

Northern Gas Networks

Young Innovators Council

Session 1: Education and Skills

February 2021

Education and Skills Session
Internal use only



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(YIC, S4TP, Northern Gas Networks & other)
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1. Overview

Background

Northern Gas Networks' Young Innovators Council (YIC) is the voice of young people at Northern Gas Networks. It will provide young people's perspectives and Northern Gas Networks will ensure these young people's thoughts and opinions are put at the heart of the business' decision making. Each session agenda will be co-created by S4TP, Northern Gas Networks and the Young Innovators Council, leading to meaningful and relevant engagement which will provide a real opportunity to influence decision-making. The council is made up of 35 young people aged 14–18 who are based across the footprint of Northern Gas Networks.

Key principles of all sessions:

- Empower young people to use strategies and methods to acquire information and knowledge and to use that knowledge to make decisions.
- Empower young people by recognising their experience and expertise.
- Respect their leadership activities.
- Build mutually respectful relationships between adults and young people.
- Involve young people in cocreation at all stages of the process from defining the problem to gathering and analysing data for decision making.
- Include young people in the evaluation process.

All sessions follow a distinct format:

- Knowledge sense test prior to witnesses
- Key information and knowledge given by 'witnesses': the witnesses may be from Northern Gas Networks or other specialists in the field. Information about a subject may also be given prior to the session. This methodology ensures that the young people are prepared to ask questions of the witnesses and have a framework for understanding the content of the session.
- Break out to smaller groups to discuss, offer ideas and prioritise into:
 - NOW = quick wins, easy to implement
 - WOW = big impact, take a little time to implement
 - HOW = big impact, not possible now
- Decide who will feedback 1 or 2 ideas from each of the above categories
- Feedback to whole group

Session 1: Education and Skills

Total length: 90 minutes

People Involved: 3 S4TP facilitators, 1 S4TP (tech support) and 6 Northern Gas Networks

Date and Time: 24th February 2021, 5pm

Panel attendance: 34

Apologies: 1

Objectives:

- A. Identify why young people think Northern Gas Networks should deliver an Education and Skills strategy.
- B. Understand what the objectives should be for Northern Gas Networks' Education and Skills strategy.
- C. Understand what the impactful things are that Northern Gas Networks can do to support young people through education work.

Pre meeting:

Prior to the session the young people of the YIC were put into three groups (based on age), with each group being asked to individually research one of the below –

TASK: We'd like you have a think about the careers outreach that happens in your school, and research the questions:

Group 1: Outreach in schools

- What different activities are good for different age groups in school?
- Which companies go into your school, and what do they offer?

Group 2: Work experience placements

- What do you think of when someone says work experience?
- Research 3 different work experience placements

Group 3: Apprenticeships and recruitment

- What are your perceptions of jobs at Northern Gas Networks?
- Research 3 different jobs and/or apprenticeships at Northern Gas Networks

2. Attendees

Young Innovators Council

Amanda	Kate
Amiee	Lewis
Bernard	Lina
Brook	Lorna
Charlotte	Lucas
Declan	Lydia
Drew	May
Ellie C	Maya
Ellie G	Millie
Finn	Sam G
Imogen	Samuel S
Jayden	Sophie
Joseph	Summar
Joshua	Taylor
Josie	Tom
Jude	Travis
Kaitlin	Yvana

Solutions for the Planet

Jen Baughan	CEO
Claire Fitton	Youth Insights Manager
Fran Isherwood	Youth Insights Administrator
Jamie Baughan	Tech Support

Northern Gas Networks

Jenny Wilkinson	Stakeholder Manager
Eileen Brown	Customer Experience Director - Witness
Alex Brightman	Northern Gas Networks facilitator
Claire Spencer	Northern Gas Networks facilitator
Ian Coates	Northern Gas Networks facilitator
Lewis Burton	Northern Gas Networks facilitator

3. Session theme and materials

Theme: Education and Skills

Northern Gas Networks identified Education and Skills as an area of strategic planning where the Young Innovators Council could have a meaningful and actionable input. Northern Gas Networks are currently developing an Education and Skills strategy and they would like to know why young people think this is important, they would also like input from the council to develop impactful, useful, and creative ways that Northern Gas Networks could undertake as part of its education, skills and careers support.

Materials:

Prior to the session the YIC was only told what the session theme would be and given their research tasks.

During the session a slide deck was presented with information regarding the *skills gap*, new ways of working *post-pandemic*, and how the three working groups has been created with regards to educational *crossroads*.

