

# Customers in vulnerable situations

## Annual Strategic Workshop



22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

*together*  
we are  
the network

# Thank you

Thank you again to those of you who joined us for our annual strategic Customers in Vulnerable Situations Workshop on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

Myself, Jill, Steve, Steph, and our facilitators thoroughly enjoyed seeing you all again. A special thank-you to our guest presenter Natasha Barley, from our partner organisation Hull and East Yorkshire Children's University (HEYCU). Natasha provided an insight into how their VCMA funded project, the 'Reading Van' is being used to support children in care, with literacy skills and raising awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) and the Priority Services Register (PSR).

**Eileen Brown**

Customer Experience Director

# Purpose of the workshop

- Review of 2021/22 - a look back at our performance and outputs over the year. An opportunity for stakeholders, by way of a breakout session, to feedback on how they think we have done on performance, against stakeholder priorities and business plan commitments.
- Review of how we have engaged over the past year. An opportunity for stakeholders, by way of a second breakout session, to feedback on any improvements NGN can make to how they engage. In addition to this, feedback on how our engagement compares with other organisations, including anything NGN can learn
- Partner spotlight session – Natasha Barley from Hull & East Yorkshire Children's University (HEYCU), including a Q&A session
- Future priorities, challenges and opportunities
  - Overview of the current political and social climate
  - Customer Perceptions Research overview
  - NGN – looking ahead to the next year. A flavour of some of the key areas NGN has been thinking about for 2022-23
  - Exploring stakeholder priorities for the next 12 months

# Review of 2021/22 - What stakeholders told us were their top 3 priorities in April 2021

During 2021-22, focused workshops were held, to address each of these specific priorities, identified by NGN's stakeholders

## High level summary of each priority

### Fuel poverty

Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) – 789 gas connections achieved to the date of the workshop (for those living in fuel poverty). Expectation to exceed 800 by the end of GD2 year 1 (31/3/2022.) Numerous challenges experienced over the year ie uncertainty around funding for first time central heating, the impact of the energy crisis and Government policies around phasing out fossil fuels

### Maximising VCMA to those most in need

NGN spend to date is £490,000 against a budget of £1.36 million per annum. £340,000 (25%) of the annual budget can be spent on collaborative projects with the other three Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs). NGN currently has 23 projects in flight and a further 9 collaborative projects. Some challenges experienced in the first year include gaps in project themes (physical disability / mental health) and geographical coverage (west Yorkshire and Newcastle/Sunderland). A further challenge has been the rapidly changing political and economic landscape. Internal and external independent governance groups are helping to address some of the challenges

### Improving partnership working

Many actions have been taken to promote and grow partnership working such as, monthly sessions with our 9 Strategic Partners, linking up partners from different NGN funds, working with water and electricity partners to adopt a holistic approach, collaboration groups, steering groups and quarterly stakeholder workshops

In addition, the other three areas detailed below were reviewed

- Emerging issues – NGN held an energy crisis workshop
- Update on non-contractual commitments – reflections on how we've done against three other funds supported by NGN
  - Customer Support Fund (shareholder funded)
  - Community Partnering Fund (shareholder funded)
  - Additional Winter Support Fund
- General update on Ofgem metrics – detailed in the table below

Over the course of the workshop, Slido voting was used to gather feedback from stakeholders, in relation to the updates they were being provided with from NGN. Questions as detailed below.

Question Q1.

**Given everything you've heard, on a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you think NGN has performed?**

Average score was 8.1/10 from 18 responses

Question 2.

**Please give a reason for this score**

- Always room for improvement but a positive start!
- Targets weren't met 100% but fantastic results in a challenging year despite this. You are a very engaging team, and you demonstrate this on these workshops
- Has been a difficult year but always wanting to engage with stakeholders and work with other organisations
- Enthusiasm and effort shines through despite challenges
- Lots of changes in the energy market and pricing. We need to take a more proactive approach to a changing the market to help the fuel poor
- You've reached most of your targets. You've identified what you need to improve on, and you go beyond the requirements of OFGEM, to provide extra support for customers and organisations that support them
- I gave a 9 because overall NGN is doing excellent work for vulnerable customers & partner engagement.

