

Northern Gas Networks

Young Innovators Council



Session 2: Ideal Work Experience

March 2025

Facilitated and written by Solutions for the Planet

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1. Executive Summary

Northern Gas Networks' (NGN) Young Innovators Council (YIC) met online on Wednesday 12th March for the second session of 2025. NGN is looking at its **talent development pipeline** and was interested in getting the YIC's opinion on **what a quality work experience programme would look like**.

In advance of the session, the YIC were asked to reflect on either a) a work experience placement they had completed or b) a work experience opportunity they had researched. **How was the placement structured? What were the positive parts? What didn't work or was missing?**

In the first part of the Session, Jenny Wilkinson – Stakeholder Engagement and Research Lead – **fed back to the YIC on how their insights from Session 1 had been actioned**. As well as implementing some of the practical elements, such as communication preferences and topics of interest, the business had also taken the young people's rankings of business priorities into consideration as they move ahead with their business plan. We also reviewed and agreed to the Group Agreement that had been drafted in Session 1.

We then gathered the YIC's reflections from their pre-work activity. It was clear that a well-structured, flexible, and varied experience was important to them.

We heard from our Expert Witness, Roxy Allen – Talent Development Manager at Northern Gas Networks. She talked about the **current talent development pipeline** at the business, and her team's initial thoughts on how this could be built upon. Specifically, she explained that a **high-quality work experience programme was a key part of the plan**, and that the YIC's input would be an important part of finalising their offering.

With that in mind, the YIC members were challenged to come up with an 'Ideal Work Experience' programme. Unsurprisingly, a range of perspectives were presented – from a 'normal day at work' to a 'competition to come up with a new energy source using Virtual Reality!'.

As ever, we're grateful to the YIC for their dedication to being part of this initiative, and for sharing their creative and well-considered ideas on work experience at Northern Gas Networks.

2. Overview of session

Background to the Young Innovators Council

2025 marks the fifth consecutive year of Northern Gas Networks' Young Innovators Council (YIC). The YIC continue to be the voice of young people at Northern Gas Networks, and the business ensures that these young people's thoughts and opinions are put at the heart of decision making.

At the end of 2024, Northern Gas Networks published its 5-year business plan for 2026-2031. It is clear from this plan that the business has taken the YIC's contributions into consideration, with multiple references to the importance of their unique, youth perspective.

14 members of this year's YIC were also part of the programme last year, with one member entering her fifth year on the YIC. This demonstrates the value that young people are also finding from their experience.

Background to the Session

At the end of 2024, a new Talent Development Manager joined Northern Gas Networks, and started to work on the company's talent development pipeline. There are already some successful parts of this process: the Net Zero Education Team, NGN's involvement in the Big Ideas Programme, the Young Innovators Council, and the apprenticeship opportunities. One of the areas for development is the work experience and post-16 'internship'.

Furthermore, three current YIC members have already completed work experience placements at Northern Gas Networks, and one is lined up for this year. These placements, whilst positive, have been organised as required. The business is now keen to develop a more structured offering for young people, which includes an accreditation and a possible opportunity guarantee in the form of an invitation to an assessment centre.

YIC 2025 Session 2: Ideal Work Experience

Total length: 1 hour 45 minutes

People involved: 2 S4TP facilitators, 2 NGN Stakeholder Engagement Team, 4 NGN Facilitators, 1 NGN Expert Witness (Talent Development Manager), 1 ISG Observer

Date and time: Wednesday 12th March 2025, 5.15pm – 7.00pm

Panel attendance: 18

Apologies: 7

Objectives:

- That all YIC stakeholders review and sign the Group Agreement
- To gather the YIC's perspective on valuable work experience elements
- To explore an ideal work experience placement including structure, knowledge areas, and skill development
- To identify ways that NGN can offer a work experience programme that is engaging, practical, and beneficial for both the business and young people

Prior to the session the YIC were asked to read and complete the following tasks:

- Either research online for work experience placements available at different businesses...
- Or reflect on some work experience that they have previously completed.
- Think about what works well, what activities are included, what might be missing?

Agenda

Time	Activity
5.15	Welcome, objectives, 'you said...so we...' and Ramadan Mubarak!
5.20	Group Agreement Review
5.25	Pre-work reflections
5.40	Expert Witness: Work Experience at NGN – opportunities and challenges
6.05	Breakout Rooms – design your ideal work experience
6.30	Pitch-off!
6.45	Reflections
6.55	Wrap-up, next session, survey
7.00	End

3. Attendees

Young Innovators Council

Alex	Joe
Amiee	Maryam
Daniel	Mubashir
Danielle	Sophie
Divya	Orla
Ellie	Ralph
Lucy	Ronan
Idris	Thomas
James	Zinedine

Solutions for the Planet

Claire Fitton
Lauren Gupta

Youth Insights Programme Manager
Youth Insights Coordinator / Interim Comms Lead

Northern Gas Networks

Alex Brightman
Eleanor Glyn-Smith
Hollie Scott
Jarrod Knott
Jenny Wilkinson
Kati Sexton
Roxanne Allen

Energy Futures and Net Zero Educator
Asset Risk and Strategy Analyst
Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator
Project Manager – Energy Futures
Stakeholder Engagement Lead
Customer Care Officer
Talent Development Manager

4. Key discussion points

You said...so we...

The session began with the best practice of providing feedback to the YIC on how their insights from Session 1 has been used so far. This covers two important part of the **Lundy Model**, which Solutions for the Planet follows in its Youth Insights Work. Firstly, ensuring that the young people’s views are communicated to the right **audience**. And, secondly, ensuring that youth voices genuinely **influence** what is happening at the business. This also aligns to NGN’s principles of honest and meaningful engagement.

