

Supporting our customers in vulnerable situations

Annual Strategic Workshop



20th April 2021

together
we are
the network

Thank you

Thank you again to those of you who joined us for our annual strategic review workshop on Tuesday 20th April.

Myself, Jill, Steve and our facilitators thoroughly enjoyed seeing you all again. A special thank you to our guest presenters and partners - Kate Urwin, Ian Bartlett and Christine Nicholls, for excellent insights into their sustainable projects with Northern Gas Networks. An overview of each project is detailed further down in the report.

“Really enjoyed learning more about other organisations projects especially the smart hubs and slow cooker programme.”

“The real-life case studies were very valuable. They brought to life the experiences and challenges of receiving and managing funding and provided a real insight into what is going on in the region.”

Purpose of the workshop



delegates



overall satisfaction with the event (out of 10)

1. **To provide updates on our business plan, engagement and GD2 readiness in terms of priorities**
2. **Partner spotlight sessions** – an overview of three sustainable projects
3. **Exploring three key area** – Sustainable projects and partnerships, Measurable outcomes / 6 Ofgem metrics for GD2 and Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

GD2 readiness – update on priorities

A reminder of what our stakeholders previously gave us clear direction on, in terms of priorities for GD2 - Enhanced Commitments Update

- Hardship Fund (£150k)
 - Fund to support hardship – health, causes, circumstances, appliance repairs/replacements
 - 4 contracts in place – BLF, Groundwork, CE, FILT
 - All activities underway, great feedback received already
- Customer Vulnerability & Competency Framework (CVCF)
 - Appointed Vulnerability Trainer
 - Key modules identified - Dementia Friends, It’s Your Call, PSR
 - CV-19 created a challenge to be able to test some modules
- Training community partners
 - Online e-learning – PSR / CO awareness delivery ongoing
 - Already working with Strategic Partners to deliver Fuel Poverty Awareness Courses and creating Community Energy Ambassadors

Partner spotlight sessions – project overviews

Community Energy Ambassadors - CEA (Kate Urwin)

Growth of a project – initially funded from the NGN Community Promises Fund to support a Dementia Hub. The project then extended to other partners – Stockton District Council and Groundworks which enabled additional funding streams to be accessed

Stockton Citizen’s Advice and Energy Advice (Ian Bartlett)

Extending partnerships and access to external funding – initially funded from the NGN Community Promises Fund to support a Dementia Hub. The project then extended to other partners – Stockton District Council and Groundworks which enabled additional funding streams to be accessed

Community Action Northumberland - CAN (Christine Nicholls)

Growth and development of a concept Warm Hubs to Pop Up Hubs. CAN were initially funded to pilot an initiative called Warm Hubs – the model involves an energy efficient, sustainable community building, with sustainable volunteers to meet the needs of the community. Pop Up Hubs is an evolution of this model and can be held at employment hubs and learning disability centres (anywhere). The focus is around using a slow cooker and cooking cheap, hearty meals, whilst imparting energy efficiency advice, PSR and CO awareness information to the audience