Why should Northern Gas Networks have
an education & skills plan?
Bridging the gap



Too many young people are leaving education without the tools to help them consider their future options or how their skills and experiences fit with opportunities in the job market.
Gov Careers education, information, advice and guidance report

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Figure 1: Screenshot of skills gap session materials; YIC Session 1

4. Engagement methods:

S4TP used a variety of engagement mechanisms to inform and engage the council, which have been tailored to meet the needs of young people, allowing different and broad perspectives to be heard. The session involved written, online and offline opportunities for participants to express their views. This helps people with different accessibility needs to make an equal contribution. By using different techniques, it is believed that we can enable sustained engagement over the period of the council.

Pre-engagement knowledge share

This information and expertise sharing from a witness enabled young people to gain a level of understanding of the subject area in order to have a meaningful input to both breakout sessions and main sessions.

Interactive whiteboard

Using the interactive whiteboard enabled participation from a large number of council members, particularly those that felt less confident to speak in a large group. The chat facility was also available for the council members who prefer to interact via this method. This ensured that council members who were accessing the session on mobile devices could still participate effectively.

Small group work

Small group work was written into the session plan as a result of feedback from the Meet Up Session. It was indicated that many of the council members preferred the work undertaken in the breakout sessions. With such a large group, splitting into smaller groups facilitated deeper discussions on the topic.

Large group feedback

S4TP felt it important that the young people themselves fed back to the larger group, rather than the facilitators. We were aware that though initially this may feel a little uncomfortable, in the longer term it will help to develop the YIC's ownership of ideas, decisions, and the council itself.

Co-creation

One of the most important parts of developing the Young Innovators Council is to build advocacy among the young people and, in turn, champion their views within Northern Gas Networks. Advocacy is built up over time and is the result of carrying out top quality meaningful engagement in partnership, to deliver results that work for everyone. Co-creation is a co-operative process in which, in this instance, young people with diverse experiences, skills and knowledge come together to address a common issue, and which enables them to be actively involved in shaping the things which impact their lives now and in the future.

Post-session feedback

In order to respond to the needs and the requests of the Young Innovators Council, post-session questionnaires are filled out (see Appendix 1). This ensures a holistic and innovative approach to responding to the young people's needs.

“It’s so disappointing to see young people being left out so it’s fantastic that Northern Gas Networks are getting us involved.”

Council Member

Agenda

Time	Activity	Lead	Room Main/Breakout	Timings	Outcome
5:00	Welcome & introductions Feedback from Meet Up Session	S4TP	M	2 mins	Friendly space
5:02	Introduction to session & objectives	S4TP	M	2 mins	Clear understanding of what the session objectives are
5:04	Whiteboard activity: Why should Northern Gas Networks have an Education & Skills plan?	S4TP & facilitators	M	10 mins	List of suggested reasons for Northern Gas Networks & the YIC as to why plan is needed; the dual benefits
5:14	Explanation of careers road map & crossroads concept	S4TP	M	3 mins	Understanding of how the groups were split & the focus of each
5:17	Witness 1	Northern Gas Networks	M	10 mins	Understanding of what is happening now @ Northern Gas Networks & the challenges
5:27	Q&A	S4TP	M	10 mins	Chance for YIC to question witness
5:37	Reminder of group work brief	S4TP	M	2 mins	Clarity
5:37 – 5:50 Brain sprint	Split into crossroads groups in breakout rooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain sprint • Discuss • Prioritise • Decide on feedback 	S4TP & facilitators	BO	35 mins	Deeper dive into their crossroad & Now / Wow / How prioritisation
5:50 – 6:02 Discuss					
6:02 – 6:12 Prioritise					
6:12	Return to main room for crossroads groups feedback	S4TP & facilitators	M	15 mins	List of suggested actions for Northern Gas Networks to implement into plan
6:27	Questions & plenary	S4TP	M	3 mins	Ownership
6:30	FINISH				

Table 1: Agenda for YIC Session 1

5. Key Discussion Points:

Objective A

Identify why young people think Northern Gas Networks should deliver an Education and Skills strategy

Interactive whiteboard

An interactive whiteboard was used to gather the YIC's views on the benefits to having an Education and Skills strategy, both for Northern Gas Networks and for young people.

Benefits to Northern Gas Networks	Benefits to young people
To establish a constant workforce by engaging young people in interesting jobs	To learn about new jobs
Create a positive brand image	To learn a trade
Encourage young people to look at jobs and companies that they had not considered before	To gain an insight into Northern Gas Networks and the energy sector
To save money on training	To get young people interested in STEM careers by linking engineering, science, and the environment
To help to create happy stakeholders	To have the opportunity to get a high skilled, secure job
To understand the future workforce	An opportunity for young people to have their say
To increase understanding of the energy industry	To get a head start in the jobs market
To support local young people	To learn skills not taught in school
To establish and enhance Northern Gas Networks as a community-based company	To have an opportunity to learn about future energy and future jobs
To develop future workforce	To gain industry relevant knowledge
To help to attract applications from a diverse range of candidates	To learn about all the different types of jobs within the gas industry e.g., marketing etc.
To help young people gain the right skills for future employment	To develop essential social skills needed in a workspace
To gain new ideas and insights	
To attract the most talented individuals	
To help to create a wider recruitment pool	
An opportunity to educate about future energy and future green jobs	
So that people from all backgrounds have access to the same opportunities	

