Cadent
Your Gas Network

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Albert Kennedy Trust

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Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)







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Project registration table

Project summary	
Project title	Safe & Well at Home
Strategic area	Fuel Poverty
Lead partner name	Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT)
Lead GDN(s)	Cadent
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent
New/Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New
Date of PEA submission	1st July 2026
Project start and end date	1st July 2026 – 30th June 2027
Project location	All Cadent networks
Project contact	
Name	Phil Burrows
Contact details	Email address: Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com Contact number: 07773545451
Project partners and third parties involved	
Organisation name	**Role**
AKT	Charity partner
Costs and funding	
Total cost (£k)	£106,464.00
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£100,014.00
Total BAU vulnerability and CO safety activity baseline allowance funding by activity (£k)	

Problem(s)

The Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT) is a national charity supporting LGBTQ+ young people aged 16–25 who are at risk of homelessness or living in unsafe environments. Evidence shows that LGBTQ+ young people are disproportionately affected by family rejection, abuse and housing instability, with around [1]24% of homeless young people identifying as LGBTQ+.

In the current socio-economic climate, rising living costs, fuel poverty and housing insecurity are exacerbating these risks. Individuals experiencing homelessness or unstable housing are more likely to face cold homes, unsafe heating practices and limited awareness of essential protections such as the Priority Services Register (PSR), Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness, and energy efficiency tips. These align with Ofgem's Priority Services and consumer vulnerability guidance, which highlights that customers in vulnerable situations are at greater risk of harm from energy affordability issues, disconnection, and safety risks such as CO.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to have a significant impact on families in the UK. In February 2023, Carnegie UK commissioned YouGov to conduct a poll of over 2,000 adults across the country regarding the broader effects of this crisis.

The research revealed that the cost-of-living emergency is negatively affecting the financial management of the majority of people in the UK.

According to the findings, one-third of adults reported that rising costs make it difficult for them to eat healthily, while 16% said the crisis has resulted in them exercising less regularly. Moreover, the study highlighted that rising expenses are causing people to cut back on social and leisure activities. Approximately one-third of respondents indicated that the crisis has hindered their ability to spend time with friends, while a quarter reported the same issue regarding family time.

The long-term life prospects of individuals are also at risk, with the study showing that about one in six adults feel that the cost-of-living emergency has negatively impacted their performance at work or in education.

[2]Annually, approximately £22.7 billion to £24 billion in income-related benefits and social tariffs go unclaimed in the UK, affecting around seven million households. Substantial amounts of support that remain unclaimed include £7.5 billion in Universal Credit, £5.2 billion in Pension Credit/Attendance Allowance, and £2.8 billion in Council Tax Support.

Recent analyses have shown that these figures have risen from £19 billion to over £22.7 billion, with some estimates even reaching £24 billion.

The most common reason for this unclaimed support is the complicated application process, lack of awareness and the stigma attached.

Charities continue to face increasing demand as local authority resources decline, limiting their capacity to support vulnerable communities. By recognising these pressures and adapting to the evolving needs of both marginalised and non-marginalised groups, Cadent can play a key role in addressing socioeconomic challenges such as fuel poverty, while enabling cross-sector learning and more effective, targeted interventions.

As a result, there is a clear need for targeted, accessible and inclusive support that addresses both the immediate safety risks and the wider drivers of fuel poverty affecting this cohort.

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[1] [1] Our Mission & Vision - Safe Homes for LGBTQ+ People - akt

[2] how much is unclaimed in benefits - Google Search

Scope and objectives

Cadent's VCMA funding will enable AKT to enhance and embed energy-related support within its existing services, ensuring that vulnerable LGBTQ+ young people can access tailored advice and practical interventions to stay safe and warm. The project duration is for one-year and support will focus on raising awareness of key protections, improving energy efficiency, and addressing drivers of fuel poverty

- Individuals engaging with AKT will have access to information and advice on CO safety, the PSR, and energy efficiency/income maximisation through a range of accessible digital channels, including the organisation's website, social media platforms, and online webchat. This approach ensures that support is available in a timely, inclusive, and accessible format for those who may not engage with traditional services.
- The programme will facilitate identification of individuals who may be eligible for the Priority Services Register, helping to ensure they receive additional protections from energy providers, including support during supply interruptions and tailored assistance for those in vulnerable circumstances.
- Free CO alarms will be distributed to beneficiaries either through two AKT locations or via postal delivery, providing an immediate intervention to reduce safety risks, particularly for those living in temporary, insecure, or poor-quality accommodation.
- Beneficiaries will also receive energy efficiency guidance, helping them to better understand how to manage energy use, reduce costs, and improve comfort within their homes or temporary accommodation, supporting longer-term resilience against fuel poverty.
- In addition, the project will provide income maximisation support, benefits advice, and onward referrals/signposting, ensuring individuals can access wider financial support, increase household income, and reduce the likelihood of experiencing or remaining in fuel poverty.

