

Rural England supporters meeting: Summary of 2022/23 activities 25th April 2023



Key activities:

- **Village Agent/Community Agent schemes research project**
- **Priority Services Register specific groups research project**
- **Rural town centres research project**
- **Decarbonisation impacts for off-grid properties research project**

Village Agent/Community Agent Schemes research project

Purpose:

- Follow up to initial PSR-related project on rural people's experience of utilities and supply outages/stoppages.
- In particular, finding that many remained unaware of the PSR and its benefits.
- Village Agent Schemes and the like (where they exist) thought potentially a useful means to help address this.
- Schemes which help connect people – especially vulnerable people – with the services that meet their needs.

Findings:

- Identified 14 such Schemes of varying size, scale and scope.
- Like many grant-funded initiatives may start-up, evolve or fold over time.
- Most were aware of the PSR, but only 5 were actively promoting it.
- Near universal willingness to do more (with barriers to doing so few and largely surmountable).
- Schemes also keen to do more on related topics e.g. fuel poverty and energy efficiency support.

Experiences and issues for rural energy and water users from specific PSR needs code groups

Again, a follow up to earlier general research project on rural experiences of the utilities/PSR.

What are particular experiences or issues for those with the most severe vulnerabilities?

Research commenced by Rural England associates, CCRI (University of Gloucestershire).

Selected three groups as the focus:

- Mental ill-health and dementia
- Dependent on medical equipment (using electricity or water)
- Blind and partially sighted

Methodology: in-depth interviews with individuals plus some interviews with support bodies.

Decarbonising at off grid properties research project

Ongoing research to:

- Explore the practicalities, costs and impacts of decarbonising at off (main gas) grid properties
- Based upon case studies at both residential and commercial rural properties
- Its findings to inform views about the appropriateness of current Government policy

Comments or questions



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