

2015/16 Stakeholder Engagement Incentive Scheme





Part 1 - Our Engagement

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1. Improving our business together

At NGN we firmly believe that stakeholder engagement, and most importantly our response to feedback, can lead to stronger outcomes for our stakeholders, our customers, our colleagues and our business. In short, stakeholder engagement underpins our business in moving from 'good to great'.

The 'good to great' challenge is a philosophy that drives us at NGN, recognising the need for continuous improvement in order to be the best. As we move into the fourth year of our business plan I'm pleased with our focus and progress in delivering excellent and efficient services whilst getting the business geared up for the future beyond 2021. We know that close relationships and regular input from our stakeholders are essential to meet this challenge; helping us to understand those people we impact and to find the best solutions for all.

This year stakeholder input has helped us to focus our resources on delivering the right outcomes and improvements, and in developing our longer term plans. From driving up standards through the roll out of the Considerate Constructors Scheme (p13), to refining and scaling up our social responsibility programmes (p18). I'm also really proud of the work we have been leading on Energy Futures (p20). A few years ago the role of gas in the future energy mix was rarely acknowledged; now through some strong engagement and influencing it is firmly on the national agenda and on the back of this our Head of Energy Futures has been seconded to DECC to support the team in developing their plans.

In order to be the best at delivering great outcomes for our stakeholders we need to be the best at engaging with our stakeholders. I am pleased that we have AA1000SES accreditation for the third year in a row (p8) and our approach to auditing throughout the year is demonstrating clear progress, like the formalisation of our stakeholder panel, closer collaboration with the Third Sector and improved reporting to all our stakeholders.

We are investing the resource to make sure the right people within the business are engaging and delivering results on the back of this, with our regional hubs well placed to engage locally through to my own senior team. Through meetings like our stakeholder panel and best practice sharing with industry colleagues and business leaders like Vodafone and McClaren, I have heard directly from our stakeholders this year, which is helping us to continue to deliver excellent service and set the future direction of our business.

Mark Horsley
Chief Executive Officer



AA1000

Stakeholder
Engagement
Standard
retained

81%

complaints
resolution agreed
within one hour

£893,000

saved for 2,793 customers as a result
of our social outreach programmes

REACHED

20,454

vulnerable
customers to
raise awareness
of CO poisoning

44,144

children
educated in
safety and
employability
skills

33%

customers using
new flexible
online
connections
service

19

national
awards for
our best
practice
work sites

10,645

customers received a care call
following emergency works;
providing extra support after our
part of the job is done



2. Our strategy

Our stakeholder strategy has been in place and setting our direction since 2005

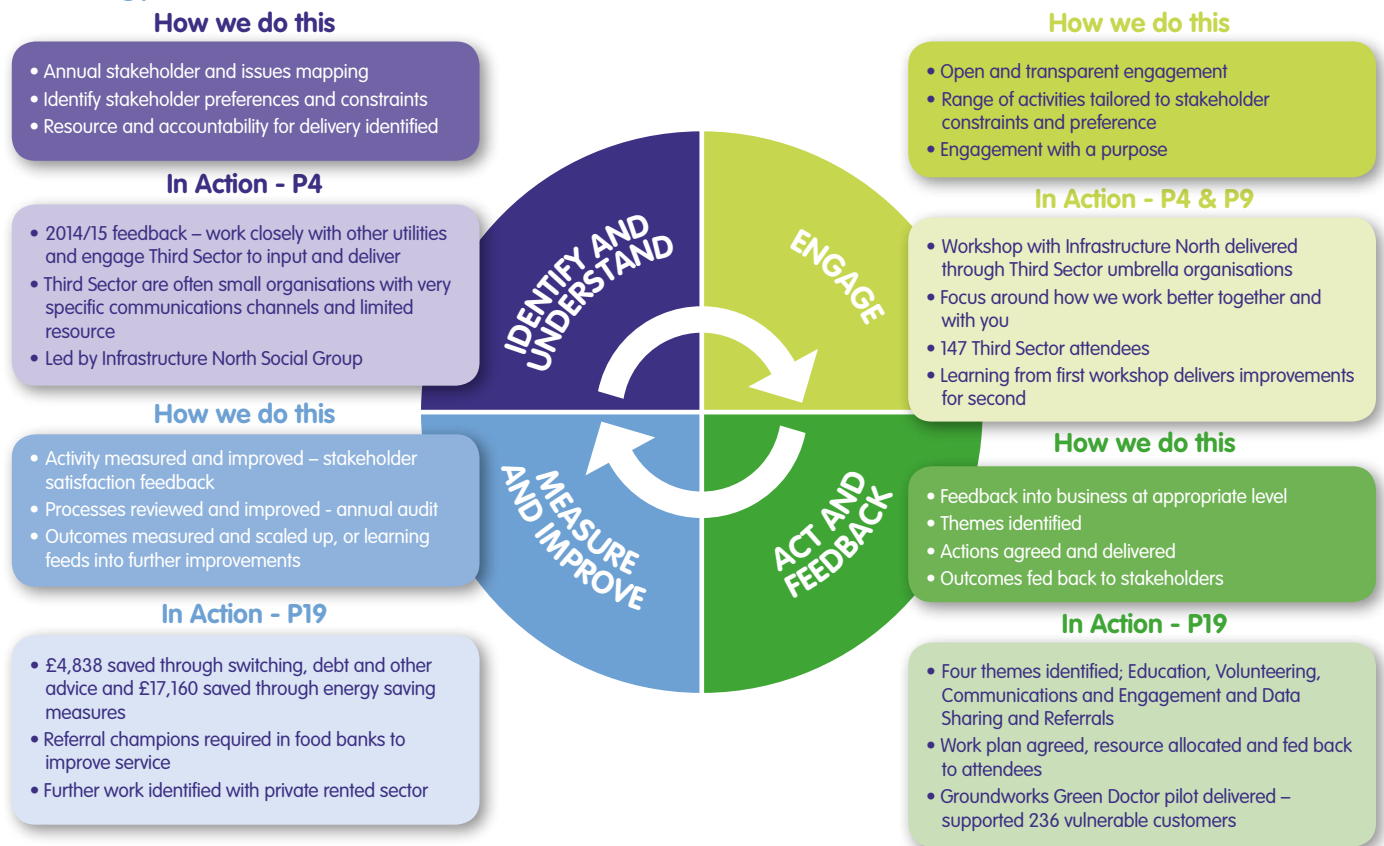
OUR VISION



Stakeholder engagement underpins and supports everything we do so that we are inclusive, responsive and recognised as a trustworthy, reliable and innovative organisation delivering excellent service.



Our strategy in action



This process is underpinned by our stakeholder engagement values:

Inclusivity

Taking a co-ordinated, holistic and tailored approach to stakeholder engagement to meet the needs of our large and diverse range of stakeholders and those who are hard to reach.

Materiality

Including our stakeholders in decision-making; aligning stakeholder engagement to business priorities to ensure it is meaningful and makes a difference. Keeping pace with new and emerging developments and stakeholder priorities to ensure that our strategy is relevant.

Responsiveness

Responding to stakeholder concerns. Ensuring the outcomes of our engagement have demonstrable impact and benefits. Listening and responding to our stakeholders' needs to drive improved services and business performance.



There is a huge variety of engagement activities in NGN, operating at different timescales, covering different subject matters and involving different parts of the business. This variety is a strength, and it demonstrates the depth and breadth of integration of engagement across operations.

SGS AA1000SES Audit Management Report, March 2016





3. New in 2015/16

Recognising that we are constantly evolving we review our strategy annually to incorporate emerging themes, new stakeholders and learning from stakeholder feedback as well as our external assurance. Whilst the direction and principles remain the same we have made key improvements this year.

Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration



Our stakeholders said:

Work closely with us and each other (energy industry and utilities) to deliver better outcomes for the region, our communities and UKPLC.

Businesses, local, regional and national government and political stakeholders, other GDNs and utilities



Our partnerships with our stakeholders are being strengthened as we increasingly share resources and learning between organisations to deliver strong outcomes. Over the last year a colleague has been seconded into **National Energy Action** to help deliver their work and increase our understanding of fuel poverty. Our Head of Energy Futures is currently on secondment to **DECC** as Technical Advisor on the Future of Gas Networks. We have recruited two full time people to support the local authorities we are partnering with to deliver the DECC Central Heating Fund (p19).

We've been proactive in seeking out best practice across a range of issues. Through meetings with industry leaders like **Microsoft**, **McLaren**, **Vodafone** and more we're looking at things differently and making sure we're ahead of the game in meeting increasing expectations from our customers and stakeholders.

We work closely with our industry colleagues on a range of issues with over 40 colleagues involved in over 50 groups and meetings throughout the year. We've delivered significant joint engagement leading to some great outcomes through our work with the other

GDNs, see Appendix 1 for more detail. Outside these formal groups we also share best practice and learning on specific issues.

This year we have visited **WPD** to better understand their customer and stakeholder work, welcomed **Scottish & Southern Energy** to our customer contact centre in Sunderland to discuss complaints handling and other issues, shared learning with **Wales & West Utilities** around gas holder demolition and our stakeholder and customer work, we've also visited and hosted **SGN** to share learning around our leading customer performance and worked closely with **Northern Powergrid** on our social agenda.

We continue to work closely with our partner utilities **Northern Powergrid**, **Northumbrian Water** and **Yorkshire Water** as "Infrastructure North". In December we launched our report "Growth, Investment, Potential" highlighting the role our organisations play in regional growth, investment and infrastructure. Collaborating to deliver key outcomes and to engage our shared stakeholders is giving us greater reach, helping to remove duplication of effort and ultimately to deliver more effective outcomes.

Our partners



Some of our 2015/16 collaboration outcomes

- We have been leading the industry work on energy suppliers sharing their smart meter roll out plans with distribution networks
- Supporting local authority consortiums to secure over £11m of DECC Central Heating Fund for our customers (p19)
- Following a customer summit with the other GDNs and DNOs at the Energy Innovation Centre we are leading 'Project Concur', working with industry to improve how we acquire and share data
- Through sharing our approach to complaints handling (p16) we've helped SGN to improve their own performance from an average 25% to 60%, for complaints resolved within a day of receiving them
- We're working with McLaren, using their considerable expertise to assess our approach to asset investment and decision making



A particular strength of NGN's work is the clear recognition that collaborative working is – and will continue to be – the most effective way to tackle both individual issues and core strategic challenges.

SGS AA1000SES Audit Management Report, March 2016



Working together we recognised we could help our customers more by introducing an improved service to fix our complaints faster and better.

Maureen McIntosh, Head of Customer Experience, SGN



Key partners helping us to engage the hard to reach

In November, with our Infrastructure North partners (p3) we held two workshops delivered through the representative organisations for the Third Sector in our region. We were keen to hear first-hand from organisations working with vulnerable customers, and in the fields of health, social housing, fuel poverty, child and family safety about the work we are doing and the challenges our communities face.

140 stakeholders who work with the hardest to reach in society attended the events, helping us to shape our community and customer engagement, work with vulnerable customers and specific work areas such as energy & water efficiency, and poverty. We took away **15** significant shared actions from the events and we are pleased to begin reporting the outcomes (p19).



Our stakeholders said:

Use existing channels and relationships to engage the hard to reach and take their advice on content and how to improve.

Third Sector organisations, vulnerable customers, Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords



“Good opportunity for community and voluntary organisations to interact and discuss with corporates - need more opportunities to do so.”

Attendee at the North East social workshop, November 2015

Trialling new approaches to tackle complex issues

In June 2015 we partnered with Leeds Beckett University to deliver a deliberative event with SMEs around fuel poverty. The event was part of a European research project which explores the potential for intermediary organisations to use deliberative methods to engage with SMEs on complex problems.

