



Case Study - Gas

“Our customers now have access to information about our network 24 hours a day, all year around. The portal helps customers with simple enquiries to self-serve, while our experienced team focus on more complex and challenging enquiries like high pressure pipelines.

“With LSBUD’s support, we have been able to give more customers better information. 7.5m people rely on our network every day, and improving the information provided not only improves the customer experience, it also keeps our network safer. ”

Stephen Davies, Plant Protection Network Officer at Wales & West Utilities

AT A GLANCE

477,000

more searches in one year

32%

increase in site visits

7.5m

homes and businesses that benefit

Collaborative Portal Key to Customer Satisfaction Improvement

By joining LSBUD, Wales & West Utilities has been able to interact with far more customers who are performing searches, providing them with greater detail, faster than ever.

In 2018, Wales & West Utilities received 23,000 search enquiries, with the average response time being five days. After introducing LSBUD in 2019, it received more than 500,000 enquiries, and the average response time was down to less than two minutes.

Customers are getting an almost immediate response with the data they need, while Wales & West Utilities’ experienced team intervene in specific, challenging cases, supporting the customers and projects that need it most.

In 2019, 53,061 enquiries were reviewed in detail by the company’s Plant Protection Team, with 3,238 being followed up by site visits. Site visits have increased by 32 percent on the previous year.

Search information data is collected by the LSBUD portal, allowing Wales & West Utilities to analyse patterns and trends for future planning. This allows them to be even more proactive and focussed with its approach, putting safeguards in place in areas of high risk, or fine-tuning its safety advice even further.



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Wales & West Utilities is the company that look after the pipes that keep the gas flowing to **heat the homes and power businesses of 7.5m people** across Wales and south west England. It operates the gas emergency service, connect new homes and businesses, and upgrade the gas network so it's safe today and fit for the future.



The company is also committed to playing its part in getting to **Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050**. 30 power stations connected to its network support renewables like wind and solar power while 19 green gas sites inject enough decarbonised green gas to power 130,000 homes. Additionally, the company's network supplies bus garages in three locations across the south west of England, fuelling CNG buses that **improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions** from public transport.

Protecting the gas network was always important, but is even more so now, with communities depending on it for not only heating, but also electricity and transport.



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The Project

Wales & West Utilities had historically operated with four colleagues responding to queries about the location of their pipes and plant from customers including house builders, developers, homeowners and other utility companies.

With the increasing importance of the gas network, and in line with two of the company's priorities to demand safety always and drive outstanding service, Wales & West Utilities started looking for a service that would better protect its underground gas network, and with it, improve the customer experience.

Action

By becoming a LSBUD member, Wales & West Utilities has been able to evolve its strategy. Plans of its network can be issued to a much wider audience in a shorter period of time.

It is also able to start generating immediate automated replies and provide quicker in-depth responses, which not only keep those doing the digging up-to-date, but also keeps them more engaged with the search process.

Working with LSBUD has allowed Wales & West Utilities to focus less of its team's time on providing people digging near its assets with information – letting automated processes do that. Instead, the experienced team focus on visiting large developments and worksites near the company's assets. They visit people and organisations planning work near the most sensitive of assets – like High Pressure Pipelines – to give them clear and pertinent information about how to work safely and keep their team safe. Reducing the weight of administrative work through LSBUD allows Wales & West Utilities to be proactive, reaching out to those digging, educating them about the risks involved and providing safety advice.