

Appendices 2

Evidence of our stakeholder consultations in 2013/2014

1. 2013 stakeholder workshop report
2. 2014 stakeholder workshop report - CO
3. 2014 stakeholder workshop report - fuel poverty
4. 2014 highways authority survey results



**Evidence of Stakeholder
Involvement
Stakeholder workshop
report:
Fuel Poverty and Carbon
Monoxide Awareness**



GreenIssuesCommuniqué

| March 26th 2013

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2 Introduction

2.1. Date and location

The stakeholder workshop took place on 26th March 2012 at The Royal York Hotel, Station Road, York YO24 1AA.

2.2. Attendees:

47 stakeholders attended the workshop. The details of all attendees are shown below:

Claire Mawson - Health improvement Practitioner, NHS South of Tyne and Wear

Jenny Saunders - Chief Executive, National Energy Action

Joanne Burnley - Principal Environmental Health Officer, Hartlepool Borough Council

Martin Garbutt - Technical Compliance Manager, Carillion

Denise Willis - Regulation Manager, EDF Energy

Simon Winch - Programme Manager, Yorkshire Energy Partnership

Chris Sowerbutts - Community Energy Solutions

John Arnold - Manager, The All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group

Lee Cattermole - Community Energy Solutions

Stephen Roberts - Senior Team Manager, Christians Against Poverty

Dr Mark Bevan - Research Fellow, University of York

Jane Mears - SEHO, East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Cllr Chris Ward - Ravenfield Parish Council

Visaly Muthusamy - Policy Connect

Steve Healey - Strategic Projects Area Manager, Cumbria Fire and Rescue

John Mallinder - Home Energy Efficiency Officer, Barnsley Metropolitan Council

Cllr Noel Beal - Crakehall with Langthorne Parish Council

Allen Jones - Energy Masterplanner, Newcastle City Council

Carol Murtagh - Gas Safety Enforcement Officer, Berneslai Homes

Peter Hirschfeld - Calor FREE Energy Advice Project Officer, Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council

Kathryn Chapman - Acting Communities and Stakeholder Manager, Rural Action Yorkshire

Tony Brunton - Chairman, Carbon Monoxide Awareness Ltd

Dawn Gill - Advice Centre Manager, Darlington Citizens Advice Bureau

Patrick McKendry - Sustainability Manager, St Vincent's Housing

Graham Elliott - Chairman of the Finance Committee, Eastfield Parish Council

Brian Golding - Director of Estates & Facilities, York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Roland Johns - CO-Gas Safety



Jen Woolridge - Corporate Partnerships Development Coordinator, The Children's Society

Cllr Les Rayment - Appleton Roebuck Parish Council

James Healey - Property & Estates Manager, Manningham Housing Association

Julie Marshall - Development Manager, Age UK Sunderland

John Ward-Campbell - Home Energy Conservation Officer, Harrogate Borough Council

John Dowle - Mechanical Services Inspector, Berneslai Homes

Ashley Martin - Public Health Project Manager, RoSPA

Cllr Anna Semlyen - Chair of Economic Scrutiny, City of York Council

Stacey Rogers - The Dominic Rodgers Trust, The Dominic Rodgers Trust

Mark Fishpool - Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Environment City

Maureen Fildes - Warmfront Co-ordinator, Age UK Sunderland

Linda Evans - Warm and Well Team, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

