



# We are the network

Your NGN news update  
April 2020



## Keeping our communities safe, warm and connected at this challenging time

### A message from Mark Horsley

I am writing to you at an extraordinarily challenging time and I really hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well. I'd like to firstly thank our partners across healthcare, local government and the emergency services for all they are doing for us. They are putting their lives on hold to save others and continue to be there for us when we need them most.

As the gas distributor for the North of England we know people across Yorkshire, the North East and northern Cumbria rely on our services to keep warm, access hot water and power our essential services.

The UK's energy networks have a reputation for reliability, something that we all value now more than ever. If you see our engineers on your street, it's because they are doing essential work to keep the gas flowing and our customers and communities



### Customer Engagement Group calls for new expert members

Our independent Customer Engagement Group (CEG) is recruiting new members. Established in 2018, the group has helped to shape a customer focused business plan and will provide ongoing challenge to ensure delivery of the plan continues to meet stakeholders' needs.

Now the CEG are looking for people who are passionate about the value of customer led services and who are willing to share their skills, expertise and experience to

safe.

It is hugely important to me that we continue to meet the needs of the communities we serve in the face of Coronavirus outbreak and provide as much stability as we can. We're working closely with Government, the energy regulator, Ofgem, the HSE and the wider industry to keep things running as normal.

### **Working with our partners to do the right thing**

To protect our colleagues, customers and communities, we have suspended our non-critical work programme, but are continuing to deliver our essential services including responding to gas emergencies, undertaking emergency repairs and critical maintenance activities.

We are taking every precaution to keep customers safe while carrying out our critical work and our engineers are wearing personal protective equipment where appropriate and observing strict guidelines for safe distance working wherever possible. We will only request entry to a customer's property if it is absolutely necessary in order to ensure the safety or continuity of a gas supply.

We will continue to reassess the situation based on the latest Government guidance.

### **Our people**

At Northern Gas Networks, we care deeply about our people. We've launched a digital Wellbeing Hub where colleagues can access information, tips and advice to take care of their physical and mental health.

We're using video chat technology to help teams stay connected and I'm holding a regular call where I personally share the latest news on the steps that we are taking to protect our people, customers and communities.

We understand how important it is that we provide financial stability for our colleagues and our direct employees will continue to receive full pay throughout this period. We're also providing tailored financial, practical and emotional support to

help create a gas network fit for the future.

The CEG is chaired by Jenny Saunders CBE, previously Chief Executive of National Energy Action. Jenny is joined by experts in industrial, commercial and customer strategy, with a focus on customer service, innovation, asset management and sustainability.

You can also hear what existing members of the group say about its work and the benefits of being involved by clicking 'Read more' below.

[Read more](#)



### **Keeping your energy flowing**

The Energy Networks Association, the trade body that represents the UK's energy network companies, has published information on networks' response to the situation on its **website**, along with guidance and advice for consumers.

[Read more](#)



### **Update on RIIO-GD2**

our direct service providers – small, local and often family run businesses – to help them through this challenging time - and have re-deployed skilled contractors into critical roles where possible.

### Supporting our communities

As a business based at the heart of communities, we are working closely with our partners to provide support to customers who are particularly vulnerable. We have extended our volunteering programme to provide unlimited paid leave for colleagues in the local community, where it is practical and safe to do so.

We've had an incredible response from staff to our new policy and call for volunteers, from colleagues making surgical gowns for NHS staff, helping out at local hospices, delivering essential food supplies and making daily calls to customers that are isolated in their homes.

As this situation continues, we understand that this support must be enduring, and we have extended offers of help to community partners throughout our region. Our long-term partner, Community Action Northumberland, is just one charity to benefit with a £2,600 donation for its Warm Hubs programme, which we helped to establish in 2015. The money is being used to fund Telephone Hubs - helplines to provide vital support for residents across 24 Warm Hubs throughout rural Northumberland - and pay for essential items for those who were already living in isolated conditions and have been further impacted.

If you are one of the many groups providing vital support to those in need at this challenging time, and would like to talk to us about how we can help, please contact the team at [AskNGN@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:AskNGN@northerngas.co.uk)

As you'll be only too aware, this is a rapidly changing situation. We will continue to follow UK government advice and keep you informed.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you and your families the very best. Please look after each other and stay safe.

**Mark Horsley**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

### business plans

In light of the current situation, Ofgem has suspended its planned **open hearings** with draft determinations on the RIIO GD2 business plans expected to be published on 1 July 2020. We will continue to work with Ofgem to provide any support as required.

[Read more](#)



### An army of caring volunteers

A caring army of volunteers has mobilised to bring food, medicine and 'virtual hugs' to isolated and elderly residents in rural parts of Northumberland. Warm Hubs, meeting places in local communities where people can go for warm food and company, have had to temporarily close during the Covid 19 pandemic.

However, volunteers from the Warm Hubs programme have mobilised to provide outreach support for their service users, including food and medical prescription deliveries, and local helplines for residents to get practical support, or to simply chat to a friendly voice and avoid loneliness.

[Read more](#)

### Keep in touch...

To keep in touch with our programme, follow us on Twitter @NGNgas or via our LinkedIn page.

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