

Northern Gas Networks

Young Innovators Council 2022



End of Year Report 2022

CONTENTS:

- 1.**Background
- 2.**Engagement methods
- 3.**Feedback methods used by Northern Gas Networks
- 4.**How have the Young Innovators Council's thoughts been put at the heart of Northern Gas Networks' decision making?
(A close analysis of each session)
- 5.**Does the Young Innovators Council give real value to the young people taking part?
- 6.**Did the Young Innovators Council meet expectations?
- 7.**Conclusion
- 8.**Appendices

1. BACKGROUND

Purpose and objectives of Northern Gas Networks' Young Innovators Council

Northern Gas Networks' Young Innovators Council (YIC) is the voice of young people at Northern Gas Networks. It provides young people's perspectives and Northern Gas Networks ensure these young people's thoughts and opinions are put at the heart of the business' decision making. Each session agenda is co-created by S4TP, Northern Gas Networks and the Young Innovators Council, leading to meaningful and relevant engagement which provide a real opportunity to influence decision-making. Innovation, skills, future energy (sustainability) and stakeholder (including community) engagement are important to Northern Gas Networks as is diversity, both in its workforce and wider network. Northern Gas Networks were keen to bring a wider range of voices and perspectives into the business and approached Solutions for the Planet to explore how these voices can be brought together in the form of a youth panel. 2022 was the second year of the Young Innovators Council.

Value of the YIC to Northern Gas Networks:

- Bringing in diverse young voices to their decision making
- Meaningful engagement with key stakeholders and future customers
- Providing opportunities to upskill future talent
- Enhancing links with community and school partners

Value of the YIC to the young people of the council:

- Experience of informing key business agendas and strategies
- An increased knowledge of the workings of a major utility company, and networking opportunities
- Skills development including teamwork, confidence, negotiation, critical thinking, and communication
- Certificate and letter of recognition to acknowledge the role on the council

Overview of the YIC 2022

The Young Innovators Council 2022 was quite a large group of 26 young people and therefore the sessions included both whole group exercises and discussions as well as smaller group work in breakout rooms, facilitated by S4TP and Northern Gas Networks staff. To support this facilitation, S4TP led NGN facilitators through an initial training session at the beginning of the year, followed by subsequent specific facilitator run-throughs for each session. The young people on the Young Innovators Council expressed their appreciation of both external and internal Northern Gas Networks witnesses giving information during the session. This ensured that the YIC received useful and a balanced input of information. Both S4TP and Northern Gas Networks sourced the witnesses, and S4TP provided a written witness brief and held a witness briefing call prior to each session.

Northern Gas Networks' Young Innovators Council sessions 2022
Meet Up session
Session 1: carbon monoxide safety and augmented reality
Hydrogen Community Pilot communications session <i>(*NB this was an optional additional session)</i>
Session 2: NGN's People and Planet Strategy – people
Session 3: NGN's annual performance and strategic priorities 2022
Session 4: NGN's support for vulnerable customers
Attendance at NGN stakeholder online conference

Table 1: Session themes; YIC 2022

Recruitment & composition

The same recruitment process as was used for the YIC 2021 was implemented to form the Young Innovators Council this year, with a detailed application form followed by a scenario-based problem-solving activity. 16 young people from the YIC 2021 expressed an interest in continuing into the YIC 2022, with this number dropping to 12 continuing panellists (due to school/exam priorities). They were joined by 14 young people who were newly recruited for 2022 (down from 16, due to dropouts).

It was important to ensure once again that we had the broadest range of possible applicants, using S4TP's established network of schools and organisations, Northern Gas Networks' links, colleges, youth organisations and STEM clubs. At the end of 2022, the YIC was made up of 26 young people aged 14-19 who were based across the footprint of Northern Gas Networks. The group's membership is reflective of the demographic make-up of Northern Gas Networks' area of coverage, based on census data in respect of gender, ethnicity, geographic spread, and disability. In addition to these characteristics, the group is also proportionally representative of young people who qualify for free school meals.

2. ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Co-creation

We continued to use a co-creation method when working with the YIC. This year we also carried out a summer review with the members to ask how the sessions could be improved, how they would run a session and any further suggestions that they had. As a result of this feedback, further information was given to the YIC prior to the next session and the breakout room sessions were extended and facilitated in a more methodical way. Optional extra reading and tasks prior to the sessions was also requested by some members. Overall, the YIC were happy with the lengths of sessions and the subjects covered. Full details of this summer review can be found in Section 9. Appendices.

In the final session we asked the members of the YIC who attended NGN's stakeholder conference to feed back to the rest of the YIC. This consistent use of co-creation throughout the year has led to a growth in confidence of some of the quieter members.

“I wanted the chance to share ideas and have those ideas heard, and I definitely think that this is happening. Every meeting, I genuinely feel like the ideas/opinions we have are making a difference and that we are being listened to and what we are saying is being appreciated”.
[YIC Member]

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.

S4TP used a variety of engagement mechanisms to inform and engage the Young Innovators Council, which have been tailored to meet the needs of young people, allowing different and broad perspectives to be heard.

3. FEEDBACK METHODS USED BY NORTHERN GAS NETWORKS

Northern Gas Networks fed back their business' response to the YIC's recommendations using a 'You said – we did' method. The young people on the YIC also received copies of all the session reports.



Figure 1: Example of Northern Gas Networks' feedback to YIC from multiple sessions

4. HOW HAVE THE YOUNG INNOVATORS COUNCIL'S THOUGHTS BEEN PUT AT THE HEART OF NORTHERN GAS NETWORKS' DECISION MAKING?

Session 1: CO safety and augmented reality [16th February 2022]

Background

For YIC to help Northern Gas Networks shape a programme using augmented reality and innovation to improve CO awareness and detection in young adults and teenagers.

Objectives

A. General proposal testing:

- Is the idea something young people would use?
- If not - why?
- If yes - why

B. Scoping the functionality of the programme:

- What are the 'should, would, could' criteria for the programme?
- What do we need to include in the content to make it appealing and engaging to the young people?
- Is the current content in the proposal, right? If not, what needs to change to make it relevant to young people why?
- How it should be visually displayed?

C. Testing the execution and delivery:

- How do we get young people to engage with the product?
- Where should these mats go, e.g., coffee shops, gyms, etc.?
- Who should we target as partners?

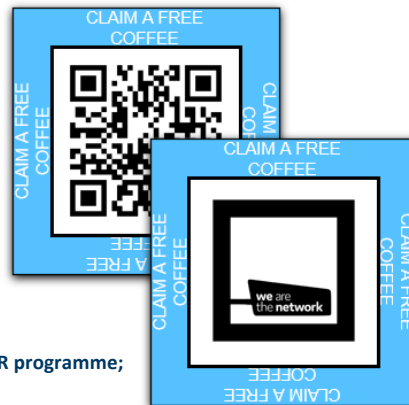
Key discussion points

Witness 1: James Perry – Egnida

The developer, James, gave an overview of the proposal for the augmented reality CO awareness application, running through how they envisioned the app working and questions that he hoped the councillors could help to answer. The presentation also included a live demonstration of how the app would work.



Figure 2: Screenshots of witness presentation on the CO AR programme; YIC 2022 Session 1



Objective A:

General proposal testing: Is the idea something young people would use?

Would you use the carbon monoxide augmented reality programme?

018

(1/2)

Definitely



Probably



Maybe, if you build the things we've suggested into the content of the app



Maybe, if you use the incentives and partnerships we've suggested



Probably not



Figure 3: Results of Slido poll; 'Would you use this CO AR programme?'; YIC 2022 Session 1; *NB councillors could choose 2 options

Objective B:

Scoping the functionality of the programme:

- What are the 'should, would, could' criteria for the programme?
- What do we need to include in the content to make it appealing and engaging to the young people?
- Is the current content in the proposal, right? If not, what needs to change to make it relevant to young people why?
- How it should be visually displayed?

In breakout rooms of 3-5 young people and a Northern Gas Networks facilitator, two separate whiteboards were used to gauge the YIC's ideas for the AR programme. It was agreed that two of the Northern Gas Networks' innovation team's scoping criteria of 'should' and 'could' would be used as starting points; should have = the programme must have x/y/z and could have = it would be nice to have x/y/z as optional extras. This section of the session was intended to test the current content and design of the programme and identify what needs to change or evolve for it to be engaging for young people.

Should have	Could have
The instructions need to be very clear	Multiple rewards to choose from
Adaptations must be made for those who are visually or audibly impaired	Email blasts a week later to test knowledge
Option to choose age range so that quiz is aimed at appropriate level	Video input from victims of CO poisoning
Explanation of relevance to young people's lives, e.g., effective statistics	Demo game at beginning showing symptoms of CO poisoning
Clear GDPR info	Include a link so that it can be accessed later
Instructions straight away, followed by interactive house demo, then a quiz	Link to website as well, for those without access to QR readers or smartphones
Coaster itself must have clarity of purpose, including Northern Gas Networks logos, to prevent a fear of scamming from potential users	Allow for a section within the programme for suggestions to improve CO safety, FAQs, etc.
Use colour and music to prevent blandness	Link to where CO monitors can be bought/supplied
Get to the point quickly	Refer a friend incentive
Include a link to CO safety website	Option to donate rewards to charity
Include a gamification aspect, e.g., lose a life/gain power with answers to questions	Add a leader board and challenge your friends
Include a competitive element, e.g., a time limit mapped on CO danger time	Prolonged engagement is valuable
Different levels linked to quality/quantity of reward, e.g., reaching a higher level = better reward	
Use Wordle/Cahoot/Teams quizzes as a model	

Table 2: Extracted content from breakout room discussions on CO AR programme; Objective B; YIC 2022 Session 1

Objective C:

Testing the execution and delivery:

- Where should these mats go, e.g., coffee shops, gyms, etc.?
- How do we get young people to engage with the product?
- Who should we target as partners?

Where should the mats go?	What rewards should be offered?*	Who should NGN partner with?*
Cinemas	Snacks	Universities/colleges
On bus/metro tickets	Discounts	Student unions
Places of worship	% off bill	Greggs
New houses	Free sandwich/pastry	Landlords
Student lets	Free CO alarm or discounted	Northern Rail
MacDonald's	Food in general!	MacDonald's
School/college/uni libraries	School stationary	Scouts/Guides
Gym mirrors	Book discounts	Starbucks
Supermarkets	Camping/festival discounts	First Bus/metro
Cafés	Gas bill discounts	Tesco
The metaverse		Costa
On camping equipment		Tik-Tok
Festival tickets		Paperchase
Doctors		WH Smith
Menus	*NB keep it environmentally friendly	
Police stations		
Science labs		

Table 3: Table 2: Extracted content from breakout room discussions on CO AR programme; Objective C; YIC 2022 Session 1

Witness 2: Richard Hynes-Cooper - Head of Innovation, Northern Gas Networks

NGN gave a broad overview of innovation within their business, how innovation is funded and some of the major projects being undertaken currently. The YIC was also given information about NGN's role in innovation including:

- NGN's innovation approach is designed to support the UK's transition to a low carbon economy,
- Developing pioneering projects around hydrogen as a replacement fuel for natural gas.
- Exploring a broad range of whole systems and digital projects, incorporating key focus on the impacts on vulnerable customers

Young Innovators Council's key recommendations

The YIC felt strongly that all instructions prompted by the QR code for the carbon monoxide augmented reality programme should be clear from the beginning of engagement. All the groups pointed out that the app should be accessible for everyone, including those with visual or audio impairments. Providing instructions in languages other than English was also deemed as important.

Having different levels of quiz questions would enable age-appropriate information and mean that people could progress through the app with increasingly difficult questions, enhancing the gamification of the programme. Many councillors felt that some level of competition would be invaluable and suggested following a Wordle or Cahoot model, as well as allowing for users to compare knowledge or results, through 'refer a friend' or leader board additions.

The YIC felt that it was important to offer a variety of incentives, including discounts on books and cinema tickets, dependant on where the mats would be placed.

