

WESTERN POWER
DISTRIBUTION

Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

Powering our communities

'In This Together –
Community Matters'
Fund



westernpower.co.uk

An introduction from WPD's Chief Executive



From the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, staff at WPD have continued to work around the clock to keep the power flowing for the eight million customers across our region.

We provide an essential service ensuring a reliable energy supply continues to reach hospitals, factories and supermarkets enabling them to continue their vital work.

We understand that delivering safe and secure power to homes is now more important than ever too. The network has helped to power home offices and home schooling, as well as to charge the devices that have helped to keep us all connected to our loved ones and the world outside.

As well as keeping the lights on, we recognise that we have a crucial role in supporting the communities we serve during these incredibly difficult times. I'm delighted that through our **£750,000 'In This Together – Community Matters' fund**, WPD has been at the heart of supporting its communities and in particular people living in vulnerable situations.

The fund was set up in just two weeks at the outset of the pandemic and national shutdown in the UK.

It was created to help communities and charities maintain and expand their support to those that were impacted most by the pandemic, ranging from vital home delivery supplies to child education initiatives to befriending services.

At the same time, we have also scaled up our existing customer support schemes which, during normal times, support people impacted by fuel poverty and living in cold homes.

This has meant that **over 50 organisations** WPD typically works with to offer energy saving and tariff switching advice widened their support to include befriending services and undertaking additional actions such as delivering shopping and prescriptions to isolated and vulnerable people.

WPD was also able to help other key support agencies by sharing the data it has collected on its Priority Services Register (PSR) for those in need of extra support during power cuts.

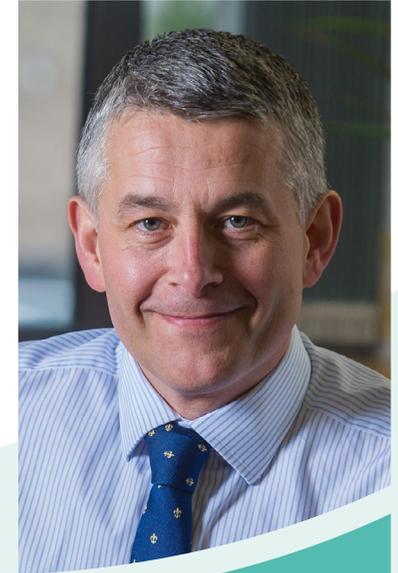
Over the past five years WPD has carried out **4.3 million proactive contacts to customers living in vulnerable circumstances**. As a result, we have very accurate information about their needs to share data with other support agencies during emergencies.

At the start of the lockdown we therefore wrote to every local authority, local resilience forum and utility provider in our region to offer to share this data where possible (in compliance with data protection regulations) to help them identify those most in need.

So, while life may be a little different at the moment, WPD's aim remains the same: **to deliver the energy and wider support needed to help the millions of people living in our region and help them get through these difficult times.**

We're all in this together.

Phil Swift,
WPD Chief Executive



I am immensely proud that as a direct result of WPD's 'In This Together – Community Matters' fund, we have funded 463 worthy causes and supported over half a million vulnerable people.

Background to the fund

The 'In This Together – Community Matters' fund was set up on 3 April 2020 in quick response to the lockdown announcement across England and Wales. We realised straight away that the support many vulnerable people in our communities rely on had vanished overnight and that people who wouldn't normally consider themselves as vulnerable were now being ordered to shield and needed help.

The fund was set up specifically to help communities with their response to coronavirus, with initially **£500,000 being made available to local charities**, community groups and councils to provide services and support to those who were vulnerable and in isolation, as well as key workers.

A diverse range of groups have benefited from the funding, including established charities like foodbanks, hospitals, the Salvation Army, Age UK and several hospices. In addition, a large number of community groups that formed specially to help their local communities through the pandemic have also benefited, including groups that are delivering food parcels, collecting prescriptions or offering online virtual support to those isolating.

Within three weeks of the fund's launch, we received **almost 600 applications from across the region**. We formed an independent panel comprising of customer representatives to help us assess the applications in order to support the most deserving causes.

We were able to fund over half of these applications with amounts of up to £10,000, supporting schemes including food and prescription delivery services, befriending

support, online services, helplines and PPE for hospitals. **Over 400,000 people benefited from the donations.**

Members of our independent Customer Collaboration Panel were drafted in to help administer the awards to the most deserving causes. They also helped devise the assessment criteria to ensure a variety of different types of scheme across a wide geographical area were eligible for support.

