

Embedding resilience throughout

Resilience is a strategic imperative for us at UK Power Networks. It exemplifies our ability to anticipate and adapt to challenges, sudden or gradual, and absorb the shocks that they inflict.

Organisational resilience depends on a deep-seated culture that permeates an organisation. It cannot be attached or acquired; the only way to achieve it is to embrace it wholeheartedly and make sure everyone in the organisation understands it and takes responsibility for their part in it. Resilience builds over time, with experience, practice and commitment. At UK Power Networks we have been building this culture over many years and it is an important element of our way of working.

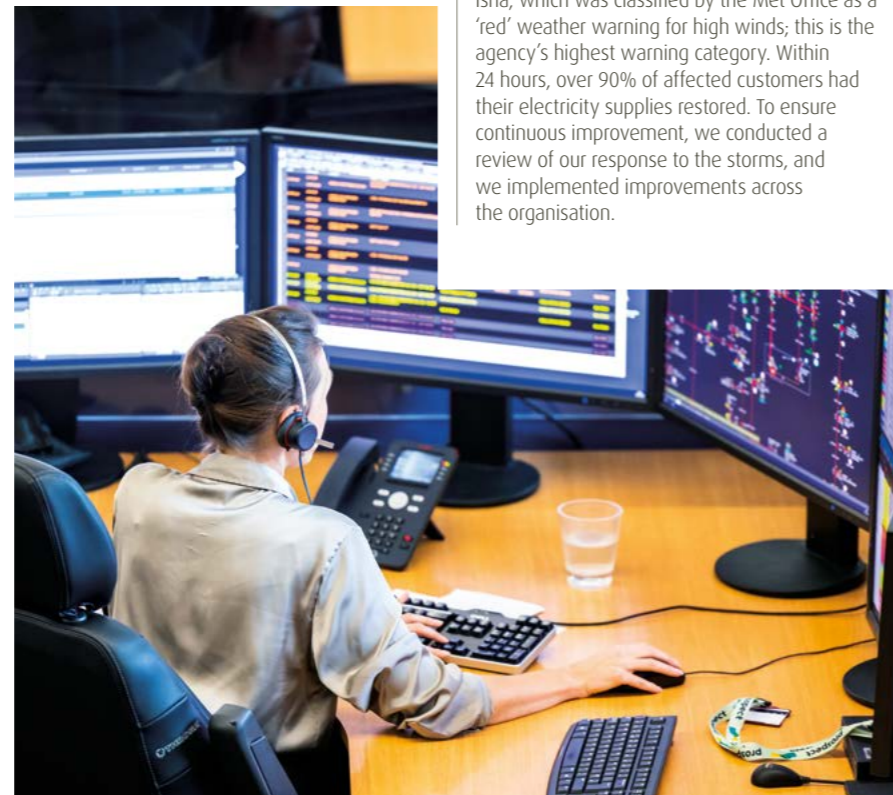
We were not subject to any events in 2023/24 that tested our readiness to withstand a crisis. That does not mean, however, that we did not continue to scan the horizon ceaselessly; if anything, it gave us the opportunity to refocus and deepen awareness throughout the business. We have a programme of communication and awareness-raising that reaches all levels of the business.

Revised British Standards Institution (BSI) guidance

We align our organisational resilience with the BSI guidance (BS 65000). In 2023/24, this was revised to view resilience in more breadth, placing emphasis on the dependencies and interrelations of functions. It further suggests that an organisation's strategy, business model and risk management are fundamental to building and maintaining organisational resilience. This fresh approach chimes with our own and we are matching our activities with this new Code of Practice.

A resilience dashboard

We are beginning to be more explicit in how we measure our organisational resilience, as we recognise that what we choose to measure is what gets done. We are developing a dashboard that helps our leadership team track factors of resilience and issues relating to them and to identify areas where we should concentrate our efforts to reinforce our position.



Introducing the principle of the pre-mortem

In 2024, we started to encourage the use of pre-mortems more widely in resilience planning. A pre-mortem involves identifying a potential crisis that we could face as a business and defining it in as much detail as possible. Working backwards, we proceed to determine the steps and decisions that could have led to the event and our imagined failure to manage it. This technique is a valuable way of discussing the threats that face us and analysing them systematically. It also allows us to identify what actions we might take to prevent the circumstances arising.

On this page you will see how we have performed against the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Response to extreme weather

As a DNO it is a fundamental aspect of our role to be able to operate in spite of extreme weather. Traditionally, this has referred to storms but, increasingly our preparation includes measures to deal with extreme heat.

We prepare our plans meticulously in anticipation of every major event and we hold reviews afterwards to ensure we learn the lessons they teach us and make the relevant improvements. This aspect of our resilience planning proved to be crucial during the extreme weather conditions experienced throughout 2023 and the beginning of 2024. A series of named storms, which caused nationwide disruption, stress-tested every element of UK Power Networks' severe weather response plans. Particularly noteworthy was Storm Isha, which was classified by the Met Office as a 'red' weather warning for high winds; this is the agency's highest warning category. Within 24 hours, over 90% of affected customers had their electricity supplies restored. To ensure continuous improvement, we conducted a review of our response to the storms, and we implemented improvements across the organisation.

PREPARATION FOR AND OPERATION OF THE CORONATION

Although we did not have any significant crisis occur over the past few months, we were not without the need for resilience. On 6 May 2023 the Coronation of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen Consort took place at Westminster Abbey in London. A once-in-a-lifetime event for many, the Coronation was watched by tens of millions worldwide. This meant that our network and the underpinning systems had to be reliable and resilient to ensure both a seamless delivery of the event itself, and the ability to broadcast around the world. Months of preparation, collaboration and hard work paid off, and the Coronation ran smoothly, without a glitch.



Resilience in Design

Outside influences are highly valuable in resilience planning. There is always something to learn from others. To that end, along with our colleagues in our commercial arm, UK Power Networks Services, we have joined a collaborative forum called Resilience in Design. This brings together, on a 'Chatham House' basis, practitioners from a wide range of industries with the aim of sharing, discussing and learning from each other about current issues, challenges and practical approaches in relation to achieving a truly resilient organisation.