Conclusion

The councillors engaged well during the session, though it was noted once again that some breakout room discussions were freer flowing than others. With this in mind, the chat function was particularly effective during this session for those young people who perhaps were less inclined to speak publicly.

Furthermore, as this was the first contributing session for many of the councillors, it inevitably took a little while for them to relax and contribute. That being said, the YIC once again delivered excellent ideas and suggestions, many of which had not been thought of by facilitators and staff, and met the session objectives. When asked, the majority of the YIC present at the session said they would use the app if their suggestions were incorporated. Most of the remaining councillors said they would probably or definitely use it.

The question-and-answer sections went well, and the councillors asked a variety of questions of the witnesses, as well as engaging with each other and the facilitators throughout. However, it was noted that it is important to avoid the use of acronyms that are commonplace and understood within the industry, but not necessarily beyond.

Response from NGN

Council members were clear that the app should be accessible for everyone, including those with visual or audio impairments. Providing instructions in languages other than English was also deemed as important.

- We recognise the importance of this app being accessible to everyone and will make sure accessibility is a key basic feature of the programme as we develop the prototype further.

You said that to make it appealing, having different levels of quiz questions would enable age-appropriate information and mean that people could progress through the app with increasingly difficult questions, enhancing the gamification of the programme. Many councillors felt that some level of competition would be invaluable and suggested following a 'Wordle or Cahoot' model.

- We've reflected on all these ideas and worked them into a final proposal and submitted the project for funding through our Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance. This was successful and has received £60,000 of funding to develop into a collaborative pilot with the other GDN's and cover Universities nationally through a partnership with the National Union of Students.

During conversation about how to share the app and potential partnerships the YIC suggested a number of outlets to partner with as well as universities, colleges and Students' Unions. It was clear that it was important to offer a variety of incentives, including discounts on books and cinema tickets, dependent on where the mats would be placed.

- The idea of working with Students' Unions is really compelling and targets a key at risk group when it comes to CO awareness. We are approaching the National Union of Students to partner with us to trial the app in a pilot project.

Optional additional session: Hydrogen Community Pilot communications [March 9th 2022]

Background

Northern Gas Networks was developing proposals for an area of their network to convert from natural gas to hydrogen for a minimum period of one year. This required changing the boilers and any other gas appliances of Northern Gas Networks customers in that area to appliances that could work with hydrogen gas or an electric alternative.

The project was due to launch to the local community in April 2022, and Northern Gas Networks were developing customer facing engagement and communication materials in preparation. These included but were not limited to letters, project brochure, videos, and a website. This HCP communications session was aimed at sharing some of this material, namely the working video and logo, to seek and discuss the YIC's feedback on it.

The communications material that the Young Innovators Council reviewed in this session were part of the materials that Northern Gas Networks used to start conversations with people living in the proposed community. As such there was a high degree of confidentiality involved in this project to help manage all communication and engagement in a controlled and informed manner. The YIC members were informed of this by Solutions for the Planet and were then asked to agree to this confidentiality element in the chat.

Objectives

To understand what changes could be made to the key messages and material that is included in communications and engagement around the hydrogen community.

Specifically, Northern Gas Networks want to gain feedback on a video which will act as an introduction to the hydrogen community, explaining why it's happening and what it involves. The aim is to understand from the Young Innovators Council:

- Is there anything that doesn't make sense from the video?
 - Which bits of language and narrative aren't clear enough or use too much jargon?
- What questions do they have after watching it?
- What did they want to know but didn't hear from the video?

Key discussion points:

Witness presentations

As with previous sessions, a witness presentation was needed to contextualise why an extra session was being held for the Young Innovators Council, as well as to give some background on how a hydrogen community may work. S4TP recapped on the first hydrogen community session that was held as part of YIC 2021. Next, Northern Gas Networks' energy futures communication manager gave some context to the video and explained that the messaging in the video will also inform a host of written material (brochure, letters, FAQs), so the feedback on the video will also influence that material too.

Slido word cloud

After watching the video introducing the hydrogen community, the YIC members were asked straight away “What three things come to mind after watching the video?”. This was to gauge their immediate reactions to the video.

What three words come into your mind after watching the video?

0 1 4

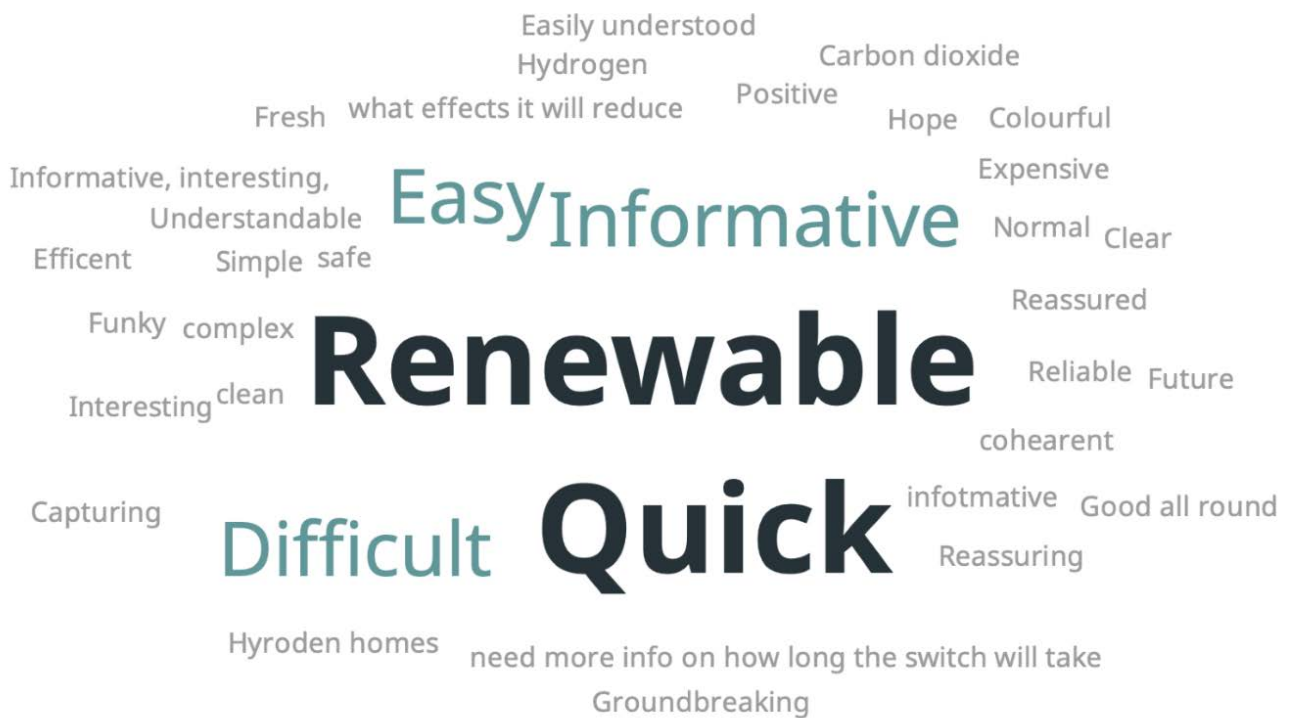


Figure 4: Screenshot of Slido word cloud; hydrogen community communications session; YIC 2022

Slido polls

The YIC were asked a series of questions using Slido polling to gain some quantitative feedback for Northern Gas Networks.

How would you feel if you lived in the trial area and the video was the first thing you saw?

(1/2)

Excited

17 %

Bored

0 %

Interested

58 %

Confused

33 %

Pleased

8 %

Worried

25 %

Other

0 %

How effective do you think the animation was?

- Helped but missed some important information.
- I think the animation is good as it shows everything you need to show but in a more interactive way
- It helped but it could have more details
- It makes it easier to understand changes but doesn't really explain how long they would take
- The animation was simple and conveyed the points well enough.
- It made it simpler to understand and it kept me engaged in what it was saying.
- animation is useful to everyone, clear and cohesive
- Things are easier to remember and understand when using an animation.
- Creative imagery
- Very effective, it captured the idea very well and was exciting to watch.
- I think the animation was easy to follow, clean and effective. I see no issue with the animation
- It was ok, but I think it needs abit more info

Figure 5: [and above]: Screenshots of Slido polls; hydrogen community communications session; YIC 2022

After the initial reaction questions were asked through Slido, we continued into more detailed discussions around the YIC’s impressions and suggestions on the hydrogen community information video. First, we asked “What do you remember from the video?”:

Positive observation	Impressions and suggestions
The lack of disruption, i.e., appliances replaced at no additional cost [to the household]	Reiterate the comparative efficiency of new appliances
Reassured as to what the process would be	The video could link to a specific website viewers can visit for more information
Hydrogen does not emit carbon	What is the timeline for external and internal works?
Free appliances	Explain what ‘net zero’ is
Interested in such a new concept	The wording of ‘at least as safe as’ requires clarity
Possibility of new jobs in the area	Some viewers might be worried due to a lack of knowledge around hydrogen vs. other gases, i.e., include what the potential risks are
A great opportunity to take part in something new	
An informative and engaging animation	

Table 4: Extracted detail from first group discussion; hydrogen community communications session; YIC 2022

NGN were keen to know if the language used and the explanations given in the video were clear and understandable. We asked the YIC to write “3 things or words I didn’t understand or weren’t clear”:

Cost, time and compliance – How will you ensure compliance?
Net zero not understood by some
Are there any risks at all?
What will the quality of the new appliances be?
What does “at least as safe as gas” mean?
How much better for the environment is hydrogen? Can you quantify this?
Will there be any point when we will have neither gas nor hydrogen, e.g., in the changeover
Would the new appliances be any different to the existing one?
Be clear on timelines, including how long households will have to respond/decide.
Will hydrogen bills be higher or lower than their gas bills were?
Why hydrogen? – “are there no other renewable gases to choose from?”

Table 5: Extracted detail from second group discussion; hydrogen community communications session; YIC 2022

The YIC were also asked “What is the most important message for people to hear?”. We wanted to know what they thought the overarching goal of the video should be:

Safety/risks
Costs
Where people can get more information or help
That everything has been fully tested and trialled
‘My town could change the world’
The benefits
Pointing out that its produced locally almost inspires local pride in the project

Table 6: Extracted detail from third group discussion; hydrogen community communications session; YIC 2022

Throughout the detailed group discussions, the councillors were encouraged to add further thoughts and outstanding questions to the Zoom chat, and facilitators were on hand to add them to the whiteboards or answer where possible.

- It [the animation] provided the same information as the voiceover, so the extra details aren't fully up to the animation.
- The [animation] voiceover provided quite a bit of information, but I feel I'd need more (any risks, what would change, time taken) to make a decision.
- You'll also have people who might not understand why you need to change the pipes to switch gases... So, they might not let you drill up their houses to replace the pipes and appliances.
- It could increase local relationships from builders and homeowners.
- *Alex NGN to YIC: Do you think it would help having the reassurance of someone who has used the appliances? Not just from manufacturers?*
- Yes / 100% I think that would be effective / But not just videos like in other adverts 'this product changed my life' but actual people travelling and spreading the word.
- *Alex NGN to YIC: Would you want to hear it from someone from the general public or a public figure?*
- from experiences / the general public resonates more personally / Probably not too high up because that might make it seem forced in a way that it isn't.
- *Alex NGN to YIC: Chefs? People they see regularly on TV?*
- Local businesses / cafes, restaurants / Bakeries / Maybe firefighters, people who regularly deal with cooking and heating (plumbers and electricians?) / But local figures would be best because people trust them, and it won't seem cheesy like in video ads / I think people generally trust those they see as similar to them (e.g., emergency services) than faces that represent a company / maybe local businesses as well because the owners will still be similar to normal people but have enough influence to change people's mind.
- **How can you persuade people to move to electric sources if they don't agree to have a hydrogen boiler installed?**
- **Is the hydrogen mostly imported or is the UK sufficient at producing it ourselves? That detail is worth including, it will encourage engagement.**

[Unanswered questions]

Logo Feedback

As part of the feedback questionnaire the Young Innovators Council were asked for their thoughts on the proposed logo for the hydrogen village.

