

Power in good hands

Corporate Responsibility Report 2003

FAQs

Who's that new age guy advertising 'positive energy' on the telly?

That's Bob. Like us, he takes energy conservation very seriously. You can find out more about Bob on our consumer website, www.powergen.co.uk.

Will I speak to a machine if I phone you up?

Yes, we use automated responses but only to direct you to the person who can help solve your problem as quickly as possible. Information on customer service is included in the 'Key issues' section.

There have been a lot of power cuts recently – what are you doing about it?

East Midlands Electricity supplied a 99.99% reliable service to its customers during 2003.

Inevitably there are going to be occasions when power is interrupted. There are many causes for this including bad weather, equipment faults and third-party damage to our network. In these instances, we provide help to those vulnerable customers worst affected – see our case study on supporting the community through the storms.

We have systems in place to ensure that customers affected by power cuts get the information they need quickly and efficiently and their power is restored as soon as possible.

We are committed to improving our network and investing in new technology and equipment to help us continue to deliver an excellent service to our customers.

Last year we invested £69.4 million on reinforcing our network and this year plan to spend a further £70.7 million in the east region of our new Central Networks business, the new name for East Midlands Electricity.

In addition to the extra investment, Central Networks, which covers the entire Midlands region, will have more engineers on the ground to ensure the network continues to provide a reliable service to our 4.8 million customers. We will also be looking to recruit more engineers to help us maintain and improve our network.

What if I can't afford to heat my house properly?

We tackle fuel poverty through local energy efficiency promotions and community projects, and a choice of products, services and tariffs designed to suit the different needs of our customers. See the section on helping older and vulnerable customers.

What do your employees think about you?

We carry out regular surveys, focus groups and employee forums so our employees can tell us what they think and want. We've written a case study on the latest employee opinion survey.

Is training and development encouraged?

We are committed to giving our employees every chance to grow and develop through effective training, for example through the new company-wide coaching programme for managers, 'Achieving our Potential'. Follow this link for more on training and development.

Is good performance recognised?

We've launched a review of our reward strategy in 2003 to make sure we recognise, promote and reward good performance. This report includes our statement on pay and conditions.

Aren't all those pylons and cables dangerous?

In the interests of public safety, our equipment is contained within secure buildings, and our cables are either a safe height from the ground or buried underground. We also promote safety to schools and other community groups. More information can be found in the public safety pages.

What's it like living next door to you?

For our immediate neighbours, we try to make our operations as unobtrusive as possible. Local communities benefit from a range of activities such as charitable support and safety initiatives.

Aren't you just adding to the climate change problem?

We're trying to cut our contribution to climate change in several ways, such as making our power stations more efficient and using less carbon-intensive fuels. This report includes a section on climate change.

Is renewable energy just a fad?

Far from it. The UK Government is committed to reducing emissions of carbon dioxide by 20% on 1990 levels by 2010. We may have to source 15% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2015 and are developing our UK generation business to meet this market. There's more in this report about renewable energy.

Isn't wind energy just hot air?

Not at all. 31% of our renewable energy comes from our 16 operational wind farms, and we began building two further projects in 2003. If you're interested in wind energy, read the pages on renewable energy and our wind farms.

Don't power stations harm the local environment?

Our sites are often rich in biodiversity and we actively encourage wildlife, for example by providing nesting boxes. We also have effective waste management plans at all our sites. You can find out more by reading nature conservation and waste management.

A lot of smoke comes out of power station cooling towers – what's in it?

What you see coming out of cooling towers is actually water vapour, which is harmless to the environment. However, there are other emissions from our power stations, which you can read about in the air emissions section.

Can I get a hard copy of this report?

Our full report is only available online, but it's easy to print off from the print report page. We also produced a summary report – you can download a pdf or contact us to ask for a copy to be sent to you.

You haven't answered my question! What am I supposed to do?

We're really keen to hear your questions. Please contact us and we'll respond to you directly.