You said...	So, we will...
<p>Email, text and WhatsApp are the best ways to reach you.</p> <p>You prefer writing and speaking to share ideas.</p> <p>Presentation and Public Speaking are the skills you want to develop.</p>	<p>Make sure sessions include working in small groups, discussing, debating and presenting ideas and, where suitable, build in information around sustainability, net zero, and skill development.</p>
<p>There were 5 priorities you felt were most important: Low Bills, Safe Service, Help for those who need, Fair Transition, and Reliable and Resilient Service.</p> <p>There is also a desire for us to consider environmental factors in our work.</p>	<p>We will use this alongside our customer research, to help us priorities issues and areas of the business to engage in and invest in in 2025.</p>
<p>We need to ensure that our policies are inclusive along with our workplace culture. We also need to focus on closing inequalities in the workforce.</p>	<p>We will use this to shape our new Inclusion strategy and action plan, and hold a session with around this in April</p>
<p>Eliminating air pollutant emissions and reaching net zero by 2050 is a clear priority, along with enabling affordable, decarbonised heat, power and transport.</p> <p>We need to ensure access to information, funding, and affordable energy for customers.</p> <p>At the same time, we need to be conscious of producing less waste and recycle it all.</p>	<p>We will use this to inform our review of our sustainability commitment and feed it into our engagement to set new targets for 2040.</p>

Signing the Group Agreement

In Session 1, the YIC were asked to provide their input into a Group Agreement that outlines their expectations of one another, of themselves, and of NGN and S4TP. These were then consolidated into the agreement shown below.

Council members were given time to review the agreement and then 'sign' using the chat function.

What do I expect of other panel members?	What do I expect of myself?	What do I expect of S4TP and Northern Gas Networks?
<p>Be kind and respectful, even if people have different opinions</p> <p>Encourage others to share ideas, listen to each other's ideas and then build on them where possible</p> <p>Complete pre-work and contribute to the best of my ability</p> <p>Be on time, ready to participate</p>	<p>Contribute and get involved, being open minded and respectful always</p> <p>Prepare in advance for the sessions</p> <p>Show respect and kindness</p> <p>Let others speak, support other members and listen to their ideas, then build on them if I can</p> <p>Communicate clearly with team members, S4TP and NGN.</p>	<p>Take the YIC's ideas into consideration and show progress</p> <p>Allow the YIC to discuss freely</p> <p>Communicate clearly and regularly, provide in-depth pre-work</p> <p>Ensure the everyone is comfortable, provide support where needed and consider wellbeing</p> <p>Be open, kind and respectful</p>

Pre-work Reflections

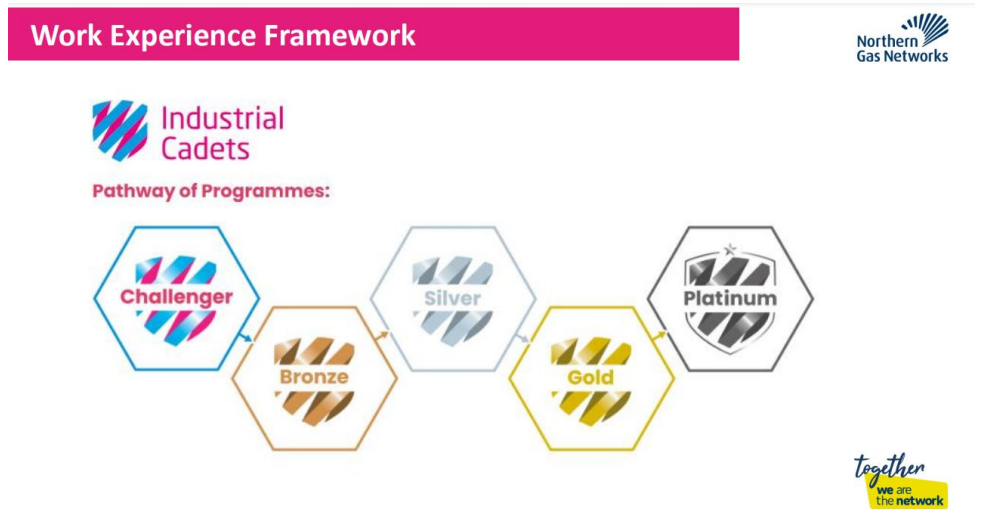
The quotes below summarise the reflections shared by the YIC, based on their pre-work research. These thoughts were gathered verbally, on Zoom, and in written format, using Mentimeter, to allow all participants to communicate according to their preferences.

- ORLA** A Physics and Astronomy ‘taster’ experience at the Uni of Leeds stood out to me because it had clear bullet points of what you’d be doing.
- ZINEDINE** My school advertises opportunities to the students, which would be a good way for NGN to promote any opportunities. I saw an Investins work experience, it clearly detailed what would be involved, it talked about how it would benefit you, and they offered to connect you with professionals in the field
- MARYAM** I did 2 weeks in Summer 2024 with NGN. The thing I appreciated the most was the flexibility when I had to change the dates due to a family reason. Also, some schools are really strict about what students can and can’t do, so NGN should make sure to be connected with schools.
- AMIEE** I have to find work experience as part of my uni course. I saw one at the Environment agency, which included a range of opportunities over quite a long period of time, so you can really get to learn.
- JOE** I did a virtual work experience a few years ago. It was good to have that option, especially if you can’t get to the office or facility.
- LUCY** It’s helpful when a placement can help cover costs like travel or accommodation, especially if it’s far from where you live or study.
- ANONYMOUS** It’s useful to give participants an idea of what kind of role they could have within the company e.g., by looking at their GCSE or A-Level options.
- ANONYMOUS** Participants appreciate certificates and references; it’s something tangible that can prove they did the work experience
- ANONYMOUS** Businesses should keep in touch with keen / promising participants and update them on any opportunities that become available
- ANONYMOUS** A variety of activities between days can help to give a more rounded view of the company

Expert Witness – Roxy Allen – Talent Development Manager

Roxy presented to the YIC about Northern Gas Networks’ Proposed Future Talent Pipeline. She explained which elements were currently in place and working well, such as Net Zero Education in early secondary schools, and highlighted the areas that they are planning to develop, such as their Work Experience and Mini-Summer Internship offering.

She went on to introduce the Industrial Cadets Work Experience Framework that NGN is considering to accredit its programmes. She explained that there are different levels, and that NGN is looking at Silver for its work experience.



Work Experience framework

Silver Framework = 30 hours

	Careers motivation and awareness	Creativity and innovation	Communication and collaboration	Teamwork	Critical thinking and problem solving	Digital skills	Personal and interpersonal development
Company Research	✓					✓	✓
Company/Site Visit	✓		✓				✓
Company presentation and activities	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Mentor/role model interactions	✓		✓	✓			✓
Hands on problem solving		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Graduation / Presentation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Finally, Roxy explained that there are some key constraints to consider when it comes to organising a more structured work experience at Northern Gas Networks.