The deliberative approach involved setting a strategic question and the participants then set the agenda, which evolved throughout the engagement. Using open space technology, with no furniture to hinder interaction and walking around to join different conversations, encouraged participation and discussion; the session was an eye-opener for our NGN colleagues and the SMEs.

The learning from the session was two-fold in terms of how we might use deliberative engagement in future and an insight into the issue of fuel poverty and the importance of engagement around it.

The session identified that fuel poverty is a “wicked” problem; an issue that cannot be defined, analysed and solved in sequential steps, which is moulded by a complex cocktail of social, political, psychological and economic factors which generate difficult questions. The report and the event have helped to clarify our approach to collaborating and partnerships around complex issues and are informing the development of our vulnerability strategy.



A willingness to try out a new, innovative technique in the area of environmental sustainability engagement was a key factor underpinning the development of the pilot project. Without the commitment, energy and professionalism of the NGN team the pilot would have floundered as had been the case with at least three other intermediaries invited to participate in the SME-DE project beforehand (two Chambers of Commerce and a University Research Institute). These intermediaries did not recognise a need or the value that could arise from testing out a new technique to engage SMEs and address a sustainability issue.

Paul Willis, Director of the Centre for Public Relations Studies at Leeds Business School (Leeds Beckett University)



Informed Decisions



Our stakeholders said:

Where possible demonstrate the tangible benefits and added value of your engagement.

Ofgem stakeholder panel



Following a visit to WPD in August 2015, to see how they measure and deliver financial and other benefits within their stakeholder initiatives, we have been working with colleagues within and outside the business to share best practice on how this can be improved.

By systematically applying the expertise from our innovation, asset management and finance colleagues, to all our stakeholder outcomes, we have built on our work around smart investments and

decision making (p11) to find the meaningful benefits, financial and other. Our submission has been through a strict data audit to assure our metrics are accurate. Recognising some of the benefits are less quantifiable but no less worthy we have worked with the Third Sector to identify and measure benefits around our social programmes. There is more work to do but we are already seeing smart decision making around what we scale back, roll-out and trial.

Identifying priorities through improved reporting

Our stakeholder reporting has seen a transformation this year following feedback on our 2014/15 report. Our stakeholders wanted more context, explanation and access to differing levels of detail depending on individual preference. Alongside our detailed report to the regulator, we produced a headline stakeholder report available online. We also reviewed and relaunched our stakeholder website **NGN & You**.

The site and the two reports allow stakeholders to see our performance against all 51 of our outputs, drilling down to their preferred level of detail across the board, with clear explanations of what this means and what we will deliver moving forward. The site has been **visited over 19,300** times since its launch. We're now working with Citizens Advice to further improve our annual report.

This detailed reporting forms the basis of our annual consultation to understand stakeholder priorities. From October to December we openly invited stakeholders to let us know how we are doing, and what we should do more or less of. We promoted this through our quarterly e-bulletin, personal letters, the website and our online community.

To ensure we had a representative view from across our stakeholder groups we also commissioned an independent agency to conduct focus groups, telephone and on-street interviews and surveys with a range of customers and stakeholders. We received input from over **900 stakeholders**. The research confirmed that our shared priorities remain largely the same as previous years' with more emphasis placed on raising awareness of CO.



Our stakeholders said:

**Make your reporting clear and in context;
keep it simple but allow me to see the detail
I want on the areas I want to know more
about.**

Citizens Advice, all wider stakeholders through
priorities research

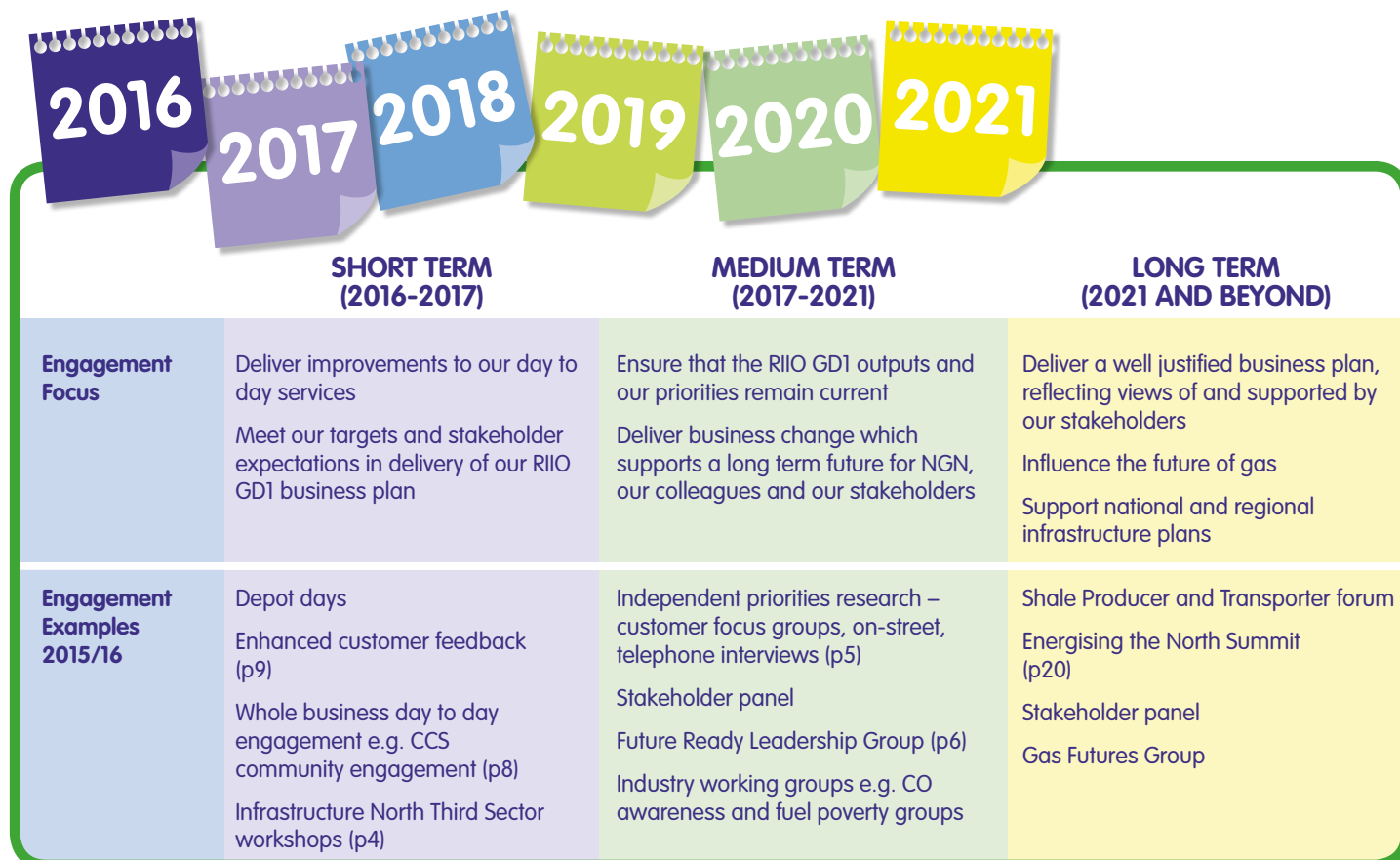


Our shared priorities remain:

- Keeping costs down
- Delivering a reliable and safe service – whilst mitigating the impact of our works
- Delivering excellent customer experience
- Community involvement and social responsibility
- Gearing up for the future

A roadmap to 2021 and beyond

As we have continued to engage on how we deliver our eight year plan to 2021 it has become clear that the business planning and engagement cycle is moving forward and our stakeholders are increasingly interested in our longer term plans. Our roadmap sets out how our engagement over the next five years will help us to:





4. Our culture and capability - people, pipes, passion

At NGN putting our customers at the heart of what we do has been a journey over the past five years, helping us to consistently be the best for customer satisfaction within the GDNs. This has been achieved through a culture of giving our people local ownership, accountability and the autonomy to do the right thing for our customers and stakeholders.

Whole business engagement

Our operating model is all about local delivery and decision making so we can respond quickly to customers' and stakeholders' needs. Our Customer Operations Area Managers were introduced in 2012 to ensure local engagement and delivery around our Emergency Response and Repair works. Following the success of this model the introduction of our Construction Services Area Manager role means we have local experts regularly engaging on planning our replacement works with stakeholders and linking up with our customer teams to deliver end to end engagement, through our regional hub model. This year we've recruited **21 new site managers**; through our intelligent data hub (p14) and extensive training we're giving them the time and skills to strengthen engagement at the frontline. This year we've also introduced depot days and local investment flyers to promote our local engagement.

Engagement is everyone's responsibility. Stakeholder engagement is included in new role profiles across NGN, strengthening the existing links to performance review and encouraging all colleagues to consider who their stakeholders are and how they engage them as part of their day to day role.



A fundamental strength of NGN's approach to stakeholder engagement continues to be that employees have a mandate for engaging with stakeholders on those issues where they have responsibility and where they can see potential benefits from that engagement. This is within the overall culture of the company which seeks to empower employees to act to address issues where they find them.

SGS AA1000SES Audit Management Report, March 2016



Senior management involvement

In addition to key meetings with stakeholders within and outside industry, on specific topics or issues, our senior team attends the regular stakeholder panel; hearing from a wider group of our stakeholders first hand which is helping us to understand individual as well as sometimes conflicting views and issues.

Our approach of engagement happening through the right person, at the right time within the business is fully supported by our senior team. Mark Horsley, our CEO, speaks directly to colleagues on a monthly basis, to communicate all key information and decisions that are happening in NGN and to reinforce the message of customer and stakeholders at the heart of what we do. To support improvement in communications and engagement, each member of the executive team (Business Review Group) has adopted one of our nine operational patches. They attend regular team meetings, and offer a vital link between day to day operations and business strategy.

Decision making and resources

Engaging our stakeholders and customers and responding to their feedback is everyone's responsibility. To ensure we have the right resource in place our governance and reporting structure gives some formal responsibility to a number of key groups within NGN. This model ensures that stakeholder feedback informs decision making by the right people, at the right place and time throughout the business from the front line to senior management. It also helps us to identify themes and strategic issues as well as responding to immediate areas of concern.

From the simplest no cost or low cost solutions to significant investments this model also ensures we are making "SMART" (p11) financial decisions around how we respond to stakeholder needs, as part of the bigger picture.

Our people - fit for the future

Our people management programme is helping to deliver improved customer service and stakeholder engagement, making it easier and more cost effective to achieve a 24/7/365 service for many years to come. Last year we updated that 50% of our workforce were on modern terms and conditions, that is now 60% and growing, allowing more flexibility in what we deliver and when. We've also been working hard to recruit new talent and encourage skills transfer, the age profile of our workforce shows 50% of colleagues are now under the age of 40, compared to less than a third in 2012.

Our Future Ready Leaders Group brings together the senior managers within the business to develop future leaders within the organisation as well as shaping our plans for 2021 and beyond.



The drive for integration of stakeholder engagement and feedback into decision making comes from board level and is a critical factor in the strategic direction of the business. Stakeholder engagement is understood as a critical part of both delivering commitments in the current business plan period, taking the company into GD2 and establishing a leadership position. Strategically, engagement is integrated into work to address core future issues for the industry.

SGS AA1000SES Audit Management Report, March 2016



NGN BOARD

The NGN Executive meet quarterly where they receive regular updates around key changes, initiatives or news in the business relating to stakeholder feedback.