Overall, this funding will enable AKT to take a holistic, person-centred approach that combines immediate safety interventions with longer-term financial and energy resilience, ensuring that a high-risk and often underserved group is better supported to live safely, sustainably, and independently.

How VCMA funding complements or supplements BAU activities

Where the VCMA Project is being delivered alongside a BAU vulnerability and/or CO safety activity or activities funded through the GDN's baseline allowance, the GDN must provide sufficient evidence that the VCMA Project complements or supplements the BAU activity or activities to prevent the risk of double funding.

The pilot phase of this project, delivered between January and March 2026, demonstrated strong success and clear value in supporting vulnerable individuals. A key learning from the pilot was that while the provision of CO alarms is critical and can be lifesaving, it must be complemented by increased awareness and understanding to be truly effective.

The project therefore places a strong emphasis on equipping individuals with the knowledge they need to recognise the dangers of CO exposure, understand the symptoms, and know how to respond in an emergency. Dedicated advisors and trained volunteers play a central role in delivering this support, raising awareness through meaningful, person-centred conversations and tailored guidance and this is what the VCMI funding is used for.

While gas engineers are able to provide CO alarms during visits, they often do not have the capacity or time to engage in in-depth discussions around safety, behaviour change, and wider vulnerability factors. This

project addresses that gap by ensuring individuals receive not only the physical intervention, but also the education and reassurance needed to reduce risk and improve long-term safety outcomes.

By combining practical measures with targeted engagement, the project enhances both immediate protection and sustained awareness, ensuring beneficiaries are better informed, more confident, and less vulnerable to CO-related harm.

Outcomes, associated actions and success criteria

Details of the VCMA Project outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these, interim milestones and how the Funding Licensee will evaluate whether the project has been successful. Each action should have a proportion of the funding allocated.

The Albert Kennedy Trust project will be delivered in partnership with AKT and aims to support 1,054,600 individuals with CO, energy efficiency, PSR and Income maximisation awareness as shown in the table below:

Theme	Activity	Reach	Reach explanation
Energy Efficiency	Direct outreach with hard-to-reach LGBTQ+ young people who are vulnerable to homelessness via AKT's existing operational service: live chat, 1:1 casework, youth work and floating support.	1,400	Direct 1:1
	Co-branded coverage and promotion on the AKT website 'hub' for key information and advice. Paid promotion across the year via performance max.	1,750	Webpage
	Marketing campaign, targeting vulnerable LGBTQ+ young people (16-25) on key digital channels: Instagram, TikTok.	250,000	Social media
	Email campaign to AKT supporters and partner networks	10,000	Distribution list
	Flyer information distribution and direct 1:1 conversations at Pride community events - Black Pride London, Manchester Village Pride.	2,500	Direct 1:1
CO	Direct outreach with hard-to-reach LGBTQ+ young people who are vulnerable to homelessness via AKT's existing operational service: live chat, 1:1 casework, youth work and floating support.	1,600	Direct 1:1
	Co-branded coverage and promotion on the AKT website 'hub' for key information and advice. Paid promotion across the year via performance max.	1,750	Webpage
	Marketing campaign, targeting vulnerable LGBTQ+ young people (16-25) on key digital channels: Instagram, TikTok.	250,000	Social media

	Flyer information distribution at Pride community events - Black Pride London, Manchester Village Pride.	2,500	Direct 1:1
	Email campaign to AKT supporters and partner networks	10,000	Email
	Distribution of alarms & CO information via network parters, events, post, and direct casework.	2,000	Direct 1:1
PSR	Direct outreach with hard-to-reach LGBTQ+ young people who are vulnerable to homelessness via AKT's existing operational service: live chat, 1:1 casework, youth work and floating support.	1,600	Direct 1:1
	Co-branded coverage and promotion on the AKT website 'hub' for key information and advice. Paid promotion across the year via performance max.	1,750	Webpage
	Marketing campaign, targeting vulnerable LGBTQ+ young people (16-25) on key digital channels: Instagram, TikTok.	250,000	Social media
	Flyer information distribution and direct 1:1 conversations at Pride community events - Black Pride London, Manchester Village Pride.	2,500	Direct 1:1
	Email campaign to AKT supporters and partner networks	10,000	Email
Income Maximisation	Direct outreach with hard-to-reach LGBTQ+ young people who are vulnerable to homelessness via AKT's existing operational service: live chat, 1:1 casework, youth work and floating support.	1,000	Direct 1:1
	Co-branded coverage and promotion on the AKT website 'hub' for key information and advice. Paid promotion across the year via performance max.	1,750	Webpage
	Marketing campaign, targeting vulnerable LGBTQ+ young people (16-25) on key digital channels: Instagram, TikTok.	250,000	Social media
	Flyer information distribution and direct 1:1 conversations at Pride community events - Black Pride London, Manchester Village Pride.	2,500	Direct 1:1
	TOTAL REACH	**1,054,600**	