Things to consider:

- Safety and insurance
- Risks and hazards
- Time involved – 5 hours per day
- Inclusivity

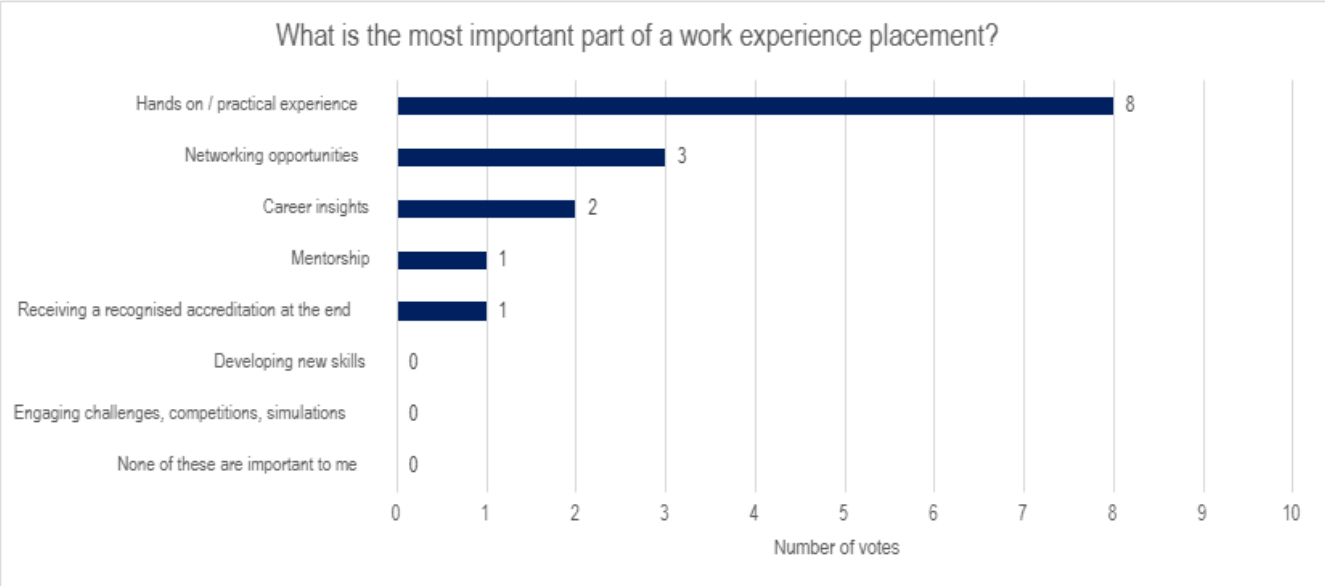


What do you consider to be the most important part of a work experience programme?

Mentimeter.com was used to gather some quick quantitative insights into what the YIC feel is the most important element of a work experience programme.

We asked them to choose from:

- Developing new skills
- Hands on / practical experience
- Networking opportunities (meeting people in the business)
- Career insights (learning about the career opportunities)
- Mentorship (being assigned a specific person / people to mentor you)
- Engaging challenges, competitions, simulations
- Receiving a recognised accreditation at the end
- None of these are important to me



As the graph above shows, **hands on / practical experience** was clearly the element that the YIC felt was most important in a work experience programme. **Networking, career insights, mentorship** and **accreditation**, also received votes from at least one member.

We also gave the Council members a chance to share other elements that they felt were most important.

● If there was something else important to you that wasn't an option on that multiple choice, enter it here. 10 10 ⋮

Location	Getting an impression of what it's like in the work environment
Being surrounded by professionals to provide a greater insight in the company and job	Keeping in touch with participants after their experience, offering follow up opportunities to any who may seem interested in such a career
Hearing opinions and experiences from employees	to have a variety of work experiences like in the financial aspect or the engineering aspect etc
Real life work and jobs	Organised/ set work experience thing
Meeting people who are following the same career path as you?	To potentially be offered a job when you're old enough

Some of these comments build on the votes in the first question. For example, **hearing opinions and experiences from employees** and **being surrounded by professionals to provide greater insights** build on the **networking** option.

Two of these comments reflect the YIC's interest in simply understanding what it's like to have a job at the organisation where you are doing work experience. **Real life work** and **getting an impression of what it's like in the work environment** tell us that getting a feel for a workplace is important.

Other comments mention **location, variety of experiences, and keeping in touch with opportunities or being offered jobs at the relevant time.**

Design your ideal work experience!

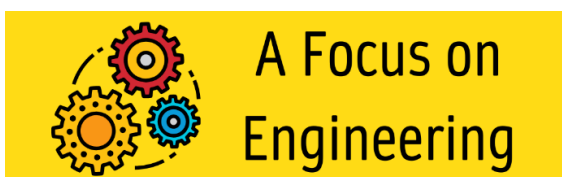
The YIC worked in teams to design an 'Ideal Work Experience' and then pitched their ideas.

The guidance below was provided to the Council to ensure that they considered different elements of a work experience programme and took some of NGN's business constraints into account.

You should prepare to present the following points:	Keeping in mind these business constraints	NGN has lots of different departments, you choose!
The Practicalities: A) What time of year? B) Over what period of time? C) How many young people in a cohort?	There is limited access to sites e.g., replacing a gas pipeline due to Health and Safety.	Energy infrastructure, engineering, technical roles.
The Game Plan: D) Day 1: how do participants begin? E) Middle days: what are the key activities? F) Final day: how does it end?	Northern Gas Networks are responsible for the safeguarding of those under 18.	Sustainability, digitalisation, innovation
The WOW Factor! G) What is unique? Hands-on tasks, challenges, simulations. Unexpected? H) What make it different from other companies?	There are sometimes busier 'seasons' when it might be more difficult to arrange work experience e.g., Winter is busy for engineering team, Reporting period takes place May – Jul, many people take holiday in the Summer months.	Policy research, legal, finance data
The Impact! Why will young people love it? I) What skills will they gain? J) How will it help them in the future?	The Talent Development Team are planning to map their work experience to an Industrial Cadets accreditation. This involves a minimum of 30 hours. So consider	Stakeholder engagement, customer service, customer facing roles

The images below shows a summary of the four pitches that we heard in the session.

Pitch 1: Alex, Ronan and Sophie



What will it consist of?

The week will begin with introductions, a tour of the NGN facilities and a briefing on the 'challenge' that the participants must work on in groups of 5. The challenge should be based on a REAL problem that NGN are currently facing or looking into. The participants will shadow engineers, asking them questions and gathering information to help them with their challenge! By the end of the week, they'll be ready to present their solutions to their peers and to the relevant NGN staff.