As the lockdown eased and the initial needs subsided it became clear that there were new longer-term challenges and many organisations were suffering due to the economic difficulties the pandemic had created.

So, in June 2020, the fund was extended by a further £250,000 but this time we invited all MPs whose constituencies are in its operational area to nominate local causes. **A fund of £1,500 was made available to each MP.**

92 MPs nominated 135 organisations for donations, with spare funds being offered to organisations that missed out from the first round of funding.



In summary

£750,000
awarded to local
good causes

463
organisations
received donations

Over
500,000
customers in vulnerable
situations supported

Map summary



Organisations across our coverage area that have benefited from the fund include:

For example...

Age UK Plymouth
Plymouth

The Llandoverly Youth and Community Centre
Swansea

Age UK Lincoln and South Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire

Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton
Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton

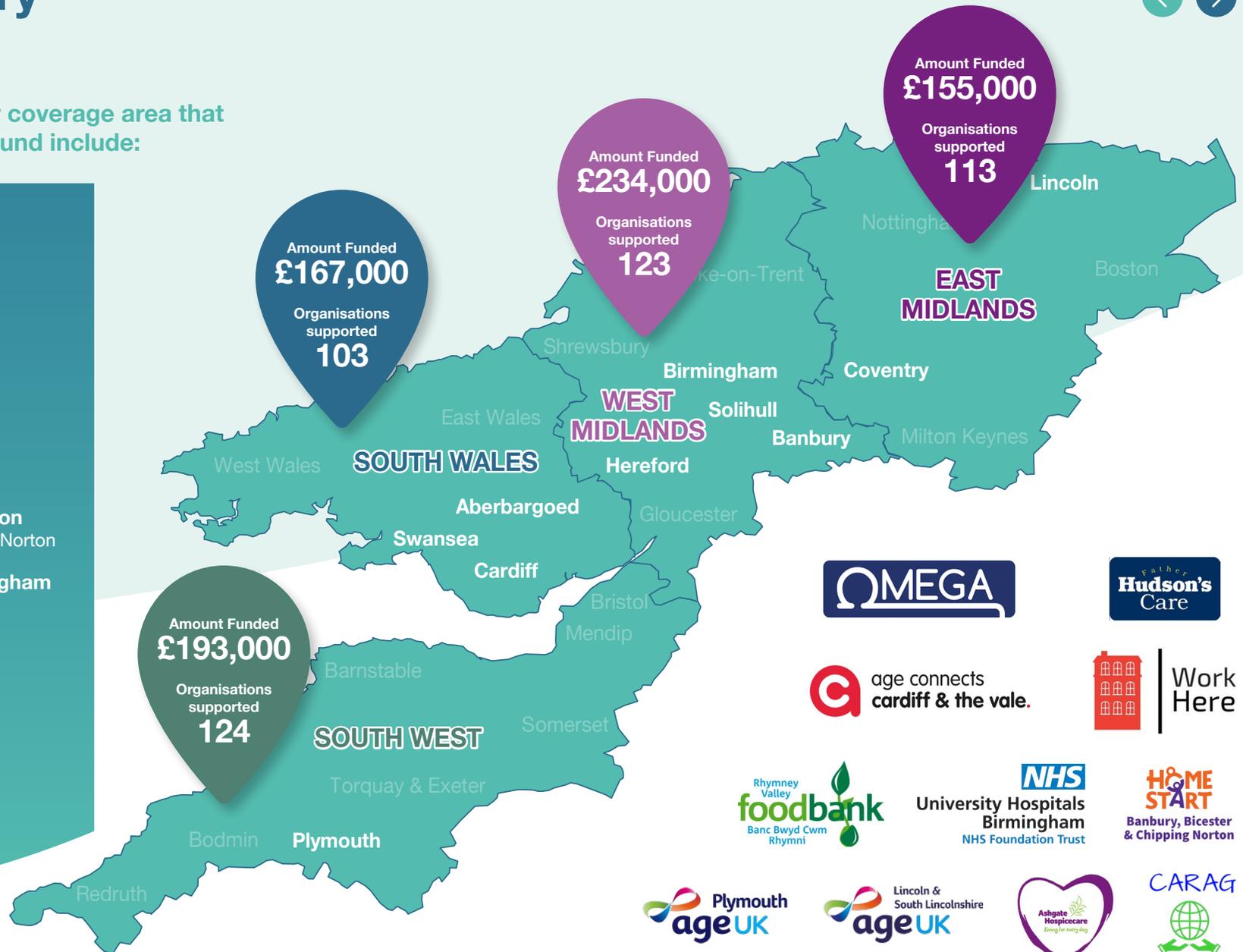
University Hospitals Birmingham
Birmingham