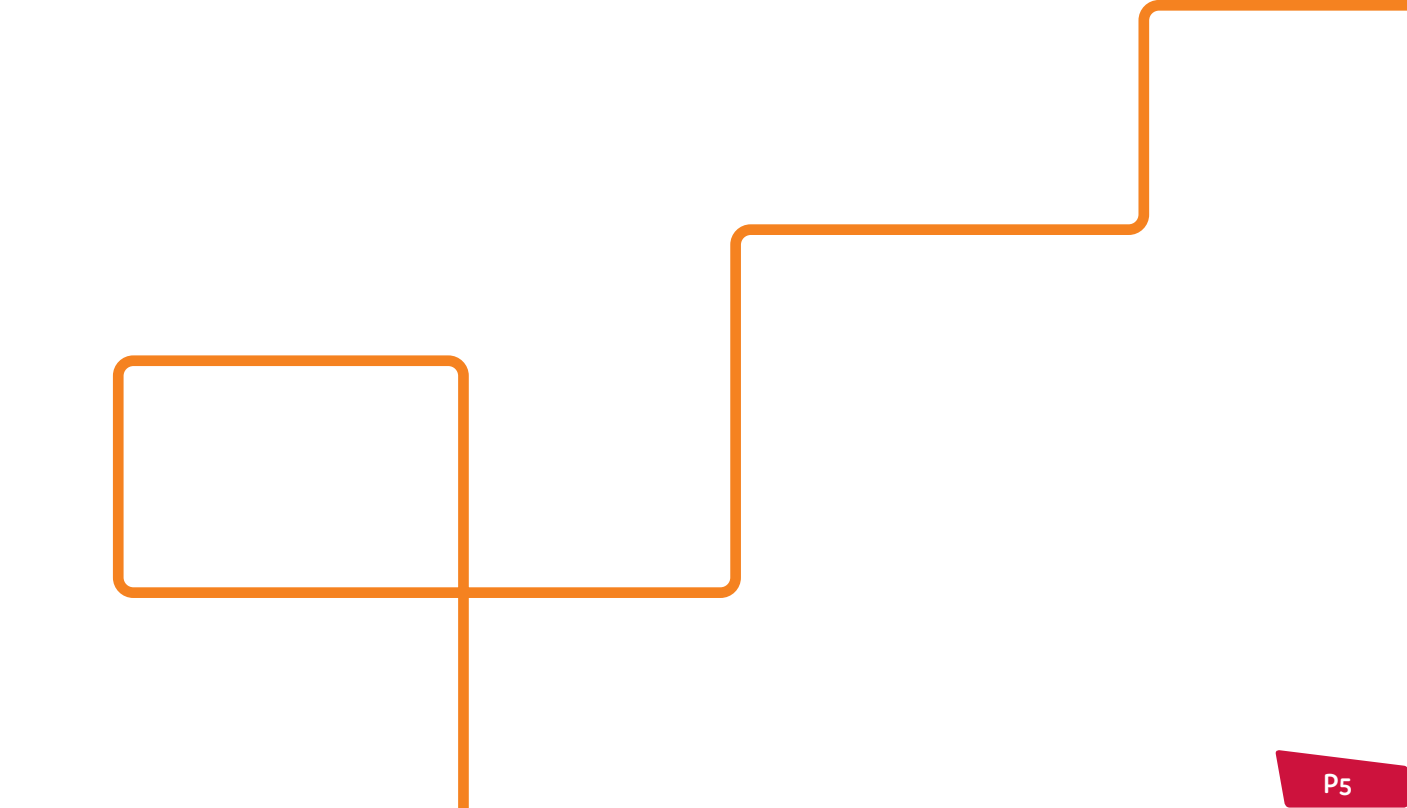
The second part of the workshop was focussed on looking at three key areas:

1. **Sustainable projects and partnerships**
-For stakeholders to discuss sustainable projects and share best practice. To help NGN provide support and guidance to stakeholders to help them grow/scale up successful projects
2. **Measurable outcomes / 6 Ofgem metrics for GD2** - To help stakeholders understand what metrics we need to report on, what issues there might be and what else we should be reporting on. Focussing on CO/PSR metrics is a priority for NGN and our partners
3. **Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)** - To provide stakeholders with an overview of VCMA projects for 21/22, and understand how we should be promoting the fund, and what governance we should have in place to approve projects. (Stakeholders were sent the VCMA governance document in advance of the workshop.)

Acting on your feedback – our commitments

You said - Session 1 - Sustainable projects and partnerships	So we are
Need to have an evidence base / outputs established from the outset and demonstrated at the end. Flexible approach required and ability to adapt as projects progress	Developing regular monitoring and reporting to track a project's life-cycle
Need to understand next steps when funding ends and look at future funding streams. Ability to self-fund which should form part of an exit strategy	Developing regular monitoring and reporting to track a project's life-cycle
SROI - needs to be measured and easy for community groups to integrate to BAU. Partner toolkit required and / or monitoring tool	Development of a SROI partner toolkit being progressed internally
Good connections need to be made via networking / break down barriers with 3rd sector. Use NGN as a leg-up to get messaging out to drive success of projects	Continuing to showcase projects / case studies. Spotlight opportunities at future workshops
Sustainable project needs to address an ongoing / local need	Ensuring partners are more prescriptive in project proposal requirements and aligned to ongoing needs. Refreshing social indicator mapping annually. Progressing our Social Mobility Pledge commitment
Training required to deliver core requirements - basics CO/PSR and also Social Return on Investment	CO training arranged. Need to include reciprocal arrangements with partners to align with Customer Vulnerability & Competency Framework (CVCF)
Communicate about the fund and its existence.	Link to other forums / partners - ann.atkinson@northumberlandcva.org.uk / North Northumberland Voluntary Forum bvforum@hotmail.co.uk. HEY Confident Futures hosts talks - share information and these links with the network
Need to have shared values / objectives - encompassing passion and commitment	Considering a mission statement
Requires smart engagement and information sharing is required and access to enable this	SharePoint site established and stakeholder mapping being progressed
Glossary of projects on NGN website ie partners / what they do	Creating a webpage to host project details and contacts as part of VCMA requirements