Table 2: Why should Northern Gas Networks have an Education and Skills plan; YIC Session 1

Could establish a constant work force and reliable teams so not Engaging and interesting people in the jobs
people from all backgrounds have access to the same
 people may find interest in jobs they did not know
 it gives people more insight to what NGN is about coming from people who work there and in the industry
 Maybe to get them interested in a career in STEM by linking engineering and science and the environment
 Encourage people to look into a company they may have not heard of before
learn a trade
 skills for future
 help for future opportunities
 larger workforce in future
 Happy stakeholders within the company
 It would establish NGN as a company that is community based and wanting to see local individuals to develop
 Gives young people more job opportunities.
 Have options for jobs
 Saving money on training
 Helps them understand the next working generation
 young people familiar with the company
one benefit of working with schools for NGN would be that the company can support young adults and possibly have more employers. one benefit to you people would be that it gives them extra
 Giving people ideas if they are unsure about what caree path they want to go down.
 Young people get valuable Insight
 People can donate money to help companies out for helping the community
 Get a better reputation for education for the students
 Makes young people more aware of how energy is supplied to connect with the things they use everyday
 young people learn about companies that they may not have known about
 Engaging and interesting people in the jobs
 Gather information for what they want to do in the future
 New opportunities give of young people to he in future
 might help you decide what the in the future
 Higher skilled jobs have a higher job security

Figure 2: Whiteboard from 'Why should Northern Gas Networks have an Education and Skills strategy?' activity; YIC Session 1

Objectives B & C:

Understand what the objectives should be for Northern Gas Networks' Education and Skills strategy.

Understand what the impactful things are that Northern Gas Networks can do to support young people through education work.

Witness presentation:

Eileen Brown (Customer Experience Director at Northern Gas Networks) gave a presentation covering what Northern Gas Networks' Education and Skills offering currently looks like, and some of the challenges that are facing the company in this arena. A question-and-answer session was held after the presentation and the Young Innovators Council relished the opportunity to ask questions.

It should be noted that additional questions were also put to Northern Gas Network staff during the breakout sessions.

What levels of apprenticeship do you provide?
What does a level 3 apprenticeship cover?
Do you only provide opportunities for 16+ young people?
Is a level 3 apprenticeship hands on or a lot of studying?
How do you work in schools – is it in assemblies or alongside lessons?
Has Northern Gas Networks ever offered a level 6 apprenticeship?
What do you have to do to get levels 2 and 3 on an apprenticeship?

Table 3: Questions from chat; YIC Session 1

The Young Innovators Council was split into breakout rooms respective of their current *crossroad*. As part of session planning it was noted that young people face several crossroads or decision points on their educational journey, e.g., when choosing which subjects to study, when looking at 6th form or HE college and when deciding upon university, apprenticeship or jobs. Groups were asked to 'brain sprint' their ideas, discuss the topic further and then prioritise their suggestions.

Challenges

- Involvement is mainly voluntary and driven by individuals rather than NGN.
- We are unsure which activities to focus on.
- We are unsure which activities deliver the most value to young people.
- Should we stay reactive to requests or drive activity ourselves?



Figure 1: Screenshot of witness presentation; YIC Session 1

Group 1: School outreach in general secondary

What do you want to hear and learn from companies visiting schools?

- Think about activities for the right age groups:
 - Do some problem solving in groups
 - Small activities for students to take part in
 - Target specific people who are interested in certain jobs i.e. students in STEM based GCSE courses could be spoken to about jobs and apprenticeships that Northern Gas Networks offer
- Assemblies in secondary schools
- Get young people engaged in the future of gas:
 - The future of gas
 - Make people more aware of career opportunities in gas, the appeal of working in gas industry
 - But don't JUST talk about careers
- Example: at one school, companies like the fire service, Burberry and the Army have come into school and either had assemblies or the army went through a military training. Burberry tasked the students with a product design task.

How do you want to hear these things?