Rhymney Valley Foodbank
Aberbargoed

Age Connects Cardiff
Cardiff

Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group
Coventry

Work Here
Hereford



Case studies



The Llandoverly Youth and Community Centre



 **Based:** Llandoverly, Swansea

 **Funding awarded:** £1,500

 **Fund use:** Helpline to meet needs of struggling families with food and help people with mental health issues etc.

Jill Tatman from the organisation said:
“We have been really busy with the foodbank, organising volunteers to deliver shopping and prescriptions, and producing art/craft/gardening kits for children and adults. We are spending great lengths of time on the telephone too, as ‘cheerer-uppers’!”



People who live alone and are isolated really need someone to chat to on a regular basis. Our volunteers are loving being able to help people and we now have 72 of them eager and willing to do anything that needs doing. The funding provided by Western Power Distribution is certainly being put to very good use, and is benefiting so many people.

We are very grateful for their support.”

Age UK Plymouth



 **Based:** Plymouth

 **Funding awarded:** £6,650

 **Funding use:** Purchase of food boxes for delivering hot meals and shopping. Smart tablets for online contact.

Lynne Hodgson, Interim Deputy Chief Executive, said:
“Age UK Plymouth are extremely grateful to WPD for their most generous donation to help the charity support those elderly people who are struggling during the coronavirus pandemic.”



The money will help to provide free food boxes to those most vulnerable and in need, and the iPads will allow our team of volunteers and staff to help isolated people connect online with friends and family.

We are providing support to hundreds of older people who are struggling during these difficult times.”

Case studies



Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton



 **Based:** Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton

 **Funding awarded:** £500

 **Funding use:** 'Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton' are supporting a number of local young families with children under 5 through this difficult time. Their volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to families under stress.

Louise Sansom, Grants & Trust Fundraiser, said
"We are delighted and very grateful to receive the funding from Western Power Distribution. During the Covid-19 crisis, staff and volunteers from Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton are providing weekly telephone contact to support the emotional wellbeing of our supported families.



The practical and emotional demands of parenthood are challenging enough in normal times, but the current pandemic adds so many additional layers of anxiety, uncertainty and isolation.

We remain as committed as ever to supporting parents in the critical early years of childhood and we thank WPD for helping us to do this."

Age UK Lincoln and South Lincolnshire



 **Based:** Lincolnshire

 **Funding awarded:** £5,000

 **Funding use:** Age UK Lincoln & South Lincolnshire, received a grant for £5,000 to help support older people in the local area during these difficult and unprecedented times. It offers advice through its dedicated phone support line and helps those who need assistance with their shopping and picking up prescriptions. It also offers home cooked meals.

Michele Jolly, CEO, said:
"Age UK Lincoln & South Lincolnshire are adapting and innovating in these unprecedented times to support our existing customers and new calls for help by providing services for those who need them the most.



The donation from Western Power Distribution will be fundamental in supporting us to continue delivering food and essential supplies to vulnerable older people across Lincoln & South Lincolnshire, and to support our befriending services, where staff and volunteers are making wellbeing calls to those who are lonely and isolated.

Thank you so much for helping us to continue to be there to help more older people."



Case studies



University Hospitals Birmingham



 **Based:** Birmingham

 **Funding awarded:** £10,000

Charlotte Schofield, Director of Fundraising at University Hospitals Birmingham Charity, said: “On behalf of the 20,000 members of staff across University Hospitals Birmingham I would like to thank Western Power Distribution for this incredibly generous donation to help us to support our NHS Superheroes at this really challenging time.



The donation from Western Power Distribution will help us to provide important supplies for our staff members to help them to keep going during their long shifts. Our patients will benefit greatly from the tablets funded through this donation. One of the sad impacts of the pandemic is that our patients cannot receive visitors, greatly increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The tablets will provide our patients with a way of communicating with their loved ones, as well as providing entertainment. Alongside the tablets, we are also funding radios and activity packs for our patients. None of this would be possible without the generosity of organisations like Western Power Distribution.”