BUSINESS REVIEW GROUP (BRG)

NGN's Chief Executive and directors receive regular reports on stakeholder activity and feedback to inform strategic direction and long term plans. The group engage their own senior stakeholders through meetings, membership of key groups, conferences and events.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

Senior Managers and Heads of Department from around the business are responsible for engaging their own specific stakeholder groups determined by an annual plan. The group meets monthly to co-ordinate and share engagement activity and key themes from feedback to inform decision making.

TEAM 10

Key individuals throughout the Regional Hubs meet regularly to identify themes and roll out best practice from local engagement activity.

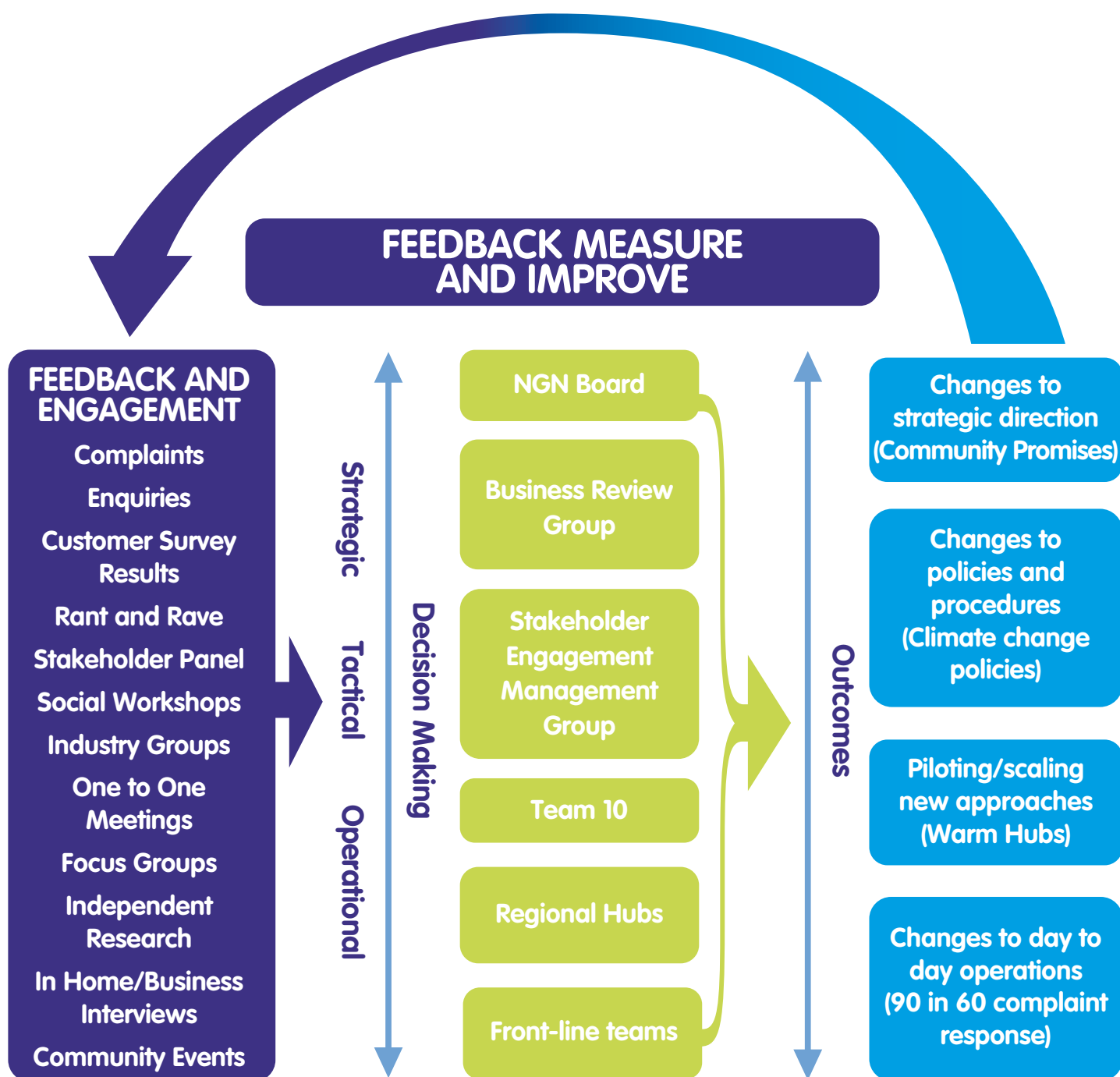
REGIONAL HUBS

Construction Services Area Managers (CSAM), Customer Operations Area Managers (COAM), Customer Care Officers (CCO) and Stakeholder Managers are responsible for planning, engagement, co-ordination and delivery around our operational works.

The teams meet weekly to discuss planned works; mitigation plans are agreed including customer and stakeholder engagement plans and accountabilities.

FRONTLINE WORKFORCE

2,147 colleagues are engaging and responding to customer and stakeholder needs. Responsibilities are given to frontline colleagues to resolve day to day customer and stakeholder issues.





5. Accreditation and independent evaluation



AccountAbility AA1000SES

We have been externally assuring our engagement against the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (SES) since 2012. As part of the audit we are assured against the Ofgem minimum requirements. However, our choice of attaining this standard and the focus of our audits has always been primarily to develop, learn and improve. This year saw us rolling our ten day audit out throughout the year so we could get real time feedback based on the auditor directly assessing engagement and outcomes as they happen; allowing us to make improvements as we go.

We passed with flying colours and were commended for best practice in our stakeholder reporting and the refreshed website, the success of our regional hub model in strengthening local stakeholder relationships and our tailored approach to stakeholder mapping. We're using the audit recommendations to strengthen the risk management aspects of our engagement to match the emphasis in the revised AA1000SES standard and reviewing our Stakeholder Engagement Management Group annually to ensure it is fit for purpose.

In addition to our central stakeholder assurance we are regularly assessed and assured against a variety of wider standards which include stakeholder engagement.



We were successfully accredited against the ISO 55001 standard in June 2015. The standard requires us to demonstrate that we are taking customer and stakeholder feedback into account when developing our asset management plans and that we can evidence this. For example stakeholder input to which gas holders we prioritise for demolition and the significant community engagement around how and when we conduct our works.



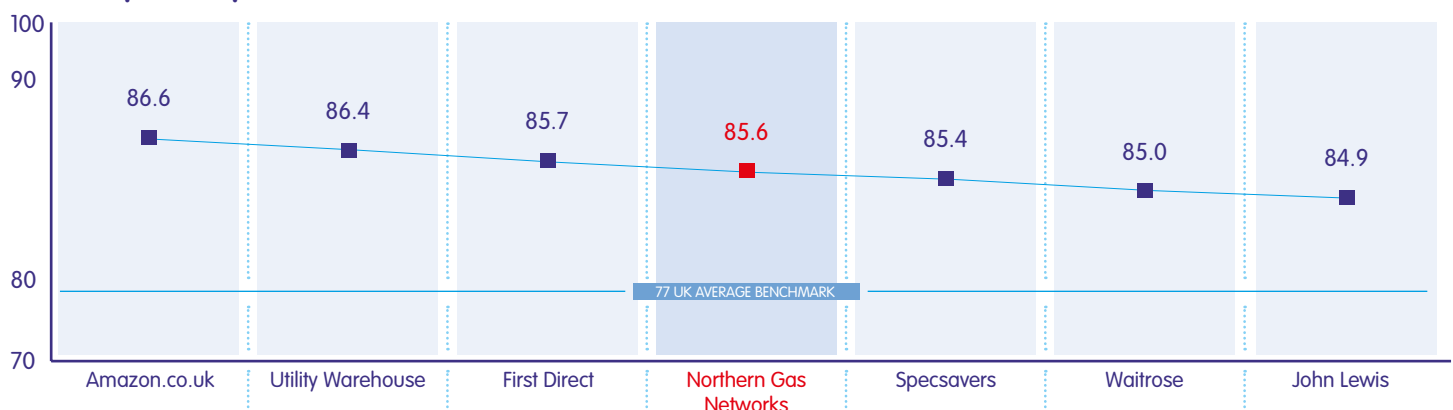
We have rolled out the Considerate Constructors Scheme across all of our high and medium impact work of a duration of six weeks or more. Community engagement is one of the five pillars of the standards (p13) which is helping us to deliver consistently high standards and improvements in how we engage.



The Institute of Customer Service

Following a rigorous six-day assessment we achieved a ServiceMark from the Institute in Customer Service (ICS) in 2014. With a score of 83.1 we also ranked strongly in the ICS Customer Satisfaction Index. Earlier this year we conducted our mid-point review with ICS, achieving an improved customer score of 85.6. We remain among the highest ranking companies in the UK, outperforming John Lewis and only one point behind Amazon.

UKCSI Top 7 Companies



NGN continues to build on its strong foundation of stakeholder engagement across the company, developing innovative approaches and seeking to collaborate with others in the industry where possible. As in previous years, the strengths of the company's approach are its business culture, the strategic nature of the response to stakeholder needs, and the provision of resources to deliver engagement and respond to stakeholder inputs.

SGS AA1000SES Audit Management Report, March 2016



The exceptional measures used in each of the aspects of the CCS code equate to the qualities seen on the highest valued sites and it is abundantly clear that every effort has been expanded to ensure the team, the operations and the outcomes are seen in the best possible light from the customers and the community.

Independent audit feedback on our respect for the community



85.6

in the ICS Customer Satisfaction Index



6. Measuring the impact, outcomes and benefits

Ensuring that our engagement leads to improvements and tangible outcomes for our stakeholders is a key measure of the success of our engagement, alongside satisfaction with the way we engage.

Stakeholder satisfaction and reach

To move from good to great we need to measure the quality of our engagement which we do consistently, in a number of ways. Below are some examples of how we are measuring the quality, impact and satisfaction with our engagement.

Throughout the year we ask an independent agency to survey 200 stakeholders to measure their levels of satisfaction with our engagement, understand their preferences and identify areas for improvement.

In 2015/16:

Satisfaction with our methods of communication 7.9
Satisfaction with the frequency of communication 8.0
Satisfaction with relationship with NGN 7.8

Areas identified for improvement in 2016/17 include further promoting our social and community work and sharing our future investment plans more widely.

We hold a number of events throughout the year and survey attendees to understand levels of satisfaction and improvements for future engagement. A good example of this was our recent social workshops with the other utilities. Learning from feedback between events led to improvement in our scores in meeting attendees' expectations from **72.7% to 92%**.

Overall customer satisfaction

In 2015/16 our Ofgem customer satisfaction scores improved in every area, up by **0.17** overall but there is always more to do to better understand our customers, and tailor our services accordingly.

We have been gaining new customer insights by surveying customers in different ways across different services, reaching more and varied customers not just those covered by the Ofgem customer satisfaction survey. This is helping us to reach more customers through improved response rates (traditionally 15%-25% on paper based surveys) and gather insight into how we can develop. We're using this feedback to set ourselves stretching targets which drive improvements in areas most important to our customers, like speed of response and a more tailored approach on specific issues (p16).



There is a strong emphasis on engagement in order to develop and deliver action and change, and action plans are regularly developed and communicated to stakeholders.

SGS AA1000SES Audit
 Management Report,
 March 2016



NGN maintains the highest average score across all surveys for RIIO GD1.