What make it stand out?

In their challenge, the students will be encouraged to use Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence. The challenge should be designed to really stretch the groups!

Benefits for young people?

They'll learn technical skills, presentation skills, and teamwork skills. It will look good on their CV and help inform their decisions on future job prospects

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Pitch 2: Amiee, Danielle, Joe, Lucy



What will it consist of?

The work experience will kick off with an introduction to the company and a tour of the building, then the students will be told about their challenge - to come up with a new energy source. Throughout the week, they'll work in their groups on the task - speaking to engineers, using physical props, and using Virtual Reality and modelling to test their ideas. A 'curveball' should be thrown in to make it more challenging! And ideas will be presented at the end.

What make it stand out?

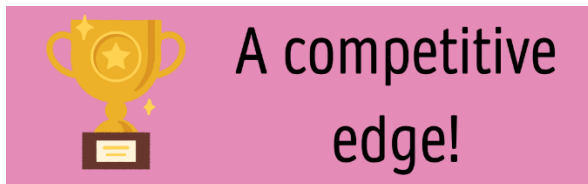
Incorporating VR and modelling will make it unique. The participants will use a mixture of VR headsets as well as modelling programmes e.g., Blender.

Benefits for young people?

This programme will give them a range of experiences, so there is plenty to learn and use for future applications, interviews and roles!

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Pitch 3: Daniel, Divya, Ellie, Ralph



7-10 days

Summer holidays

Groups of 5

What will it consist of?

The experience will begin with introductions, teambuilding, a tour, and some demonstrations of NGN work. On Day 2, the participants will be set a task relevant to the business. Throughout the week or two, they will meet people from across the business, they will practice debating, and they will shadow someone for day. Each day, there will be time to work on their task ready for a presentation on the final day! So, they build skills over the week to aid their success.

What make it stand out?

The use of AI and competitions will make this experience stand out. Plus, a useful prize e.g., money towards university or further education would be a huge benefit.

Benefits for young people?

This will be a really interesting work experience programme that will build their skills and also offer them financial support for their next steps.

GET STARTED →

Pitch 4: James, Maryam, Orla, Thomas



2 blocks of 5 days

Split across Summer and Winter

2-4 students

What will it consist of?

The crucial part of this work experience is that it will give a genuine insight into what it's like to work at NGN. With a small group, they can spend time with different team - with a mixture of shadowing and actually being able to get involved with tasks e.g., supporting with customer service. Students will feel like they are actually at work, and will therefore gain a realistic expectations of what it would be like to join NGN.

What make it stand out?

the basic WOW factor will be that this experience will give a realistic sense of what work is like at the business. It doesn't need to be exciting, it needs to be real.

Benefits for young people?

They will learn communication skills - especially in this new environment and with adults - networking, confidence, listening, and absorbing new information.

GET STARTED →

For ease of comparing, we will take each of the guidance points that were provided to the YIC and show the proposals from the YIC – including suggestions sent via email by members who could not attend or left early to break their Iftar fast.

The Practicalities

What time of year?

- June / July. After exams, but still during school time so that NGN can link up with the school.
- During the Summer holidays
- 2 blocks of time, one in Winter and one in Summer so that young people can experience different periods of the business e.g., busy engineering period and a quieter period

- Intakes throughout the year, since some schools break at different times and participants can see the business in different contexts
- March / May – would avoid reporting period for NGN and the busy engineering season and be before exams start.

Over what period of time?

- 5 days
- 7 days
- 7-10 days
- 2 blocks of 5 days
- 1-2 weeks

How many young people in a cohort?

- 2-4 people since a small cohort would allow better access to the business
- 5 people in a group, although you could have more than one group at a time
- 10 people per cohort would be enough to get conversations started whilst also have a good chance to connect with the people at NGN
- 30-50 students will help to maintain engagement and allow students to go off in groups to share ideas and work together

Other comments about The Practicalities?

- Advertise online and in-person opportunities
- Consider paying or partially paying for travel to help people who live in rural areas
- Offer work experience at a range of locations so it can be accessed by people all over the region
- Make sure the time allowed for applications is at least a month so it's not too short notice and stressful

The Game Plan

What happens on Day 1?

- Introduction and welcome, tour of NGN facilities, presenting the 'challenge' that they'll work on during the week
- Introduction to the company, ice-breaker activities, tour of the building, launch of the 'new energy source' activity
- Team building, introductions, tours and demonstrations

What happens in the middle days?

- A competitive challenge based on a current challenge / need of the business. Students shadow engineers and ask questions as they work on their challenge. The problem should be real, and it should have certain constraints so that students are stretched. The use of VR and AI should be promoted.
- Participants are tasked with coming up with a new energy source. Throughout the challenge there should be 'curveballs' that require the team to adjust their

project, and there could be simulated ‘emergencies’ to keep it interesting. Students can use VR and AI in their projects and could model their new energy sources.

- Work experience participants work on a competitive challenge related to NGN’s work. Throughout the week, the participants meet with different teams across the business and gather insights that they can use on their project. Students can use AI to support their projects.
- Halfway between ‘doing something’ and ‘shadowing’. Students should get a realistic experience of what it’s like to work at NGN on a day-to-day basis. Where possible, they should be able to support with tasks e.g., when working with the stakeholder engagement team they could contribute.
- Talks from professionals in different departments, a hands-on simulation “Build Your Own Gas Network”, a workshop on the future of green energy and hydrogen power, how AI is shaping the energy sector, role-playing stakeholder negotiations where students act as policy makers, engineers and customers to solve an issue. There could be a case study on legal and finance considerations and an interactive session with the customer services team.
- One day there could be a field trip to an active site e.g., observing gas pipes being replaced, or going along to a call out for a potential gas leak.
- Present the groups with questions / scenarios that related to real NGN situations and that have a connection to different areas of the business e.g., finance, legal, digitalisation, customer service. In groups of mixed interests, the participants can work on these and present their answers. Then for the rest of the week, the groups can be changed into area-specific, and then they spend more time in the relevant department to their interest. If someone isn’t sure on their interest, they can rotate.

What happens on the last day?

- Participants present their final projects to their peers and to relevant NGN staff. Their solutions could even contribute to future work that NGN does!
- Final presentations about their new energy source.
- Final presentations and a summary of the experience.
- Everyone gets together to reflect on their experience. Certificates are distributed to all the participants. Some way of keeping in touch about future opportunities should be provided.

Other comments about The Game Plan?