Rhymney Valley Foodbank



 **Based:** Aberbargoed, South Wales

 **Funding awarded:** £400

Leah Philbrick, Rymney Valley Foodbank, said: “We are so thankful for the support we have received for the Rhymney Valley Foodbank through Western Power Distribution Community Fund as we seek to respond to the growing need created by Covid 19.

The Rhymney Valley Foodbank has seen demand more than double in the last month and a half when compared to need this time last year. With your support we have been able to stabilise our food supply as we begin to get a handle on what the new reality for us will look like in the coming months.



This will not be a short-term response and your support has enabled us to respond to current need and there are many individuals and families who will have food on their tables in these next few weeks thanks to your support and that of many others in our local communities.”

Feedback and Comments



Please support your local hospice
"One in five of our patients are cared for thanks to gifts in Wills"



10th August 2020

Thank you so much; we have received the generous donation from the Weston Power Distribution In this Together - Community Fund. The grant will enable us to continue to give our vital medical, practical and emotional support to those with life limiting illness and at the end of life, at home and at the Hospice during this difficult time.

We will ensure that we share the difference that the donation has made with you all at Weston Power soon.

Thanks again,
Yours sincerely

Tina Croley
(Trusts and Grants Fundraiser Ashgate Hospicecare)

Ashgate Hospicecare, Ashgate Road, Old Brampton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S42 7JD
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President: His Grace The Duke of Devonshire, Vice President: Dr. Richard Atkinson MB BS FRCR DRCOG



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17 July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your kind donation of £2,350 towards the work of Brushstrokes food distribution, our project for newcomers and the hidden poor based in Smethwick near Birmingham.

Brushstrokes is an award-winning project, recognised both locally and nationally for its work to improve lives for the most vulnerable in the area. It does this by alleviating destitution, overcoming social exclusion and developing independence to enable newcomers to move onto an independent future. The project helps more than 1,000 new people every year. New registrations were up by 20% on last year and we expect that to continue to rise this year.

Your donation is crucial to Brushstrokes being able to continue its work enabling vulnerable people and their families to settle and thrive. Specifically, your grant will help us to meet the increasing demand for food parcels. During lockdown these food parcels became more essential. Penny, one of our volunteer food delivery drivers described her experience in her new role.

"Brushstrokes have shown their dedication to their community, responding quickly and efficiently in an unprecedented situation, providing a new service which they haven't offered before... I have been delivering in the Tipton area and the residents have all been really grateful to receive their deliveries. It has been lovely and rather humbling to see their genuine smiles of appreciation."

Thank you for choosing to make a donation towards this vital work. Your financial support is both much needed and very much appreciated.

With best wishes
Yours sincerely

Andrew Quinn
Chief Executive

Reaching out to provide social care in the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham
Registered in England and Wales no. 1653388. Registered charity no. 512992.
Father Hudson's Care is a working name of Father Hudson's Society.



Friday, 29 May 2020

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your generous grant in the sum of £3000.

This has reached us at precisely the right time. We have been hit with a groundswell of kindness. We are uniquely well placed to respond safely to requests for help during the current crisis.

Thank you again and best wishes,
With kindest regards,

Thomas Memery
Director

P.S. Congratulations too, to you and your team for gaining coverage in the Shropshire Star.

Omega, London House, Town Walls, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TX
[Patrons: Rose Davies, Helen Page-Croft, Janet Wood]
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Feedback and Comments





Absolutely well done and huge thanks!! Already a fan after your fantastic response during the floods. You're much appreciated! Xxx

Well done... we forget you guys are also key workers as this difficult time. You guys have been brilliant when we've had power cuts in Nottingham! You even got the power back on one Saturday evening last year just in time for MOTD!!

Thank you very much, very much appreciated...

Thank You

Thank you WPD you are greatly appreciated xx

Well done to all staff at WPD. Fantastic job you're doing.

Thank you to all the customers who've got in touch to share their appreciation for the work we've been doing since the outbreak.

Here's just a small selection of some of the heart-warming comments we've received on social media:

The most underrated of all the key workers that are doing a great job keeping everything running as smoothly as possible.