You said –Session 2 - Measurable outcomes / 6 Ofgem Metrics	So we are
CO survey questionnaire - clarification required	Including as part of CO training - NGN need to be specific about pre/post results. Can be incorporated into partner BAU processes
Partners need to understand what reporting is required back to NGN, including GDPR implications	Communicating as part of partner roundtable sessions. This includes any training - PSR/CO/SROI and case studies
How do NGN measure quality control with partners? Do NGN drop in on their sessions?	Considering QA for own internal training via/ Vulnerability Trainer and whether ICS training mark can be broadened. Considering QA for partners delivering under our banner / certification
Need to keep everyone on board - all ages. Example - Safety Seymour and CO (KS1/2). How do we hit the different age ranges?	SharePoint/secure portal - online materials / resources made available. NGN can provide further training
Use different mediums to deliver information so everyone is included and consider right format and literacy levels	Align to CO strategy/ priorities for year 1



Slido poll

Future workshops – hot topics.

You said – Session 3 – VCMA feedback	So we are
Group do not want to be involved in VCMA governance - conflict of interest. A panel / steering group could discuss the themes / priorities for that year.	Approaching electricity and water partners to see if they want to be part of a panel. Mission statement will help shape this further
Use networks not already engaged with / NGN to promote VCMA to them. Use existing forums	Stakeholder mapping will assist with engagement. Other networks will be considered
Create a hashtag on social media	Discussing internally with Comms Team
VCMA - eligible projects allowed - look at those already working on projects/capture groups already doing this type of work to avoid duplication	Publishing new project ideas as NGN are approached. SharePoint site could be the platform to hold this information
Undertake gap analysis of eligible projects v ineligible	Considering other funding streams - CPF / NIA opportunities. Publicise declined projects on SharePoint
Like more information on how VCMA being spent to ensure equal across themes	NGN to draft explanatory note on how VCMA fund was built. Where do stakeholders think we should be spending – geographical or socio-economic focus? Governance group will help

The workshop concluded by asking our stakeholders to vote on their priorities and our (NGN's) priorities, for topics they would like to be addressed at future workshops.

Each stakeholder was asked to vote on what they saw as priorities moving forward. The top three from each vote will form the basis of the future, quarterly workshops.

Your priorities - to be selected from topics below

- Fuel Poverty
- Priorities out of CV-19
- Network Innovation Allowance (NIA) - develop collaborative research projects
- Understand and align to Ofgem’s Vulnerability Strategy
- Cross-sector data sharing
- Fair transition to decarbonisation
- Improving partnership working
- Maximising VCMA to those most in need
- Training – identifying needs for our community partners

Our priorities - to be selected from topics below

- Fully use available funding streams – Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance and Network Innovation Allowance
- Fuel poor connections – achieving between 1,000 and 2,000 per year
- Increase PSR membership
- Increase Carbon Monoxide Awareness
- Customer & Vulnerability Competency Framework - embed
- Hardship Fund – measure success of new fund and refine split across 4 areas
- Evolution of Community Partnering Fund
- NGN work on Equality and Diversity
- NGN progress on Social Mobility Pledge
- NGN progress on education, skills and recruitment

Your priorities	NGN’s priorities
Fuel poverty	Fully use available funding streams – Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance and Network Innovation Allowance
Maximising VCMA to those most in need	Fuel poor connections – achieving between 1,000 and 2,000 per year
Improving partnership working	Increase Carbon Monoxide Awareness