Mark Freeman - Sustainability Officer, Coast & Country

Julia Guppy - Business Development Manager, Leeds Community Foundation

Vicci Gibbons - Sustainability Officer, Wakefield and District Housing

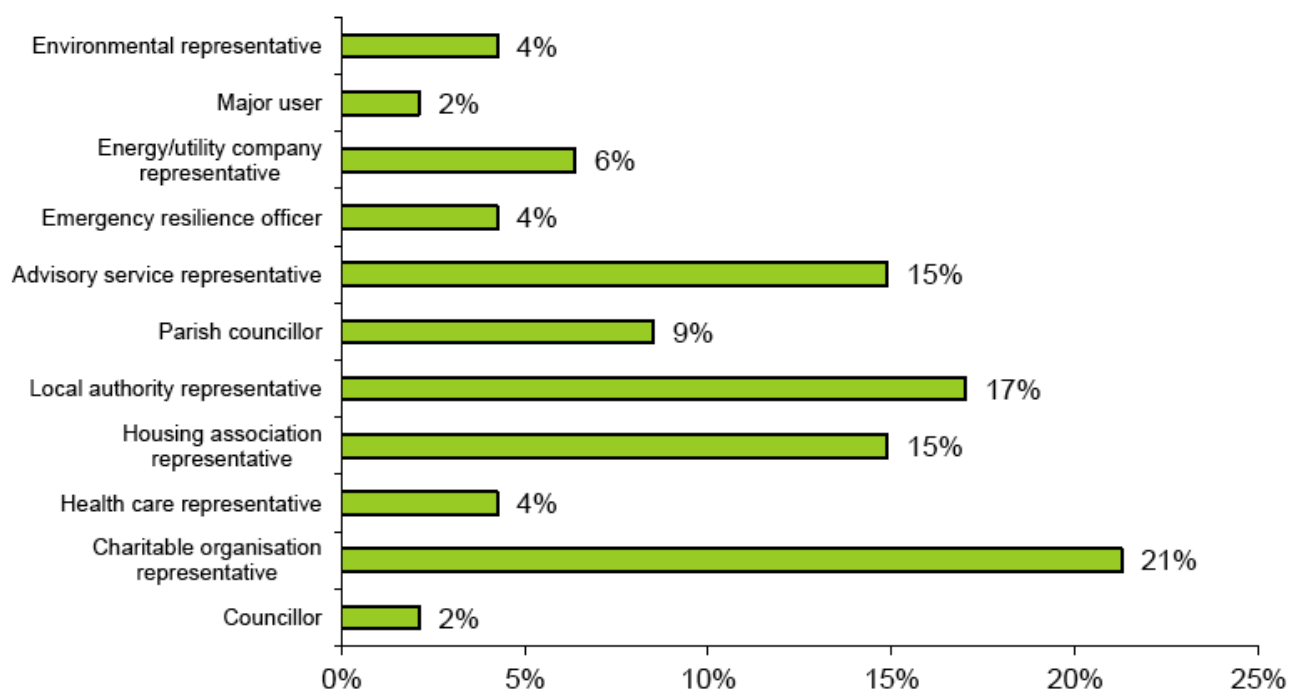
Karen Hindhaugh - Operations Director, Community Energy Solutions

Denise Hall - Project Coordinator, Yorkshire Energy Partnership

Liz Tilly - Director, Building Bridges Training

Richard Herbert - Assistant Director of Properties, Yorkshire Coast Homes

Wayne Lowther - Money and Employment Advisor, Hartlepool Borough Council



The split of stakeholders according to the type of organisation they represent is shown below:

Northern Gas Networks

- David Gill - Director of Stakeholder Relations
- Howard Forster - Customer Operations Director
- Richard White - Contract Manager
- Tom Notman - Network Programme and Planning Manager
- Gary Farnhill - Stakeholder Manager
- Ian Reed - Network Integrity Officer
- Eileen Brown – Head of Customer Experience
- Rebecca Pickin - Stakeholder Support Officer
- Tamar Leeper - Communications Consultant

Green Issues Communiqué

- James Garland - Director (workshop facilitator)
- Kelly Edwards - Executive Director (workshop facilitator)
- Chris Brown - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Emma Webster - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
- Ian Biddulph - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Andrew Vaux - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Nick Carthew - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Rebecca Caygill - Account Manager (scribe)
- Laura Edwards - Account Executive (scribe)
- Alex Coleman - Account Executive (scribe)
- Farah Pasha - Account Executive (scribe)
- Bob Parkes - Account Executive (scribe)
- Robert De Angeli - Account Executive (scribe)
- Emma Heesom - Consultant (scribe)