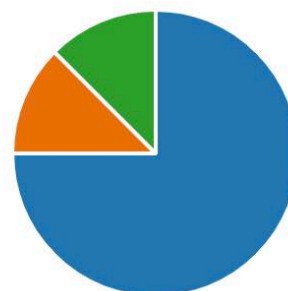


Figure 6: Hydrogen Community Logo FOR TESTING; hydrogen community communications session; YIC 2022

4. Do you think the community graphic is clear and understandable?
If you select 'No', please write why in the 'other' box.

[More Details](#)

● Yes	6
● No	1
● Other	1



In the 'Other' field for the above question, one councillor fed back:

- "I don't like how the graphic adds another stem to the "m", for me it makes it harder to read."

What are your first thoughts about how effective this logo is?

It is very effective because a community is a group of people and you have made the M special, so it is made of multiple people which is what a community is.

It doesn't communicate much. All I know is that there is a hydrogen community with NGN. And the graphic seems to focus on people more than hydrogen, for some bizarre reason.

It tells you immediately what it is about.

I think it looks good. I like the fact that it has the image of people, it makes it feel inclusive.

I like the concept but I don't think it is effective as it is not very memorable.

Looks good, gives sense of community.

I love how the 'm' is people and the green tones of the logo are effective to show sustainability of hydrogen.

Figure 7: [and above] Extraction of feedback on proposed logo; hydrogen community communications session feedback form; YIC 2022

Conclusion

There was good engagement throughout this session and every councillor had the opportunity to talk or discuss their ideas. Overall, the reaction to the video was very positive, with 77% thinking that the video was helpful, or really helpful and informative. During discussions around what would be needed to make the video more effective the main message was to include timelines and any safety risks to allay fears. The language used in the video was engaging and clear overall, two exceptions being around 'net zero' and 'as safe as', with clarity requested here.

Response from NGN

Overall the animation was received well and it was felt that it provided an easy introduction to what was happening. "Interested" and "Confused" were the two main feelings you said you would have if you lived in the trial area and the video was the first thing you saw. The YIC felt the language used in the video was engaging and clear overall, two exceptions being around using the phrases 'net zero' and 'as safe as', with clarity requested here. During discussions around what would be needed to make the video more effective the main message was to include timelines and any safety risks to allay fears.

- This feedback has shaped all the communications we used as part of the suite of information provided to customers across the Redcar Hydrogen Community area.
 - We recognise that using the phrase "as safe as" raised some questions. All our safety messaging has to be approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the final video narrative has been approved by them before any communications were issued publicly.
 - We've rephrased the language around net zero and included clarity around timelines within the video to help address the initial questions that were raised. This is supported by additional signposting to other information about the project to find out more information
 - The video was used as part of the suite of communications material for the Redcar Hydrogen Community in March 2022, and we are now undertaking a consultation with customers in the proposed project area about how happy they are with the project and looking at how clear people in the trial area felt the information we provided was.
-

Session 2: NGN's People and Planet Strategy – people [27th April 2022]

Background

In October 2021 YIC members attended a session focussed on NGN's Sustainability Strategy. Northern Gas Networks had created a sustainability strategy but was unsure what future customers would expect a company to be doing in terms of sustainability.

Key issues defined by YIC in October 2021 sustainability session:

- The YIC is largely comfortable that the commitments cover everything that is important to them. However, it was noted that the targets are quite top level, and the YIC would like more detail. The YIC would like to see immediate targets against the commitments: "It feels like there's a lot of intent, but that Northern Gas Networks will figure out how to do it later."
- The YIC want to know how the targets will be achieved and to have some clarity and accountability for Northern Gas Networks on what it will deliver. Will this be externally verified?
- As a response to the issues raised above NGN requested a second session to look further at the existing targets, what was missing from them, and how the 'People' focus of the strategy could be improved.

Objectives

- A. Understand what targets and aims NGN should have as part of their People Strategy.
- B. Identify if the targets NGN have outlined against their commitments meet the YIC's expectations of a future employer.
- C. Understand how these targets can be improved and what NGN need to change or include in order to reflect YIC's expectations.
- D. Ask the YIC how NGN should benchmark their work in this area.
- E. Ask the YIC how NGN should measure its progress.

Key discussion points

Prior to the session YIC members were asked to research:

- When you think of a 'good' employer, what is that business doing for their employees to make them want to work there?
- What is the best practice for leading in diversity and inclusion?
- Can you think of any companies that are doing all of this, and showing it?

Witness: Hannah Jewison, the Sustainability Lead for NGN.

This presentation explained that NGN currently commit to:

- **Reflect the diversity of our communities**
- **Eradicate inequality**
- *Provide access to affordable energy solutions (YIC prioritised)*
- *Spend responsibly (YIC prioritised)*
- Improve access to fair employment
- Support colleagues' wellbeing

Objectives

- A. Understand what targets and aims NGN should have as part of their People Strategy.
- B. Identify if the targets NGN have outlined against their commitments meet the YIC's expectations of a future employer.

'What three words come to mind when you hear the word equality?'



Figure 8: Slido word cloud of responses to Objectives A & B discussions; YIC 2022 Session 2

'What should NGN's diversity and inclusion policy include?'

Different ethnicities/races/disabilities/sexuality	Strict anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic policies in place
Flexible working times and hours	Supporting the LGBTQ+ community
Areas that staff are from, including how many are from the immediate local area	Respect religious backgrounds in the workplace; recognising different religions' needs
Gender / gender pay gap	Don't use gender-specific language in day-to-day meetings, briefings, signage, etc.
Economic background	Include examples from across the protected characteristics in advertisements
Make it so different people are able to work as efficiently with support if needed	Everyone is able to access the workspace (whatever that means for the individual)
Fair maternity / paternity leave and pay	Mental health support for everyone
Domestic abuse experts on site	In hiring: clear proportions of applicants from different backgrounds at interview
Hidden disabilities are known about, and additional support can be accessed if needed	

Table 7: Extracted content from Objectives A & B Mural; YIC 2022 Session 2

Objective C: Understand how these targets can be improved and what NGN need to change or include in order to reflect YIC’s expectations.

In three breakout rooms, the YIC were invited to examine what Northern Gas Networks should look like in 2030:

- How can we make all feel included and welcome at NGN?
- What actions should NGN be taking to achieve this?
- What initiatives do you want to see in the business?
- Think “eradicating inequality” and “reflecting diversity”

Physical workplace environment	Culture and behaviour	Guidance and rules (policies)
Accessibility for all – including those with hidden disabilities	Flexible working times, days and hybrid working	Strict anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic, etc., policies in workplaces
Ramps & elevators	Domestic abuse experts available for staff	Fair maternity and paternity leave policies
Toilets that meet disability access codes	Use non- gender specific language in day to day meetings/briefings/materials, etc.	Religious needs & relevant holidays policy
Prayer rooms	Facilitate and advertise opportunities to talk about hidden disabilities and request support	Standardised tests
Suggestion boxes	Mentors in the workplace	Codes of conduct made clear from start of employment
Signage that reflects the diversity and additional needs of the entire workforce, e.g., non-binary terms	First aiders that specialise in mental health and hidden disabilities	Inclusive recruitment policy - monitoring information removed from initial application to remove bias
Include people of all races/genders/ages/abilities in advertisements, marketing, etc.	People to talk to separately from your immediate colleagues and working teams	Support given at interview, e.g., first interview as phone calls if access required
	Anonymous application process, including first stage interview	Appropriate questions around any help needed and support provided at interview stage
	Importance of ED&I demonstrated from interview stage	Clear and appropriate consequences for breach of policies

Table 8: Key discussions from breakout rooms; YIC 2022 Session 2

Young Innovators Council's key recommendations

The YIC breakout rooms fed back the key ideas or issues from the discussions outlined in Table 8 above. Each YIC member then had four votes to prioritise which ideas were most important to them using stamps:

Physical workplace environment	Culture and behaviour	Guidance and rules (policies)
Provide prayer rooms	Provide internal mentors for new starters	Ensure that anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-sexist and anti-transphobic policies are in place
Provide training in D&I prior to any job starting	Consider having independent people available for employees to talk with	Ensure that there are strong consequences for breaches of above policies and all staff are aware
Talk about accessibility in the interview process	Consider having mental health first aiders and those with knowledge of hidden disabilities	Appropriate holiday allowances for different cultures & religions
Provide ways to show any hidden disabilities	Avoid giving too much information at the induction period	Consider remote working for those with disabilities including invisible disabilities

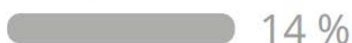
Table 9: YIC's key recommendations; YIC 2022 Session 2

Objectives

- D. Ask the YIC how NGN should benchmark their work in this area.
- E. Ask the YIC how NGN should measure its progress.

What do you think is the most meaningful way for NGN to measure progress around what we've discussed today?

Independent verification/certification



Internal measurement with staff e.g surveys



external awards and accolades



Figure 9: Slido poll results for Objective D; YIC 2022 Session 2

What should be our guiding benchmark for setting any targets or comparing achievements in D&I?

Industry wide



regional wide



UK Wide



B Corp



EU wide



Figure 10: Slido poll results for Objective E; YIC 2022 Session 2

Conclusion

One thing that was noted was that the younger YIC members seemed to find the subject matter a little difficult to comment on. This might be due to the fact that diversity and inclusion are in themselves sensitive matters to discuss, as highlighted by NGN’s head of environment and sustainability. It may also point towards the importance of additional external witnesses to contextualise the subject matter prior to breakout sessions. There were also noticeably more technical challenges for the attendees, particularly around sound, meaning the chat and posting capabilities of the sessions continue to be vital.

Despite these challenges, the Young Innovators Council put forward some complex considered ideas, and the discussions around guidance and rules (policies) were particularly detailed and thought-provoking. What is very promising is that some of the YIC’s suggestions are already in practice or in place at Northern Gas Networks – but it is hoped that the outcomes of this session will verify that these issues are of utmost importance to future employees and customers.

Response from NGN

Fairness, respect and equal opportunities were the overarching principles that you said needed to underpin the diversity and inclusion focused commitments within the people part of our sustainability strategy and reflect what equality meant to future customers.

Discussions looking at NGN’s diversity and inclusion policy focused specifically on equality around gender, ethnicity and disability, specifically making sure that everyone is able to belong at NGN (whatever that means for the individual)

- We are looking at ways we can continue to build a better, more inclusive workplace and create a positive and inclusive environment where everyone feels able to be themselves (respected), participate, influence, have their perspective valued and achieve their potential (equal). For this, we are creating a video featuring staff from all walks of life discussing comments of discrimination they have received in the workplace. The comments are then followed by examples of what an understanding and appropriate version of said comment would be.
- In collaboration with Business in the Community (BITC) we have created a mandatory Training Programme around Inclusion & Belonging for line managers. The training has been created to raise awareness around Inclusion & Belonging: what it is, why it's important and how to navigate any issues relating to I&B or E&D healthily, etc.
- We've mapped our short-, medium- and long-term targets that sit behind our commitments to ensure that the targets align with the feedback and positioning our future customers, colleagues and partners said they expect from a future employer.

The YIC identified 26 different specific changes we could make to our offices, our culture and our policies/guidance and rules to reflect future customers' expectations of what an inclusive and diverse workplace looks and feels like.