Ofgem - RIIO GD1 Annual
 Report 2014-15

YTD Q3 Overall Customer Satisfaction

Northern Gas Networks	9.18
Wales & West	9.02
SGN	8.96
National Grid	8.36

Overall
 customer
 satisfaction

9.18

WHO	WHY	METHOD AND RESPONSE RATE	INSIGHTS AND NEXT STEPS
Live/dead check on services and paid for disconnections customers	Not currently captured through the regulated surveys	Telephone Interview c47%	Domestic customers are scoring higher than business customers – 8.61 v 7.9 Repeat survey in Q2 2016/7 Develop consistent process for all customers
Emergency customers – Bradford and Pennines commenced	To provide real-time feedback and aid colleague coaching	Face to face c90%	Greater understanding of key themes and tailored services we can offer Roll out initiative to all nine operational patches
Emergency and planned work customers	Expectation and perception gap analysis – to understand if we are delivering to customers' expectations	Telephone Interview N/A	World class service is anything lower than a gap of -5 We scored -1 on Emergency and -6 on Planned Works Action plan developed to address key gaps and maximise on areas of strong performance
All regulated survey customers	To offer customers a multi-channel choice to give feedback	Paper – with offer of phone and online Est 50% - 60%	Working with other GDNs on extended trial which will test introducing multiple channels and improving response rates

Key outcomes

Possibly the best measures of how effective our engagement is, are the outcomes, improvements and benefits we deliver as a result.

This table summarises **135** substantial outcomes from our engagement this year and Part 2 of the submission picks up on some key examples in more detail.



SEGMENTS	ENGAGEMENT METHOD	COST	IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED	ACTION/OUTPUT AS A RESULT OF ENGAGEMENT	BENEFIT
All stakeholders	Research – stakeholder satisfaction	£2,500	1 - 3	Developed local investment information flyers and depot days Increased frequency of e-bulletin - 8/10 satisfaction	Over 8,000 stakeholders receive regular local information and contacts
	Research – stakeholder priorities	£27,000	4 - 13	Increased reach of in-home CO safety briefings and wider community talks Refreshed stakeholder website	20,454 vulnerable customers reached to increase CO awareness Transparent and clear reporting to stakeholders - 19,369 hits on website
	Stakeholder panel	£3,642	14 - 19	Working with Citizens Advice and Energy UK to improve transparency of reporting	
Domestic, business, connections customers and their representatives	Microbusiness interviews	£16,565	20 - 22	Earlier payments for microbusiness compensation introduced	More flexible payments for microbusinesses under the compensation scheme
	Commuter survey	£0	23 - 25	Increased use of signage before schemes begin	120,032 hits on roadworks.com
	Customer Contact	£85,024	26 - 33	Reduced target for getting gas back on from 24 to 8 HRS Introduced faster, more flexible services like ping it, one stop alterations for connections	83% customers gas back on within 8hrs Reduced connections alterations process from 4-6 weeks to less than 7 days
	Workshops	£117	34	Reached 8 large local businesses to better understand their future energy challenges and opportunities	
Colleagues and contractors	Workshops	£25,920	35 - 52	18 headline improvements identified from engagement with over 100 colleagues including review of emergency and repair bonus scheme and refreshed role profiles for all	
Energy industry and wider utilities	Industry working groups	£43,548	53 - 84	We participate in over 50 formal industry working groups often leading on key initiatives. There are a number of significant outcomes being delivered through these groups: • 100% conversion to PSR sign ups from NGN and Northern Powergrid fuel poverty referral trial • Leading GDNs to secure better visibility of smart meter roll out plans and opportunities to support	
	Best practice sharing	£20,067	85 - 87	Supported SGN to improve complaints processes	From 25% to 60% score for complaints resolved within a day of receiving
	Bilateral meeting – DECC	£384	88	Head of Energy Futures seconded to DECC to advise on future of gas	
	Infrastructure North and sub-groups	£9,472	89 - 96	Through our electricity and water partnership we have launched a joint economic impact report with parliamentarians; held a use of drones in utilities workshop and commissioned social impact of street works research	
Local, regional and national government	Workshop	£212	97	Changes to NGN climate change policies and procedures	
	Bilateral meetings – Local Authorities	£2,444	98	Supported LAs in securing DECC Central heating fund £11.1M in our region	Over 1,400 vulnerable households to receive whole house heating solutions
	Workshop	£3,481	99	Engaged 13 key parliamentarians, academics and experts around regional devolution and opportunities for energy	Greater awareness of future of gas and key partnerships strengthened - 187 people viewed follow up article
	Sustainability and futures forums	£3,911	100 - 103	Members of a number of local and regional forums including FRESH Partnership and Leeds LEP sustainability forum	Energy Accelerator Fund – secured almost £1million EU funding to support 300 businesses deliver 3,300 tonnes carbon
Vulnerable customers, hard to reach, third sector and resilience	Vulnerable customer interviews	£15,625	104 - 108	Customer literature for planned works and website simplified 10,645 customer care calls following emergency works; providing extra support after our part of the job is done	All customers can use website, regardless of physical disabilities or software End to end contact throughout customer journey
	Third Sector joint utilities workshops	£8,156	109 - 123	Sharing vulnerability codes to inform water utilities schemes Groundworks Green Doctor pilot delivered to 236 individuals	Over £30,000 customer savings
	Third Sector meetings and partnerships	£19,918	124 - 128	Over 2,700 vulnerable individuals reached through our social outreach programmes including Childrens Society and Warm Hubs Full time member of staff seconded to NEA	£893,000 savings to individuals through social programmes Greater understanding of NEA, fuel poverty and vice versa
Education and community bodies	Local schools through planned works	£702	129	70 Play Safe, Stay Safe sessions delivered	
	Meetings and partnership(s)	£39,919	130 - 133	Employability and education programmes delivered through schools and colleges through our Academy programme	177 children mentored through Hull Children's University Over £15,300 raised for Princes Trust charity 4,796 children reached through Ahead Partnership employability programme
UKPLC	Best practice, conferences and events - outside industry	£14,817	134 - 135	Participated in over 20 best practice sharing meetings, conferences and events with the likes of Vodafone, Standard Life and McLaren	McLaren innovation project commissioned – investment decision making Introduction of Rant and Rave SMS tool



Andrea Leadsom MP at Energising the North event



Warm and informed project launch report



Educating communities about the dangers of CO



Raising CO Awareness at Eldon Square



Energising the North

People, pipes, passion NGN & You



Tees Depot Open Day



Hendon Depot Open Day



Infrastructure North report launch event



Creative education programmes



Dealing with extremes



Part 2 - Your priorities, Our outcomes

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	20 Supporting green cities





Our Community Promises

Through a series of stakeholder workshops looking at our broad impact and focus in 2014, our stakeholders said:

- Target your efforts on the issues where you are best placed to influence and have a positive impact
- Maximise opportunities for cross-over; don't work in siloes
- NGN is well placed to and should go "above and beyond" to support local communities in a sustainable way

We set out a framework and following further stakeholder input and consultation we launched our Community Promises in early 2015. Our Community Promises, set out under the five S's (to Serve, Stop, Share, Shape and Sustain), outline what we will deliver for the communities that we serve in our continual pursuit to 'Be the Best'. Our promises help us to maximise cross-over opportunities and focus our efforts on having a positive and sustainable impact on the things that matter to our stakeholders. The outcomes outlined in this submission all sit under our Community Promises Framework.

Be the Best

Sustain



Environment, we will sustain and protect the environment we live in and ensure optimum safety

Serve



Customer, we will serve you the best way we can

Stop



Social, we will work tirelessly to stop needless hardship and risk to health

Shape



People, we will shape a sustainable future for our people, communities and colleagues of the future

Share



Stakeholder, we will be open and share information with our partners to drive sustainable improvements



Keeping costs down

YOU SAID:

- Deliver a value for money service; more for less
- The top stakeholder priority is keeping energy bills as low as possible

All stakeholders; Stakeholder panel, Ofgem and consumer groups

OUR PROMISES:

SERVE – Invest wisely in processes and technology that support our vision to be the best
SUSTAIN – Make smart investments to deliver long-term efficiencies

WE DID:



Initiative	£ Investment	Who benefits	Outcomes achieved/benefits to customers/stakeholders	
			Benefits to customers/stakeholders	£ Savings to customers/stakeholders
Smart contracting	£15M	All Customers Colleagues Local Authorities Other Utilities	Secured long term skills solution for mechanical equipment maintenance	Est 10% saving by 2021
Next generation technology	£1.2M		Reduction in IT Operations costs. Faster in responding to our customers and more flexible in how we respond to emerging needs and developments	£2M savings per annum
Addressing theft of gas	£37,000 per annum		Improved safety and tailored support for customers to register sites	Over £100,000 income recoverable and passed directly back to customers

Keeping costs down is the number one priority for our stakeholders; service expectations are rising as affordability is an increasing issue. We know this is not about cutting corners, but delivering more for less through smart investments and decision making which lead to value for money for our customers and stakeholders.



Throughout this submission we highlight 'SMART' examples of how we are doing this through:

- Piloting key projects to assess their impact and value for money before scaling up, rolling out or looking for alternatives (see Smart Technology p14)
- Comparing different approaches to issues in order to determine the best way forward (see Community Involvement p18)
- Looking for efficiencies in all that we do, finding the most cost effective solution with the best service outcome – we are consistently the number one GDN for efficiency in Ofgem benchmarking (see examples of customer savings above)

1. SMART CONTRACTING

In an industry first our new outsourced contract to maintain our mechanical equipment, from gas offtakes to district governors, is expected to deliver **efficiency savings of 10% by 2021**.

There is a serious skills shortage in this area and as a result we have found it costly and difficult to recruit to these roles in recent years. We selected local specialist Penspen because of their excellent local recruitment record and dedicated training centre in Newcastle. This means that new skilled engineers can be recruited to support the project, working alongside a number of highly skilled NGN employees who transferred from our mechanical maintenance team.

2. NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY

Historically we have owned our own IT infrastructure and worked under a model where its maintenance and support were outsourced. Our move to a Cloud based system is making it easier and faster for us to invest in improvements that we need to make for customers and stakeholders, rather than what is available through an existing supply chain.

The move to Cloud will be completed in Summer 2016 but we are already seeing the benefits. We are able to test new applications in less than a week (it used to take months) and just pay for what we use rather than have to invest in expensive equipment. Bringing our development team in-house is

Mirroring our localised approach, colleagues work in mobile units around the North of England to deliver services and benefit from a dedicated in-house training facility.

Culturally this is a big move for us and although it's still early days our performance has already improved. It's an exciting time for our business as we continue to modernise our network and we plan to share the outcomes with the industry.

3. ADDRESSING THEFT OF GAS

Gas theft increases costs for customers and has potentially serious safety implications. Taking the learning from an industry wide piece of work in 2014/15 we have established a new enduring approach to address this, going beyond the minimum standards to ensure we are keeping costs down and keeping our colleagues and customers safe.

Our full time Supply Point Compliance Officer manages the end to end journey for theft of gas and unregistered sites. Through an annual cycle we proactively identify sites; during the winter months, when our front line engineers are busiest we conduct desktop cleansing, whilst in the

also delivering wider benefits, thanks to them being able to harness the kind of cutting-edge app technology our colleagues and customers are used to.

We estimate these moves will save around £2M per year but more importantly the changes will mean we are in real control of IT and data; so we can be faster in responding to our customers and more flexible in how we respond to emerging needs and developments (see Smart Technology Driving Safety and Reliability Improvements p4). Over the last year we have welcomed colleagues from Wales and West Utilities, SGN, MBNA and Leeds City Council to share how we are embracing this next generation technology.

summer months they physically go out and investigate the sites identified.

This has seen an increase in recoverable income from **£25,500 in 2014 to over £100,000 since January 2015** when we began the programme, all of which goes directly back to the customer.

Although our focus is rightly on safety and recovering income lost from theft, we always remain customer focussed and a key part of this role is supporting customers to get registered, particularly those who may be vulnerable.