3. Executive Summary

Fuel Poverty

- The vast majority of attendees represent organisations dealing with issues relating to fuel poverty
- The consensus from stakeholders is that fuel poverty is becoming an increasingly important issue and many were looking for ways in which they can work with NGN to help address this
- The point was made that the phrase 'fuel poverty' has a certain stigma and that many residents, particularly the elderly, may be too proud to seek assistance
- It was commented that many people may increasingly find themselves in fuel poverty in the future as a result of the upcoming welfare reforms
- Families, the elderly and people who suffer from learning difficulties or certain medical conditions were noted as groups who are likely to become increasingly affected by this issue, although the point was made that this is an issue that can affect anyone
- It was commented that those people living 'off-grid' often find themselves living in fuel poverty as they are forced to use more expensive alternatives to gas in order to heat their homes. The result is that fuel poverty has become an issue that disproportionately affects people living in remote areas
- It was widely agreed that NGN should work with trusted local organisations in order to identify and target those individuals who are most affected by fuel poverty. Examples of relevant organisations include advice agencies such as the CAB, parish councils, local authorities and health and social care representatives
- Many stakeholders were of the view that NGN ought to do more to tackle issues relating to fuel poverty, although it was noted that there are already numerous groups in existence who work to address these and that it may be counter-productive to duplicate the work that is already being done
- More effective partnership working with existing organisations was emphasised by many of our stakeholders as a way of addressing fuel poverty
- The point was made that many customers need to be better informed and educated on the issue of fuel poverty and the help that is available
- Most stakeholders were of the view that customers would not be prepared to pay more in the future to help address fuel poverty. The comment was also made that any increase in bills in the future may actually result in more customers being forced into fuel poverty
- It was generally agreed that it is the responsibility of companies like NGN to work to address the issue of fuel poverty and that NGN should work alongside suppliers and other relevant organisations in order to raise the profile of the issue

Carbon Monoxide Awareness

- Although the point was made that anyone could potentially be affected by carbon monoxide (CO), many stakeholders were of the view that vulnerable customers and people living in deprived areas were more at risk
- People living in private rented accommodation, student housing and those living in older houses were identified as being particularly at risk of CO poisoning
- It was noted that landlords have a responsibility to ensure that boilers and heaters are regularly checked and well maintained. It was commented that while there are legal requirements in place to enforce this there are no such requirements for other homeowners. It was, however, noted that landlords do not always abide by their legal requirements in this regard
- It was broadly agreed that people need to be better educated about the risk of CO and that educating people was of paramount importance. There was support for NGN working with partners including local authorities and housing associations in order to roll out initiatives to promote awareness
- There was a good deal of support for the initiatives that NGN is currently undertaking in order to raise awareness of the dangers of CO, particularly its outreach work in schools. This was seen as an effective way of raising awareness and of changing behaviour with regard to this issue. It was also suggested that NGN could work with the scouts and guides to reach out to young people
- It was broadly agreed that NGN could always do more to tackle this issue. Ideas included: helping to fund the distribution of CO alarms; initiating publicity campaigns to raise awareness; working more closely with fire authorities; working in conjunction with the National Landlords Association and the Association of Registered Letting Agents; and reaching out to 'hard to reach' groups who may be at risk
- Although the majority of stakeholders were of the view that companies like NGN should do more to raise awareness of CO and its dangers, the group was not in agreement that gas customers ought to pay more for this