- We are now taking these suggestions and feeding them in to develop a series of action plans to support our short-, medium- and long-term diversity and inclusion targets as part of our overarching commitments to reflect the diversity of our communities and eradicating inequality.
- The five colleague communities that we have established internally reflect the key areas that the YIC identified as focus areas and all these groups have reviewed NGN's internal policies and made significant changes to them to ensure that the content and NGN's approach is inclusive. Examples of changes made include:
 - Dress Code Policy: where NGN encourages colleagues to embrace religious or culture dress, piercings, tattoos and hair styles.
 - Bank Holiday Amendments: NGN staff are now able to swap UK bank holidays (Christmas/Easter) for other community festivals/dates such as Eid and Diwali.
 - Support for Muslim colleagues during Ramadan (Month of Fasting): NGN now offers 1:1 discussions between line managers and colleagues who are practicing fasting, this is to seek understanding on what flexible work pattern will work best for the colleague observing Ramadan.
- Adapted recruitment policies and the language used in job advertisements to be more inclusive, such as:
 - Avoiding gender bias by using gender neutral wording
 - Avoiding age bias by removing DOB
 - Removing gender coded words which can sway other gender candidates
 - Welcoming candidates with disabilities and informing candidates we can assist with any needs
 - Reducing jargon which can intimidate/overwhelm some candidates e.g., Dyslexic candidates
- These changes provide a wider variety of candidates from an array of backgrounds a fairer opportunity to read job advertisements easily, without creating an impression of what/who the ideal candidate would be.

- We have also been working on reducing the criteria/entry requirements for certain opportunities at NGN, such as apprenticeships. This is to create a fairer and equal opportunity for apprentices, no matter their socio-economic struggles.

Transparency and accountability continued to be important for YIC members. 79% of the YIC felt that the most meaningful way to measure progress against our commitments was through internal measurement, such as surveys with employees, with a small amount of YIC members supporting independent verification and certification as a meaningful form of recording progress.

- We are already required to report on our gender pay gap, but we recognise that we need to be much more transparent with changes and progress now that we have set ourselves targets to meet. As such, we've planned to build in a programme of staff surveys to measure perceptions and sentiment and change from our colleagues.
- Alongside that we are also working with BITC, who run an annual/ two yearly Responsible Business Tracker which sets out the environmental and socially responsible actions a business should be taking to check our progress independently.

It was clear in our conversations around what should be our guiding benchmark for setting any targets or comparing achievements that you felt we should benchmark ourselves against our industry standards.

- Whilst we feel this is a good starting point, the industry standards are still pretty low compared to outside the sector and we want to push ourselves. Some of our other stakeholder groups have said that we should reflect the communities that we work in, and our aspiration is to obtain B-Corp standard. We recognise that that is a very long way off and we have a lot of work to get there given our relatively low starting point.
 - We have set 'being above industry wide figures for D&I' as the bare minimum of our benchmarking and will use our BITC Responsible Business Tracker to benchmark ourselves against other businesses outside the sector to strive to be better and push ourselves.
-

Session 3: NGN's annual performance and strategic priorities 2022

[13th July 2022]

Background

NGN published its annual Stakeholder Report on June 30th, a reflection of its stakeholder engagement activity over the 12 months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This report shares how stakeholder views have influenced and informed NGN's decisions over the year and shares achievements, challenges, and performance against some key regulatory targets.

Alongside this report, NGN's Community Engagement Group (CEG, the independent board that monitors and challenges NGN's business, to make sure it's meeting customer and stakeholder expectations) also published its independent report. This document reflects on how NGN has delivered the commitments made to customers and stakeholders during the first year of the RII0-GD2 five-year price control period.

These reports formed the foundation of discussions at NGN's Online Stakeholder Conference in September. This conference provided an opportunity to check satisfaction and acceptability of NGN's performance and direction of travel with stakeholders, and to understand if it's in line with their expectations. It was also a chance for NGN to understand and identify what stakeholders think the future focus of the business should be, over next year and over the next three years.

As future customers, colleagues, and stakeholders, it's important that the YIC voice is heard and represented at the conference. This YIC 2022 Session 3 introduced the young people to the reports and the conference and invited them to contribute their feedback and provocations, which were then raised by those that were able to attend to represent the YIC at the conference in September.

Objectives

NGN want to use this YIC session to:

- A.** Gauge the satisfaction/acceptability of their performance and direction of travel from both reports and understand if it's in line with the YIC's expectations.
- B.** Identify what the YIC think NGN's future focus should be, over next year and the next three years, in three main topics:
 - i. Communities, customers and vulnerability (cost of living, fuel poverty, being the best at customer service)
 - ii. Sustainability and people in the business (inclusion and belonging, people and skills, making the gas/energy sector an attractive career)
 - iii. Net zero and future energy (making the case for hydrogen, looking at whole systems - being more joined up with electricity)
- C.** Identify the key points that the YIC would like their representatives to feed back to the conference (on performance over the last year and future areas)

Key discussions

Prior to the session, YIC members were asked to:

- Read the sections of both reports pertaining to the topic that most interested them.
- Send in advance one question about what they've read.
- Identify one thing from the report that they liked (a positive thing that NGN did or that surprised them) and one thing from the report that NGN could have done better on (something they felt disappointed with or thought NGN should have done

Witnesses

Gareth Mills, Head of Regulatory and Strategic Planning, NGN

This presentation provided the business' perspective on what they think the successes and challenges have been, and where their future focus lies.

Jenny Saunders, Chair of NGN's Community Engagement Group

This helped to highlight 'the good', the 'need to pick up speed', and the 'future challenges' that the CEG reported on.

After the witness presentations there was a short Q+A in which YIC members were invited to ask questions based on what they had read of the NGN and CEG reports.

Objective A: Gauge the satisfaction/acceptability of their performance and direction of travel from both reports and understand if it's in line with the YIC's expectations.

Slido was used to gauge an overview of the YIC's feelings about their reading of the reports, and to capture top-level insights and a landscape check.

Did you find NGN's stakeholder report useful?

0 1 9

yes



no



Figure 11: Responses to Question 1 from Slido exercise; YIC 2022 Session 3

Why?

Found it interesting and it included all the key information	It was very informative as to NGN's actions/ goals.
It gave the key figures in a way that was easy to decipher and follow and used bullet point lists to outline these statistics.	It was easy to understand and told us clearly what their aims were and what they did to reach those targets and aims.
It was very informative.	I was able to see what concerns and ideas there were and the possible strategies and solutions to them.
Very informative (key information.)	It gave better insight into what NGN are actually doing.
The report goes into detail about the different sectors that are important and key to different stakeholders.	It provided a lot of information about future plans and how they have started to take place.
It explained who the stakeholders were and what role they play	Informative but could be difficult for some to understand
It gave me a bigger insight about NGN	The information was broad and got to the key statistics; gave some key dates but lacked further detail I felt.
It gives an insight into the business and how it works. I also found it interesting to see all the people involved in the business.	Although they've established what they're doing, there's not much detail as to what steps they are taking.
Lots of images and infographics	Difficult to interpret

Table 10: Responses to Question 2 from Slido exercise; YIC 2022 Session 3

Can you give 3 words or phrases about what you think NGN did well last year?



Figure 12: Responses to Question 3 from Slido exercise; YIC 2022 Session 3

Can you tell us 1 thing that's missing from NGN's report or work that you think is important?

Letting everyone know what is going to happen and how it will affect their life, e.g., money, cost of living, etc.	How things may be done [in the future]
More details	We get many vague plans stuffed with buzzwords without much indication of how that will happen
Inclusivity/equality	Detail on end points for sustainability plans
Safety concerns and awareness of those for the people affected	Detailed plans/diagrams
[The NGN report] said what it was going to do but sometimes lacked HOW it was going to do it	More information on sustainability

Table 11: Responses to Question 4 from Slido exercise; YIC 2022 Session 3

Objective B: Identify what the YIC think NGN’s future focus should be, over next year and the next three years, in three main topics:

- i. Communities, customers and vulnerability (cost of living, fuel poverty, being the best at customer service)
- ii. Sustainability and people in the business (inclusion and belonging, people and skills, making the gas/energy sector an attractive career)
- iii. Net zero and future energy (making the case for hydrogen, looking at whole systems - being more joined up with electricity)

The YIC, facilitators and witnesses went into breakout rooms to explore what the YIC think NGN’s future focus should be, over next year and the next three years in three main topics:

Communities, customers & vulnerability / Sustainability and people in the business	Net zero and future energy
Safety: including customers safety, hydrogen safety, cyber safety, asset safety. What do the awareness programmes look like?	Maintain communication with all consumers to ensure public awareness around hydrogen.
Decarbonisation and the role hydrogen plays. The YIC want to understand the pros, the cons and importantly understand how hydrogen helps to tackle fuel poverty.	Communicate the procedures for the transition to hydrogen, including safety, the speed of transition and how the hydrogen economy may affect jobs.
Informing younger people: how NGN reach a wider younger group of stakeholders and the wider future customers and colleagues to spread more awareness and advocacy.	Communicate short- and long-term plans regarding hydrogen.

Have a focus on apprenticeships and what careers NGN can offer.	Ensure a cost-effective transition to hydrogen whilst also expanding the hydrogen infrastructure
Address fuel poverty: continue to demonstrate NGN’s consideration of and actions around the cost of living crisis , especially the food vs fuel issue.	Develop ‘open source’ competitions for any issues connected to hydrogen that are open to all customers and stakeholders
Sustainable Partnerships : understanding how YIC and other stakeholders can work with NGN to achieve goals.	More research into biogas as another fuel source that can be added into the conversations and options.
Make provisions for digitally excluded consumers .	

Table 12: YIC key priorities, as stakeholders at NGN; YIC 2022 Session 3

Conclusion

S4TP gave the members of the YIC an opportunity to decide which topic from within the reports they would like to concentrate on, and this led to one break out group being much larger than the other. This was anticipated and planned for by linking topics 1 and 2 as customer-centred, allocating the expertise of facilitators to their most relevant rooms, and aiming to ensure there was plenty of time for the breakout room discussions. Nevertheless, the witness presentations and Q+A exercises did run longer, and it was clear that topics 1 and 2 would both have benefited from their own focus time. The disproportionate sizes of the groups also impacted on the timings, and from now on all breakout rooms should have a minimum and maximum of YIC members in them, whilst continuing to take into consideration their preferences. S4TP suggest that it is important that we offer an extra session, possibly in the middle and/or at the end of each year of the YIC, that is dedicated to answering the broad, detailed and intelligent questions the YIC members continue to ask.

There was a lot of conversation about the lack of detail – specifically around what NGN’s future plans are, how they will be delivered, and how they will be held accountable (accountability being a point that the YIC consistently return to). NGN noted afterwards that a bit more context about the report – that it was a review of the last 12 months of work and not a future action plan – would have helped to address this before the YIC fed back. Having said that, it is worth highlighting that whilst detail was a repeated priority for the YIC, when asked in the first exercise why they found the NGN report useful, most of the young people responded that it was informative.

There was clear sense of frustration from the YIC at the lack of speed and progress being made particularly around the steps to net zero. Both this and the other key priorities were fed into the NGN stakeholder engagement conference by YIC attendees. Prior to the conference S4TP met with the YIC representatives to ensure that they felt fully supported in taking these key messages to the conference and ensuring that their voices are heard.

Response from NGN

Reporting

Sustainability, Communications, public inclusion and education were the key things the YIC members felt NGN had done well in the first year of RIIO-2. During discussions around the report, it was clear the YIC felt it was interesting and informative and provided them with a broad insight into the role stakeholders play in shaping NGN's decisions, alongside a good use of images, infographic and statistics. There was a lot of conversation about the lack of detail available, specifically around what NGN's future plans are, how they will be delivered, and how NGN will be held accountable (accountability being a point that the YIC consistently return to).

- This feedback will be used to inform the planning and design of next year's annual report to ensure all our stakeholders have a clear sense of how their engagement has informed our strategic thinking and delivery of projects over the regulatory year.
- Whilst the report is a record of progress rather than a forward looking plan, we recognise the need for more detail and will look at ensure clearer links in our communications and reports so people can find out more information and further details on plans.

There was a lot of conversation about the need for clarity around and detail about what our future plans are and how we will deliver them, in particular the procedures, process and plans for any transition to hydrogen. It was clear that customers do want to know about our future plans, not just our achievements, and want us to make it easier to find information and be able to see the full story, where NGN can play a part and where we are part of a wider process and have limited control or influence.