- A prize for the competition could be some financial contribution towards university or further education
- Make tasks as near as possible to a real day at Northern Gas Networks
- Include the option of work experience across all different departments, even if they don’t all run at the same time, so that young people have choices and can see that there is more to Northern Gas Networks than they might think!
- Rather than having one set programme, there could be a few different programmes based on different skills / areas of the business so that NGN can attract young people with all different interests.

The WOW Factor

What is unique? Hands-on tasks, challenges, simulations. Something unexpected?

- The use of VR and AI, and being able to contribute to a real issue that NGN is facing.
- Using VR and modelling to come up with a brand-new energy source.
- A competition format would make it unique, plus using AI in the tasks. The week will be designed so that skills and knowledge are gained that will ultimately contribute to the final presentations.
- The WOW factor would be that this is the most realistic work experience possible. It will give a true feeling of what working at NGN is like.
- Having work experience that can be tailored to a specific area of interest or career path.
- Tackling real life problems in an immersive way makes this stand out.

What makes it different from other companies?

- Using competitions, VR and AI would show that NGN is a high performing and innovative company
- Making the challenges relevant to NGN and the energy sector would also help this stand out against other work experience offerings.

The Impact

What skills will they gain?

- They'll gain presentation and teamwork skills, as well as digital skills by working with VR.
- By engaging with a range of NGN departments across this week, they will learn a lot of new skills.
- They will practice communication skills, especially talking with new adults and in a work environment.
- They will learn to network, gain confidence, and practice listening to lots of new information and trying to absorb it.
- Problem-solving, teamwork, innovation, communication, and technical knowledge.
- I believe communication, teamwork, problem solving and public speaking would be great skills to improve/ gain during the work experience as these are soft skills that would be very much useful as they grow older for interviews, university applications

How will it help them in the future?

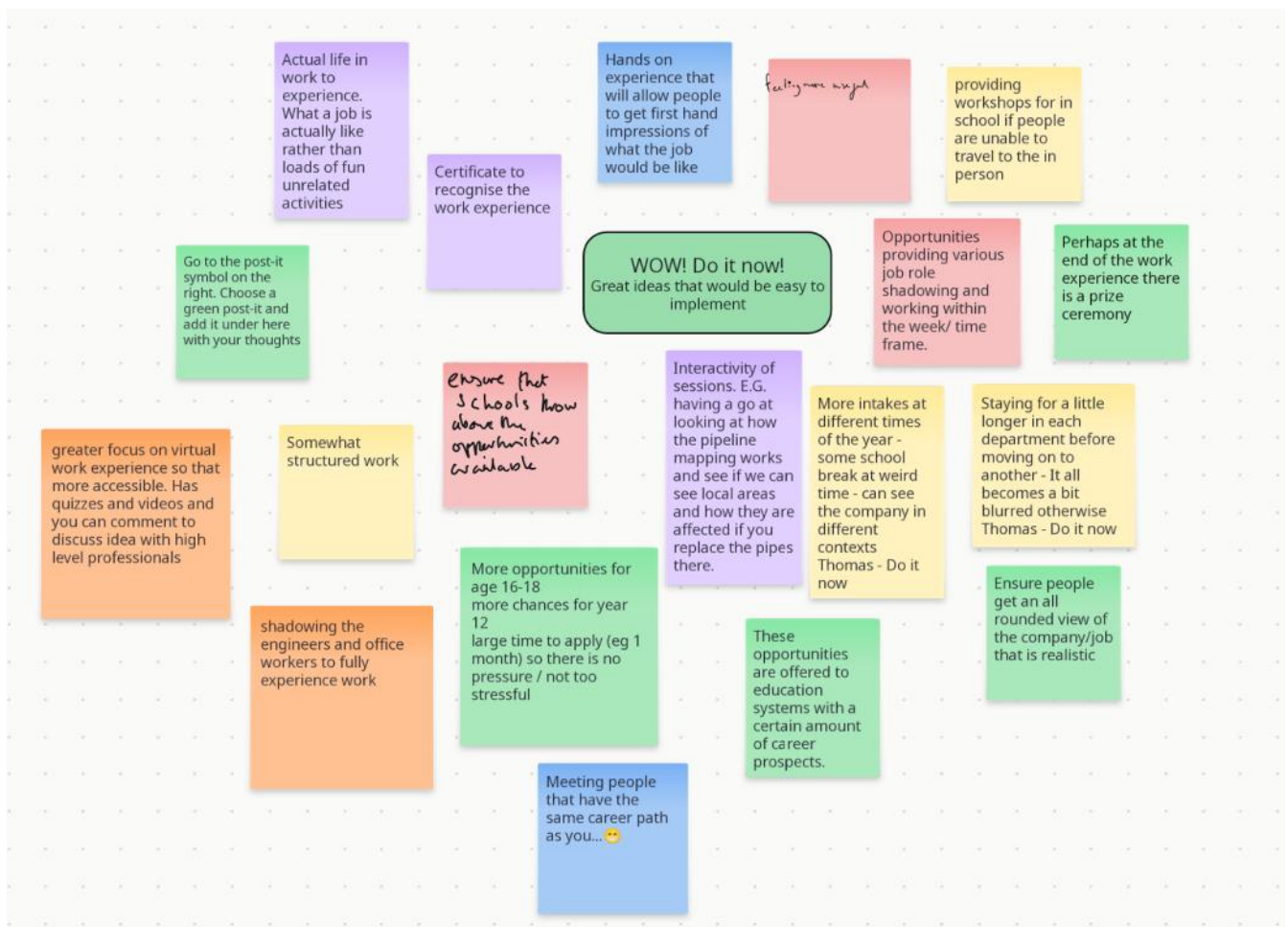
- It will look good on their CV and help to inform their decisions on future job prospects.