Future Engagement

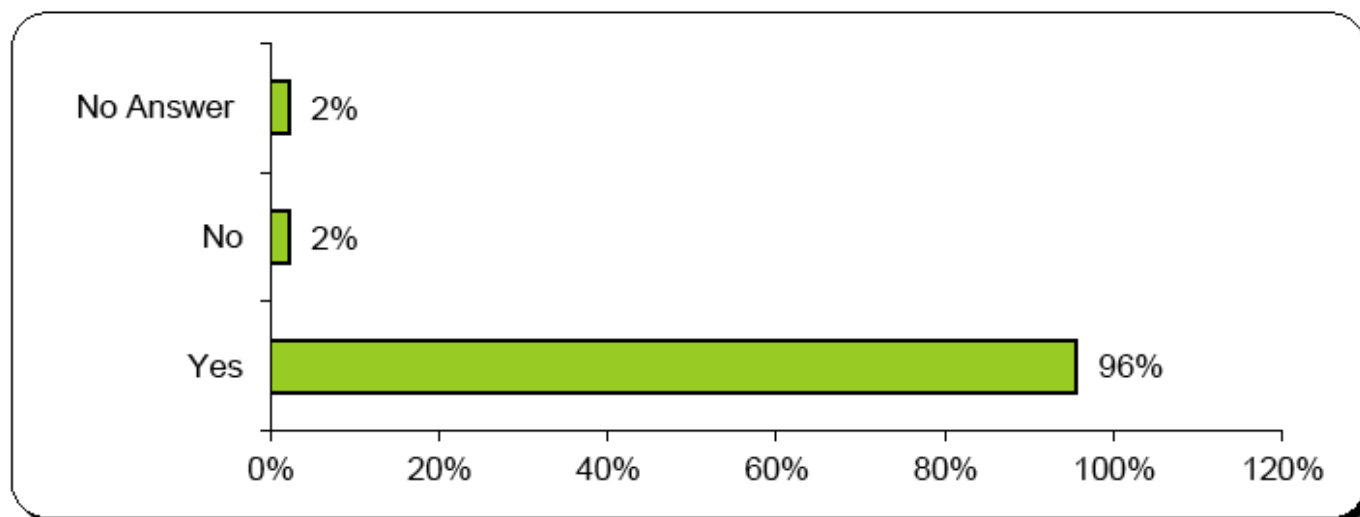
- Many stakeholders stated that NGN should work to improve its communications and raise its profile in the future. Whilst it was accepted that social media was a useful tool, it was commented that this is not always the best way for companies such as NGN to engage with young people
- Most stakeholders told us they would like to be involved in future events with NGN and the workshop format for doing so was the preferred way in which to do this

4. Fuel Poverty



4.1. Q1. Is fuel poverty an issue that is relevant to your organisation?

Table 1



- A charitable organisation representative commented that s/he had been working with Northern Gas Networks since 2009 and was 'heavily involved' in issues related to fuel poverty
- A health care representative stated that s/he was involved in setting up an affordable warm group
- An energy/utility company representative said that s/he was involved in promoting solutions to fuel poverty
- A major user, who was involved in gas safety and infrastructure, made the point that s/he was becoming 'increasingly more involved in issues relating to fuel poverty'
- An advisory service representative highlighted that s/he was involved in promoting energy efficiency schemes in order to help tackle issues relating to fuel poverty
- A local authority representative stated that s/he was seeking to generate improvements in the way fuel poverty issues were managed within the private rented sector
- An energy/utility company representative highlighted that s/he co-ordinates with Ofgem about issues relating to utilities' social obligations. S/he went on to say that the organisation s/he represented was actively 'spending money to address fuel poverty issues'

Table 2

- A local authority representative said s/he oversees '1,200 council houses, looking after both fuel poverty and carbon monoxide (CO) issues'
- A major user stated that s/he is conducting research on fuel poverty and disabled households
- A charitable organisation representative commented that s/he works with NGN to 'help them achieve fuel poverty targets and renewable technologies, linking into national and local schemes'
- A parish councillor said that 'three out of four parishes I clerk for don't have mains gas and they are looking at how to ease fuel poverty, particularly for older folk'. S/he added that most people in his / her village are reaching retirement age
- An advisory service representative said that s/he is learning about CO initiatives and hopes to get ideas about CO awareness and fuel poverty that can be used at a local level throughout his / her network. S/he added that s/he believes there is a 'strong correlation between the risk of CO and poverty'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that s/he works for a national debt council charity across the UK and attended because s/he believes that 'many people are becoming increasingly needy and the cost of fuel makes a huge difference to families who have to balance their budgets'
- A parish councillor made the point that there is a high average age population in his / her parish and fuel poverty is often 'hidden'. S/he also has a number of concerns around CO poisoning, commenting that s/he is 'looking to make sure we can incorporate raising awareness of this issue into our parish plan. We do not know about how to pay for it but want to be at the leading edge'

Table 3

- A local authority representative commented that in Newcastle 'we have a thing called Warm Zone and that has been working for the last 5 years'. S/he also added that 34% of his / her area were 'fuel poor'
- A housing association representative was of the opinion that 'the bedroom tax and benefit restrictions are going to make the issue come to a head'