CASE STUDY: THEFT OF GAS



On one of our site visits the engineer found that the property had a live gas supply but the customer did not have a supply contract in place. The engineer discovered that the customer had mental health issues and did not fully understand how or why he needed to register the supply. Instead of walking away or just reporting the theft our engineer sat down with the customer and fully explained the need to register the supply and helped him through the registration process. The engineer then informed the local authorities and the customer's carer of our visit.

4. PROGRESS FROM 2014/15

2014/15 INITIATIVE	Measure	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 (EST)
We reported last year that we had completed our three year journey from using large tier one contractors to engaging small, locally run engineering firms to deliver our mains replacement work. The model has now been fully in place for a year and we're now seeing around 10% efficiency savings as well as delivering a faster, less disruptive service for the public, due to the teams' local knowledge.	£ per metre	£148.3/m	£143.8/m	£134.9/m
	£ cumulative savings	£1,497,700	£5,056,200	£13,171,600
With 60% of our workforce now on modern terms and conditions, we are able to provide a more flexible 24/7 service while significantly reducing the cost of overtime.	£ cumulative overtime savings (since 2013)	£791,180	£1,982,588	£3,246,768

IN THE PIPELINE



- We will be introducing internal checks for shipper requested new Meter Point Reference Numbers to reduce the number of illegal connections which will lead to improved safety and potentially reduce theft of gas
- Alongside continued roll out of modern terms and conditions we are beginning to look at efficient models for incentivising our colleagues through opportunity contracts



Delivering a reliable and safe service – whilst mitigating the impact of our works

YOU SAID:

- Public and colleague safety is an overriding priority
- Do more to raise awareness of CO (rated 9.6 out of 10 importance with customers and stakeholders)
- Do everything you can to minimise inconvenience during essential works

Local Authorities, Department of Transport, domestic and business customers, general public

OUR PROMISES:

SUSTAIN – Inspire an approach of zero harm to colleagues, third parties and the environment

STOP – Educate our communities about the dangers of CO poisoning

WE DID:

Initiative	Who benefits	Benefits to customers/stakeholders
Driving best practice on every site	Domestic and business customers Communities Commuters Highways and Local Authorities Colleagues	• Improved community engagement, customer service, staff welfare • Reduced inconvenience for customers, helping to reduce complaints by 7% • 39 average CCS score against national benchmark 35.48
Smart Technology	Other utilities Third Sector Vulnerable customers	• More time on site for customer and stakeholder engagement meaning easier and faster solutions • Improved safety - direct labour defects reduced by 10% • Reduced the instances of joint failures by 27 avoiding costly and disruptive repairs, saving approx. £81,000 per annum
Targeted approach to CO awareness – extending our reach		• Multiple channel approach for CO awareness • 32 volunteer colleagues and Third Sector trained to deliver CO briefings • Raised CO awareness with 20,454 vulnerable customers • Awareness raised from 6.19 to 8.00

1. DRIVING BEST PRACTICE ON EVERY SITE



Last year we were proud to report that we were the first energy distribution company to join the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) and won a gold and silver national award for two of our early schemes.

Construction sites, companies and suppliers voluntarily register with the scheme and agree to abide by the Code of Considerate Practice, the scheme encourages best practice beyond statutory requirements and we are audited against five key areas.

Care about
Appearance

Respect the
Community

Protect the
Environment

Secure Everyone's
Safety

Value their
Workforce

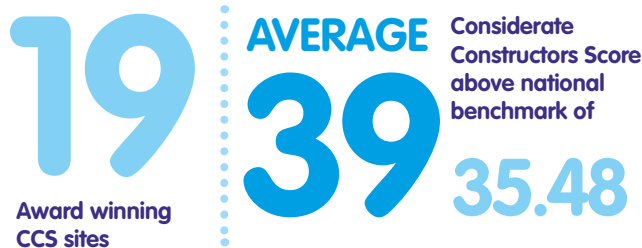
This holistic approach to continually improving our sites and the positive response from our stakeholders and customers means we are now committed to fully rolling out Considerate Constructors in the business.

Since we began we have delivered 29 Considerate Constructors Schemes on our most impactful sites, scoring an average of **39** against a national benchmark of **35.48**. Feedback from the schemes and their independent audits have led to a number of standard improvements in how we run these sites. From using eco cabins to reduce our environmental impact to delivering a bespoke leaflet at the end of the scheme outlining our community engagement and donations, increasing the amount of recycled materials used and other issues of interest to the communities we've been working in. In early 2016 we received **19** national awards for our CCS sites.

As we continue to introduce new improvements we are keeping an eye on the costs of running Considerate Constructors sites against the benefits to customers and stakeholders, many of which are highly valued but difficult to quantify financially. From this assessment we have employed a full time member of staff for the next year to support roll out as we extend the schemes we register to include all our appropriate high and medium impact replacement and major project schemes and our connections business. We have also gone a step further this year through our CCS strategy and committed that by the end of 2017 we will be applying the CCS principles across all our sites.

Exceptional level community engagement and involvement with the local community, well done to all concerned, I look forward to seeing further developments when I next visit. Exceptional safe systems in place, proactively managed, lots of opportunities for the workforce to get involved and report any issues.

Independent CCS Audit feedback on our Elwell Avenue project



2. SMART TECHNOLOGY DRIVING SAFETY AND RELIABILITY IMPROVEMENTS



Through piloting new apps and smarter ways of working, we are strengthening how we assure the safety of our sites for our colleagues, customers and stakeholders and the general public.

Control Point

Control Point is a system which helps to externally quality assure all of the joints we use to link our pipes through our replacement works, which equates to around 2,250 joints per week. Our colleagues use SMART technology to send data to Control Point experts who can assess the joints for quality and offer immediate feedback, before the joint is buried.

The system helps us to target training and coaching for operators where needed and avoid joint failures requiring costly replacement or repairs in the future through getting it right first time. With a guarantee of 10 years on every joint that achieves a 100% quality assurance inspection and an expected 50 year life Control Point is helping us to future proof the network.

Following a successful field trial in April 2015 of 300 joints the system is now being rolled out across the network. This allows us to target training and coaching for engineers where needed, reduce the instances of joint failures leading to costly and disruptive repairs and maintain an accurate GPS record of our network.

Intelligent Data Hub

Over 50 colleagues in Leeds have been trialling an app which sends site pictures back to our Intelligent Data Hub (IDH). A team of three expert colleagues assess the photographs for issues like position of barriers and signs, locating and marking cables, excavation techniques and how the site is left, in the same way an on-site supervisor would quality assure the work. Since introducing the app we have reduced direct labour defects by 10%. Also as supervisors do not need to travel between sites and the depot we are reducing CO² emissions and enabling them to spend more time coaching teams.

The central team also picks up a lot of the standard administration, allowing our site managers to focus on the operational sites, local customers and stakeholder engagement.

We now have a dedicated full time member of staff who is rolling the system out across the network and expanding it from its original safety focus to cover the quality assurance of our end to end works on site. We have had positive feedback from the local authority and we are discussing how we can make the data directly available to them in future.



Piloting key projects to assess their impact and value for money before scaling up, rolling out or looking for alternatives.

Project	Investment	Savings
Intelligent Data Hub	£471,975	£2,549,900 savings (to 2021)
Control Point	£625,155	£1,124,232 savings (to 2019)

Through a strong focus on safety improvements, since 2011:

Road traffic collisions
have reduced by

35%

Cable strikes
are down

66%

Northern Gas Networks has done and continues to do excellent work to drive through improvements in carbon monoxide (CO) safety, not least through the iFest campaign you led on earlier this year, which I was happy to support in a press release.

Barry Sheerman MP Co-Chair,
All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group,
December 2015

3. TARGETED APPROACH TO CO AWARENESS – EXTENDING OUR REACH

Working with the other gas distribution networks and wider partners to raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide we know that there is no one size fits all approach to how we target and reach those most at risk. We work closely with others in industry and the Third Sector to share and pick up good practice, build on and roll out what works and trial new approaches.

This year we continued to promote iFEST on behalf of the gas distribution networks. The online game raises awareness with festival goers, a particularly vulnerable group; it has been **played 4,381 times** to date. We made improvements to the annual CO schools poster competition to now include other mediums like poetry and extended the reach, with **90 entries** within our patch.

All our engineers responding to reports of a gas escape carry CO detection equipment, and deliver in-home **CO safety briefings to 3,927** of our more vulnerable customers a year. Through awareness raising events like partnering with colleagues from the Fire and Rescue Service at Eldon Square shopping centre in Newcastle and our wider social outreach it's

clear there are others who can help us to reach far more people to raise awareness of the dangers of CO.

This year we have trained an additional 32 people in CO awareness to BPEC standard. By training more of our own colleagues alongside those with an interest from the Third Sector, we are increasing the opportunities to raise awareness with wider customers and particularly vulnerable groups. We expect they will reach an additional **3,500** individuals each year with key CO safety messages, at a minimal one-off cost of around **£2,500**.

32 NGN and Third Sector colleagues trained in CO safety reaching a potential **3,500**

additional people at a cost of around **£2,500**

4. PROGRESS FROM 2014/15

We've continued to utilise new technology we invested in last year to minimise interruptions, improve safety, speed up job completion times and reduce costs. As a result we've seen:

- **79%** increase in homes where we've used live service insertion equipment, to replace customers' service pipes without the need to dig in the street
- **70%** increase in jobs using main spraying technology; minimising leakage, less invasive digging and inconvenience to customers

IN THE PIPELINE



- Reinstatement is a key focus for us in 2016/17 as we look at recyclable materials, expanding our intelligent data hub and more
- We are already working on over five key technology solutions including an interactive platform to co-ordinate all types of work allowing us to better plan resources and geographically map works; leading to more efficient delivery



Delivering excellent customer experience

YOU SAID:

- Tailor your services to meet my specific needs
- Respond clearly and quickly - tell me what's happening when and why
- Let me communicate with you how and when I choose, make it as quick and easy as possible

All stakeholders, vulnerable customers, Third Sector and microbusinesses

OUR PROMISES:

SERVE – Push the boundaries of what's possible to increase the speed and efficiency of our service
SERVE – Ensure our customers are amongst the most satisfied in Britain

WE DID:

Initiative	Who benefits	Benefits to customers/stakeholders
Above and beyond for our customers - every time	Domestic and business customers Vulnerable customers Local Authorities Other utilities Local Resilience Forums	• Customer Interface Centre – surveying and responding in real-time to 1,447 customers • 10,645 customers received care calls following emergency works; providing extra support after our part of the job is done • Introduced more tailored support and services including: proactive pressure management, improved communications and increased referrals for additional support
Faster, more flexible services		• More flexible payments for microbusiness compensation available • 24/7/365 service in response to complaints - agreed resolution of 81% of complaints for customers within 60 minutes • Online connections service – 33% of customers now choosing to use the service giving them more flexibility to apply outside traditional office hours, through a faster, more streamlined service
Dealing with extremes		• More tailored, faster support for vulnerable customers during incidents • Supporting local businesses' sustainability through using local resources – around £30,000 on local food vouchers for customers and businesses in Consett • Increased and faster customer support and communication on site – reaching 100% of customers by telephone partnering with water companies • 9.85 out of 10 score from customers surveyed around incident in Consett

1. ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR OUR CUSTOMERS - EVERY TIME



Although our responsibility formally ends when the main supply is back on there are some cases where a Gas Safe Registered engineer is needed to check in-home equipment before the customer's supply can be reinstated. We are committed to supporting the end to end customer journey so in February 2015 we began proactive call backs for customer's left off gas to ensure their well being and help with any issues with third parties getting the customer's supply back on after we leave. One of the key issues identified was that fuel poor customers were often unable to call a gas safe engineer due to lack of credit on a mobile phone; we then make the call for the customer ensuring they get their gas back as soon as possible. Since we fully launched the service in March we have **proactively called 10,645 customers**.