- You could do a quiz about what they already know, this way you are tailoring your offer
- Engaging and fun activities:
 - We could learn what goes into programming the robotics and we could try it ourselves
 - VR - more kids would be interested. Including technology will probably be a big hit. We could use it to see what and how some people do when they are working, specific roles
 - YIC group interview 'Faketown' exercise
 - New technologies
- Teach young people about how the company is going to develop/become more sustainable in the future
 - Talk about the future, tell them as if they are doing it now, this usually makes things more appealing
 - Explaining what working in gas really means – there are misconceptions all around it especially with regards to the recent push around global warming
 - What the actual company does and their plans for the world, to make it a safer environment
- Example: a company called C and K careers came into one school and did quizzes and with these students were able to see what jobs would suit them
- You could make your different jobs clear – subject specific links to careers can be mapped out
- Teach young people work skills and how to stand out in an interview

Rank how Northern Gas Networks could deliver the above in an exciting way (1 = highest)

1. Use fun/interactive activities and workshops (based on challenges working at Northern Gas Networks)
2. Show the exciting technologies e.g., robotics, AI

3. Young people might zone out of an assembly so target engineering/design or science. Before you do the survey of what people do/don't know, there could be a video clip to watch with the new advancements = Teenagers usually are on their phones or are watching videos on Netflix or YouTube. You could use a video as if they see something on a screen, they pay more attention to it.
4. Based on the social media you need to advertise to grow so getting captivating social media adverts will get young people to engage in the future of Northern Gas Networks. I think that you should be engaging because then we might be able to take more interest and we might be able to think about our future and you might benefit with creating jobs.
5. Reach out to school's careers leads. Use the website to have problems to solve and the innovation.
6. Use a survey to ask students what they want. Use assemblies.

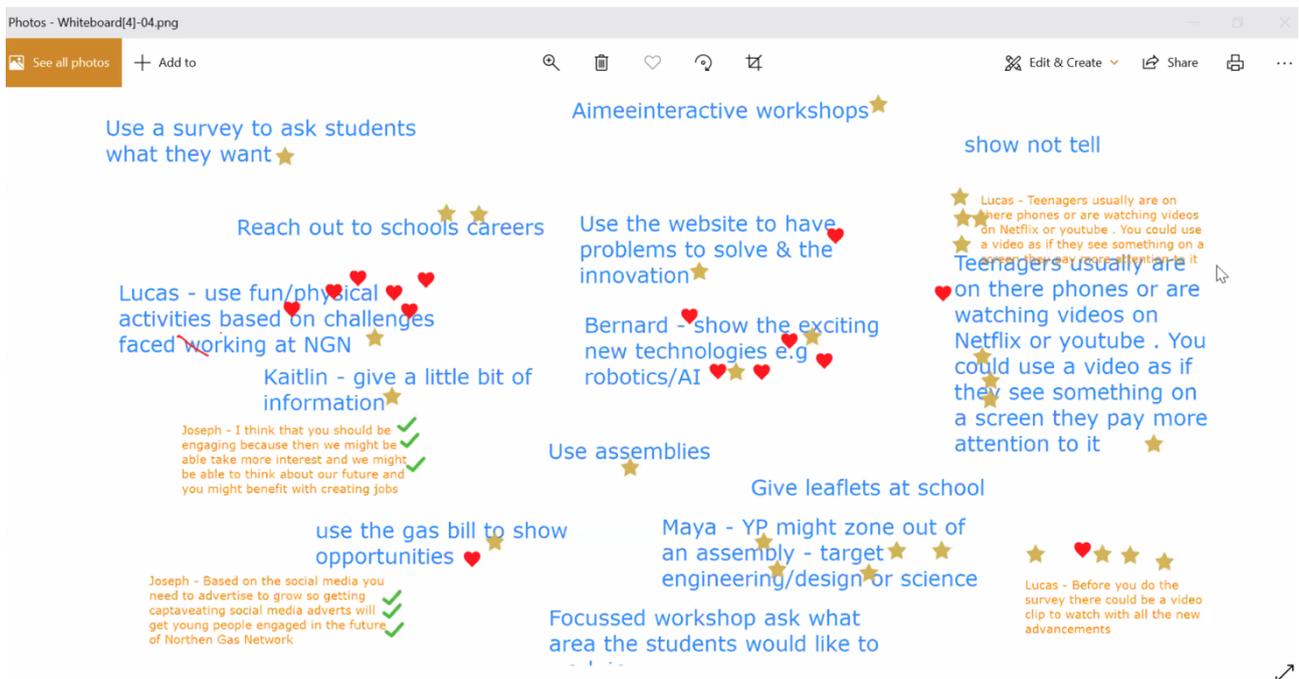


Figure 2: Example whiteboard from breakout room discussions; YIC Session 1

Group 2: School outreach and work experience

What do you think when someone says work experience?