Table 4

- A health care representative stated that the community nursing team in his / her organisation had the most experience of dealing with fuel poverty
- An environmental representative commented that s/he is responsible for fuel poverty awareness and linking networks, training nurses/community workers
- A parish councillor pronounced that s/he is a community leader representing a 'poor area so fuel poverty is a huge issue'
- An advisory service representative explained that s/he was a front line support worker dealing with fuel poverty
- A housing association representative commented that s/he works in the social sector representing residents on fuel poverty

Table 5

- An advisory service representative said s/he works for 'a national charity where fuel poverty and CO are a concern and are closely linked'. S/he commented that 'it is a matter of safety to work on cutting down on CO poisoning and fuel poverty'. S/he was concerned 'individuals may try to reduce heating bills and by doing this misuse heating appliances such as stoves which can cause CO poisoning'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'fuel poverty is highly relevant to my organisation'
- A housing association representative stated in his / her organisation 'there are 1,300 houses and 99% of them are served by gas'. S/he felt 'fuel poverty is more important than CO in rented properties as landlords have to legally carry out safety checks on boilers'
- A local authority representative commented in his / her area 'there are 3,500 council homes and fuel poverty is a problem for tenants'. S/he is also 'keen to address problems in rural areas'
- A parish councillor stated his / her parish 'are not connected to a main gas line but instead rely on LPG'. S/he said s/he is 'interested to learn about the NGN and the relationship they have with Ofgem and other organisations'
- A charitable organisation representative commented in his / her organisation work with the 'elderly and fuel poverty is a concern as winter deaths are on the rise'

Table 6

- An advisory service representative stated that his / her 'main focus is part two of today's event'. However, s/he added that fuel poverty does have an impact on the amount of accidents, particularly in older people
- A charitable organisation representative admitted that s/he was here for the 'CO side of today, really'
- A charitable organisation representative said that for the 'past four years we have been heavily involved with the Warm Front scheme and a development of hardship scheme in our local authority'
- A local authority representative commented that s/he had a background in social housing but has been specifically working on fuel poverty for the past year
- An environmental representative said that his / her organisation is concerned with 'various aspects of healthy and sustainable living'. S/he added that it is working with 'local installers to get cavity wall insulation and external cladding in to properties'
- A housing association representative stated that his / her role 'is very broad'. S/he explained that s/he 'goes out to residents to give them energy advice and is interested to hear how NGN could fund future projects'

Table 7

- The table unanimously agreed that fuel poverty was relevant to the organisation that they represent