- Industrial Cadets accreditation, networking with professionals, and potential entry into NGN's apprenticeship schemes.
- Survey everyone to see if they would be interested in updates on future opportunities in NGN via email/text, offer to get any promising + keen candidates in touch with contacts/ NGN employees if necessary
- Give everyone certificates (+ online references if they ask for them) – tends to be very popular with Work experience students as they have something to show for their time and hard work

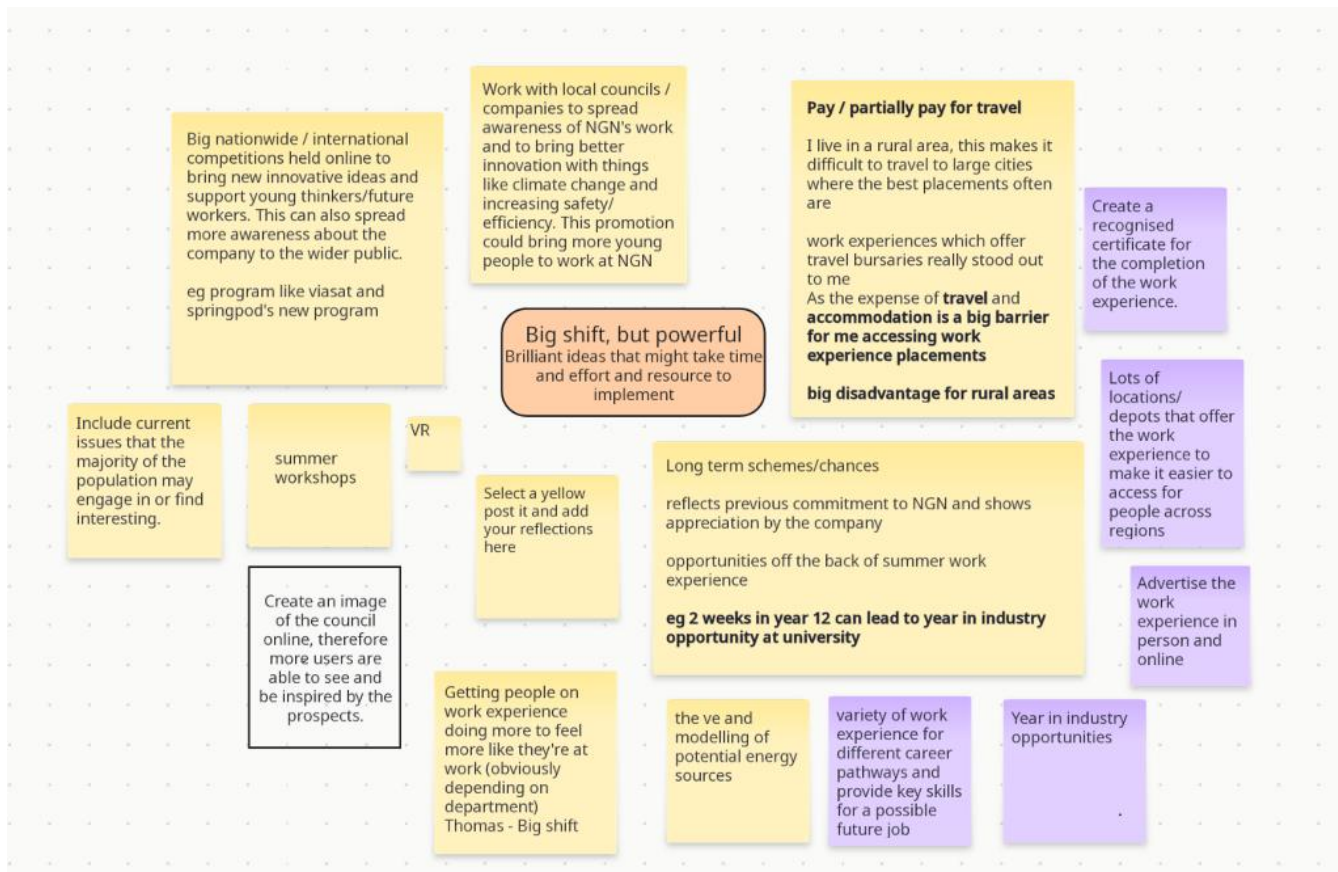
Reviewing the Ideal Work Experience Proposals

Firstly, we asked the YIC to consider which of the suggestions could be categorised as **'WOW! Do it now!'** (great ideas that would be easy to implement), and which would be **'Big shift, but powerful'** (brilliant ideas that might take time and effort and resource to implement). We used a Zoom Whiteboard to capture these reflections.

1) WOW! Do it now!



2) Big shift, but powerful!



And, secondly, we asked the YIC to vote for the best Ideal Work Experience pitch. This was a fun way to finish off our pitching activity although, of course, many of the ideas were shared across multiple presentations! It should be noted that some of the YIC has logged off by this point in order to break their fast, hence a lower than usual number of votes.

Pitch 3 ('A competitive edge') and Pitch 4 ('A 'real' experience') both received the highest number votes with four each. The remaining two pitches each received two votes.

5. Key Reflections for Northern Gas Networks

The structure of this session allowed us to capture a range of useful reflections about work experience. From the very practical elements to ideas for content, and from easily actionable activities to aspirational targets.

Key reflections for Northern Gas Networks on **most important elements** of a work experience programme

1. **Hands-on and practical experience** received the greatest number of votes from the YIC. This was reinforced throughout the session as members came up with interactive activities during the pitching section and one group very specifically said that it should not just be shadowing.
2. **Networking and engaging with NGN employees** also came through strongly during the session. The Council clearly value being able to connect with employees, ask questions, and learn about career pathways.
3. **Having a realistic impression of work life** also came through as a key consideration. This was not only noted in the vote for 'most important elements of a work experience' but was also the foundation of one of the team's pitches.

Key reflections for Northern Gas Networks on the **practical elements**

4. **Somewhere between 1-2 weeks** is a good length of time for work experience. All the pitches and the email contributions suggested this length of time.
5. **There should be some flexibility or options of when work experience takes place.** Of course, avoiding exam periods is crucial, but there was no consensus on a time of year apart from that. Some prefer it to be within school terms so there's a link with their education, some suggested the summer holidays, and some even suggested having a split programme across the year!
6. **Working in small groups** would allow for more engagement with one another and with NGN employees. Even though some of the YIC proposed having 30-50 participants overall, there was always group activities within this – somewhere between 2 and 5.
7. **Offering virtual options** for those who are not able to travel or attend in person and **covering the cost of transport** were also specifically mentioned by the group.

Key reflections for Northern Gas Networks on the **game plan / activities included**

8. A work experience programme should be book ended by **an informative opening day and a reflective summary day** to ensure clarity and structure.
9. **Including some kind of competition** was a popular suggestion in the pitching activity. Proposals included coming up with a new source of energy, solving some kind of engineering challenge, or working on a current issue faced by the business.
10. **Engaging and informative activities** such as simulations, field visits, role-playing negotiations, and workshops on sustainability were also suggested. These could contribute to the participants' knowledge gathering for the competition element mentioned above.

