and range of opinions. Feedback not necessarily fully aligned to the topic and only provides a limited insight and thus moderately useful.
2.34-3	Well conducted, trustworthy event with highly relevant feedback. Specific, clear and relevant information with clear link to the topic discussed and high value added.



EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT

Phase	Date	Event ID	Event name	Key stakeholder segments	Number of stakeholders engaged	Engagement score
Phase 4: Testing and Acceptability	Sep-21	E151	Consolidated Outputs and Costings Event	Contractors, Consultants, Local Authorities, National Government, Storage and Renewables suppliers, Supply Chain	106	3.0
	Sep-21	E156	Draft Plan Qualitative Acceptability Testing Event	Domestic Customers	46	3.0
	Sep-21	E161	Personal Resilience Plan and Battery Backup Surveys	Domestic Customers	400	2.0
	Sep-21	E170	Microsite survey on Costed outputs	Domestic Customers, Vulnerable Customers and Future Customers	1298	2.7
	Sep-21	E173	Customer Service Survey on Draft Outputs	Domestic Customers	3	2.5
	Sep-21	E176	Citizens Advice report on DNO Draft ED2 Business Plans	Consumer groups	1	2.5
	Aug-21	E159	Customer Service and Consumer Vulnerability Bilateral and Survey on Draft Outputs	Consumer groups, Local Authorities, Research Bodies, Vulnerable Customer representatives, Charities, Water and Energy Suppliers, Business advisors	21	2.5
	Aug-21	E166	Corporate Affairs General Bilateral	Government, Storage and renewables providers	25	1.5
	Aug-21	E174	Consumer and Vulnerability Employee Engagement	Current and future employees	17	1.5
	Jul-21	E149	Citizens' Jury	Domestic Customers	34	2.5
Jul-21	E172	Customer Service and Consumer Vulnerability Internal Engagement	Current and future employees	74	2.5	
Phase 3: Business Plan Refinement	Mar-21	E125	Willingness to Pay Qualitative testing	Domestic customers, customers in vulnerable situations, next generation bill payers, SMEs	54	2.5
	Apr-21	E148	Corporate Affairs Bilats	Government, Consumer interest group and Charity	6	1.3
	May-21	E126	Willingness to Pay Quantitative report	Domestic customers, customers in vulnerable situations, next generation bill payers, SMEs	1,161	2.5
	May-21	E127	Sustainability bilateral Thames Water	Water	2	1.3
	May-21	E147	ED2 microsite survey: main phase	Domestic customers, community interest groups, SMEs	1,072	2.2



EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT CONTINUED..

Phase	Date	Event ID	Event name	Key stakeholder segments	Number of stakeholders engaged	Engagement score
Phase 2: Co-creation	Mar-21	E090	ED2 blueprint survey: Pilot phase	Domestic customers, community interest groups, SMEs	126	1.5
	Mar-21	E098	Improving the customer journey during supply interruptions	Domestic customers, customers in vulnerable situations, SMEs	100	2.5
	Jan-21	E046	Internal staff research on customer expectations for customer service	Current and future employees	27	2.5
	Dec-20	E043	Customer Service and CV strategy internal engagement	Current and future employees	40	2.5
	Dec-20	E044	Customer service and LCT external Facebook survey	Domestic customers, current and future employees	90	2.2
	Dec-20	E050	HM Passport customer service bilateral	National government	1	2.0
	Dec-20	E051	Survey of expert loCS members	Water, GDNs, energy suppliers, national government	5	2.2
	Dec-20	E052	DNO wide Broad Measures survey	Domestic customers	1	1.7
	Dec-20	E087	Ecuity - SSEN Coronavirus Customer Survey (Dec 2020)	Domestic customers, customers in vulnerable situations	1,600	2.5
	Oct-20	E118	ED2 Customer Priorities Survey	Domestic customers, customers in vulnerable situations, next generation bill payers, SMEs	39	3.0
	Sep-20	E071	Annual Stakeholder Workshops - South	Local authorities, housing associations, water, vulnerable customer representatives	109	2.5
	Sep-20	E072	Annual Stakeholder Workshops - North	Local authorities, vulnerable customer representatives, housing associations	84	2.5
	Sep-20	E081	Consumer Insights on the Future of the Gas and Electricity Distribution Networks in Scotland	Domestic customers, customers in vulnerable situations, SMEs	1,507	2.5
	Jul-20	E116	Hybrid and Service quality trial	Domestic customers	330	2.5
Phase 1: Open Discovery	Aug-20	E019	ED2 Customer Priorities Survey	Wider industry & value chain, ICPs, Supply chain	2,031	2.0



EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT CONTINUED..

Phase	Date	Event ID	Event name	Key stakeholder segments	Number of stakeholders engaged	Engagement score
BAU Insights	Sep-19	E011	SSEN Distribution Stakeholders Workshops - Oxford	Wider industry & value chain, Consultants, ICPs	24	2.0
	Sep-19	E012	SSEN Distribution Stakeholders Workshops - Portsmouth	Builders & developers, DG customers	30	2.0
	Aug-19	E007	Annual Distribution Survey of Domestic Customers	Domestic customers	2,069	2.5
	Dec-18	E018	DSO Consultation - Supporting a smarter electricity system	Charities, Local government	5	1.8
	Nov-18	E003	Annual Distribution Survey of Domestic Customers	Domestic customers	2,066	2.0



MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

Output	Northern target	Southern target	Comparison to RIIO-1	Cost in baseline plan	Consumer benefits
Meet our targets through our plan and strive to further achieve a customer satisfaction score of at least 9.2 across all categories	9.2	9.2	2019/20 North: 9.19 South: 8.67	£26.1m	Improved service for all our customers across a number of different channels, including diversified self-serve options alongside traditional means of communication
Maintain/ improve our industry-leading 9.3 digital satisfaction score	9.3	9.3	New for ED2		
Improve average speed of response to 20 seconds on the telephone for power cuts and to five minutes on social media.	20 seconds 5 minutes	20 seconds 5 minutes	2019/20 <u>Telephone</u> North: 31 seconds South: 36 seconds (these increased in 2020/21 due to Covid-19) <u>Social media</u> 15 minutes		
Meet our targets through our plan and further strive to reduce complaints by 5%, resolve 75% of complaints at first contact, 90% within 1 day and 99% within 1 month by 2028	5% reduction overall and resolve 75% of complaints at first contact, 90% within 1 day and 99% within 1 month by 2028	5% reduction overall and resolve 75% of complaints at first contact, 90% within 1 day and 99% within 1 month by 2028	2019/20 Within 1 day: 88.41% Within 1 month: 96.89%		Simplified processes and quicker resolution of complaints



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