# Ofgem metrics performance

The table has been updated to reflect GD2 year 1 end performance to 31/3/22

Ofgem metric	Target	Performance @ 22.3.22	Performance @ 1.4.22
Fuel poor connections	1,000 per annum	789	810
Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness sessions	10,000 per annum	6,861	**17,955
Number of consumers reached through CO awareness sessions and average awareness score before/after	No target set	6.31 - 8.63/10 increase of 37%	**5.88 – 7.55 increase of 27.64%
Priority Services Register sign ups	5,000 per annum	5,298	5,533
Priority Services Register (PSR) Customer Satisfaction (CSat) score	9.15	9.35	9.35

## INCREASE IN CO AWARENESS PERFORMANCE

The additional figures to the end of regulatory year one, have now been included in the table. At the time of the workshop, NGN did not have the data from the PSR and CO comms campaign. The increase in CO awareness sessions shows the strength of the campaign, which was used to bridge the awareness gap, left by the inability to undertake face to face briefings on a large scale, due to the pandemic

# Breakout session 1

## 4 questions asked of stakeholders around NGN's performance

1. Is there anything that surprised you about NGN's performance over the last 12 months?
2. What would you like to have seen NGN do more of?
3. Is there anything that you specifically asked NGN to do, that hasn't been yet, or you feel hasn't been done as well as you would have liked?
4. In your room, please agree on one question that you would like to ask NGN, about the last 12 month's performance

## Overall feedback to question 1 – NGN performance:

Feedback from stakeholders was that they were generally pleased with the year 1 performance in GD2. Stakeholders were impressed by our flexibility, adaptability and general performance given the pandemic, acknowledging NGN always challenge themselves to do more. There were a number of challenges from our stakeholder around under performance in the areas below:

### FPNES – reasons why numbers weren't achieved

Stakeholders asked if there were specific difficulties in reaching the FPNES targets and what they were and why were they encountered. An explanation around FPNES challenges was provided, with the current energy crisis and uncertainty

around funding for internal measures, being the main factors influencing performance in year 1 of GD2. FPNES targets will continue to be challenging considering the recent ECO4 funding update from government, which means first time central heating will not be funded under this scheme in future.

Link to FPNES governance document below.

[ofgem.gov.uk/publications/fuel-poor-network-extension-scheme-fpnes-governance-document-0](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/fuel-poor-network-extension-scheme-fpnes-governance-document-0)

A question was asked around the customer contributions that are sometimes required, regarding a fuel poor connection. Multiple factors make up the quotation provided to customers, including location of the property/distance from main and work undertaken by NGN or the customer (trenchwork ie garden/footpath). The fuel poor voucher contribution (assistance) is a set amount ie £2,300 and the customer would be expected to make up the quotation difference. For example, a quotation for a gas connection could be £2,365 (considering the factors above). The fuel poor voucher amount is £2,300 therefore the customer would pay a contribution of £65 for the gas connection. Having previously listened to stakeholder feedback, NGN is working hard to look at a process to make up the shortfall of fuel poor connections, therefore nil contribution from the customer, whilst maintaining transparency and fairness for

all customers.

Fuel poor connections are now also prioritised, in terms of work execution, ahead of non-fuel poor connections.

### PSR numbers – performance appears low. Should the base target have been greater?

Stakeholders asked if the PSR base target figure could be increased. NGN have agreed to increase the base target to the actual performance in 21/22. Additional feedback was around the request to have one, cross utility PSR. This is already being progressed by colleagues in the water industry (Northumbrian Water Limited). Part of this discussion includes a common set of needs codes across utilities and an update on progress of this will be provided in Spring 2022. Through our Making Every Contact Count (MECC) referral process, NGN has also started to refer customers onto the water PSR, to adopt a holist approach.

We will also be holding a PSR specific workshop on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

## Overall feedback to question 2 – what could NGN have done more of?

Feedback was received from our stakeholders around engagement in relation to the energy crisis and what else NGN could be doing, to support vulnerable customers during this challenging time. NGN are working collaboratively with the other GDNs on two national projects - Citizen's Advice and the Fuel Bank Foundation, to address financial vulnerability and affordability issues, fuel poverty, carbon monoxide

(CO) awareness raising, PSR and energy efficiency.

