



Inclusive Service Panels

Annual Report 2018/19

About Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) forms part of the FTSE-50 energy company, SSE. It is responsible for maintaining the electricity networks supplying over 3.8 million homes and businesses across central southern England and north of the Central Belt of Scotland. It owns one electricity transmission network and two electricity distribution networks, comprising 106,000 substations and 134,000 km of overhead lines and underground cables across one third of the UK.

About the Inclusive Service Panels

Recognising that for some, a power cut can be particularly distressing and difficult, SSEN offer extra help and support for customers who are registered on the Priority Services Register. However, SSEN's approach to supporting customers is wider than that, aiming to be the most accessible and inclusive Distribution Network Operator in Great Britain. To ensure that the services provided are truly accessible and inclusive, an independently chaired panel formed of experts with a working knowledge of issues relating to inclusion has been established. The Inclusive Service Panel works alongside an internal panel made up of representatives from across the business. The Inclusive Service Panels have been formed to challenge thinking, provide innovative suggestions and practical ideas to further improve the inclusive nature of the services offered to SSEN's customers. The members of the panels bring a vast range of work-life experiences including working or supporting people with mental health issues, physical and/or learning disabilities, older people living with dementia, supporting equality, occupational therapy, religious diversity, and views from the LGBT community. Both panels are chaired by Richard Shakespeare, a leading expert in diversity and inclusion.

Purpose of this report

This is the first annual report since the panel was created and its purpose is twofold:

- First, to provide a summary to SSEN's business leaders of the issues considered and the advice given, which in turn helps to support further scrutiny and accountability; and,
- Secondly to be open about the work of the Panels, for the benefit of SSEN's customers and stakeholders as well as to outline the pertinent issues and decisions taken in 2018/19.

Contents

03	Foreword
04	How the panels work
06	Key issues 2018/19
10	Panel biographies



Foreword

For many businesses' inclusion has become a buzz word, an opportunity to be seen to be doing the right thing without the need to challenge the way they think, the way they feel, or the way they behave. Within Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), I have seen a real passion and desire to ensure their services are more inclusive for all of the customers they serve.

Before the launch of the Inclusive Service Panels, I was commissioned to conduct a comprehensive review of SSEN services. I held focus groups with over 50 employees across both license areas. Most groups met without a managerial presence to ensure that participants felt confident that they could talk openly about the business, what works well and what could be improved. The review led to 36 observations and nine actions taken forward to the panel for review.

Chairing both the internal and the external Inclusive Service Panels has allowed me to see how committed SSEN is to their customers. SSEN already had robust processes, passionate and skilled people and the ability to help any of their customers who and wherever they may be. The next challenge was to become the most inclusive Distribution Network Operator by reviewing and improving the accessibility of their services. This past year they have become far more open, transparent, and inclusive. The panel has taken forward a total of 20 projects, actions or changes in business practice so far and, were very proud to be nominated as a finalist in the stakeholder engagement category at the inaugural Networks awards.

The significant success we have seen over the past year can be attributed to the business welcoming challenges and embracing change. They take on board ideas, feedback and suggestions from panel members, customers and stakeholders alike. The desire to change for the benefit of their customers, particularly those in vulnerable situations, has led to remarkable developments across the business. Within the past year, we have seen SSEN provide greater clarity to their aims and objectives through the Vulnerability Strategy Wheel; improving their storm processes for customers; adding subtitles to videos; producing documents in Easy Read; introducing an accessibility toolbar to their website and radically improving catering options for customers during power cuts through a partnership with an external agency.

Continuing to consider the needs of their customers, working with partners from water companies to resilience partners, and the willingness to be challenged is, in my view, what sets SSEN apart from other businesses not only within the energy sector but across the UK.

Richard Shakespeare

Richard Shakespeare
Chair

How the Panels work

Panel development in 2018/19

The Inclusive Service Panels (ISPs) have concluded their first year, set up to inform, challenge and influence the company's decision making, the focus is solely ensuring that the services provided are more inclusive for the 3.8 million homes and businesses served by SSEN. There are two panels, an external group which provides us with an external perspective and ability to explore best practice from across a range of industries and sectors. By harnessing their experience, the panel challenges the business on issues facing SSEN's customers; and an internal panel compliments this by bringing in the knowledge of people who speak with customers, and who know how recommendations could be applied to processes and procedures, to improve services.

By learning from the panel members' expertise, experiences, backgrounds and knowledge, SSEN is checking all aspects of its business to ensure that it not only continues to do the right thing for all its

customers but also continues to develop its commitment to delivering a truly inclusive culture within its organisation. The panels meet three times per year. SSEN provides the secretariat function and manages and tracks all challenges and the implementation of solutions. Alongside this, there are frequent formal check-ins with the Chairperson to track and monitor the progress of actions and initiatives to ensure momentum.