Event Evaluation and Future Engagement – 20 responses

Summary:	Customers in Vulnerable Situations Strategic Workshop	Tuesday 20th April 2021
Event Evaluation		
Q1	What do you want to get out of today?	
Q2	Choose 2 words from this list below to describe this event	Interesting, useful
Q3	Overall, how satisfied were you with the event?	8.85
Q4	How would you rate the discussions?	8.85
Q5	How would you rate the event contact and speakers?	8.85
Q6	How would you rate the networking opportunities?	7
Q7	Is there anything you think could be improved / changes for future workshops?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collective page with all contacts and what they doMore time for discussionsSlightly shorter event is needed, too longBefore the workshops. Clarify with everyone what is being discussed, in case questions need to be askedI have scored networking relatively low - this is a feature of virtual events and totally understandable in view CV-19Maybe an extra break for me as difficult to sit etc for 2 hoursThere was some confusion over what we were being asked to consider which was cleared up by intervention from one of the speakers but could have been prevented. (Measurable outcomes)I don't know if it's possible but could you mix up the groups for the breakout sessions? It would be nice to chat with different peopleCould you please include names of attendees against their organisation in the post event follow-up? This could be helpful for the networking element of the event, especially whilst these are held onlinePresent discussion questions to attendees prior to the webinar to allow for more in-depth discussions, and better use of time.It was a good mix of listening to other speakers and discussion with other partners

Q8	Is there anything else you would like to tell us?	<p>It would be good to chat about how the charity Scope could support with Equality and Diversity</p> <p>These sessions are very important so we are in touch with other partners and see what's happening</p> <p>I really enjoyed learning more about other organisations projects especially the smart hubs and slow cooker programme</p> <p>Breakouts were a bit unstructured</p> <p>A very friendly and supportive event</p> <p>The real-life case studies were very valuable. They brought to life the experiences and challenges of receiving and managing funding and provided a real insight into what is going on in the region. Excellent</p> <p>Enable chat function on zoom to interact with individuals rather than just "everyone" as messages can get lost</p> <p>Really useful event, enjoyed hearing about different projects and there were plenty of opportunities to interact and discuss issues through the breakout rooms</p> <p>Networking always more difficult in virtual settings. Interesting speakers and examples of projects</p> <p>I really liked the use of live voting on Slido during the event!</p>
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Q9	Thinking of yourself as a stakeholder of NGN, how satisfied are you with the relationship that you have with NGN	9.4
Q10	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
	NGN keeps me up to date on their business plans	Strongly agree 6 Agree 10 Neither agree/disagree 4
	NGN provided me with clear information about their business performance	Strongly agree 4 Agree 12 Somewhat agree 2 Neither agree/disagree 2
	NGN provided me with opportunities to give feedback on the topics that interest me	Strongly agree 10 Agree 7 Somewhat agree 1 Neither agree/disagree 2
	NGN allows me to give feedback through my preferred method	Strongly agree 11 Agree 7 Neither agree nor disagree 2
	NGN makes it clear how they have used feedback to change	Strongly agree 11 Agree 5 Somewhat agree 1 Neither agree/disagree 3

Event Evaluation and Future Engagement – 20 responses

Summary: Customers in Vulnerable Situations Strategic Workshop		Tuesday 20th April 2021
Future Engagement		
Q1	How else would you like to engage with NGN in future?	<p>Through cross utility/cross network working.</p> <p>When allowed face to face group events</p> <p>Meetings, workshops, etc.</p> <p>Email contact</p> <p>Further meetings</p> <p>The way I currently engage with NGN suits my needs.</p> <p>Short update meetings eg 1.5 hours long</p> <p>I am a new stakeholder and so have limited experience on which to base my responses to question 12 - I think they should be excluded to avoid biasing the final result - I tried not answering them but that didn't work!!</p> <p>Happy with the range of engagement offered</p> <p>We are happy with our NGN engagement and wouldn't change anything</p> <p>Do you send out a regular newsletter as I don't seem to get any? If you have different email lists for different things would it be worth sending something round to update the records to see if we are all getting what we would find useful?</p> <p>More information on grant opportunities</p> <p>Polls, surveys, virtual meetings</p> <p>More opportunities on partnerships</p>

Future engagement sessions

September 14th, 10am to 12pm – Topic Workshop 2

November 16th, 10am to 12pm - Topic Workshop 3

January 25th, 10am to 12pm (2022) – Topic Workshop 4 (optional)

March 22nd, 9.30am to 1.30pm (2022) - Annual Strategic Review & and Planning Workshop

Tell us what you think

Thank you for reading this report. We welcome any further feedback, thoughts or ideas you have. Please drop us a line on at stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk

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