Links to Citizen's Advice and Fuel Bank Foundation documents below.

[northerngasnetworks.co.uk/current-business-plan/vulnerability-and-carbon-monoxide-allowance/](https://northerngasnetworks.co.uk/current-business-plan/vulnerability-and-carbon-monoxide-allowance/)

NGN is also working with the Fuel Bank Foundation on a separate project, providing fuel top up support for pre-payment customer (gas and electricity). This support is being provided via NGN's

Winter Support Fund and includes the provision of winter support packs, which contain items such as blankets, flasks and hot water bottles. The referral process is undertaken by NGN's engineers, who attend properties for gas supply emergencies.

To further improve engagement, stakeholders can request resources and CO alarms from NGN. A mailbox has been created where requests can be sent to, the link to the mailbox is below:

[vcma@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:vcma@northerngas.co.uk)

Name of fund	Fund amount	What it is	Duration of funding	How to access	Application process
Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)	£1.38 million per annum provided by Ofgem for 5 years (ends March '26)	Can be used to fund any national or local projects where there is a need to address any vulnerability and / or raise awareness of carbon monoxide. Governance around this and the project must have an energy theme. 25% of the allowance is ringfenced for collaborative projects with other GDN's.	4 years remaining	Any charity, community group, community interest company or not for profit organization can apply to NGN	Complete a Project Eligibility Assessment document (PEA) which will be reviewed. <a href="mailto:vcma@northerngas.co.uk">vcma@northerngas.co.uk</a> or complete an online application form: <a href="https://northerngasnetworks.co.uk/current-business-plan/vulnerability-and-carbon-monoxide-allowance/vcma-application-form/">northerngasnetworks.co.uk/current-business-plan/vulnerability-and-carbon-monoxide-allowance/vcma-application-form/</a>
Customer Support Fund	£150,000 per annum	Supports 3-4 themes associated with hardship – <b>health related hardship</b> (contract with Asthma & Lung UK to fund a Community Engagement Manager role), <b>causes of hardship</b> – fund a role within Groundwork that provides Benefits Advisor, Foundations Independent Living Trust ( <b>FILT</b> ) - <b>provides a service to repair and replace appliances</b> – self referrals or via Local Authorities	1 year	3 partners already in place.	Customers can apply for support to the individual organisations listed in second column for support on benefits advice and repair/replace of appliances
Community Partnering Fund	£50,000 per annum	Currently paused. Being developed further for 22/23	1 year	Any charity, community group, community interest company or not for profit organization can apply to NGN	Applications via appointed community foundation. This previously was centred in Leeds, but will be launching in Newcastle in 22/23
Winter Support Fund – provision of fuel top-up vouchers (pre-pay gas and electricity meters)	£100,000 for 21/22	Provision of fuel top up vouchers. Referrals made by NGN engineers when they attend a property for a gas emergency. Offering of winter support packs to all customers	Ongoing	If you receive a visit for a gas emergency	Customers in vulnerable situations are identified support on the engineer's visit

\*\* NGN can provide further information about each fund, if you would like to get in touch.

### Overall feedback to question 4 – one question to NGN about last 12 months' performance:

Stakeholders asked the following questions of NGN: -

#### Has there been other barriers other than CV-19 that impacted performance? If only CV-19, then next year's performance should be better.

Response -

CV-19 created face to face challenges around CO targets, as engineers had to minimise time spent in customer's properties. Performance this year and future years should be much improved and the target of 10,000 awareness sessions per annum to be exceeded.