- Gaining more knowledge about a certain trade
 - Time spent in a workspace learning about a specific career, job role or company
 - A chance to experience a career you are interested in
 - Understand whether a specific career is something you really want to do
 - Clarifies what skills and qualifications are needed for the job
- Gain experience and knowledge for the future
 - Insight into everyday working life
 - Some experience to put onto your CV to make you look more desirable to companies hiring you in the future
 - You seem more desirable because it shows that you have your foot in the door in the industry, so you know that you definitely want to commit to the job

- Having the independence to do the work and developing the skills
 - Shows motivation and interest in a career
- Different to just studying in a classroom as it has more practical elements
 - Doing something more interesting than regular school

What makes a great work experience/makes a placement most valuable to you?

- Have options for both a wide range of roles (for those who are unsure) as well as more specific roles if you do have an idea of what you want to do:
 - Exposure to multiple different areas helps you decide what you want to do in the future
 - Different every time to make it more enjoyable
 - Broad so you could see more practical things
 - It can be hard to judge whether you want to enter an industry whilst in school, so it should give this insight
 - A broad range would help you discover paths you weren't aware of
 - Rotate around different departments
 - Working with specific people with different roles and talking to them to get a variety
- A realistic working environment:
 - Represents what you would be doing if you got a job in that field
 - Give you a taster of what working is like, the real professional environment
 - Not just doing work that is in an office (fetching tea is NO!)
 - Making sure it includes a large range of people from different age groups
- Gain connections and skills to help you get a job:
 - Such as interview skills
 - Perhaps you have to find it yourself to gain communication skills
 - Gives more confidence to go into work
 - You learn from the experience of someone else
 - Be able to speak to others confidently
 - Professional confidence
 - Receiving a reference afterwards
 - Learning how to act and how to be formal in a working area – professionalism
 - Learn how to communicate and speak to people – email and verbally
- Engineering placements
- Vehicle maintenance/mechanics
- Working with robots/AI
- 3-4 weeks probably enough to gain skills:
 - Should be couple of weeks long to get a real idea of the workplace
 - One or two weeks
 - One day a week for a few months – starting with shadowing then as you gain more experience you can take more responsibility
 - Short work experience followed by an extended placement later
 - Going back over a period of time (e.g., every 6 weeks/months) to the same company
- Good before A-Levels, perhaps starting at Year 10

“...what would have the greatest impact on students would be if Northern Gas Networks had a strong focus on transferable skills that would be desired within their company.”

Council Member

Group 3: Jobs and apprenticeships

What do we need to communicate more about re: careers at Northern Gas Networks?

- Include in job descriptions the fact that you can change, evolve your role and career once in a job
- Tell us what other people doing apprenticeships have gone on to do
- Future prospects – don't want to feel tied to one role/company
- What subjects would best equip you for the role?
- What a typical day is like at the business
- Will the apprenticeship provide high job security?
- Look into degree apprenticeships
- Degree apprenticeships would help for people finishing A Levels.

What makes a job or apprenticeship most appealing?

- Have something similar to a final year degree project: have a final project where all of the skills and knowledge developed over the apprenticeship are used
- The salary is very appealing up to a certain point
- Make it clear what progression you can make
- Direct competition with other businesses
- A conscious company that is always looking to grow and building on what is happening globally
- Jobs that are tied into close partnerships with schools/colleges/youth groups
- Gender representation

Ideas/suggestions/improvements?

- Developing job outreach on social media such as Instagram will attract younger applicants. Facebook jobs, twitter, etc. 'Social media is the future of advertising'
- Advertise straight into schools to STEM students
- Apprenticeships need to be more appealing – how do the Northern Gas Networks jobs compare with similar like the Army or AngloAmerican?
- 'I found it quite difficult to find jobs on the NGN website since it only displayed jobs available, it would be useful to have a list of all the jobs including a brief job description with subsections including engineers which then branches into the specifics of each engineering role.'
- More information on the website of roles that people already have, and their experience.

6. Key recommendations (priorities)

Suggestions and actions
1. Make sure all activities in schools outreach are interactive
2. Include the future of gas and innovative technologies in content, especially Northern Gas Networks' role within this
3. Be very clear and factual about what working at Northern Gas Networks looks like
4. Highlight clear pathways from education into the gas industry
5. Advertise work experience, apprenticeships and jobs on social media
6. Work experience placements should involve job rotation
7. Work experience placements should provide a realistic, lived experience of professional environments
8. Revisit the length and breadth of work experience placements, perhaps varying this based on crossroad and department
9. Transparency around career progression is vital for engaging young people
10. Create a graduate programme

Table 4: Young Innovators Council's suggested actions; YIC Session 1

7. Agreed Actions for the Young Innovators Council

- To fill in post-session survey, including 'About me' questions
- To forward any research task work undertaken to S4TP
- To indicate interest in writing a Young Innovators Council blog post, to support external communication and PR

8. Summary of modifications to be made after feedback.

S4TP and Northern Gas Networks are committed to learning, improving and adapting our engagement with the young people and therefore reassess our approach to engagement after every session. A key response was that the YIC would like more time for deeper discussions in smaller groups using the breakout rooms. The council liked the use of whiteboards to capture their thoughts in 'real time,' and felt that the pre-work gave them some key insights to the topic.