Panel Business in 2018/19

In order to keep all members abreast of strategy and performance, meetings are aligned to the four quadrants of the consumer vulnerability wheel. The panels were involved in the development of the wheel which outlines the following focus areas to support customers who benefit from extra help and support:

1. Drive forward PSR provision and promotion
2. Ensure our services are inclusive accessible now and, in the future,



3. Expand on fuel poverty and energy efficiency activities
4. Widen our partnership network and collaborative activities

In planning the agendas for each meeting, the Chair requests topics and subjects for discussion from members of both panels. These items are fed into the meeting schedule for the year, ensuring the most salient issues receive priority. The Chair, in turn, sets the agenda alongside the Secretariat.

Within the SSEN three-tier approach to stakeholder engagement (Strategic, Organisational and Operational) the Panel correlates to the strategic level of engagement. While not directly involved at an operational and organisational level, the panel is kept informed about these activities and outcomes.



Key Issues 2018/19

SSEN have a genuine desire to become more inclusive and are open to ideas for improvements. The panels have seen SSEN act on the feedback provided implementing several tactical initiatives quickly. This section of the report outlines some of the issues considered and viewpoints of the panels throughout the year.

Ensure our services are inclusive and accessible now and, in the future



Diversity and inclusion have been brought to the forefront of language and communications for SSEN and they are making good progress in these areas. The panel have informed several initiatives which have been launched to improve accessibility for customers including the Recite Me website toolbar, the addition of subtitles on all videos, supporting the work of corporate affairs in looking at how we make our communications with customers more inclusive, and the creation of an Easy Read version of the PSR leaflet.



These initiatives provide direct benefits to customers building on a website (ssen.co.uk) that has been rated the most accessible website in the UK energy industry. The ReciteMe toolbar provides additional options of customers to adapt

the site and make it more usable for their needs including changing languages, colour of text and background, having text read aloud or even downloaded. Another feature that the panel applauded is the ability to increase and changed into alternative typefaces, including 'Open Dyslexic'. This functionality is beneficial to anyone who has dyslexia, is blind or has a degree of visual impairment, struggles to read text or who has trouble in reading English easily. Another suggestion from the panel was to introduce Easy-Read format to make documents very easy to understand by using simple and stripped back wording alongside images to aid understanding. As well as helping customers with limited reading abilities, people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities, it is also appreciated by many people for whom English is a second language.

Expand on fuel poverty and energy efficiency activities

The panels recommended that SSEN need to do more to provide support for customers in fuel poverty. This year SSEN has established a partnership with Home Energy Scotland and YES Energy Solutions to provide a referral service for customers to find out more about the support available if they are in fuel poverty and receive free advice about ways to reduce their energy bills. The implementation of referrals to Home Energy Scotland and YES energy solutions are great, low cost initiatives that allow SSEN to support vulnerable customers by working with experts in fuel poverty.

SSEN should consider what their commitment is to support the reduction of fuel poverty as part of their wider consumer vulnerability strategy by keeping abreast of government and industry initiatives and partnering with third parties and experts who can support customers.

Widen our partnership network and collaborative activities



The panel suggested that SSEN use a systematic approach to review their current service provision against a characteristic checker to identify any gaps and where partnerships could be formed to bridge these gaps. We are pleased to report that this tool has been used to assess the service provisions offered and also internally to assess whether customer facing staff are equipped to support customers across the range of characteristics.

SSEN are reaching out to community, charity and third sector groups to promote the Priority Services Register but there is more to do to ensure that all customers who need extra support can access these services. SSEN should consider and pursue partnerships that will allow them to engage with customers that are harder to reach.



Drive forward PSR provision and promotion



The Priority Services Register (PSR) continues to be a top priority for SSEN as the register allows us to provide extra support to those who need it most during a loss of electricity supply. The panel recommended different ways to promote the PSR including using videos and targeted adverts to medical professionals via LinkedIn promotion. The panel have witnessed a marked increase in awareness of the register and the service provision offered. Although awareness of the register is increasing, SSEN must do more to engage with hard to reach communities such as community groups or university networks.

With a growing number of customers on the PSR, the panel challenged SSEN to consider how they prioritise customers in order to ensure that the most vulnerable

customers are considered first. This has resulted in the launch of the PSR 1+ category. Similarly, SSEN have also focused on ensuring that all the PSR codes are suitably aligned with customer requirements, ensuring that they receive the appropriate support during power interruptions. An example of this is for customers who aren't directly attached to SSEN's network, known as sub metered customers. These include Park Homes and sheltered housing. During a power cut, to SSEN this will appear as one customer or meter going off supply, but it can hide dozens of Park Homes or sheltered housing units, both of which have a high propensity to have elderly people or people with disabilities. SSEN have acted to more effectively record these locations to help prioritisation during power cuts and provide better warning of planned supply interruptions.