Uncertainty around funding streams (ECO4) for internal energy efficiency measures, (first time central heating) impacted FPNES delivery. FPNES and ECO have historically worked hand in hand. The online, radio and social media, PR and CO awareness campaigns, significantly improved numbers in the last couple of months of GD1, year 1 - as seen in the table above

#### Can NGN help lobby for the social tariffs / standing charges to be reduced for vulnerable customers?

- NGN have tried hard to influence this and NGN always champion least cost options. NGN is mindful of things we can influence but we are limited, to some degree. NGN can influence Guaranteed Standards of Performance measures (GSoP) and processes have been adapted in order that customers didn't lose out on payments when suppliers went into administration during the energy crisis. Below summarises some of the work NGN is undertaking
- Ongoing work with shippers and suppliers to ensure that GSoP payments move automatically through industry processes in a timely way
- As suppliers all have different billing

systems, help with customers identifying which part of the bill relates to the GSoP or voluntary payment. NGN can't directly influence how suppliers display this, but we have spent time educating suppliers on this, and where needed also helped at a customer level. This might be something we could take further in future

- Using centralised industry communications and systems to raise awareness of GSoP and changes to it – this is something new as the annual rate review process has come into place in GD2
- NGN pricing updates to industry are shown as a suitably granular level to ensure that shippers and suppliers can see what is driving changes to our charges, much of which flows into the standing charge from suppliers. Happy to work with industry for any improvements to this that would help overall customer transparency of costs

#### Review of how we have engaged over the past 12 months

An overview of how NGN has engaged over the past year was provided. Since April 2021, there have been 5 Customers In Vulnerable Situations (CIVS) workshops held, covering themes prioritised by our stakeholders, as detailed earlier in the report. Each workshop includes a playback of actionable outputs from the previous workshop (You Said/We Did.) Other engagement has been through GDN collaboration groups and presenting on key subject areas, at conferences hosted by the national fuel poverty charity National Energy Action (NEA). A snapshot of some examples of the You Said/We Did actions from the last 12 months, was shared with stakeholders.



109

delegates have attended the CIVS workshops



8.8

overall satisfaction score (out of 10)

## Breakout 2 – How have we engaged with you?

### 3 questions were asked of our stakeholders around engagement

1. What improvements could we make to how we engage – frequency/method/content etc?
2. How does your engagement with NGN compare to other organisations you deal with? Is there any learning?
3. One question for NGN regarding how we have engaged

### Overall feedback to question 1 – improvements on engagement

There was general agreement from stakeholders that NGN has the right approach to engagement, in terms of frequency and method however, stakeholders asked to have sight of key themes that will be included in future workshops and any associated material, in advance of the session. Any supplementary information / slido questions will be sent out with workshop zoom links (invitations) in future

Stakeholders fed back that NGN need to look at opportunities to collaborate more. Consider what other partners are doing and use better tools for stakeholders to collaborate online. This will be a priority for NGN for future workshops.

NGN has committed to hosting future CIVS workshops online. However, in response to previous requests about creating more information opportunities to meet NGN and each other, NGN will be trialling an 'open day' event on May 27th. This will be an opportunity to meet the NGN team. The intention will be to hold 2 open days per annum, one in the north of the network (Newcastle / Sunderland) and one in the south (Leeds). This will

include other departments from NGN exhibiting their work, e.g., innovation team, environment team, and will importantly give partners the opportunity to showcase their projects and connect with operational colleagues, who work within the footprint of their projects.

### Overall feedback to question 2 – how does NGN's engagement compare with others?

Overall feedback was positive about how NGN's engagement compared to others.

Our stakeholders agreed that NGN have the right approach to engagement with this group of stakeholders, frequency and method feels right. One stakeholder commented – 'NGN are one of the best at doing these kinds of sessions.'

Some stakeholders stated that hybrid meetings can be challenging, often experiencing technical issues. They advised that hybrid engagement has worked well with small groups, and no requirement to have breakout rooms. NGN has an opportunity to host a hybrid meeting with their Strategic Partners during the monthly roundtable meetings and will be trialling this for the first time in May.

Learning opportunities can be taken by engaging with grant making organisations such as Children in Need. NGN will look at their approach and see if there is any best practice that can be adopted, in terms of awarding grants.

### Overall feedback to question 3 – one question to NGN on how we have engaged

Stakeholders asked the following questions of NGN: -

#### Can NGN seek funding to innovate a platform – anything that could be innovative and one site where people can access to ask questions / get responses?

Response - This is being investigated internally by NGN

#### Referrals out to partners - can this be gathered through Making Every Contact Count - MECC data?

Response - NGN is considering having a deep dive into referral MI in a future workshop. This should then include two new referral routes from the Fuel Bank Foundation (as previously mentioned) and a 'One Number' referral for the repair and replacement of appliances, **after a gas emergency** intervention. An NGN engineer will refer a customer to a single number, to be able to have an appliance repaired or replaced and will also receive other advice as part of the service. NGN will be sharing high level results from year 1 MECC at the NGN Open Day on 27th May.

