



Coronavirus: Our Response

Powering Your Homes, Businesses and Communities

We are all living, and working, in challenging times.

However, one thing remains unchanged during the coronavirus crisis. At WPD, we continue to work 24/7 to keep the power flowing to 7.9 million customers across our region, ensuring vital energy reaches hospitals, factories, supermarkets and other essential services.

We understand that a safe and reliable energy supply to homes is more important than ever too. The network is helping to power home offices and home schooling, as well as to charge the devices that keep us all connected to our loved ones and the world outside.

Like everyone, we've had to change the way we work in response to the outbreak. But, as always, our top priority remains the safety of our colleagues and the communities we serve. That's why we're carrying out essential work only and following the latest government guidelines on safety and social distancing.

We're also doing what we can to support our communities and most vulnerable customers during the pandemic. This includes the launch of our £500k 'In This Together – Community Matters' fund to support the delivery of services to the most vulnerable in our communities during this difficult time, ranging from vital home delivery supplies to child education initiatives to befriending services.

We have also scaled up our existing schemes that, during business as usual, support customers impacted by fuel poverty and living in cold homes, as well as increased our proactive contact with customers on our Priority Services Register.

So, while life may be a little different at the moment, our aim remains the same: to deliver the energy and support needed to our homes, communities and vital services to get us all through these difficult times.

We won't let you down.



Alison Sleightholm,
Resources and External Affairs Director

Key Workers, Key Performance

We've been working hard during the crisis to uphold the high standards of service and support our customers expect.

Here's how: In the last three weeks during the outbreak (3-23 April):

Many of our employees are key workers who must leave their homes to deliver essential services which keep the electricity flowing. Others are performing their vital roles as they adjust to new, home working arrangements.

In spite of tough new restrictions on our working practices, we continue to provide a robust and reliable service to homes and the critical services we all rely on.



5,200

incidents were responded to by our field and control teams



Calls were answered in an average of just

4 seconds



Over

10,000

calls were made to customers on our Priority Services Register



More than

46,000

calls were handled by our customer care team



88%

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



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.

A Network of Support

We've been doing everything we can to support our communities, too.

'In This Together – Community Matters' fund

Our 'In This Together – Community Matters' fund was launched to support those hit hardest by the coronavirus outbreak. The £500k fund is helping local organisations to deliver support and services to the most vulnerable in our communities. In the first week alone, we've helped community groups to deliver vital support to more than 130,000 vulnerable people in our region. That number will increase substantially over the coming weeks as further awards are made.

To date, this has included a donation to the Selston Covid-19 volunteers towards food and ingredients for cooked meals for NHS staff and vulnerable people in Nottinghamshire; funding for University Hospitals, Birmingham to buy insulated mugs and snacks for NHS frontline staff and iPads to enable coronavirus sufferers on 120 wards to keep in touch with loved ones while in hospital.

We'll also be supporting Moorvision, a charity in the South West, which helps develop online educational resources for blind and partially sighted children, along with Age Connects Cardiff and The Vale to help fund food and prescription deliveries and keep in telephone contact with elderly people in isolation.

Supporting customers on WPD's Priority Services Register

We're also providing additional support to the 1.9 million customers on our Priority Services Register (PSR), many of whom may find a power cut difficult or are medically dependent on electricity.

During the crisis, we're working closely with local community partners to help PSR customers most in need to access services such as food and prescription deliveries, telephone calls to combat loneliness and advice on energy savings.

A new iPad app is making it easier for our field staff to refer those who may be struggling or in isolation due to coronavirus.

We've also emailed more than 330,000 PSR customers to tell them about the help and resources we can offer during the coronavirus outbreak. A special coronavirus information portal for PSR customers has been created on our website which includes everything from energy saving tips to home schooling resources and regularly-updated FAQs.

Many more customers have been signposted to the portal by text message.

Addressing fuel poverty and those living in cold homes

During normal operating conditions, we work with a wide network of community-based agencies to support those struggling to afford their energy bills.

In the last 12 months, we've helped more than 18,000 customers directly save a total of over £10.5 million.

In light of coronavirus, our work to alleviate fuel poverty has also been stepped up to help households manage the financial impact of the pandemic, largely as a result of increased utility and grocery bills.

Alongside our community partners, we're helping those who have been most affected by the crisis to access support and advice, including help with online shopping slots, food bank referrals and advice on energy payment schemes.



Statistics correct as of W/C 27th April 2020



payments awarded
£390,000



174
organisations supported



people directly
benefitting
from funding
awarded
130,000



Joining the Fight Against Covid-19

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



Education and Discovery

We're 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.

Youngsters will also be able to find out how they can reduce the energy they use by checking in with Ecobot, our energy saving mascot!

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:



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

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!!

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

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

Thank You

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:

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

5th emergency service! Well done.

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

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.**

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.**

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.**

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

Thank you WPD you are greatly appreciated xxx

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

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

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.