11. A different, but clearly articulated, approach is to simply **experience a normal day at work**. This might involve some shadowing, but efforts should be made to enable participants to carry out some tasks.

Key reflections for Northern Gas Networks on the **WOW factor and benefits to young people**

12. Incorporate **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR)** and other current technologies such as **3D modelling** into the programme.
13. Consider offering **prizes for competitions** that are of genuine benefit to the young people such as a financial contribution towards university or further education.
14. Ensure that **next steps and future opportunities** are clearly articulated so that young people who are interested can keep in touch, learn more, or apply for relevant roles.
15. Key skills to be developed are **teamwork, presentation skills, communication, problem solving, and digital skills**.

Further to the recommendations outlined above, Solutions for the Planet has noted each individual suggestion from the YIC onto digital post it notes on a Zoom Whiteboard. This has been shared with the Talent Development team at NGN, who can sort through the ideas. We suggest categorising them into the following groups:

Wow, do it now! (great ideas that would be easy to implement)

Good, but needs work (good ideas, but need some development before they could happen)

Not our style (not practical or doesn't align with NGN ethos)

Big shift, but powerful! (brilliant ideas that might take time, effort and resource to implement)

6. Conclusion

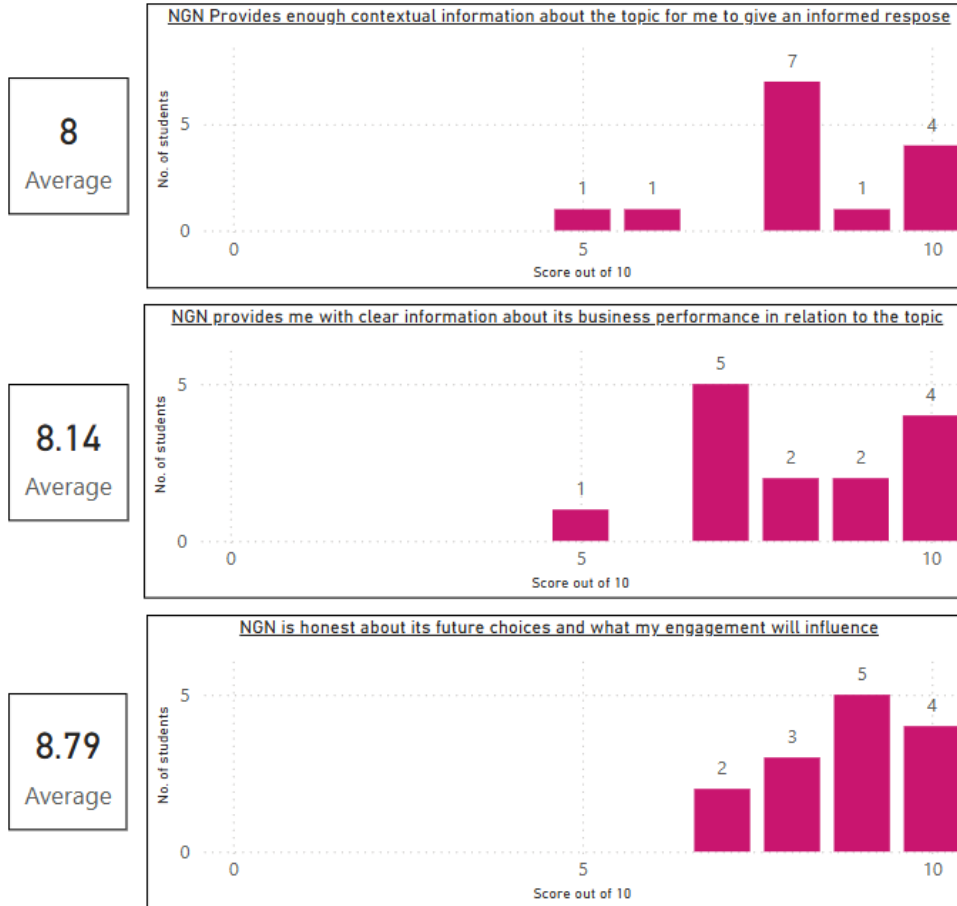
Session 2 was a positive follow up to our successful first session in Leeds. Having tackled some big-picture thinking about Northern Gas Networks' business priorities in Session 1, we drilled down into a much more specific topic in this session. The topic of 'Ideal Work Experience' could not be more relevant to the Young Innovators Council since many of them have either recently completed or are looking to complete a placement.

It was brilliant to see how well the new members of the YIC have settled into their role and connected with existing members. We were also impressed by the detail and quality of the work submitted after the session by those who either could not attend or had left early for Iftar. We really appreciate the dedication of the YIC members to the development of Northern Gas Networks.

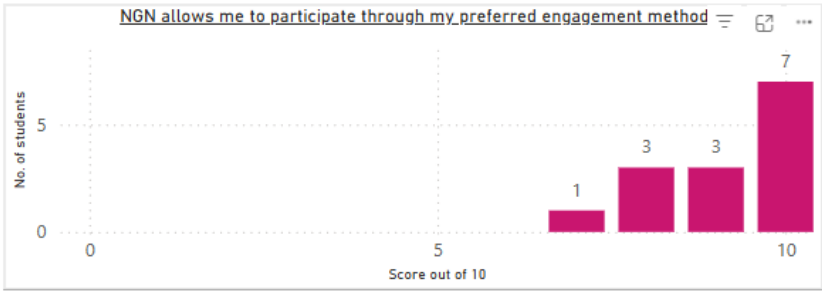
The recommendations outlined in this report reflect the diversity of thought that exists across the young people on the Council. What's clear is that one size does not fit all when it comes to an ideal work experience programme, and that flexibility and variety is essential for positive engagement and outcomes.

Appendices

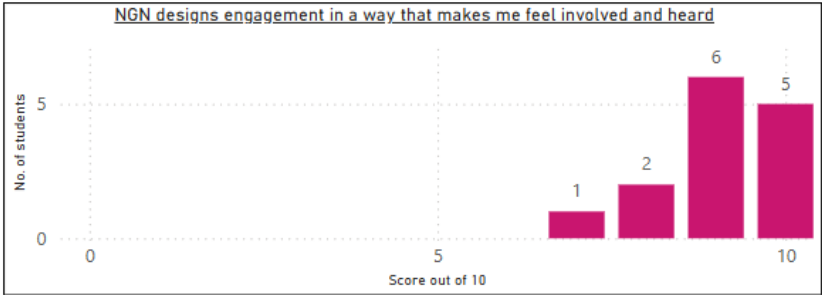
Appendix 1: Post Session Survey Feedback on NGN Engagement. As of 25/03/2025 14 of those who attended have completed the survey.