#### Shared location for VCMA projects that are live and running - can we see this?

Response - A collaborative project will feature in detail in each quarterly social strategy newsletter in future. All collaborative projects are posted on NGN's website

[northerngasnetworks.co.uk/current-business-plan/vulnerability-and-carbon-monoxide-allowance/](http://northerngasnetworks.co.uk/current-business-plan/vulnerability-and-carbon-monoxide-allowance/)

# Hull and East Yorkshire Children University (HEYCU) – partner spotlight session

Natasha provided an overview of the Reading Van, which can travel to rural areas, and how it is being used to support children in care through HEYCU. The reading van provides an opportunity for the children to read books via their Letterbox Book Club in a quiet setting. The dissemination of gas safety / carbon monoxide (CO) messaging is a key part of this project and some of the members of Natasha's team (including herself), recently received CO awareness training from NGN. This will ensure CO messaging is cascaded to a wider audience ie extended family through the children.

## Comments and questions to Natasha

1. Eileen mentioned NGN's VCMA collaborative project with MyBank and financial literacy sessions. This presents an opportunity to link HEYCU with them
2. Simon Kilshaw from Groundwork advised that they are now providing support around energy in East Riding & Hull. Simon shared his email with the group and energy related messages can be shared with Natasha's schools and their wider community
3. Melanie Laws (NGN Customer Engagement Group / CEG) asked can the National Children's University be pushed to do the same? Can NGN link up with these? Natasha advised they use a different programme – a Learning Passport Scheme.

## Overview of the current political and social climate

An overview was provided of the current political and economic climate. This covered the areas below -

### Energy crisis

- Unit cap price increase in April and then October
- Supplier volatility

### Russia / Ukraine crisis

- Impact of cost of living / mental health

### The post pandemic world

- Just coming out of covid and all grants / support are being removed
- General customer research shows that we are more aware of our safety, we want more control over our own destiny, we now have less patience when things go wrong

**Customer Perceptions Research** – an overview was provided of the research undertaken with 1,124 customers. The key findings from this round of research, were that the top 2 priorities from the previous round had reversed. **Cost / financial hardship is now the top priority for customers surveyed.** When customers were asked whether they struggle to pay their bills – in wave 1 the response, in wave 2 this rose to 40%

Wave 1 (January 2021) - Customer's informed priority

### 1. Providing a reliable supply of gas

2. Keeping bills as low as possible

Wave 2 (January 2022) - Customer's informed priority

### 1. Keeping bills as low as possible

2. Providing a reliable supply of gas

### NGN – looking ahead to the next year

The areas below provide a flavour of some of the things NGN has been thinking about for the coming 12 months

- How do we reflect the Customer Perception Research into our plans/priorities for 22/23?
- Achieve 100% against all our Ofgem metrics
- How will the energy crisis impact customer trust in the sector?
- What can we learn from Storm Arwen about how we can better look after our vulnerable customers during outages?
- Will we see an increased safety risk, due to customer behaviours?
- How will we manage looking after our colleagues in the lowest paid roles?
- How will we manage the cost increase of supplies and resources that we rely on?
- How do we balance sustainability v reliance, through the projects that we create together?
- How can we make sure we are investing wisely in support of our customers in most need?
- Develop a PSR hotline that will be available 24/7

# Breakout 3 – NGN and stakeholder priorities for the next 12 months

5 questions were asked of our stakeholders about considering their own priorities for the next 12 months

1. What's your biggest concern or worry? How does the world/current climate look to you?

2. What are your challenges within your own organisation and for the customers that you serve?

3. How resilient do you feel to be able to continue to support the customers you serve and within your own organisation?

4. What would you like NGN to prioritise over the coming year?

5. What are your priorities within your own organisation over the coming year?

## Overall feedback to question 1 - concerns for the next 12 months

Stakeholders told us that the biggest concern was around affordability, in particular boiler repairs.