Looking to the future

Communities are always changing and SSEN must continue to immerse themselves in communities to understand the changing needs of customers. SSEN must acknowledge the technological advances taking place within the industry with the transition to Distribution System Operator and adoption of electric vehicles, they must consider combatting the potential for vulnerable customers to become even more isolated. SSEN must continue to work towards changing processes and systems to ensure customers are always at the forefront of any decisions. SSEN must also move at pace, ensuring it adapts to a constantly changing world. Going forward SSEN must engage with future consumers to ensure they are at the forefront, driving change within the industry.

To progress ambitions to become the most inclusive and accessible Distribution Network Operator, SSEN should consider the need for increased resources and/or working closer with partners to provide more support in the communities. SSEN must not lose focus of the commitment to becoming more inclusive and accessible as it takes time, patience and committed resources to rollout and embed change in an organisation of this size. To be effective, SSEN must ensure that the membership of the Inclusive Service panels is regularly reviewed to ensure that panels are representative of their customer base.



Panel Biographies



Richard Shakespeare, Chair

Richard Shakespeare is a leading Diversity Consultant and, the Managing Director of Workplace Diversity Solutions Ltd. Having lived with a disability since birth, Richard can offer a unique insight into the challenges faced by consumers with a disability. Richard works with businesses across the UK to help them to understand how they can create an improved experience for customers with disabilities, people from different communities, and embed a culture of inclusion within the businesses he supports. Richard has provided diversity and inclusion training to more than 42,000 people since he started working in the industry over eight years ago.

Richard empowers businesses to take a strategic approach to diversity and inclusion, he is of the view that successful companies are those who move beyond merely complying with legislative or regulatory requirements and begin to put equality at the very centre of their business. Richard has led Workplace Diversity Solutions to work with well-known brands including the likes of Manchester Airport Group, National Health Service, Eurostar International, Standard Life, Aberdeen, BBC Country File Live, and several academic institutions.

Richard passionately believes that by supplying companies with the right guidance and resources we can enhance the experience for consumers from all backgrounds and work towards a more inclusive society. During March of 2019, Richard received a nomination for a Positive Role Model Award at the National Diversity Awards.



Emma Saccomani, Panel member

Emma founded her business 'B6Learning' in 2016 to share mental health and wellbeing business best practice. Through the delivery of workshops, including Mental Health First Aid, Emma promotes the message that, while the workplace can be part of the problem, it can also part of the solution. Emma volunteers as both a trustee and facilitator of depression support groups for her local mental health charity CornerHouse. In this role, Emma witnesses the value of non-judgmental listening and ensuring the voice of those on the ground is heard. Emma also sits on a Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust working group on Bereavement by Suicide which is building a system wide approach with practical support and the needs of those bereaved at the heart of decision-making.

Emma's previous employment history was primarily as a Learning and Development consultant for Eurostar international Ltd, Kings Cross (Sept 2007 – Dec 2016). As part of a small team in a range of operational settings – depot/stations/call centre/head office, Emma provided bespoke and engaging L&D solutions for 1500+ employees and managers to embed Eurostar values and create a culture of high performance and sense of team.



Jenny Miller, Panel member

CEO of PAMIS (Promoting a More Inclusive Society), an organisation that supports people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their family carers to lead healthy, valued and inclusive lives. Jenny has a background in occupational therapy and leadership of allied health professions (AHPs) within a local health board but also nationally and within Scottish Government funded projects. Prior to Jenny's current CEO post she worked for NHS Education for Scotland as the lead for practice education for AHPs and continue to actively engage with this agenda in her current role. As the CEO of PAMIS, Jenny is involved in national and international networks and advisory groups supporting the voice of people with profound and multiple learning difficulties and their family carers.



Anne McWhinnie, Panel member

Anne is the National Dementia Friends Programme Manager with Alzheimer Scotland; the Dementia Friends initiative is part of a social action movement to increase awareness about dementia and to address the stigma experienced by many people living with the illness. With the right support and understanding, people can live well with dementia and still contribute to their local community. Anne has worked with Alzheimer Scotland for 14 years in various roles over the years and finds this the most rewarding so far.



Henry Field, Panel member

Henry Field brings his HR, recruitment and equality, diversity and inclusion experience to the Inclusive service Panel. As well as playing an active role in the Inclusive Service Panel, Henry is the Resourcing and Talent Manager for NewLaw Solicitors and studying his CIPD level 5 qualification as a part time student. Over the past 2 years Henry has also volunteered with LGBT+ Charities within the UK, using his own experiences to support other members of the LGBT community that require it.

Henry struggled with his Mental Health, and in 2018 was diagnosed with ADHD, he uses his own experience to ensure the service meets the needs of customers like himself. Henry has not allowed his own battle with his mental health hold him back and uses his own experience to make the lives of those that need support better. Having worked in recruitment for 5 years, Henry uses his wider network to add value and open doors to additional services and partners where needed.

There are also 16 voluntary representatives across Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks who sit on the Internal panel.