Taking this idea further, the brainchild of our Bradford and Pennines Emergency and Repair teams is our Customer Interface Centre (CIC); helping us to respond in real time to customers issues. Through adding some key satisfaction questions to our current interactions with customers we can judge immediately if there is more we can do and respond; either on site or through our CIC team offering an instant customer call back. This is helping us to deal

with any specific customer issues quickly in addition to identifying key themes for service improvement. Since launching in February 2016 we have **surveyed 1,447 customers** and offered enhanced services including:

- Proactive pressure management to ensure steady supply whilst route cause repairs are carried out
- Improved communications on longer term jobs, providing regular and direct updates to customers affected
- Increased referrals for additional support like CO alarms available through Local Authorities and advice from our fuel poor partners
- Immediate support for our vulnerable customers, following a CIC call back where things haven't happened as quickly as expected, like Gas Safe Registered service engineer visits we have been able to offer heaters, hotplates and additional support to ensure our customers remain safe and warm

The CIC weekly reports include colleague scores which help us to target coaching and training where needed alongside detailed feedback of outcomes for our customers. We are developing an app to support the roll out of CIC across the business during 2016/17.

CASE STUDY: CIC IN ACTION



On arrival at a job to make safe a historical disconnection it became evident

that the property had been off supply since 2008. The only form of heating and cooking the elderly and vulnerable customer had was a single fan heater and a slow cooker. Our CIC team put an action plan into place that delivered a complete solution for the customer. We arranged for alternative heating and cooking to be delivered to site. Social Services were made aware of the problem. The service to the property was re-laid, the internal pipe work was extended and re-connected, and we arranged for the Local Authority to carry out a landlord safety check on the appliances so that the installation could be re-commissioned.

10,645 customers called proactively after our part of the job is done to get them back on supply

1,447 customers surveyed and offered additional support if required (February/March 16)

2. KEEPING ONE STEP AHEAD

Throughout 2013/14 we listened to customers, colleagues and wider stakeholders to understand where we should focus our customer experience efforts. Responding to this feedback our customer strategy drives all our improvements.

Our Customer Charter - One Step Ahead, through delivering our four promises

Being Responsive

Anticipating your needs & acting quickly
We will apologise if something does go wrong

Making it Easy

We will make our communications easy to read
To contact us if you want to query something or to complain if you are not happy

Keeping it Personal

We understand that every customer is different and we are shaping our services to support this

Driving Innovation

Keeping warm and cooking on gas is important to go about our daily lives and we want you to have as little disruption as possible, so we are constantly looking for new ways to do things

3. FASTER, MORE FLEXIBLE SERVICES

This year we have been introducing new, flexible systems and processes that will enhance our service now and in the future. By doing this we are able to provide a more convenient, quicker and bespoke service to customers through the channel of their choice.

DATE	INITIATIVE
FEB 2015	- Customer care calls introduced following emergency works; providing extra support after our part of the job is done 'One Stop Alters' for private connections alterations introduced – reducing the process from 4 to 6 weeks to less than 7 days and often completed on the same day
MAR 2015	- Customer Experience Management (CEM) System introduced – with visibility of full customer case history every time a customer calls us - Efficiency from CEM frees up 2.6 days redeployed for full roll out of 10,645 customer care calls following emergency work
APR 2015	10am daily complaints and safety calls extended to weekends and bank holidays – 24/7 response - Online connections system launched – 33% of customers now choosing to use the online service giving them more flexibility to apply outside traditional office hours and through a faster, more streamlined service
JUL 2015	Pingit 'faster payment' launched for customer compensation
SEPT 2015	Introduced early payments for microbusiness compensation so they can receive weekly support when they are being impacted
NOV 2015	Predictive analytics project - gives us the ability to identify and respond to complex enquiries, not leaving customers dissatisfied and leading to complaints
DEC 2015	Social media response moved to Customer Care Team, to allow faster and more consistent service to customers - 71% of enquiries responded to within 30 minutes through this 24/7 service
FEB 2016	Customer Interface Centre pilot launched – 1,447 customers reached to date



Lisa Italiano

@italianlire 15 Jul 2015

We're told to book our gas meter to be moved less than 1m 2wks ahead with @ngncare
@NGNgas Next available apt 27th August #busy #holidaytime



NorthernGasNtwks

@NGNgas 15 Jul 2015

@italianlire Hi Lisa. Do let us know if you'd like to discuss with our customer team.
Please DM a number if so. Thanks



Lisa Italiano

@italianlire 1h

@NGNgas Huge thanks for moving our appointment forward so our building work could stay on schedule - much relief and huge appreciation



Paul Sutcliffe

@PaulNBBand

Fantastic customer service from @NGNgas this morning.
Calls back and all questions answered! Brilliant, well done!
3 Jun 2015, 09.43AM



I'd like to thank Yvonne Anderson, I never get nice people like Yvonne on the telephone. If Yvonne hadn't called I would of been sat waiting, thank you so much.

Customer in Leeds,
August 2015



4. PUTTING CUSTOMERS FIRST AS WE DEAL WITH EXTREMES



As extreme weather has become more of a norm and water ingress events continue to be an issue, the impact this has on our network and our customers is a key priority and we have robust plans in place to respond to these incidents.

It will always be a trying experience for customers impacted by extreme weather and loss of gas but our focus on customer experience and community engagement is really helping us to minimise the impact and offer tailored support for all our customers. As we do more to understand the different needs of our customers the way we respond to these events is improving all the time.

We do not have a one size fits all response to customers' needs but rather a suite of options available to our customers and at the autonomy of our front line teams to provide; this enables us to tailor our support to specific needs.

CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS IN CONSETT



In November a water main burst and damaged our gas pipes resulting in over 700 homes and businesses being off gas for up to 10 days. Putting our learning into action from previous incidents coupled with our understanding of the community we were able to:

- Mobilise our customer and operational response team within the local community hall. With a dedicated customer team on site the operational teams could concentrate on fixing the problem as quickly as possible
- Set up our hardship fund immediately on site. Topping up electricity meters enabling those more financially vulnerable customers to use our heaters and hotplates – a lesson learnt from an incident in a fuel poor area in Bradford in 2013
- Offer different catering options including codes for Just Eat, vouchers for the local fish and chip shop and general stores
- Provide oil filled radiators for vulnerable customers – the dry heat from the usual electric fan heaters we provide exacerbates existing breathing conditions prevalent within old mining communities. We are now looking at holding a number of these heaters in stock
- Work closely with Northumbrian Water to address the water issue and better communicate with our customers. The water companies hold telephone numbers for all their customers and by working with them to support our communications we were able to quickly contact all our affected customers 70% through texts and 30% through landlines to keep them updated with key information and support. We also made sure that the local authority social services teams were aware of support available for their vulnerable customers

9.85
OUT OF 10

score from customers surveyed around the Consett incident



The organisation, speed of response, effort and commitment of all involved was, quite frankly, superb. Heating, cooking, food and accommodation of the vulnerable were superbly addressed by a professional team who were completely customer and community focussed throughout the emergency.

Bob Glass & Jane Brown, Ward Councillors, Consett, 25 November 2015



Flooding often impacts communities for much longer than the off gas incident itself and we are keen to continue to support our communities as they begin to recover. When we have addressed the immediate issue of getting the gas back on we revise our investment plans to deliver sustainable supply back to these communities. Following an incident in Skinningrove back in 2013 we have delivered a replacement scheme to secure supply and our community artist has worked with the local school and community resulting in a mural on the new bridge (replacing the one washed away) unveiled in October 2015.

5. PROGRESS FROM 2014/15

2014/15 INITIATIVE	2014/15	2015/16	Summary
Last year we talked about challenging our performance across the board and we've continued to do this. Whilst we strive to do our utmost to avoid the need for customers to complain, when it does happen we are quick to respond and resolve the issue			
No. of customer complaints	1,619	1,503	7% reduction
Average time to go through escalated complaints process	70 days	23 days	Reduced by 47 days
Complaints agreed resolution within a day of receipt	81%	82.8%	1.8% increase
Accolades to complaints ratio	2:1	2:1	Ratio sustained

IN THE PIPELINE



- In response to our new survey with Paid for Disconnections customers, we will refine the customer journey and improve the overall customer experience by creating one dedicated team who will handle disconnections, simplify our call tree and review our telephony plan to reduce call waiting times
- Rolling out the SMS based tool we've been trialling to get instant feedback from customers about the service that they have received so that we can respond to any issues in real time and introducing web chat to give customers another channel to reach us through



Community Involvement and Social Responsibilities

YOU SAID:

- Work with key partners to understand and meet the needs of vulnerable customers
 - Work with local organisations that have similar aims to reduce fuel poverty, e.g. councils and charities
 - Do more to support customers off the gas grid and in rural areas
- Ofgem, MPs, Government, Third Sector*

OUR PROMISES:

- STOP** – Access the knowledge and funding required to deliver a more holistic solution than just a gas connection
- STOP** – Raise awareness among our vulnerable customers about the support available to them

WE DID:



Comparing different approaches to issues to determine the very best way forward.

Northumberland CAN Warm Hubs	DECC Central Heating Fund	GREEN DOCTOR™ Groundwork/ Green Doctor	The Children's Society
Vulnerable customers benefitted: off grid and rural, fuel poor, children, elderly			
Supported 1,740 vulnerable customers	Supported over 1,400 vulnerable customers	Supported 236 vulnerable customers	Supported approx. 1,000 vulnerable customers
£24,500 invested	£28,000 invested	£5,772 invested	£120,000 invested
£818,000 benefits	£866,600 benefits	£30,473 benefits	£75,000 benefits
£14 Cost per customer supported	£20 Cost per customer supported	£24 Cost per customer supported	£120 Cost per customer supported
£470 Benefits per customer supported	£619 Benefit per customer supported	£129 Benefit per customer supported	£75 Benefit per customer supported
Committed to 3 year roll out to achieve sustainability	Committed to looking at alternative funding sources for whole house solutions – supplier partnerships	Roll out to further 300 homes	Roll out successful aspects through The Children's Society and other partners at lower cost

1. SCALING UP SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS



In February 2015 working with Community Action Northumberland (CAN) we launched a new initiative called 'Warm Hubs' – providing warm places to meet and relax for vulnerable people in communities both on and off the gas network. The scheme provides places to have a hot meal, meet friends and receive wider advice around issues like energy efficiency. Operating as a sustainable model, Warm Hubs not only supports the vulnerable people in the community, but also helps the owners of the buildings where the hubs take place to operate more energy efficiently and secure the funding required to keep the hubs going well into the future.

Following the successful pilot we have agreed to fund the Warm Hubs project for the next three years when the model will be self-sustainable.



Comparing different approaches to issues to determine the very best way forward.

Warm Hubs: Pilot Feedback

Benefits -

FOOD

INFO

COMBAT ISOLATION

89%

Need one in their area

Outcome	Pilot Winter 2015	Year 1 (to date) January to March 2016	3 Year Total (Est) Winter 2015 to March 2018
Community centres/buildings running the schemes	6	20	50
People attending Warm Hub sessions	180	1,560	50,820
£ benefits realised		£818,000	
Additional benefits/outcomes			
• Local communities are picking up and running with the model – extending services e.g. first warm hub pub, meal delivery services, volunteers trained and delivering dementia awareness • Larger organisations interested and delivering hubs including British Legion supporting veterans, Newcastle Diocese and ACRE • National interest from DECC and DEFRA • Fully sustainable model by March 2018			

2. TACKLING FUEL POVERTY IN PARTNERSHIP



In March 2015 we helped local authorities in the North of England to secure over £11 million of DECC's £25 million Central Heating Fund to support people living in homes not connected to the gas network.