Massive respect to everyone x

Thank you! We all expect the electricity to magically heat and light our homes but we don't always remember the people who keep it going in all weathers, day and night, in the most difficult of times. Thank you all again.

A massive THANK YOU to WPD, for keeping the lights on. You are more important than the NHS in my book. Without power a hospital is just a building. Thank you, to every engineer and technician for continuing to work away from the safety of their own home, risking their lives so we can have power. "Thank you" just doesn't seem enough.

We were without electricity for around 6 hours last Thursday but we were kept well informed throughout the time on the work they were doing to repair the fault....Well done we are very grateful that it was repaired. Thanks to all involved.

Well done to all the men and women working hard to keep our electricity on.

Well done! Simply the best x

Huge respect to each and everyone of you, thank you so much, well done !!!! xx

I've said before, the silent heroes keeping us powered up - no one takes any notice or gives it much thought until it's not there. Well done.

Fantastic response from Western Power on Saturday. No power coming in to the house. In less than two hours after I'd made a telephone call to log the problem they had engineers out issue diagnosed and resolved, absolutely outstanding service especially in these challenging times.



Well done and thank you.

Appreciate everything you are doing.

I love my WPD drivers, I'm always beeping to them as they drive around the lanes where I live. The 3rd emergency service, possibly national heroes

Thank you for all you are doing.

Very grateful.

The silent heroes - no one will notice or think about you keeping us powered - well done & thank you all.

Stay safe. We can't do without electricity. Thank you WPD.

Good to hear times are hard and nice to see you have stopped non-essential works unless it's emergency work well done #letsbeatthistogether Respect the elders.

Well done to all staff at WPD. Fantastic job you're doing.

Brilliant job you did today getting the power back on and the level of communication was outstanding.

Thank you we need the electricity more than ever stay safe.

Thank You

Thank you all who work to keep homes going.

(fund) How uplifting to read this message. For a large corporation to initiate such a project we should all be grateful.

(fund) Well done WPD, keeping the lights on and supporting local communities in these challenging times.

Thank you so much for all the work you do. We all appreciate you very much. God Bless everyone and keep you safe and well xx

5th emergency service! Well done.

Well done we would be lost without you all xx

Well done everyone where would we be without you! Xxx

Well done everyone and thank you. X

We would like to say many THANKS to WESTERN POWER for their prompt reaction to a very early morning phone call. It turned out not to be their problem, but nevertheless their representative was extremely helpful. Once again a Big Thank You as always one should give credit where credit is due.

A big THANK YOU to Western Power

Well done Western Power.

Huge thank you for all you have done and continue to do. Please stay safe!

You're unsung heroes. Keep up the good work.



Thank you to all the key workers involved in helping us last night! Much appreciated.

Without you the hospitals and food shops wouldn't operate. Big clap for you guys.

Thank you for your hard work. Keep safe.

Stay safe and thank you!

Wonderful thing to do. Nice to work for a company that cares for its employees and the communities they live in. [In response to ITTCM fund]

Well done and thank you!

Thanks to you all. Stay safe.

Thank you so much!

Thank You

Thank you so much for your incredible support for our patients and staff. The donation that you have made will have a huge impact on patients just like Gladys.

Well done all at Western Power.

Thank you to all the key workers involved in helping us last night! Much appreciated.

Another group of key workers, without whom the rest of the nation would come to a stand still. WE salute you all!

Thank you for working hard to get us all up and running after a power cut at the weekend. You truly are a great, under-appreciated service. Thank you.

Shout out to all the vehicle techs keeping the WPD fleet on the road.

Thank you to everyone at WPD. Because of you, electricity up and down the country stays on, enabling ventilators to continue to work, the lights to stay on and the telly working. #thankyou

We salute and thank all WPD workers for their hard work at this time. Where would we be without you? Xxx

Amazing work that you do. Thank you WPD.

Well done all of you. Very proud and thank you x

Keep up the good work lads x

We had a power cut last week just before midnight. We called 105 and within less than 3 hours we were connected back to supply. Brilliant response despite the time and circumstances! Great work WPD team.

You guys are great!

Our coronavirus response



Throughout the pandemic we have continued to maintain the high standards of service and support for all of our customers.

Supporting customers

Many of our employees are key workers who have continued to leave their homes to deliver essential services that keep the electricity flowing to our homes, businesses and for critical services such as hospitals and care facilities. Other staff have been performing their vital roles as they adjust to new ways of working.