Feedback from this session can be found in the appendices and will inform the second session of the Young Person's Council.

9. Conclusion

The first session of the Young Innovators Council was very well attended and there was good engagement from most councilors. For those that felt they did not engage, it was primarily due to the size of the group. This will be addressed at the next session with smaller groups in the breakout rooms. The council gave informative feedback on the Education and Skills strategy and gave clear priorities as to which actions would be most impactful.

Both during the main session and the breakout rooms it became clear that the young people had many questions for Northern Gas Networks – in particular around the apprenticeship programme and the possibilities of a graduate programme. This interest came from across the whole age range of the council. A possible response or action to this could be a Q&A session from Northern Gas Networks around apprenticeships with staff and current apprentices.

The Young Innovators Council found it beneficial to ‘deep dive’ into one specific key question as opposed to several related questions, and again this will be addressed in the subsequent sessions. Overall the objectives were met and the Young Innovators Council gave valuable insights that will inform and drive Northern Gas Network’s Education and Skills strategy.

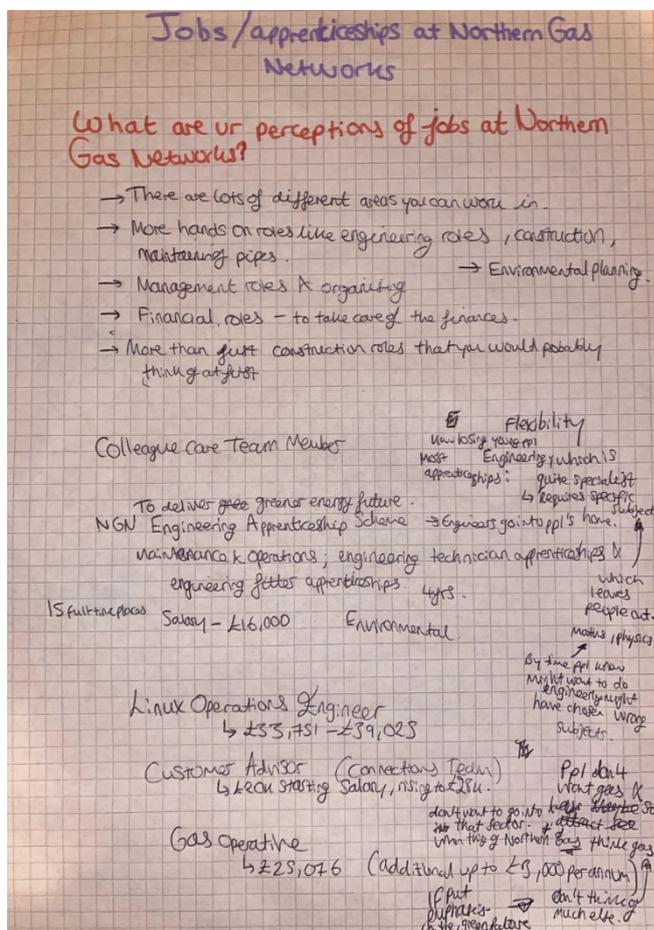
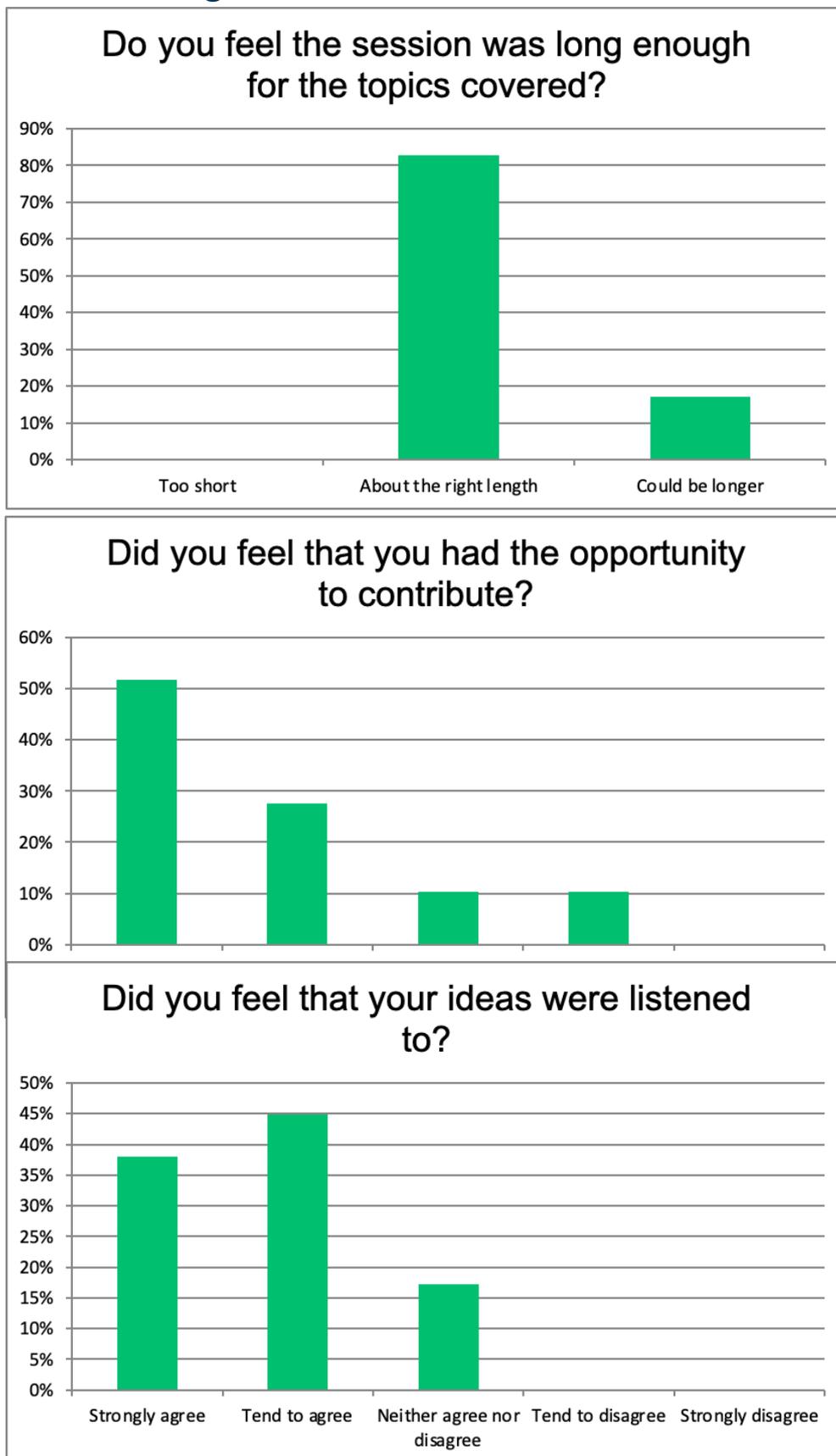