We wrote to all our local authorities offering our support with producing detailed proposals that demonstrated value for money and plans for ongoing support, to cut bills and keep homes warm more effectively. Four consortiums (covering 24 Local Authorities) were interested and we worked closely with them secure funding for in-house equipment; ensuring that over 1,400 households will have central heating for the first time. From December 2015 we appointed two full time members of staff to support the local authorities in delivering on this promise.

£866,600

estimated savings for customers on energy bills through installing gas connection and central heating equipment

3. COMBINING FORCES FOR GREATER IMPACT



Through our workshops with the Third Sector and other utilities (p4) we identified four key themes for collaborative working; Education, Volunteering, Communications and Engagement, Data Sharing and Referrals. We have agreed 15 significant outcomes for delivery and we have already begun to see the benefits from this collaboration.

Education

Volunteering

Communications and Engagement

Data Sharing and Referrals

We've worked in partnership with Groundwork's Green Doctors, Northern Powergrid, The Children's Society and the Trussell Trust to increase energy affordability, warmth and wellbeing among vulnerable households in Bradford and Leeds. The Green Doctor service helps vulnerable service users save money on energy bills

and keep warm and comfortable in their homes through installing energy saving measures; offering advice and support around grants, rebates, switching, energy debt; and behaviour change around energy use. Through this scheme they also offered advice and action regarding water bills and water saving.

Visits to **65** individual homes – fuel poor or most vulnerable to cold

236 individuals supported

Increased disposable income by **£4,838**

489 energy efficiency measures installed saving **£17,160** (over a lifetime)

Groundwork is continuing to receive referrals through the Trussell Trust and The Children's Society as a result of this pilot and we are now working with them and Northern Powergrid to improve the uptake of the service among the private housing sector, extending the scheme to reach around 300 homes.

4. PROGRESS FROM 2014/15

Our 'Warm and Informed' pilot with The Children's Society in Bradford concluded in November 2015. The project helped us to learn about the best ways to engage with vulnerable customers, further our social responsibility work and reach fuel poor customers to connect them to the gas grid. In addition to these core outcomes the broader aims were to lift families out of poverty, help with debt problems and to raise awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) risks.

The pilot has informed the content of the charity's report and guidance document, providing a blueprint for reaching fuel poor families through children's centres. It's also been referenced in DECC's March 2015 document 'Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a fuel poverty strategy for England' as an example of best practice.

We reached almost

1,000 people through Fuel Poverty Workshops, appointments with a debt advisor outreach work and home assessment appointments

537 families were supported to set up manageable repayment plans for debts totalling

£114,640

IN THE PIPELINE



- We're taking the learning from The Children's Society pilot and rolling out the best bits more widely like carbon monoxide awareness workshops and supporting people to receive warm home discounts
- Our successful trial (100% conversion rate) to refer vulnerable customers identified through our Fuel Poor Connections scheme to Northern Powergrids' Priority Services Register is now being scaled up and rolled out across all our services, beginning with our emergency response teams



Gearing up for the future

YOU SAID:

- NGN are in a unique position in the region in terms of supporting and promoting the future of energy and growth in the North
- Energy futures is an important area and gas has a role to play; engage more with us and make the links between projects and organisations

Ofgem, MPs, Government, Third Sector

OUR PROMISES:

SUSTAIN – Work collaboratively, delivering mutual benefit and innovation to solve our environmental challenges

SHARE – Include our stakeholders in decision making, particularly those who can help to inform our long-term plans

WE DID:

Initiative	Who benefits	Benefits to customers/stakeholders
Championing energy futures	DECC LEPs, Local Authorities and MPs Energy, utilities and infrastructure organisations Academia	• DECC secondment for our Head of Energy Futures • Enabling shale producers to link up with distributors • Raising awareness and understanding of the role of gas in the future energy mix • Making the infrastructure and energy links to attract wider investment and benefits for the regions we operate in
Green cities	All customers and stakeholders	• From April 2016 the Energy Accelerator Fund will support a minimum of 300 businesses in the region saving 3,300 tonnes of carbon per year

1. CHAMPIONING ENERGY FUTURES

With the launch of the Infrastructure Commission, increasing presence for the Northern Powerhouse, and devolution deals being agreed now is an interesting time for infrastructure in the North. Our Energising the North report culminated in a pre-launch with key stakeholders and Andrea Leadsom, Minister for Energy; helping to raise awareness of opportunities and support growth around skills and investment in the North East and Yorkshire. Partnering with Northern Powergrid we have been engaging politicians and large regional businesses at round table events and contacting MPs and LEPs in our region to gain support and interest. Through our engagement it is apparent that alongside securing a sustainable future for gas there are huge opportunities to work together with key partners to make the links in energy to drive growth and investment more widely in our region.

There are a number of innovative projects where we are practically trialling solutions like Leeds H21 CityGate and commercial models for Compressed Natural Gas, which are funded through the Ofgem innovation schemes. In addition we have been championing the future of gas as an affordable and sustainable fuel and making the links with our stakeholders. Working closely with the shale producers we have established a forum where we can meet and enable informed discussions between the producers and the wider distribution networks. Our work in this area has achieved national recognition and our Head of Energy Futures has been seconded to DECC for 12 months as Technical Advisor – Future of Gas Networks.



You can see the opportunities for economic development right across the region - particularly in the energy sector as highlighted by today's report. It's very clear from this report that cities across the area must look to work together to take on the world as a 'Northern Energy Powerhouse'.

**Minister of State at DECC,
Andrea Leadsom MP**



2. SUPPORTING GREEN CITIES

We have been working closely with local and regional partners like the Tees Valley and Leeds LEPs and the City of Newcastle; inputting to their sustainability strategies and helping to secure innovation investment in the region. We sit on key forums and work closely with these organisations to help to shape their plans and advise from an engineering perspective on the art of the possible.

We supported Leeds LEP financing a full time specialist between May 2015 and March 2016 to deliver a business case to establish an 'Energy Accelerator Fund'. Through the business case the LEP has secured almost £1m in Local Growth Funding and passed the outline application stage for the European Regional Development Fund. The fund launches in April 2016 and will support a minimum of 300 businesses in the region saving 3,300 tonnes of carbon per year. DECC is now using the business case to inform potential further funding for resource efficiency business support.

3. PROGRESS FROM 2014/15

Last year we established a dedicated team, along with a suite of support tools to encourage and support Biomethane producers to get their product to the grid. This proactive approach has helped this year as our specialist team were ready to work closely with the producers to successfully connect eight plants to our network, meeting tight deadlines on complex projects to help them achieve their goals. We expect to connect a further six plants in 2016.



John Baldwin
@baldwincng



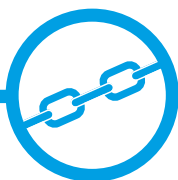
@NGNgas Congratulations to NGN for getting 5 new biomethane projects into the grid in the last 10 days of March - great achievement

4 Apr 2015, 12.34PM

IN THE PIPELINE



- We have been leading the industry work on energy suppliers sharing their smart meter roll out plans with distribution networks. We are currently in talks with some of the energy suppliers on sharing our replacement plans to pilot how this may further support the roll out
- The Future Energy Systems Hub (FRESH) project is a collaboration with Newcastle City Council, Northern Powergrid, Siemens, Newcastle University and National Energy Action. Using the city of Newcastle as its template we're developing more joined-up thinking around our energy infrastructure
- Our Energising the North summit will take place with key stakeholders in September. We'll be discussing how we can work more closely with business, academia and local authorities to make the North an energy leader



Useful Links

Infrastructure North – Growth, Investment, Potential

<http://infrastructurenorth.co.uk/safewarmincontrol/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/24542-Infrastructure-North-Report-WEB-VERSION.pdf>

NGN & You

<http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/ngn-and-you/>

Depot days

http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/local/teesvalley/14447109.Gas_depot_throws_open_doors/

Local investment information

<http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/document/area-fact-sheets/>

Our Community Promises

<http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Community-Promises-FINAL1.pdf>

Considerate Constructors

<https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>

iFEST

<http://gdngames.co.uk/>

Dealing with extremes video

<http://my.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/?p=1315>

Connections online

<http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/your-connections/domestic/getting-connected/>

One stop alterations

<http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/your-connections/domestic/alterations-to-supply/>

Warm Hubs

<http://www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hubs-project>

Green Doctor

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Pages/Category/green-doctor>

The Children's Society – Warm and Informed Report

<http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/warm-informed-evaluation-and-findings>

Energising the North

<http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Energising-the-North-report-final.pdf>

Biomethane support

<http://biomethane.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/>

We are happy to provide any additional information on request

Appendix 1 Gas Distribution Networks Collaboration

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Joint GDN Stakeholder Submission Appendix

As Gas Distribution Networks we continue to actively collaborate to deliver valuable outcomes for our stakeholders. Our collaborative DRS submission to Ofgem in April 2015 highlights collaboration through 'The Power of Four'. [Discretionary Reward Scheme submission](#)

We remain committed, utilising the 'Power of Four'; with much of our work co-ordinated and supported by the Energy Networks Association (ENA); collaborating to find solutions that benefit our customers and stakeholders. Our collaboration and joint commitment is focussed on:

- Supporting and protecting the communities that we live and work in, and minimising our wider impact on the environment;
- Going beyond what is expected of us, exceeding both our social and moral responsibilities and collaborations that extend to expert organisations and other sectors

Our ongoing collaborative work on various topics means we are able to achieve so much more than working independently. This has contributed to:

- **Effectiveness.** Effectively communicating consistent messages to national, regional and local audiences, whether that is lobbying for policy change or becoming more accessible to our stakeholders through our partnerships.
- **Efficiency.** Sharing the costs of activities and lobbying, developing joint communications and activities, ultimately delivering outcomes efficiently for customers.
- **Best practice.** Sharing experiences to understand the best approaches. This prevents us from repeating mistakes and enables far more efficient ways of working.