Activity	Delivery
Energy efficiency, CO, PSR and income	1:1 casework
	Management reporting, IT
CO	alarm distribution
	Storage
	Admin
Pride event advice hub	Fees and logistics

	Volunteer expenses
	Printing
Marketing	Marketing
	Marketing staff
Advice Hub	Drop ins advice and support

Success Criteria

The success of the project will be measured against the delivery as follows:

Direct Outreach (Casework, Live Chat, Youth Work, Floating Support)

- Target number of individuals reached through 1:1 engagement is achieved (as per reach targets).
- ≥80% of engaged individuals receive tailored advice on CO, PSR, energy efficiency, or income maximisation).
- ≥60% of individuals demonstrate improved awareness or understanding.
- Evidence of referrals or onward support where additional needs are identified.

Website Hub & Co-Branded Content

- Website hub is launched and maintained with up-to-date, accessible information.
- Target webpage engagement achieved (e.g. ≥1,750 views or equivalent metric).
- Users actively engage with content.
- Content is inclusive, accessible, and aligned with vulnerability needs (e.g. simple language, mobile-friendly).

Digital Marketing Campaign (Instagram, TikTok, Paid Promotion)

- Target reach achieved 250,000 individuals.
- Engagement rates meet or exceed benchmarks.
- Campaign drives increased traffic to support services (e.g. webchat, referrals, website hub).
- Messaging effectively reaches and resonates with the target demographic (16–25 LGBTQ+ young people).

Email Campaign (Supporters & Partner Networks)

- Emails successfully distributed to target list 10,000 recipients.
- Evidence of click-throughs to support services or resources.

Community Engagement (Pride Events & Outreach)

- Delivery of in-person engagement at key Pride events (e.g. Black Pride London, Manchester Pride).
- Target number of individuals engaged through direct interactions.
- Evidence of meaningful conversations and signposting to services.

CO Intervention (Where Applicable)

- Target number of CO alarms distributed achieved.
- All recipients receive clear safety guidance and usage information.
- Increased awareness of CO risks and emergency actions (measured via feedback or interaction).

PSR

- Eligible individuals are identified and informed about PSR benefits.
- Evidence of successful referrals and sign-ups.
- Increased awareness of additional benefits of the PSR available to vulnerable customers

Income Maximisation & Financial Resilience

- Individuals receive advice or are signposted to relevant services.
- Evidence of referrals to benefits or grant support services.
- Demonstrated improvements in financial awareness or access to support.

Overall Programme Success

- Delivery achieves the total projected reach (1,054,600).
- Balance achieved between broad awareness (digital) and deep engagement (1:1 support).
- Measurable contribution to:
    - Reduced vulnerability
    - Increased energy awareness and safety
    - Improved financial resilience.
- Positive qualitative feedback and case studies demonstrate real-life impact.

Potential for new learning

This project represents a significant milestone for Cadent, addressing the needs of a vulnerable community.

With homelessness rising across England, our discussions with AKT highlight the considerable number of individuals from the LGBTQ+ community who are affected.
AKT specialises in providing assistance to LGBTQ+ individuals, helping them secure suitable housing and enabling them to live safely and independently.

This initiative will enhance Cadent's understanding of the challenges these communities face and identify ways in which we, as a prominent Gas Distribution Network (GDN), can offer effective support via AKT and out in the community. As is the case with many of our initiatives, members of this community often seek assistance from specialised organizations that are well-equipped to understand their unique circumstances.

As we move forward in 2026, it is important to acknowledge that this community continues to encounter prejudice, hate, and discrimination, which places them in vulnerable situations. Through this project, we aim to foster awareness and create positive change.

All our learnings and insights will be shared within our organisation via our Pride community and our communications channels. We will also share our findings with the other GDNs.

Aligning with and supporting wider vulnerability approaches

The LGBTQ+ community frequently experiences vulnerability as a result of prejudice and discrimination, among other challenges. Recognising the importance of fostering a supportive environment, [3]Pride in Energy, a dedicated industry network, has initiated comprehensive training programs for utility staff. These programs are designed to equip employees with the knowledge and skills to provide empathetic, respectful,

3.Equity, diversity and inclusion - Energy UK

and inclusive service to LGBTQ+ individuals accessing energy services. Furthermore, Pride in Energy collaborates with organisations like OFGEM (Office of Gas and Electricity Markets) to ensure that the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals are met and that they receive the support and protections they deserve within the energy sector. This initiative aims not only to enhance customer service but also to promote equality and understanding within the industry.