Figure 3: Example of YIC young person's research task; YIC Session 1

Appendix 1: Young Innovators Council Session 1 – Feedback



What would you like to see more of in your council sessions?

1	A debate between different participants.
2	I am not bothered
3	More about the environment
4	Not sure really
5	I am quite happy with how it is at the moment and can't really think of any improvements as it is already very good.
6	I would like to see more break out rooms as it allows you to input more .
7	A similar arrangement to the most recent council meeting where we seemed to be split into age-appropriate groups. I think having a set focus and a task to research beforehand was effective as it meant we could all start on the same page and were ready to feedback ideas. I think these groups were the most effective as they broke up the large group and meant people had the opportunity to speak more openly about their research without the pressure of the large group. It was also interesting to hear other groups discussions when we fed back.
8	More group discussion, with slightly less structure around a board more around sharing opinions and ideas based on prompts or questions
9	More opportunities for actual discussions. It's very much one person gives an idea which gets written on a white board, there's no chance for us to actually speak with each other and start a proper discussion. The sessions are too structured in my opinion, and they feel very childlike
10	Learning more about the energy sector.
11	I'm really happy with the council sessions so far and finding them very interesting, especially being able to interact but i think if possible in the break out rooms we could be placed with our age groups more. And potentially see how our help and input is being used more
12	I would like to see more discussions in small groups.
13	Fun activities/puzzles.
14	I quite like it when we write on the interactive board thing
15	I would like to go into smaller breakout rooms to allow for involvement.
16	Situational thinking
17	Probably more of the brainstorming.
18	To be honest I'm not sure but maybe extend the session because we have so much more to talk about!
19	More time in the breakout rooms to have longer discussions.
20	It's looking good as it is
21	I think the sessions have been good so far, I think we just need to find our feet and express our ideas more!
22	Maybe a little bit shorter, since my family were getting a bit annoyed because they were waiting for me for dinner! But I'm not sure really since we've only had one session on 1 topic!
23	More time to share ideas and longer time in the breakout rooms
24	longer in the breakout rooms

If there is anything you'd like to add about the topics that you didn't have a chance to say in the sessions, please write it here:

I would have just mentioned to NGN about starting a degree apprenticeship programme.