- While the annual stakeholder report is not the right report to provide that level of detail, there are lots of other reports, strategies, research and detail that we have that do provide that information. We will look at how we can reposition some of our messaging and refocus some of our communication strategies to enable our customers and stakeholders to navigate and access information about our future plans more easily.
- This will start with our conference and ensure we provide clarity and details around our future strategic plans.

Future plans and direction

The YIC identified a number of areas they felt it was important for NGN to address over the next year, including plans to tackle fuel poverty, safety across all forms, creating access to apprenticeships and sustainable careers as well as making provisions for digitally excluded customers. Overwhelmingly, there was clear sense of frustration from the YIC at the lack of speed and progress being made around the steps to net zero, with a compelling message from the YIC that there is a clear desire for NGN and the wider energy industry to get on, commit to and implement solutions.

- It is encouraging that our desire to progress net zero and establish a case for a hydrogen transition is reflective of our future customers perspective and we recognise the sense of urgency felt by this group. We will ensure we create a space for this and the other key priorities raised in discussions to be fed into the upcoming NGN stakeholder engagement conference by YIC attendees ensuring that their voices are heard by our wider stakeholder community as well.

- We will also make sure these priorities are reflected in our annual departmental strategic plans.

During conversations around communities there was considerable discussion about establishing sustainable partnerships and a desire to understand how YIC and other stakeholders can work with NGN to achieve NGN's goals. In particular, there was a compelling ask for NGN to use the YIC more to reach the wider group of future customers and colleagues to spread more awareness and advocacy.

- It's clear that this group, and others like them are a powerful force for positive change and we need to help them understand and get involved and by giving them more information and more detail we can bring them with us and they will advocate for us and with us to be part of the solution.

Session 4: NGN's support for vulnerable customers [12th October 2022]

Background

NGN are working with their Citizens Panel (of adult customer) to help understand and explore the value customers place on different support projects for vulnerable customers, specifically around the length of delivery of each offer, i.e., immediate need vs long-term support. From both YIC feedback forms and conversations with those YIC members who attended NGN's online Stakeholder Conference, it was clear this was something that the young people of the YIC also wanted to engage with urgently.

YIC 2022 Session 4 provided the young people with information about what NGN already have in place for supporting their vulnerable customers, identified the benefits and challenges of different lengths/types of support (short/medium/long-term), and invited the YIC to help inform how NGN should spend their funds to provide support for customers in need over the next year.

Objectives:

- A. Explore the benefits and challenges of short-term, medium-term, and long-term support for vulnerable customers.
- B. Understand how the YIC would like NGN to allocate funding to short-term, medium-term, and long-term support projects for vulnerable customers.

Key discussions

Witnesses 1: Anisha, YIC member

Anisha attended Northern Gas Networks' online Stakeholder Conference on 8th September 2022. She was very engaged in the conversations around fuel poverty and the consequences on CO safety, and asked meaningful questions in the breakout rooms she was in. Subsequently, she fed back to Solutions for the Planet that:

"...lasting thoughts on the conference are mainly to do with the charitable organisation helping people with energy poverty. I think the biggest take away for me was the scale in which the energy crisis has hit people. It may be important to share this with the YIC..."

Witness 2: Eileen Brown, Customer Experience Director, Northern Gas Networks

- What is vulnerability?
- Introduction to available support for NGN’s customers
- Clarity on short/medium/long-term support with examples of each type

Prior to session, YIC members were asked to:

- Research the effects of the cost of living crisis on different households in their area.
- Find examples of any available support with the cost of living crisis in their area, so that they could share the pros and cons of these examples in the session.

Objective A: Explore the benefits and challenges of short-term, medium-term, and long-term support for vulnerable customers.

The first breakout session allowed YIC members to discuss the context in which they were making decisions; in particular, how the cost of living crisis was impacting individuals and families within their local area. The YIC also had the opportunity to discuss any support programmes that they had researched.

Impacts
The use of food banks in all areas has increased substantially.
The percentages of students who are eligible for free school meals have increased across the board .
Schools in most areas are giving out free breakfasts to ensure that pupils aren’t having to go hungry.
Barnsley: Young people are missing school due to working to help with bills.
Halifax: Parents are not eating to ensure that their children can eat.
Halifax: The increase in the costs of food, energy and water is impacting on the elderly and those with children.
Jarrow: The spend in food costs has gone up 50%, the bills have gone up, and this is impacting the food banks themselves in terms of being able to operate and pay their bills so that they can support others.
Newcastle: Students are really feeling food insecurity. After paying rent there is little left from a grant or student loan to buy food. That’s hard on young adults who are just starting to learn self-sufficiency.
Newcastle: Schools are running and acting as food banks, including schools in more affluent areas.
South Shields: An increase in occurrences of shoplifting of essentials, e.g., food and toiletries. It was noted that this was occurring in relatively affluent areas.
The overall price increases for places like bakeries, which have to pay 41% more for their ingredients, making them loose a lot of money.

Table 13: Summary of discussions in breakout room 1, part 1; YIC 2022 Session 4

Support Projects
Anti-poverty partnership e.g. Fuel Your Knowledge event (Calderdale)
Gateshead: Many schools are opening earlier and providing breakfasts
Jarrow: Councils are setting up warm spots in libraries and community centres, creating places for people to go.
Leeds: Food and uniform banks opening in schools

Newcastle University Students' Union has just opened a food bank for students reflecting the growing crisis in this community. There has been no reduction in fees or rent from the universities, or an increase in student loans to reflect the increase in costs of living.

Children North East's Poverty Proofing programme

£400 energy payment to households

Heated community/ food hubs

Table 14: Summary of discussions in breakout room 1, part 2; YIC 2022 Session 4

In a second breakout room session, YIC members and facilitators discussed the benefits and limitations of NGN funding short, medium and long-term support projects:

	Benefits	Limitations
Short-term	It allows families to focus on other things.	It can cost a lot but not change a lot long-term.
	It provides immediate relief and takes pressure off, so people can look at finding a long-term solution.	Difficult to ensure fairness across severity of situations; some people miss out on support unless they're in crisis.
	It's a quick fix.	People grow reliant, causing further issues.
	Buys people time and helps them regroup (address other issues) and get back on their feet.	It needs to be accompanied by education or learning to stop it happening again.
	It gives immediate help.	Doesn't solve the root of the problem
	Great if people need a grace period.	Unsustainable
	Useful for people, like students, who may be waiting for grants to come through.	Can miss people who are in rural areas, not connected, or digitally excluded.
	Good for those in immediate crisis.	No guarantee against repeated occurrences.
Medium-term	This helps the average person, not just those in immediate crisis.	Results from these types of projects can take longer to deliver and bring benefits.
	Gives people time and space to tackle education and learn/change behaviour, and this will have long-term benefits.	It won't help everyone. Education is great but for people with better incomes they won't see immediate relief through this type of support or changes it will take a year
	People can make changes and reap long term benefits and impacts.	Hard to access support if you are elderly or digitally excluded.
	This can generate significant longer-term benefits and impacts for people accessing support.	It's not great if you are in crisis now, i.e., changing a light-bulb won't help short-term.
	Could encourage community self-reliance & support.	Those who need immediate help and intervention won't benefit.
	Good for homeowners and those that have responsibility for 'editing' their own space.	This type of project may miss those that either are too proud or ashamed to ask for help.
Long-term	Delivers community support - not just for individuals.	Reliance could become an issue.
	Helps break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability for future generations.	It doesn't help now, and we are in times of crisis so the need is now.

	E.g. warm hubs: more beneficial, breaks the cycle, giving time to tackle roots issues and causes at same time.	Only breaks cycle in certain situations - education and learning can help in short-term as well.
	More sustainable: when projects are integrated into society there will be less stigma associated with support.	Things can go wrong in the time taken to implement, creating risk.

Table 15: Summary of discussions in breakout room 2; YIC 2022 Session 4

A voting session on Mural was used to ascertain the YIC’s preferences for the distribution of NGN’s support funds. Each member was given 5 votes to distribute across the 3 areas of short, medium or long-term projects:

- Short-term offers: 20 votes
- Medium-term offers: 12 votes
- Long-term offers: 29 votes

From this YIC’s feedback, the key recommendations can be summarised as:

It was clear that there were advantages and disadvantages across all three types of support, but evidently short- and long-term projects were seen as the most beneficial, with long-term support receiving the most votes.
Short-term support was seen as particularly beneficial for those that are about to be entering employment or awaiting grants or benefits.
Support for new university students would be helpful both in terms of a medium-term money management support and short-term support in terms of covering bills before grants are awarded.
Projects that can have both short and long-term benefits were highlighted for example providing slow cookers and lessons on how to use them.
Long-term educational projects that work in tandem with offers of support can help to break the cycle of poverty and have a long-term impact. Long-term projects were also seen as being of community benefit rather than individual need and have a lesser risk of leading to dependency.
All help should be firmly integrated into existing facilities, e.g., schools, community centres in order to reduce any stigma associated with needing external help.

Table 16: Key recommendations from the YIC; YIC 2022 Session 4

Conclusion

The Young Innovators Council engaged with the subject matter with great maturity and demonstrated their ability to not only give views on how the cost of living crisis affected them as young people, but also showed empathy and understanding of how this issue is affecting other members of society. The breadth and depth of both age groups and locations meant that the session had a good representation of different views. Keeping the questions being asked of the YIC clear and concise enabled conversations to flow during both breakout sessions. The use of Mural to anonymously vote on the YIC’s preferences was a useful way to ensure that YIC members were not influenced by the choices of others. The young people reiterated the known nuances of this complex issue; but the YIC gave clear directives that no long-term support should be provided to the detriment of those in immediate need, and all support would be dramatically improved with support and education to achieve longer-term change. Alan Lowdon, a session observer from NGN’s CEG, attended the session and noted:

“There was excellent pooling of ideas and views in the 2 breakout sessions. This came from all parties. Much is to be followed up on. The YIC members offered some excellent, new, and refreshing perspectives on fuel poverty, the approach to the management of vulnerable customers, and innovation. Linkages with the Energy Systems Catapult are worthy of pursuit. Others with professional consultancies should also be pursued. Overall, the YIC sessions were regarded as progressive, providing an opportunity and resources to input into, and help shape, the future customer engagement strategies of NGN.”

As part of S4TP’s co-creation method, a summer review that was carried out with the YIC resulted in some small but impactful changes to the running of the session. For example, talking in turns during the breakout sessions and providing an agenda prior to the session were seen as positive moves by the YIC, and a high level of satisfaction was given in their feedback.

Response from NGN

- We are undertaking an assessment of our two main support programmes (Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance and Customer Support Fund), to see how the projects align to these three funding areas and where the gaps are, or we need to scale up support.
 - Looking at options to increase spend in crisis support areas, but only if services can be connected to medium/longer term support.
 - Checking with Fuel Bank Foundation to understand what their onward referral routes look like to.
 - Ensure our primary immediate short-term support programme can support people to make longer term changes and break the cycle.
 - Introducing follow up calls for our own customer referrals to understand if customers have accessed the funding that is available and support to make sure those who do need support aren’t slipping through the net and that NGN is giving them a second chance to access support.
-

5. DOES THE YOUNG INNOVATORS COUNCIL GIVE REAL VALUE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART?

i. Role on the YIC enhancing opportunities, used as evidence for:

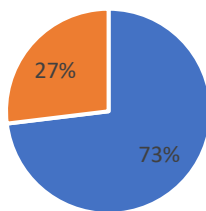
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Application to Formula E experience day
- UCAS applications
- 6th form/college applications
- References for jobs
- Apprenticeships
- Application to Eton College Orwell scholarship

ii. Networking:

- 8 YIC members attending NGN's online stakeholder conference (optional)
- Ellie C gave a presentation on the YIC to Turner & Townsend

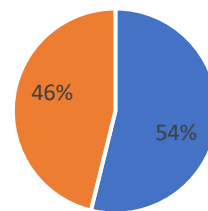
iii. Skills development: How do you think the below skills have improved through your time on the YIC?