This project is taking the same view to offer safeguarding and advice services to this cohort of individuals on our networks via a trusted partner.

Monitoring and evaluation

Since this is a new partnership and our first collaboration with an LGBTQ+ charity, we have worked closely with AKT to understand the challenges faced by their community and to ensure the project aligns with their service offerings.

This collaboration also supports our vulnerability strategy and adheres to the VCMI governance criteria.

We have scheduled monthly meetings to review any challenges and discuss successes and progress. Additionally, AKT will provide a quarterly report to track targets against delivery.

Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations, including NPV

This collaboration will deliver a one-year project with AKT to enable vulnerable LGBTQ+ customers to access support and advice on income maximisation, benefits, CO, PSR and energy efficiency. This advice is to support people living in fuel poverty.

The Gas Distribution Networks worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIRIO Strategies on the development of the Industry Standard Social Value Framework and supporting GDN Rulebook.

We have used that GDN Rulebook to carry out an assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership. Completing an assessment of the predicted outcomes detailed below we forecast a positive net Social Return on Investment

Social value measurement

Total cost*	£100,014.00
Total gross present value	£3,441,432.05
Net Present Value (NPV)	£3,341,418.05
SROI	£33.41

*Accounting for inflationary factors over the term of the project.

Internal governance and project management evidence

AKT submitted a proposal to extend the GD2 pilot project, which was reviewed and discussed by the Cadent management team. Customer reach, project costs, and the strategic areas of focus were assessed, and a budget was agreed for a one-year continuation of the partnership.

This new phase of work will build on the learnings and impact of the pilot project. AKT has a dedicated project manager, and an additional project manager will be appointed by Cadent, to oversee delivery and coordination.

The Cadent project manager will collate the data quarterly following AKT's report and disseminate as required.

GDN	Approver (Name and Role)	Date
Cadent	Mary O'Shaughnessy – Safeguarding Specialist	28/05/2026
Cadent	Emma Turnbull – Social programmes Manager	01/06/2026
Cadent	Philip Burrows- Head of Customer Vulnerability and Social Purpose	07/10/2026

Update

GDN	Approver (Name and Role)	Date

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No
Positive SROI	Have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculated in accordance with a model which the GDNs have developed and submitted to Ofgem including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project	Yes
Positive NPV	Have a positive, or a forecasted positive Net Present Value (NPV)	Yes
Support Criteria	Either: i. provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to Energy Safeguarding, or ii. provide support for those most at risk of being left behind in the transition to net zero, or iii. provide awareness of, and education on, the dangers of CO beyond the activities funded as business as usual (BAU) through baseline allowances, or iv. reduce the risk of harm caused by CO	Yes
Defined Outcomes	Have specific, measurable, and time-bound outcomes which align with relevant Consumer Vulnerability Strategy objectives to achieve the requirements set out in paragraph b;	Y es
Beyond Other Funding	Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s), including baseline allowance funding, or required through licence obligations	Y es
Support or Align	Support or align with approaches to vulnerability taken by the wider energy industry, other utilities and/or consumer organisations, and local, national and devolved government, or evidence innovation or a gap in vulnerability support provision;	Yes
No Other External Funding	Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding	Yes
BAU vulnerability and CO safety activities	Where a GDN's BAU vulnerability and CO safety activities are funded through baseline allowances, these are not suitable for funding through the VCMA. The GDN is permitted to use VCMA funds to supplement or complement its BAU activities, however, it must ensure that its reporting provides sufficient evidence to prevent double funding.	Yes

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No or N/A
Servicing must meet the following criteria:	Either: i. A GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition12 that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or iii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes	n/a
Affordability	The household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria set out in the VCMA governance document	n/a
Funding	Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord and national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance servicing	n/a

Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance repair and replacement

Eligibility Criteria	Description	Project qualifies Yes / No or N/A
Unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	Either: i. GDN has had to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has had to condemn unsafe pipework, or an essential gas appliance, following an essential gas appliance service (as described in 3.19 of the VCMA governance document)	n/a
Health condition	Either: i. The occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes and has a household income of £31,000 or below in 2025/26 prices, adjusted for inflation using Consumer Price Index with Housing costs (CPIH) 13, or ii. the household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, as assessed against the affordability criteria set out in Appendix 1 of the VCMA governance document	n/a
Funding	Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved, or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or the essential gas appliance repair or replacement.	n/a