In spite of restrictions on our working practices, we continue to provide a robust, reliable and safe service to 7.9million customers. Here's what we've achieved.

Between April and July:

Our field and control teams responded to **41,122 incidents**

Over 90% of power cuts on our high voltage network were restored in less than an hour

Over 64,000 calls were made to customers on our Priority Services Register

We handled more than **309,000 calls** from customers

Calls were answered in an average of just **four seconds**

So it's good to know that, when power cuts do happen, our teams are on hand to respond quickly to your calls and to restore supplies as soon as possible.

Supporting staff

Our trained and experienced staff remain committed to delivering essential services and we thank them their efforts at a tough time.

It has been vitally important that during this time, our teams remain safe and have been given the support, equipment and information necessary to carry out their work safely.

From the start of the outbreak, we have been keeping all staff regularly informed and updated with the latest guidance, and countless measures and activities were completed to allow them to continue essential work.

For example, additional PCs were built and our IT network extended to enable 2,000 of our staff to home work where possible.

Our fleet was also increased by 10% to keep our teams on the road and to better enable social distancing. We also sourced the PPE required to keep staff safe while keeping the power flowing.



Working together

We've joined forces with agencies across our region to deliver essential services and infrastructure in the fight against Covid-19.

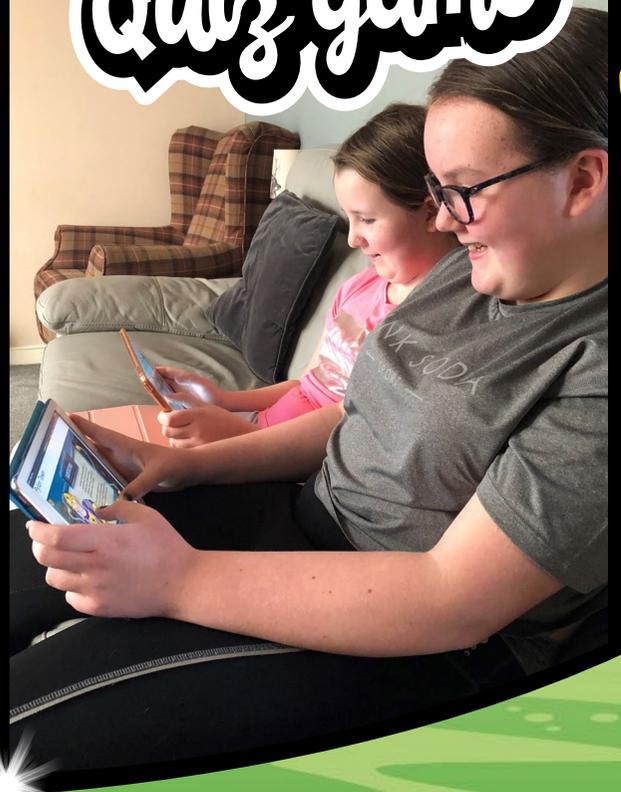
This includes the rapid installation of new connections at several sites, including NHS properties, in response to demands for increased electrical capacity.

Our teams pulled out all the stops to complete one emergency connection in less than 48 hours – a job that would normally take up to three months from start to finish.

We've also been doing a lot of work behind the scenes to ensure the resilience of electricity supplies at new and existing hospital locations, as well as to safeguard other essential services such as care homes, factories and other utilities. Our teams are proud to be part of the UK effort to combat coronavirus.



RENEWABLE ENERGY Quiz game



Supporting homeschools

We've been supporting learning and helping families to educate from home during Covid-19.

Our educational website, Power Discovery Zone, features interactive games as well as a wide range of information to help children understand the dangers of electricity.

New resources include a brand new interactive renewable energy quiz and feature our electricity superhero, Pylonman, who has swapped his usual classroom visits for the internet, to engage and inform children on everything to do with electricity.

Find out more at www.powerdiscoveryzone.com



You can find out more about what we're doing in the fight against coronavirus at www.westernpower.co.uk

or check out our social media channels:



**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**



Power cut?

If you have a power cut, rest assured that we are on hand 24 hours a day to restore your electricity supply.

Call us on 105, visit our website, download our 'Power Cut Reporter' app or go to our social media pages to let us know and we'll be here to help.



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Western Power Distribution (West Midlands) plc, No3600574
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