NGN is working on a collaborative project with Cadent Gas to appoint a supplier to deliver a 'One Number' single point of contact for the repair and replacement of appliances after a gas emergency (see previous details on this.) There is also the opportunity to contact other partners for this type of support – see previous information on the Customer Support Fund and service provided by the Foundation for Independent Living Trust.

Other concerns were listed below with some feedback included: -

### Support for over 85's should be a priority

NGN is working with the other GDN' on developing a national collaborative project with Age UK – feedback from this session will be shared with the collaborative group

### Unsafe behaviours due to heat/eat choices – concerns around portable heaters / CO awareness

NGN will promote safe behaviours through various channels including winter/summer campaigns / CO awareness week / Gas Safety Week. NGN is prioritising this issue for the first Hot Topic workshop of 22/23 on 13th September.

### Price rises and local subsidy funding in rural areas is ending.

NGN is working with Leeds City Council and Leeds Anchors Network to create an Affordability Summit (September) looking at cost burden increase in general

### Should suppliers and utilities be offering free or reduced-price servicing?

NGN would encourage more PSR sign ups in order that customers maximise the benefits offered by this. The One Number and FILT service provision previously mentioned, are routes where this support can be offered. In future there may also be more funding available through NGN's Customer Support Fund. NGN is awaiting feedback from a Citizen's Panel on how this fund can be used in future

## Overall feedback to question 2 - Challenges within your own organisation over the next 12 months

NGN has provided some feedback to some of the comments.

### Awareness of PSR 20% in Energy – 3% in water sector therefore need to level up for this challenge

Northumbrian Water Ltd hold an annual Innovation Festival – PSR sprint that organisations can get involved with. NGN's MECC process enables water PSR referrals to be passed on. NGN have made 24 referrals to Northumbrian Water since this started in January 2022

### Preparation for next winter

NGN will work with partners to support as much as possible. This is the topic for the first Hot Topic workshop of 22/23 on 13th September

### General wellbeing of staff is concerning, huge level of calls and it's difficult to stay positive

NGN will share some mental health information that they are using on the next newsletter

**Warm Homes Discount (WHD) scheme, ECO funding is still unresolved which gives partners a lack of clarity. Partners are concerned that people rely heavily on that, and it could be removed with little notice**

National Energy Action (NEA – national fuel poverty charity) have some information on WHD/ECO4 so NGN will share that with partners if possible. NGN will also feedback to stakeholders regarding how we're channelling our Customer Support Fund and Community Partnering Fund in the next 12 months

**Funding has always been a problem and it's going to continue – the grants and funding given are never long enough to make meaningful change (6–12-month projects)**

VCMA is here 4 more years. NGN is looking for longer projects to build on that can be sustainable after the funding stops. NGN has extended many of their existing VCMA projects and would look to partners for more applications

**Overall feedback to question 3 – how resilient is your organisation to support your customers?**

A snapshot of some of the responses below: -

- Training is more vital than ever - to support those most in need
- Partnerships with other strategic partners and idea sharing is key to support customers
- Need to be more holistic in our approach, we need to look deeper into what else is going on when a customer can't pay their water bill
- Concerns around a move to remote,

online advice. Lots of partners are taking this approach but it excludes those most in need / digitally disengaged

- Partners would like focus on more face-to-face services
- Concern from councils, already struggling to cope with referrals and worry about the demand for their services

NGN advised that VCMA spend can be brought forward from future years (available for the next 4 years) and we will be asking for stakeholders' views on this in future. However, there does need to be a balance between now and potential future crises

**Overall feedback to question 4 – what would you like NGN to prioritise?**

- Funding – look at how NGN fund initiatives for vulnerable customers and how to communicate it – people not aware of what's available
- How we signpost families for help – e.g. messages for children to take home
- Building relationships between strategic partners/ central point for sharing information and best practice
- PSR – better utilisation of this and have one cross utility register
- Benefits – some people who are eligible don't know they are. NGN as a trusted partner could make this link
- Timescales – partners said sometimes our processes are long winded. Suggestion for NGN to review processes (particularly assisted gas connections), to see where they can speed up this process