Teamwork



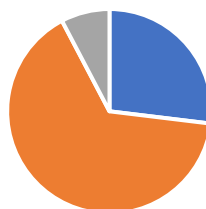
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat

Communication



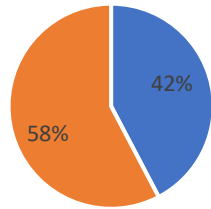
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat

Confidence



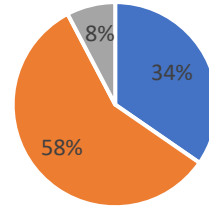
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

Business knowledge



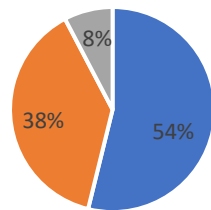
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat

STEM knowledge



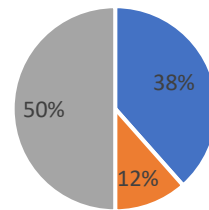
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

Critical thinking



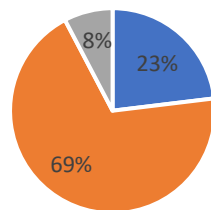
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

Problem solving



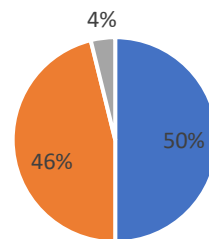
■ Greatly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

Leadership



■ Greatly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

Adaptability



■ Greatly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

Figure 13: [and above] Skills development; extracted from YIC 2022 end of year questionnaire; YIC 2022

iv. Career development:

Has being on the YIC influenced any of your education choices or career aspirations?

I would like to pursue a career as apprentice gas engineer

I might like to have a geographical career in the energy sector.

Confirmed my thought of going into the renewable energy industry.

It's furthered my interest in pursuing an environmental science degree.

I'd definitely like to look at opportunities with working in the sector, especially sustainable energy.

It has helped with chemistry in school.

It has helped improve my science knowledge and has made me want to take science after GCSE.

I am contemplating a more science-based career.

Thinking of taking geography for A-level, the YIC has made me enjoy geography as it links to a lot of the things we talk about on the council.

It has allowed me to explore practical applications of STEM subjects.

I'm thinking about taking a job in the energy sector.

Whilst I've always thought of going into corporate roles in tech, I'm now thinking of looking at roles within industries that need help with sustainability.

By showing just how many different jobs are needed to keep a company like this running.

Yes it definitely has: before the YIC I had an idea of what degree area I wanted to do but no idea what I wanted to specialise in; the YIC helped me figure out that what I truly wanted was to work as an environmental/sustainability consultant. I am now doing a Degree in Environmental Geoscience.

Table 17: Career development; extracted from YIC 2022 end of year questionnaire; YIC 2022

v. Learning and experience: Describe this year's Young Innovators Council in 3 words:

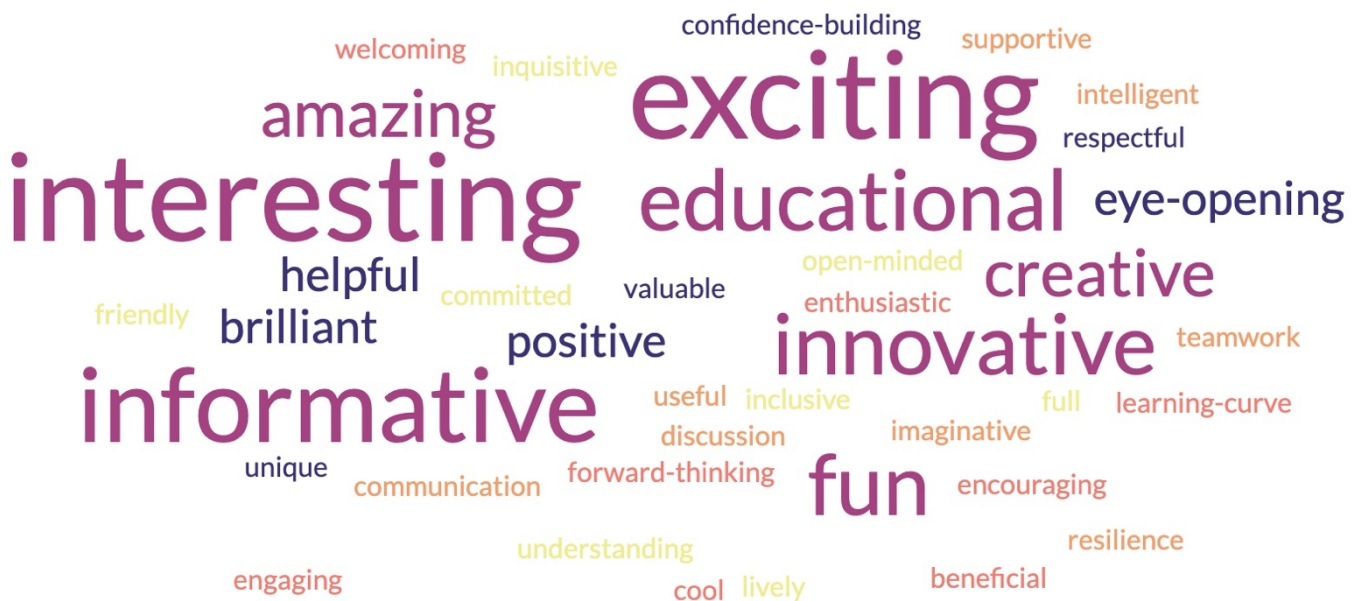


Figure 14: Word cloud; extracted from YIC 2022 end of year questionnaire; YIC 2022

What's the biggest thing you have learned through your role on the YIC this year?
Renewables and hydrogen usages.
How we can be involved and different factors affecting it.
How significant the problem of fuel poverty is.
I have learnt good communication skills regarding working in a team and sharing ideas.
More valuable teamwork skills
Do your research - the sessions where I did more research were the ones I got more out of.
What pathway gas companies are taking to move away from fossil fuels.
The impact of the cost of living crisis in the energy sector and what is being put in place to help.
About different projects going on that can help many people.
I have learnt a lot about hydrogen and how it can be used in the future.
I also learned a lot about teamwork.
The range of opportunities at NGN.
How much the energy crisis has affected the UK.
Teamwork is dream work! This year's YIC seem to have formed a group really well!
I've learnt that young people's voices really are listened to, and that NGN really take on these ideas.
I've also learnt how important sustainability is, especially for businesses.
Learning more about hydrogen electricity.
I have learnt more about renewable energy.
How to work in a team effectively.
Any ideas are always welcome.
How to do group discussions more effectively.
I've learnt how important sustainability is not just in terms of environmental sustainability but social and economic sustainability as well. I think this has been highlighted a lot due to the current crisis we're in right now.
About the advances of hydrogen energy in the home, and in our society in general.
Communication and teamwork skills
What NGN is doing to help with both the climate crisis and the cost of living crisis.
More about the different roles at NGN.
How important it is for young people to share what they think and ideas.
The ways in which the cost of living crisis has affected everyone and how parts of it can be mitigated.

Table 18: YIC's learning; extracted from YIC 2022 end of year questionnaire; YIC 2022

6. DID THE YOUNG INNOVATORS COUNCIL 2022 MEET EXPECTATIONS?

Impact on NGN Internally

The Young Innovators Council has helped NGN:

- Secure £5.72m of funding by Ofgem and BEIS to develop plans to create the UK's first hydrogen village. The YIC input played a key part in our customer engagement, which was highlighted by regulator Ofgem as a significant strength in NGN's proposal.
- Host a COP 26 event with the YIC and Decarbonised Gas Alliance talking about green jobs for the future, which got BBC coverage and generated 802,000 opportunities to see the news coverage, significantly raising the profile of greening the gas grid and future STEM skills.
- Engage with 19,545 customers and stakeholders around hydrogen on a global scale through a codesigned hydrogen home tour.

The YIC has also played an important and continued role in NGN being recognised as leading best practice in Stakeholder and Community engagement by Business in the Community's Responsible Business Tracker, measuring NGN's environmental and socially responsible actions. NGN scored 100% compared to other companies scoring an average of 56%.

Facilitator and Witness feedback

"I really enjoy facilitating the discussions at our Young Innovators Council. The young people are always enthusiastic, and they are extremely insightful and creative. They come up with so many ideas and solutions to the challenges that our business face, that we never would have thought of without them. The council have such an amazing ability to sit back, put things in perspective and come up with real solutions. I have also really enjoyed seeing the young people develop during their time on the council, growing in confidence and developing their communication and problem-solving skills, with some even being inspired to go on and study a STEM subject at university."

"The YIC knows how to keep us on our toes with our visions and ambitions. Their breath of fresh air honesty gives us a lot to think about when it comes to how we handle business today."

"It's been amazing to see their confidence grow into a team that now tangibly and positively influences NGN."

"This is my second year being involved with YIC as a facilitator, and I won't be stopping any time soon. I am inspired after every session with the young adults involved with the YIC, and I always look forward to facilitating the sessions with such committed young adults. They address every topic with desire to find a solution and this shows through the enthusiasm in pre-reading and in every session."

"I thought the participants in the YIC were insightful, thoughtful and articulate. They are an absolute credit to the organisation and I hope they continue to provide innovators like me the sounding board and guidance from their perspective which is so often overlooked or hard to get."

Summary of YIC session feedback

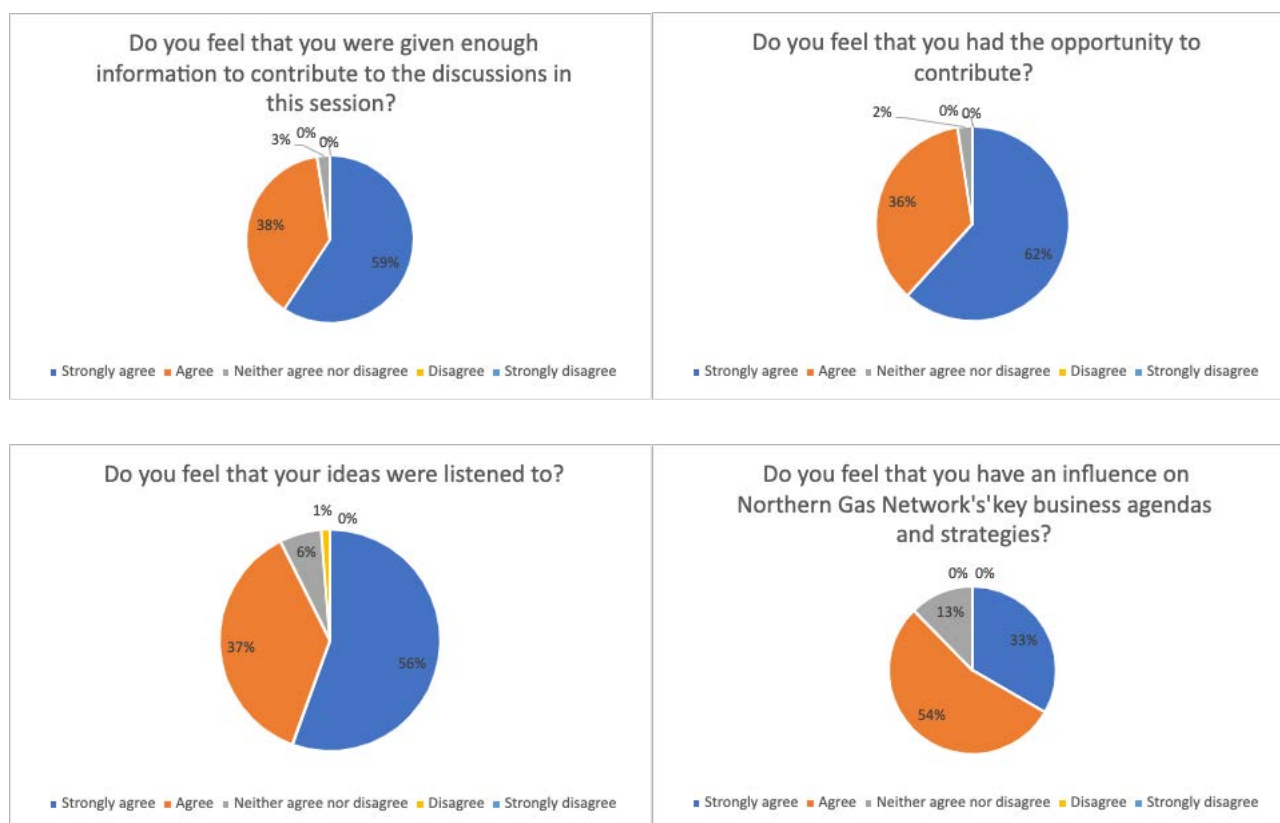


Figure 15: YIC Sessions 1-4 feedback form responses; YIC 2022

Other impacts

NGN's Young Innovators Council was a finalist in the Customer and Employee Engagement Awards (the Engage Awards are designed to recognise innovation and excellence across the entire spectrum of customer and employee engagement) in two categories:

<u>BEST USE OF CUSTOMER INSIGHT</u>	<u>BEST USE OF VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER</u>
Bupa UK Insurance	Aston Villa Football Club
Gusto Research & Medical Protection Society	Hertfordshire Constabulary
Hertfordshire Constabulary	Lowell
Newcastle Building Society	Places for People
Places for People	Solutions for the Planet & Northern Gas Networks
QV Skincare (Ego Pharmaceuticals)	Tata Communications
Solutions for the Planet & Northern Gas Networks	Virgin Media O2

Table 19: Finalists; Engage Awards 2022

7. CONCLUSION

The YIC 2022 sessions definitely benefited from there being several members who have now been part of the YIC for two years. These members now have a very good understanding of both NGN and the challenges that the business faces. Feedback has been consistently good, and the members reported that both the format of the sessions and the questions being asked were both clear and concise.

As part of the end of year review we asked the YIC how they felt that their skills had been enhanced by being part of the YIC in order for them to actively contribute to decision making. The majority felt that their teamwork, critical thinking skills and adaptability had greatly improved, whilst the majority felt that their knowledge of STEM, leadership and confidence had somewhat improved. These skills combined with the use of the YIC as evidence for UCAS applications and the influence that the YIC has had on their educational choices, has been a significant added value this year to the YIC members.

“Again, I just want to say that the past 2 years have been an amazing life changing opportunity, never did I ever imagine how replying to an email I received from my Head of Sixth Form would lead to this. The YIC has truly changed me, and I will forever be grateful to the whole team at S4TP, Fran, Claire and Jen, for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the YIC... And of course, I can’t forget Jenny who has truly served as an inspiration, not just for me and I’m sure to all the other members, for a dedication to teaching us about NGN and showing us how our opinions matter and can make changes on a bigger scale than any of us could ever imagine. I hope that YIC can continue for years to come so it can change more and more futures.”

[YIC member]

“I believe the members of YIC have developed vital skills to help them succeed in their future careers and journeys as they move into adulthood. The level of commitment provided by each and every member shows terrific desire to succeed in any challenge they may face. I also believe that the YIC has allowed for every voice to be heard and encouraged those who wouldn't normally shout about their ideas, to have the chance to show how amazing they are”.

[NGN Facilitator]

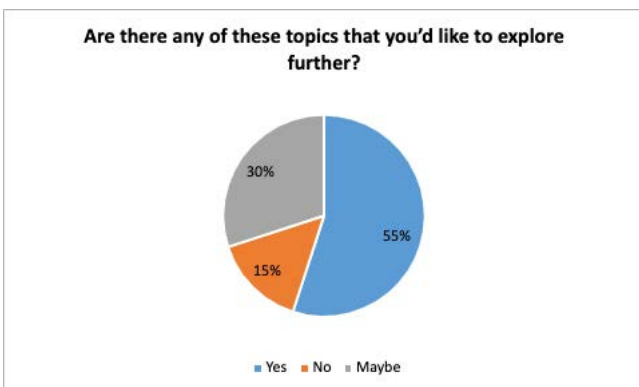
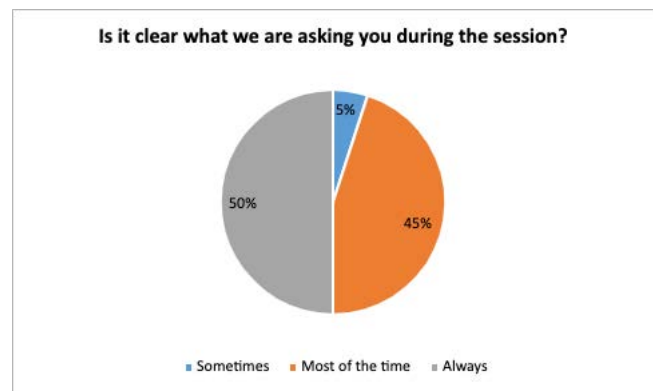
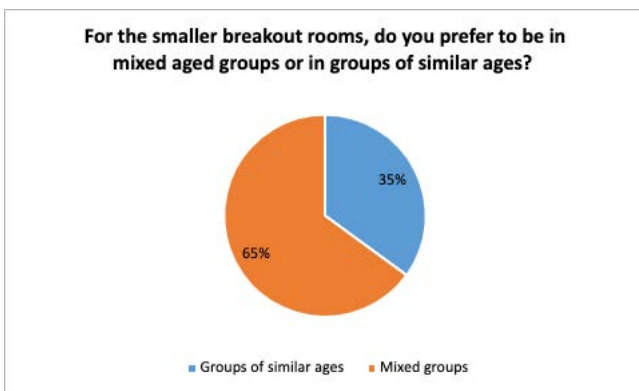
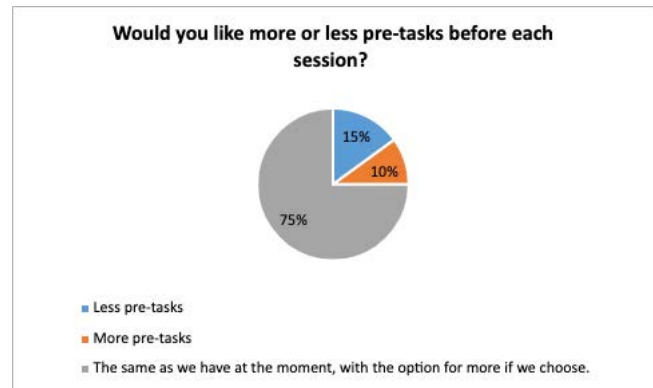
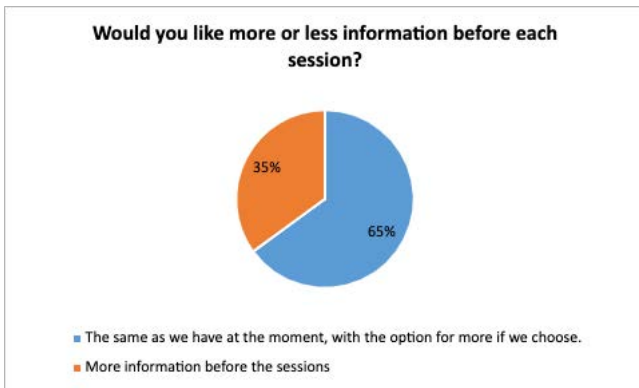
Both NGN and S4TP are now in a clear rhythm when setting the agendas and developing the resources for each session. Facilitators are becoming more confident in the way that they work with the young people, and this is showing benefits. Additionally, NGN witnesses have observed that they are changing the way they both think about and communicate complex issues with the wider community after attending sessions with the YIC.

“I think importantly, the YIC has helped develop skills within NGN, especially in terms of adapting our approach/information to make it understandable for this group, and this has helped influence how we keep should keep thing simple for all our stakeholder audiences.”

[NGN Witness]

8. APPENDICES

Appendix one: feedback from *Young Innovators Council 2022 - summer review*



If yes, what would you like to explore?

What future technologies are in the works and how we can help maintain or even build them.

Hydrogen future and sustainability in the workplace

The effect on the environment and global consequences

The hydrogen village trials

The app which is being made for CO

Net neutrality of CO2

Hydrogen Village Trial

The transport networks, and also dealing with the other areas of the gas industry.

The hydrogen village trials would be nice to explore more as I'm curious about the engineering element and challenges of integrating hydrogen into our current gas infrastructure.

Sustainability of people in the workplace

The hydrogen topic and how it can be implemented in house and day to day life

What other information or communication between sessions would you find useful and/or interesting?

Further information:

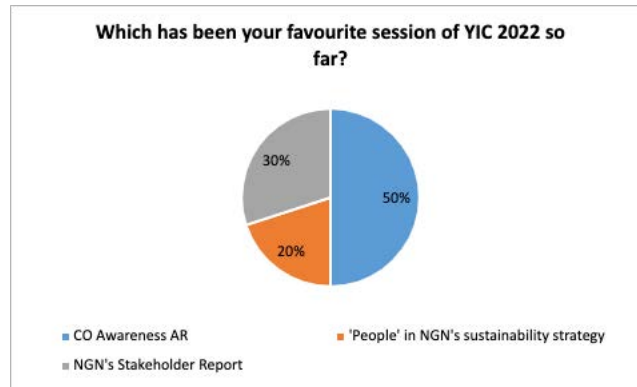
Extra information before sessions on what has been impacted or changed since a session was held
More updates on what NGN have done between our sessions whether general or something we've discussed
I think if something has happened that we made happen, we could be informed at the time rather than waiting months to find out (I don't know if that makes any sense).
Maybe doing a short quiz at the end
More info about any people we have in doing talks and what they do, to further understand them
Perhaps some information, depending on the topic of the next session, regarding the engineering and science aspects of said topic. This is quite biased to my interests however it is likely that others on the council may feel the same as I'm aware many of them like STEM.
Any possible volunteering or work experience information
Some optional "further reading" for topics
Any new developments at NGN to keep up to date would be good, and personally I would be looking for a career as a Gas Engineer and hopefully at the beginning an apprenticeship with NGN; it would be good to help influence as an employee around green energy. So maybe information on opportunities at NGN would be great also.

Communication with/between YIC:

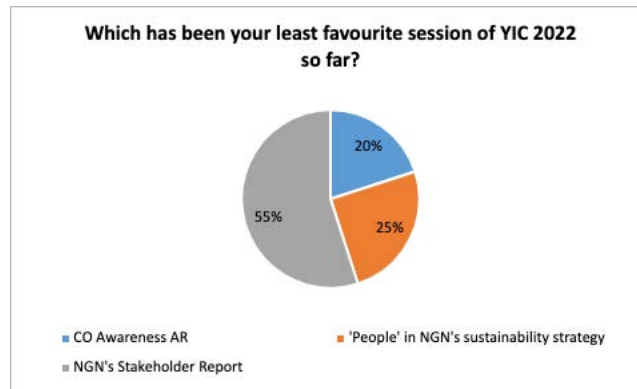
You could maybe say the estimated time for them before the meeting
If you're aware, what the next topic would be so that we can do some research ahead of the time. This way we can understand more.
Maybe a general idea on what topics will be talked about so we can conduct research outside of NGN
Communication between the actual YIC being accessible
Perhaps a portal or group chat like the one we already have on zoom calls
Group chats

How do you find using different applications like Slido and Mural?