We've been working collaboratively since network sales in 2005 delivering some great outcomes and benefits from our work for our stakeholders, across a range of issues. The tables throughout provide some key collaborative outcomes and benefits in the following areas:

- Alleviating fuel poverty
- Promoting awareness and prevention of Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning
- Supporting vulnerable customers
- Research and demonstration projects for sustainable heating solutions
- Delivering and sharing 'innovation' providing current and future benefits for customers and stakeholders

Our collaboration highlights

Helped secure **£25m** for Local Authorities to support in house measures

318 customers referred for fuel poor connection through YES Energy Services

Regularly reaching more than **20,000** private landlords with CO and fuel poor messages

Ensuring safety and mitigating customer impact of smart meter roll out

Facilitating and encouraging green gas entry to our networks

14,715 CO alarms given to vulnerable customers

39.4% increase in CO awareness

Over **20,000** appliance check reminders set up

1. Fuel Poverty

GROUPS – ENA co-ordinated GDN Fuel Poverty Best Practice Working Group, Off Gas Grid Group and Fuel Poverty Action Sub-Group

<u>What we did</u>	<u>Key Outcomes and Benefits</u>
Lobbying and working with DECC to ensure the successful roll-out of the DECC Central Heating Fund: Lobbied Ofgem and DECC to change the fuel poor network extension scheme criteria so that all homes having new gas heating installed under the scheme would also qualify for a free or discounted gas connection.	A fund of £25m available to local authorities. Local authority awareness and bids resulting in an increased number of customers receiving funded whole house solutions.
Engaging with DECC, National Energy Action and Energy Saving Trust to provide a referral scheme for customers who do not automatically qualify for the Warm Homes Scheme but where they may benefit from the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES).	318 customers referred to FPNES resulting in 94 fuel poor connections. More joined up services for fuel poor customers.
Advertising in the National Landlords Association magazine to highlight the opportunities for assisted connections to reduce the energy bills of their tenants by converting to gas.	Key messages reaching a circulation of more than 20,000 private landlords in the UK.
Consulted with Ofgem and partner organizations to increase number of fuel poor connections via the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) Increased number of projected connections by 18% from 77,450 to 91,203.	Over remaining 5 years of FPNES an additional 13,743 customers than originally planned will benefit from a fuel poor connection to the gas network. Helping to lift these customers out of fuel poverty.
Sponsoring, supporting and attending events collaboratively: - Sponsoring and exhibiting at the Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency Group (FPEEG) dinner, which was attended by 90 parliamentarians - Joint exhibition stand at the national NEA conference.	To further raise awareness of our collaboration and the potential to deliver benefits to customers locally and support the national target to eradicate fuel poverty.
Conducted a national data exercise identifying and mapping all the off-gas households and calculating how far they are from the gas main.	Assist all interested parties in making decisions about the most appropriate heating system for each property. 280,000 people have visited the gas map website - Over 20,000 appliance check reminders set up.
Continued support for District Heating Schemes (DHS) to help lift customers out of fuel poverty.	Completion of DHS to 7 tower blocks containing 470 flats of which 380 have presently been connected to DHS.
In summer 2015, we held a strategy day to assist in developing our work plans to 2018. Detailed stakeholder maps, work plans and timelines are now being developed by the Fuel Poverty Group to inform the work going forward.	Key initiatives include working with NEA to develop an energy efficiency assurance for products and supporting policy development around ECO replacement through regular interaction with DECC and Ofgem.

2. Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness

GROUPS – ENA co-ordinated GDN CO Awareness Best Practice Working Group

What we did	Key Outcomes and Benefits
Last summer we launched 'iFest' which is a game aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of CO in outdoor scenarios, specifically festivals, camping and boating. This online game tackles safety messages about the use of BBQs and gas camping equipment in enclosed spaces as well as educating about the signs and symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning.	'iFEST' has received 4,381 hits since its' launch in summer 2015. Raising awareness of the dangers of CO with these key vulnerable groups. The launch was supported by a social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter to raise awareness of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide at festivals at #TunesNotFumes
We continue to work with the CO victims charities and have this year taken on the management and sponsorship of the CO Schools Poster Competition. As part of this we have broadened out the scope of the competition to include other types of media, for example videos, models, poems and short stories. We are all engaging at a local level, not only with schools but also with youth organisations, such as the Scouts and Guides Associations to encourage more entries to the competition, in turn raising awareness on the dangers of CO to the younger demographic.	Extended reach of CO awareness with school children significantly since 2015 through wider commitment and local approach.
We have developed a matrix of our initiatives, recording factors including age and demographic reach so that we can identify the most effective awareness initiatives and any gaps in reaching key audiences. It is essential that the way we measure and report on the awareness activities that each of us run is consistent so that we can all understand, compare and learn from the results. Once an education scheme being trialled by one GDN proves to be successful, we pool resources to support collectively or share the cost as we have with the national annual CO conference.	Working together helps us reach more people, trial more ideas, measure them in a consistent and meaningful way and, through doing this, change behaviour. In 2013/15 our schemes delivered: • 14,777 survey responses • 14,715 CO alarms given to vulnerable customers; • 8.61 average rating of CO awareness following our Interaction (on a scale of 1-10) • 39.4% increase in CO awareness as a result of our interaction • 85% of people likely to take further action on CO.
We are aware of the importance of awareness of CO with political decision makers and through our membership of the All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group, we liaise with MPs, MSPs and AMs to raise awareness and look to develop measures to reduce the risks of accidental harm caused by exposure to CO.	In the past year we have also actively supported both CO Awareness Week and Gas Safety Week both within our own organisations and at public and parliamentary events.
In summer 2015 the group held a strategy day to assist in developing our work plans to 2018. Detailed stakeholder maps, work plans and timelines are now being developed by the CO Awareness group to inform the work going forward.	Key initiatives include the development and delivery of our third national CO awareness conference.
Advertising in National Landlords Association bi-monthly magazine to highlight dangers of Carbon Monoxide poisoning when gas appliances have been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained.	Key messages reaching circulation of 20,000 private landlords in UK.

3. Vulnerable Customers and the Priority Services Register (PSR)

GROUPS – ENA's Safeguarding Customers Working Group

What we did	Key Outcomes and Benefits
We, along with the Electricity Distribution Networks Operators (DNOs) and other key stakeholders including Energy UK, Citizens Advice, Age UK and the energy suppliers, continue to work under ENA's Safeguarding Customers Working Group to address issues in relation to vulnerable customers.	Worked with Energy UK and Water UK to introduce 'signposting' for vulnerable customers to ensure that they are aware that both the energy and water industries have a PSR, and to facilitate their registration on both. Carrying out trials with the DNOs, to help identify vulnerable customers when our engineers visit them, and to have processes in place to pass on the customers' details to ensure they are registered on the DNO PSR. This group continues to work with Ofgem to develop a common set of 'Needs Codes' to enable data sharing between the gas and electricity suppliers and the DNOs in relation to registrations on the PSR.

4. Future of Gas and Innovation

GROUPS – ENA co-ordinated Gas Futures Group (GFG) and Gas Innovation and Governance Group (GIGG)

What we did	Key Outcomes and Benefits
We, along with National Grid Gas Transmission (NGGT), Brookfield Utilities and Gas Networks Ireland, have commissioned KPMG to carry out an independent study on the role of the gas networks in Britain's energy future, alongside an analysis of potential alternative scenarios. In addition this work will consider the main drivers and trends that will impact on the long-term development of the energy system.	The final report is expected in Q2 2016 and will evaluate a full range of scenarios to represent how the energy system may develop to 2050, and will also identify policy initiatives to realise the benefits emerging from this analysis.
We have carried out several events this year to engage with key stakeholders to share information regarding our energy futures messages, these have included: - A joint event with the All Party Parliamentary Renewable and Sustainable Energy Group (PRASEG), focussing on gas delivering for customers and supporting the low carbon economy. - Future of Gas Awareness showcase in July. The purpose of this event was to raise awareness amongst Ofgem staff of the gas networks and their future important contribution to the UK economy. - In April 2016, ENA and Geode (a European Trade association that represents distribution system operators from most member states) held an event in the European Parliament to launch a report on green gas that all members of the GFG contributed to. - An ENA and Utility Week roundtable on the future of heat in the House of Commons on 2nd March.	Reached and influenced more than 60 MPs, advisors and other key stakeholders. Asked to help the Shadow Energy Team in developing a "Green Gas Book". A publication dealing with policy and practical aspects of the development of green gas, particularly Biomethane and Hydrogen, as a key element of the energy mix over the coming years. Provided all Ofgem staff and other external guests an opportunity to discuss and get an understanding of how gas will fit into the future energy mix. The GEODE event in Brussels brought together industry representatives and key policy makers from across Europe to discuss the 'energy renaissance' which gas is undergoing, and the long term role that green gas can play in meeting demand in an affordable, secure and sustainable energy future. Presenting our key innovation projects and the case for the gas networks to play a central role in our energy future to a select group of policy makers and influencers.
At the regular monthly meetings of GFG we have invited an array of guest speakers over the past year.	Greater understanding of other organisations' priorities, innovation and work to help us to make the links and share best practice. These have included: Hydrogen Fuel Cells Association; DECC; Carbon Connect; Buro Happold; Leeds University.
The GFG contributed to a briefing note produced by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) on 'The Carbon Footprint of Heat'.	The briefing for MPs and Peers will outline technologies likely to be involved in the decarbonisation of heat such as biogas, heat pumps, district heat networks and combined heat-power systems.
In July 2015 members of GIGG and GFG held a joint workshop to learn about and share our individual networks' objectives, our strategies and to develop a closer working relationship to ensure gas futures research is fully incorporated into our collaborative processes.	Both groups are now following up with actions to ensure that we work much more closely together in the future to ensure the delivery of collaborative futures related innovation projects.
The GIGG group publish a quarterly newsletter which details all the activities in relation to new innovation projects, the annual LCNI Conference, ENA news and forthcoming events.	This is shared with a wide list of more than 60 stakeholders, including SMEs, DNOs and Ofgem and has been very well received.

5. Other Key Achievements

What we did	Key Outcomes and Benefits
ENA coordinated Gas Networks Collaboration Forum (GNCF) is attended by the Network Directors for each of our organisations. The group focuses on safety and operation issues for the GDN's and liaises with Ofgem and the Health and Safety Executive and DECC.	In 2016 we are leading the industry in a review of the Gas Safety Management Regulations (1996) to bring them in line with current business practices and to make them 'future proof' given the ever-changing role of the gas networks in the energy mix of the future.
We work together with the DNOs and other key stakeholder including NJUG on an ENA Cross Sector group focussing on Streetworks related issues. These are currently NJUG Funding Model, Seven Day Working, Permits and Traffic Light Heads.	Through this work we are: • Using our shared knowledge and experience to provide a co-ordinated response to inform legislation, guidance and policy ultimately working to minimise the impact of our streetworks • Supporting NJUG around their funding model to ensure they can continue to influence local government.
The ENA GDN Smart Metering Steering Group oversees the interaction of ENA and it's members with the Smart Metering Implementation Programme (run by DECC) and other key stakeholders in the process – Ofgem, DCC, Smart Energy GB, Energy UK and the large Suppliers. We have worked together to ensure that we are sharing best practice and learning for our SEC (Smart Energy Code) obligations to ensure that we are compliant with our SMKI (Smart Metering Key Infrastructure) requirements with the DCC (Data Communication Centre) for Smart Metering roll out.	We have been able to create a high level solution to mitigate the technical constraints of PEMS (Post Emergency Metering Service) to customers with a Smart Meter. With Suppliers and Energy UK, we have been able to agree a commonality of approach to managing our business as usual processes during Smart Metering roll out, ensuring that there is no impact to safety and the impact to customer experience is mitigated.
Facilitating Green Gas Entry through the Distributed Gas Entry Group we have looked at the impact of renewable gas on our networks and explore how we can harmonise our connection and commissioning arrangements, and to identify learning from the development of distributed renewables on the electricity network.	In order to support the use of biogas generally and the entry of biomethane into the network, we worked with IGEM to develop standards for biomethane network entry and biogas entry. We've introduced consistent Voluntary Standards of Service (VSOS) for Biomethane connections. This means wherever the connection is happening in the country, there is a consistent service and sharing of connection performance and that we, in turn, are making sure the standards are working for our customers.
In response to the Ofgem review of Xoserve's funding, governance and ownership we have been progressing the programme in order to meet the target phased go live dates of April 2016 and April 2017.	We have: • Collectively procured the services of KMPG to act as Programme Manager • Successfully delivered the Phase 1 of the new cooperative arrangements including corporate governance and process changes to enable shippers and independent gas transporters more involvement across the board, for greater transparency.

Our collaboration in pictures



"The unsung heroes of energy security. We hear a lot about those who produce energy and those who sell energy. But the public only get a sense of how important energy networks are when, for example, extreme weather causes the network to go down in a local area.

You are responsible for critical national infrastructure which keeps our society powered and connected. We should not underestimate how difficult and complex that task is – especially as we enter a new digital age."

Amber Rudd, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change speaking about the ENA and it's members, September 2015