**Overall feedback to question 5 – what are stakeholders' priorities over the next 12 months?**

- Lobbying government / influencing policy/ WHD
- Equipping as many as possible through training to give people in need advice
- Build trusted network of people, continue to work with health and social care professionals
- Peer support groups, continue to understand the link between fuel poverty / low income / health and respiratory conditions.
- Create wrap around services / share data so others can access their customer information to benefit those in vulnerable situations
- Continued focus on the effects of air pollution
- Fuel poverty awareness
- Face 2 face advice
- Lowering energy bills
- Support for off-grid customers
- Increased PSR registrations

A slido vote was undertaken at the end of breakout 3, to gather feedback to a number of questions around priorities for NGN and stakeholders. Questions and feedback below

**Q1. What are your top 3 priorities (our stakeholders)?**

- Prioritising funding to meet the greatest need – 53%
- Increasing PSR referrals & stretch targets – 40%
- 33% for each of those below
  - Support for the over 85s as a target group
  - Getting ahead with plans for next Winter

- Price caps now and in October
- Influence and lobby government - 27%
- Train colleagues in their own organisations to deliver more - 27%
- Extended support for children - 20%
- Covid grants and support ending - 13%
- Partners able to signpost - 7%
- Worry around funding mechanisms / policy decisions - 7%
- Improving face to face support services - 7%
- Increasing support for off-grid communities - 0%

**Q2. If NGN could only focus on one of these things, what would your main priority be?**

- **Prioritizing funding to meet the greatest need - 43%**
- Price caps now and in October - 14%
- Increasing PSR referrals and stretch targets - 14%
- Worry around funding mechanisms / policy decisions - 7%
- Covid grants and support ending - 7%
- Increasing support for off-grid communities - 7%
- Extended support for children - 7%

**Q3. What are the top 3 priorities that you think NGN should focus on over the next 12 months?**

- Develop understanding and projects that support the broad aspects of financial vulnerability - including fuel poverty and sustainable projects – 67%
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness due to a potential increased safety risk – 53%
- 33% for each of those below
  - How can we maximize data from the PSR and use it to help customers?
  - How can NGN make our referral routes as fast as possible?
  - Extend support for repair and replace schemes

- Centralized online location with information on what all partners do - 27%
- Focus on outage / incident support and for our vulnerable customers - 27%
- PSR hotline - look to develop a hotline this year - 13%
- Achieve 100% against all our Ofgem metrics - 0%
- Support for NGN's lowest paid roles - 0%
- Feedback from front line colleagues regarding behaviour change - 0%

**Q4. If NGN could only focus on one of these things, what would your main priority be?**

- Develop understanding and projects that support the broad aspects of financial vulnerability - including fuel poverty and sustainable projects - 87%
- Focus on outage / incident support and for our vulnerable customers - 7%
- Extend support for repair and replace schemes - 7%
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) awareness due to a potential increased safety risk? - 0%
- Support for NGN's lowest paid roles - 0%
- PSR hotline - look to develop a hotline this year - 0%
- Achieve 100% against all our Ofgem metrics - 0%
- How can we maximize data from the PSR and use it to help customers - 0%
- How can NGN make our referral routes as fast as possible? - 0%
- Feedback from front line colleagues regarding behaviour change - 0%
- Centralized online location with information on what all partners do - 0%

# Event Evaluation and Future Engagement – 15 feedback responses

Summary:	Customers in Vulnerable Situations – Annual Strategic Workshop	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2022
<b>Event Evaluation</b>		
Q1	What do you want to get out of today?	
Q2	Choose 2 words from this list below to describe this event	Insightful, Useful
Q3	Overall, how satisfied were you with the event?	8.3
Q4	How would you rate the discussions?	8.3
Q5	How would you rate the event contact and speakers?	98.4
Q6	How would you rate the networking opportunities?	7.1
Q7	Is there anything you think could be improved / changes for future workshops?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate contacts</li> <li>More discussion</li> <li>Annual face to face would be great for networking</li> <li>Advance agenda with questions</li> <li>Alternate the participants in the breakout rooms for greater networking</li> <li>Some workshops bit rushed - need more time or fewer questions</li> <li>Would be better if information could be circulated before the meeting so time to consider in advance; there was a lot of information presented that needed more time to digest</li> </ul>
Q8	Is there anything else you would like to tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> <li>Very interesting conversation</li> <li>Not just now</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>Thanks.</li> <li>Networking is never easy online, and I have not had a good hybrid meeting; at least 1 face to face meeting would be very useful</li> </ul>