Good easy to use.	Usually work well
Slido is literally my favourite part. I don't know why but it's so fun. Also mural is an interesting and fun way to get ideas across	Pretty neutral, but on older computers it can really slow things down
Usually works, but if not, I can always put my ideas in the chat	Mural can be hard to use at times
I enjoy using them and I like that I can see what other people think too	Not helpful
Very fun	Slido is good but I struggle with mural as it never works for me
I find them fun and really useful!	I enjoy using them however mural is a little temperamental at times on my machine which makes it a little harder to engage
Enjoy mural visual information.	Sometimes for me, it doesn't work (I can't write or edit)
Useful as it give a visual representation of the data	Slido is very easy to use, mural is slightly more difficult on mobile but I am getting used to it.
Very good as it helps the group share their ideas	They worked quite well.
They are good to use	They are okay



	Why?
CO Awareness AR	More awareness of how gases are protected
	I enjoyed it and thought it is good that people can find out more about it by scanning the QR code.
	I felt it was more useful to me as a person and other people
	It was interesting, I enjoyed the different parts of the session and how involved everyone was
	For me it was the most challenging and mentally enjoyable session
	It's the thing I am most interested in.
	I felt as though it had the biggest positive outcome/ effect and that it was quite important as CO awareness can save many lives.
	As it gave an insight on what information is being used for the public and the danger of CO
	I learnt a lot.
'People' in NGN's sustainability strategy	It was the most relatable
	I like the people side of this the most
	I felt like the discussion flowed and we're able to come up with a lot of ideas.
	Important to me
NGN's Stakeholder Report	I enjoyed the prep work for the meeting and really felt like I contributed
	There was a lot to read and was interesting
	It highlighted all the impact we had and made the work we've been doing feel more "real" in a sense.
	For me, it was the most interactive session and it was good to speak to people that could answer our questions instead of speculating about them.
	To get an understanding of NGN strategy present and in the future
	I liked the fact that there were two topics to discuss and we could pick which one we enjoyed and understood well or we could have picked the one we were less engaged with and ask questions so we could gain the knowledge we lacked prior to asking the questions.



	Why?
CO Awareness AR	I think CO wasn't bad in any way, I simply preferred the others.
	Wasn't a part of YIC then
	I've enjoyed all but had to pick one :-)
	It was the least interactive
'People' in NGN's sustainability strategy	This is more of a personal reason as I'm more interested in the engineering and scientific side of things so some topics don't interest me as much.
	As it just seemed to have a bunch of non-answers that diverted the focus of the conversation in the interviews
	There hasn't been a session I haven't enjoyed, I only chose this meeting because I had to leave it early so didn't get to contribute as much
	It wasn't as interesting
	I don't remember it much
NGN's Stakeholder Report	Found it difficult to understand
	Had too much information to take in.
	It was very different to the normal sessions we do
	I feel that the guests spoke for too long and there wasn't as much time in breakout rooms
	I personally wasn't super fond of this session however I was late to it which does hinder my judgement
	I just didn't find it as enjoyable as the other two
	Lots of information.
	There was a lot of wordy phrases and difficult things to understand in this one.
	I still liked it but I did feel slightly less involved.
	Lots of uninteresting parts and it didn't feel like we did much

What makes you feel like you've had a good session of the YIC?

Enjoyed it, has a fun and learning aspect as well.

When I've put forward my ideas, got involved in conversations and learnt something

Hearing and understanding other people's ideas

Interesting topics, clear actions that we're taking

When information is passed clear, and I've felt like I'm being listened to.

Coming away with a better understanding of something in the sector we have been discussing

When I have been listened to and listened to others sharing their great ideas.

I've learnt more about the topic and feel that I've enjoyed it and would like to learn more about it

The group have all agreed on a main idea about the topic

Understanding more and feeling like I have put my opinions and ideas out to other people

A combination of the topic interesting me and the session having a good outcome/ effect.

Being part of it and getting the chance share ideas and also learn from others' ideas.

Lots of ideas shared, not just by me but by other members. Also, I enjoy learning new things about the industry.

What would you do to ensure that everyone speaks during the breakout rooms?

Check the chat periodically to make sure everyone with or without a mic had a say in the conversation.

Go round the people in the group and ask them for at least one idea even if it's been said already

Perhaps start the conversation

Make sure that everyone knows each other a bit better so they are more comfortable around each other

Ask each person to give input/examples/thoughts on subject.

Go around asking people individually if they have any ideas, but we do this anyway

Encourage others / ask questions

Use the chat box

You could go through the people and ask them 1 by 1

Just make sure that you understand the certain social cues to stop/start talking, and people recognise and acknowledge that

Go to each person one by one and ask what they have to contribute.

Ask a more specific question do that everyone knows where to start.

Turn based speaking So every gives an idea each then after that anyone can contribute at any time.

Have a list of people's names and check the names off if they speak.

Call upon them and encourage input

It helps when there's someone to call out names to get their contributions, but often not everyone wants to speak and would prefer to either type ideas or just listen, which I like because I don't always have anything extra to say

Speak in the order that it is in on the screen of the host

Describe what your ideal session would be like if you could design one.

What it would be about and how would you run it?

About CO awareness. People could talk about it and find answers during school time so people could watch it and get questions answered about it.

Have a 10-15 mins briefing or presenting information.

Set a task in breakout rooms which would be the most part of the session.

Have time at the end to share ideas.

It would be the global context. We would have some pre-reading about the state of the world now in regard to NGN, what the problem is and in groups/Murals we would try to come up with suggestions.

Awareness of what to do in a gas leak - starts with a talk from an expert (no more than 10 minutes), then breakout rooms mind-map different parts of the topic. These are fed back and discussed, refining and polishing the ideas. Afterwards these are collated, combined and iterated to create a cohesive "action plan".

Not sure have enjoyed the sessions so far.

I would like to see a session where we are each given a scenario to "fix", not too unlike the group interview. I would like to see this put into action again but with separate scenarios per person, with a hypothetical budget to see how that person would fix a problem; perhaps base these on scenarios NGN has had and make slight changes and compare how the person in question has "solved" this compared to how NGN solved it. I believe working individually on this allows for everyone to interpret fully how they react in a crisis scenario. This would have to be done either prior to or after the session depending on the amount of help you would like to provide everyone with.

Interactive activities that include all

1 or 2 guest speakers, longer breakout rooms that engage everyone, longer presentation time which involves everyone

1. To start someone would go through a PowerPoint about what will happen in the session and the estimated times
2. Then go into detail about a topic, get rough thoughts through things like Slido and Mural
3. Breakout rooms and go more in depth
4. Back to full group and share ideas
5. Agree on a main idea

Give information across

Do something like Slido to get people more engaged

Tell us what our goal is for the meeting

Give time to think

Break off into different sub topics and try to focus on a smaller different thing in small groups

Share ideas

Share ideas as a big group and tell everyone what your group has done

Conclude

I think the way it is done currently works fine which I think is in this order:

Introduction -> information (about topic) -> breakout rooms/ ideas (discussion) -> summary/ conclusion -> questions and end

If the order isn't correct to how the sessions are currently done then just take that as my (roughly) ideal session structure. The topic I would choose would just be something relevant to STEM (such as the hydrogen village topics to explore I mentioned above).

Make sure everyone is able to join the session, ask questions, maybe explore more on carbon monoxide awareness

Have an information talk at the beginning, then talking amongst the council about something related to what we learned.

Is there anything you'd like more of through the YIC (outside of the sessions)?

I like readings we often have to do before sessions. Perhaps more of these, not to be discussed during the sessions, just for personal interest and research

Maybe some more reading before a session to have an idea what the sessions is mainly going to be about.

Meeting up in person!!

Communication between members

Maybe site visits and practical demonstrations of the NGN staff actually at work?

Getting to know the other members better

Connections into the world of NGN / references for the future

Just little updates on how we have helped / what other things we can do to help

Face to face meetups

How could we (S4TP) or NGN make you feel like more like you are at the centre of their business?

Have more inclusion of what is going on behind the sessions

I think the "you said, we did" format is enough for me

I feel like we are. Whenever we meet, I get the impression that NGN are grateful to our contributions and ideas, I don't think there's much else they could do

Maybe asking us more about certain topics and our opinions

Share with us what NGN have done between sessions whether generally speaking or something we've discussed

More feedback

More sessions

I think you do a great job of bringing us in and involving us.

It's maybe to early but hopefully some information on what's next for us, do we figure in the NGN future workforce?

Taking on feedback

Maybe have more higher ups in NGN attend

Emails updating about how we have changed things since previous sessions or what has been put in place since the session

I feel you already do a fantastic job of this

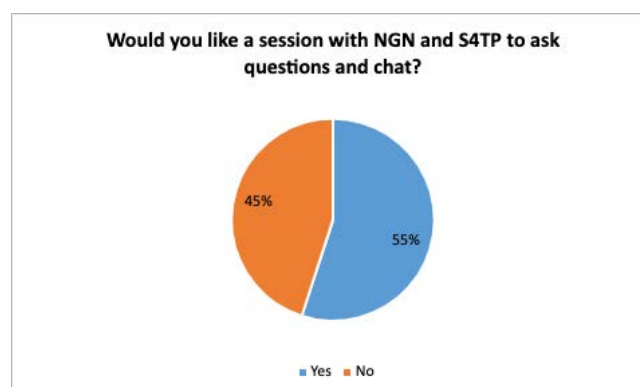
Just ensure that we know how we are helping you

Continue to give the summaries on how our input was used

Just by continuing to listen to and respond to/ incorporate our feedback on key issues.

By asking us if we have any solutions for problems that the businesses have and need solving because we might have a different perspective or idea

Maybe one day do in person sessions where we are all invited to listen and attend a conference in person



Appendix two: additional responses from YIC 2022 – end of year questionnaire

What has been your favourite thing about being part of the YIC this year?

Talking to the NGN managers and listening to their advice/future plans.

Finding out about the different viewpoints and how they are affected through the different challenges in the recent issues. I also liked working together in a group.

Being a part of a group of like-minded individuals.

My favourite thing has been learning about different topics and discussing them with others as I feel it has made some good changes.

Having a voice in important decisions.

Being able to affect the internal workings of the NGN for positive change.

The breakout group discussions.

Getting to go into T&T and getting to tell them what we do as a council and how we are helping and getting them interested in us.

Being able to make decisions that will help people now and in the future.

The group discussions and the fact that everyone's opinions were valid and heard.

Having a significant say in how the world works for once.

The carbon monoxide AR awareness.

I have loved hearing the new ideas! It has been great.

Sharing my ideas.

Working as a team and learning more about the Young Innovators Council

I have really enjoyed being part of a group and feeding back on important issues.

Working on the hydrogen fuel project.

Hearing how much Northern Gas Networks values what we say, and actually making a good contribution to their work.

When we learnt about how hydrogen could be used to heat up homes.

Although I haven't been as active as I would've liked to be I think I liked the fact that we came up with our own ideas and takes on certain schemes and plans that NGN have come up with.

Being able to discuss research I have done with others, and hear their ideas.

Knowing that I'm making a difference.

The ability to get my ideas listened to by the major gas distribution company in the northeast.

What would you say to new YIC members for 2023?

Research new energies.

I would talk about the hydrogen house and how we can change energy for the better future instead of using fossil fuels.

Don't hesitate to share your opinions.

Embrace every opportunity and get involved in anything you can.

Voice as many opinions as possible because they will always be listened to and discussed.

You get as much out as you put in; make sure to do your research tasks!

Don't be afraid to get involved.

It's such a great experience and you'll learn so much! It's definitely something that is worth doing.

Get involved and share your ideas.

Have fun!

Great choice joining, will stand out on your resume/CV.

Just enjoy it. It goes by so quick, just make sure you're involved as much as possible.

Don't be afraid to ask questions and put your ideas forward.

You will love it!!

Remember to be prepared before the lesson so it's easier to understand and ask questions.

Participate in the sessions and give your ideas!

Listen to others and be passionate about the environment.

Don't hesitate to share your thoughts, that's the entire point!

You will research and learn lots of new information while having fun.

Welcome!! I hope we can do great things together.

Make sure to ask questions and learn as much as you can in the sessions.

Don't be scared and don't be afraid to put forward your opinion.

Get your ideas out there even if you think they sound a bit silly because chances are that others are thinking the same thing.

[Extracted November 2022]