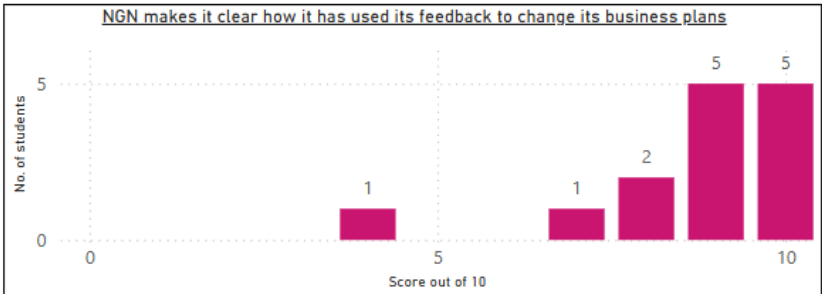
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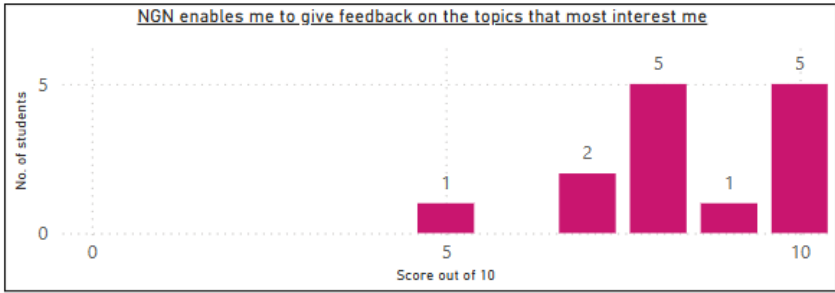
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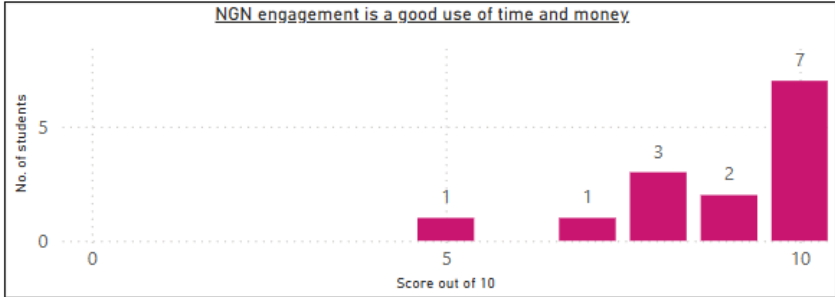
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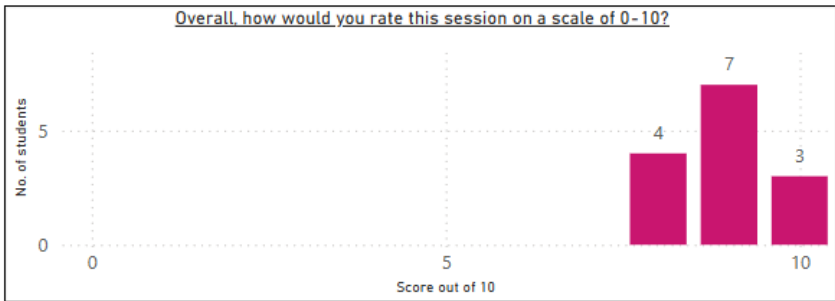
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Appendix 2: Additional comments about the topic captured in the Survey

During the whiteboard, I wrote ‘somewhat structured tasks’ planning to expand on it later but experienced technical issues and when it was fixed the whiteboard was gone so I’d like to expand the my point by saying tasks that are structured enough to give direction but not so structured that it doesn’t give you any independence as would be the case in a real workplace.

For young people seeking work experience in NGN and gas, opportunities should focus on practical, introductory projects that highlight the industry's intersection with technology. This could involve assisting with the deployment of smart sensors for pipeline monitoring, learning about data analysis for predicting equipment maintenance, participating in basic network troubleshooting, or observing the development of secure communication systems for remote operations. These experiences should prioritize safety and provide a foundational understanding of how NGN technologies enhance efficiency and security within the gas sector, offering a glimpse into potential career paths in this evolving field.

Travel costs are really important to consider when doing work experience placements Maybe catchment areas for bursaries/ full reimbursement of travel costs, would be really helpful and enable me to access work placements in larger areas

Appendix 3: Sample of work provided via email by those who could not attend or left early for Iftar

Akorede: *For me, an ideal work experience at Northern gas would involve seeing the different aspects of the business and what they do, as well as being given tasks that like to what employees at Northern gas Network do. It would also be interesting to have a day like a field trip or site viewing, for example to observe the taking out of pipes or tagging along if gas is smelt in a customer's home.*

Ethan: *Good WE can also act like an induction to the job. One of my Business Studies areas is Personnel or Human Resources, Claire's job. Recruitment is both time consuming, which has a cost, as well as costly if subcontracted out. That upfront cost, plus all the on the job and off the job training can be undone at a stroke, if the firm or the staff isn't as described, so work experience acts as a try before you buy.*

Fran: *On the topic of tasks, I think that giving them everyday tasks that the business in the chosen area on a normal day would be most useful, as it gives people an accurate idea of the world of work. Of course, some tasks may need to be supervised or simplified but make them as near to the true work as possible I believe will benefit people most.*

Hassan:

The WOW Factor:

- *Immersive experiences: VR tours, simulations, and real-world problem-solving tasks. This is something unique and relevant to today's day & age.*
- *Industry challenges: Tackling real business issues rather than just observing.*
- *Cross-department collaboration: Exposure to both technical and non-technical roles to help students discover their interests.*

Zinedine:

Final day:

- *whole cohort meets up again in same place as the first day, go over what each group learnt and whether they enjoyed it, any feedback via Menti (doing it with everyone together helps see if there are any popular opinions that need to be noted)*
- *Survey everyone to see if they would be interested in updates on future opportunities in NGN via email/text, offer to get any promising + keen candidates in touch with contacts/ NGN employees if necessary*
- *Give everyone certificates (+ online references if they ask for them) – tends to be very popular with Work experience students as they have something to show for their time and hard work*