Q9	Thinking of yourself as a stakeholder of NGN, how satisfied are you with the relationship that you have with NGN	8.6
Q10	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
	NGN keeps me up to date on their business plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly agree 4</li> <li>Agree 1</li> <li>Somewhat agree 2</li> <li>Neither agree nor disagree 2</li> <li>Somewhat disagree 0</li> <li>Disagree 0</li> <li>Strongly disagree 1</li> </ul>
	NGN provided me with clear information about their business performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly agree 4</li> <li>Agree 2</li> <li>Somewhat agree 1</li> <li>Neither agree nor disagree 2</li> <li>Somewhat disagree 0</li> <li>Disagree 0</li> <li>Strongly disagree 1</li> </ul>
	NGN provided me with opportunities to give feedback on the topics that interest me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly agree 5</li> <li>Agree 2</li> <li>Somewhat agree 1</li> <li>Neither agree nor disagree 1</li> <li>Somewhat disagree 0</li> <li>Disagree 0</li> <li>Strongly disagree 1</li> </ul>
	NGN allows me to give feedback through my preferred method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly agree 5</li> <li>Agree 1</li> <li>Somewhat agree 1</li> <li>Neither agree nor disagree 2</li> <li>Somewhat disagree 0</li> <li>Disagree 0</li> <li>Strongly disagree 1</li> </ul>
	NGN makes it clear how they have used feedback to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly agree 5</li> <li>Agree 2</li> <li>Somewhat agree 1</li> <li>Neither agree nor disagree 1</li> <li>Somewhat disagree 0</li> <li>Disagree 0</li> <li>Strongly disagree 1</li> </ul>

<b>Future Engagement</b>		
Q1	How else would you like to engage with NGN in future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haven't been involved previously - would like to stay involved</li> <li>Zoom, email, funding</li> <li>I feel my engagement with NGN is sufficient.</li> <li>All's fine</li> <li>At least one face to face meeting</li> </ul>



## Date of next workshops and other engagement

Date	Workshop topic
27th May 2022	Open Day (Thorpe Park, Leeds – Development Centre)
29th June 2022	Physical disability webinar online - 1 hour / 10-11am
20th July 2022	VCMA annual showcase (online)
13th September 2022	CIVS Hot Topic workshop online - Winter Readiness and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness – 10am to 12pm
22nd November 2022	CIVS Hot Topic workshop online – PSR and data sharing – 10am to 12pm
7th February 2023	CIVS Hot Topic workshop online – Financial Hardship – 10am to 12pm
25th April 2023	CIVS Annual Strategic workshop – venue TBC - 10am - 1pm

### Contact numbers for NGN team

Eileen Brown, Customer Experience Director – 07789 007719 / [ebrown@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:ebrown@northerngas.co.uk)

Jill Walker, Social Strategy Project Manager - 07773 390967 / [jwalker@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:jwalker@northerngas.co.uk)

Steve Dacre, Vulnerability & Innovations Lead – 07778 733867 / [sdacre@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:sdacre@northerngas.co.uk)

Stephanie Ord, VCMA Project Coordinator – 07704 545200 / [sord@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:sord@northerngas.co.uk)

### Customer Support Fund – contact information

**Groundwork** can provide support with benefit assessments and support in making benefit applications

- [www.groundwork.org.uk/projects/green-doctor](http://www.groundwork.org.uk/projects/green-doctor) or call 0113 2380601

**Foundations Independent Living Trust (FILT)** - Working in partnership with the Gas Safe Charity, funding and support is available for the repair/replacement of gas appliances for eligible owner-occupiers who can't afford to pay. The fund can facilitate urgent repairs and safety related support via Home Improvement Agencies

- [wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/how-we-help/foundations-independent-living-trust/](http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/how-we-help/foundations-independent-living-trust/) or call 0300 124 0315.

## 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](mailto:stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk)

For further information contact:  
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