I just wanted to say that Northern Gas Networks should teach young people work skills such as communication or teamwork. This would benefit the company as they would know that the future workforce has good skills and it would benefit young people as they would have a better chance of getting their dream job if they have the right skills.

It may have been interesting to discuss the gender divide in engineering professions and apprenticeships and how the Northern gas networks could encourage more female applicants.

- I definitely think social media is the way to interact with students (mainly Instagram) as it is a widely used platform.

- Apprenticeships can be more appealing if we had more information about them and maybe if we heard personal experiences about them.

- You've got to show us all the benefits for being an apprentice and being a part of your company.

- Think of it like the students are interviewing the company and they have to sell themselves as best as they can.

- The NGN graduate programme should either be like an overview of the whole company getting to see all the different jobs or it should be within one certain part like the engineering part.

- When looking for a job it's got to be standing out there and appealing. It's got to make me almost intrigued and wanting to know more. (my analogy would be like a book, when you see the cover you're intrigued and then you read the blurb and you want to read the book well this is the same, maybe put yourself on to social media such as Instagram or tiktok where the audience is mainly students because once we see that 1 min video on tiktok about your company we will immediately be thinking about it and will probably want to find out more.

Most apprenticeships are engineering, and this is quite specialist since it requires specific subjects (maths and physics) which leaves people behind since some ppl may only realise they want to do engineering later, but they've chosen the wrong subjects, so maybe educate people about what engineering actually involves when they are making their subject choices. Gas sector not that attractive because it's a fossil fuel and isn't good for the environment. So this won't appeal to some and when they think of Northern Gas they think GAS and don't know about the work you are doing on hydrogen too. (Even though hydrogen is a gas). Maybe put emphasis on a greener future and create apprenticeships about hydrogen.

continued...

Just something to add to the conversation we had within the apprenticeships and work experience group. One of the questions raised by a member of NGN was the concern of their involvement with schools and students often being a result of word of mouth rather than voluntary and any reasons for this. This may be due to my own experience but many schools don't have a strong focus on apprenticeships and students are often driven down the university route without exploring other options, particularly when schools encourage progression onto A-Levels rather than leaving school at 16 to go on to apprenticeships. Because of this, when businesses and companies have outreach into schools or taster sessions it often feels very far in the future and maybe of little relevance to students if they had a set desire to go onto University. I think what would have the greatest impact on students would be if companies such as NGN had a strong focus on transferrable skills and skills that would be desired within their company. Students in schools often see companies and the working environment as something with very little current relevance which means it's not something they necessarily have to engage with. However, I think if companies were to give a real taste of the working environment or what a day-to-day job entails rather than oversimplifying the company's aims or job roles it would allow students to see what is available and motivate them to work towards what they could achieve. If this was to involve insight into the type of work students may go on to do I think it would give the company a lot more relevance to the student's ambitions and future, particularly if students were able to see where their studies and content learnt within STEM subjects would fit into a future role. This point was touched on within the group, but bridging the gap between school and work with transferrable skills would greatly impact and improve student perceptions of companies and more importantly of Northern Gas Networks. This may just be based on my personal experience but the most valuable experience I have had in terms of my future was a week's residential work experience at National Grid's Training Centre in Year 11. I was fortunate enough to spend the week in National Grid's apprentices' facilities and take part in various workshops such as electrofusion and seeing a PIG Trap in action. From the most exciting practical in school being using Bunsen burners to now working on scaled-down overhead power lines meant I was thrown in the deep end but it was invaluable as it allowed me to see that this work was achievable and I could see the relevance of my school subjects to a job in the future. Working at a higher level than my school subjects and being out of my comfort zone meant I was more attentive and learnt a lot more from the experience than I would have if the activities simplified down as they understandably often are. Working alongside other like-minded students as well as being able to have conversations with National Grid staff and take their advice encouraged me that engineering was a career I wanted to pursue. This was through the Smallpeice Trust, a charity that aims to promote engineering careers through workshops and residential courses but without these experiences, I wouldn't be hoping to study Engineering at Durham University. If Northern Gas Networks were able to incorporate work-related activities or on-site visits even to see the work apprentices are involved in, I think it would greatly benefit participation and a student's appreciation of the company. If this was possible before 16 it may also encourage students to take up apprenticeships as they have something to aspire to and are motivated to achieve this once they know what it entails. Therefore, if Northern Gas Networks were able to work with schools to offer relevant offsite activities it would be invaluable to students and show them what is achievable with their current studies and what STEM career would involve. I'm so so sorry for the length just something that I have often thought about and never had the opportunity to discuss before!

Extracted March 2021 (sample size 29)