1.1. Q2. Do you think fuel poverty and its associated issues are growing in importance?

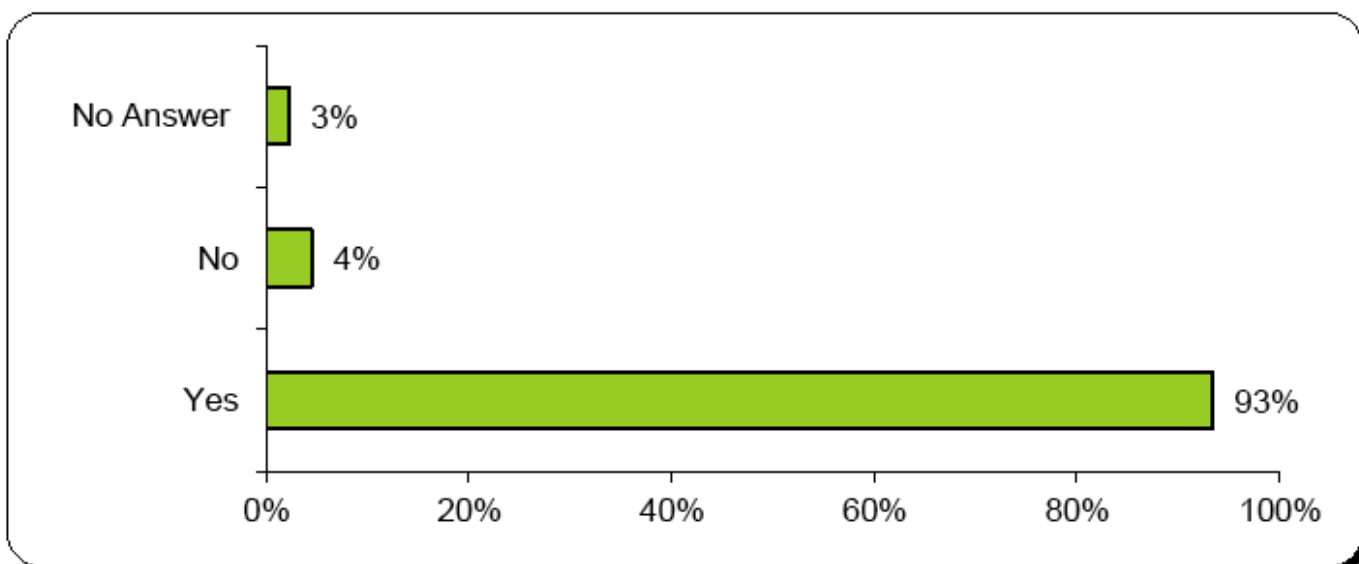


Table 1

- A local authority representative pointed out that some residents s/he had met with choose between 'keeping warm or eating as they could not afford to do both'
- An energy/utility company representative commented that the definition of fuel poverty is changing as it is not a good way to define something that is a real social problem. S/he went on to say that the 'government is seeking to narrow the depth of fuel poverty to better understand the people who are most affected'
- An advisory service representative said that people need 'hand-holding and guidance' through the various schemes that are set up to deal with fuel poverty
- A charitable organisation representative commented that it can be difficult to see if people qualify for funding and went on to mention that the organisation s/he represents tries not to use the term fuel poverty as 'some gas users who are associated with fuel poverty would not appear or want to appear as associated with this term'
- A healthcare representative made the point that s/he would 'never use the phrase fuel poverty'
- An energy/utility company representative stated that 'the government was going to rely on the green deal to fill the gap between reduced spending on welfare and fuel poverty'
- An advisory service representative developed this point by saying that 'the green deal will help a lot in the private rented sector'

Table 2

- The consensus on the table was that fuel poverty will become a bigger issue for families in the coming years. Pension reforms mean that the elderly will be exempt from council tax, but families will not
- A major user commented that 'the impact of welfare reform will affect a range of disabled households in terms of disability benefits and how people afford energy'
- A charitable organisation representative made the point that 'affordability of energy, in light that Ofgem have suggested prices could increase by 40%, will increasingly be a bigger issue'
- A charitable organisation representative said s/he had 'looked at statistics and although this is not an area we focus on particularly, 1/3 of people have about 40-50% of their income going on power. If you add that to arrears, it becomes a huge issue, with prices going up and benefits coming down.'
- A parish councillor stated that his / her parish had just sent out a questionnaire and it was interesting to see that most of the responses that said 'we are spending so much on fuel' came from families with young children
- A local authority representative made the point that 27% of his / her community are off gas. S/he went on to explain that 'this comprises a mix of people and although they have pipeline coming in, the pressure is too high so they can't be attached'
- A parish councillor living in a parish with a high proportion of elderly parishioners highlighted that 'self-disconnection may be a problem. They have the gas but won't use it, whether its 10% of their income or more'. S/he continued by saying 'when this happens, we see a rapid deterioration in general health and have to make sure that neighbours knock on doors to check up on older people'
- A local authority representative made the point that 'many elderly won't go on direct debit so do not benefit from reduced rates'
- A parish councillor added that 'many residents are covered by the old Yorkshire electricity area and lots are now Npower customers'. S/he explained that this is relevant because 'Npower recently changed platform so customers don't get their bills through until the end of April and they don't take meter readings so I think the cost is higher'
- A local authority representative added that 'People don't like change. Door-to-door work does make a difference but the elderly residents are very independent and do not want to accept it, which can be very difficult. They tend to use fan heaters rather than central heating as it is an instant heat or they use the gas fire that never gets serviced'

- A parish councillor added 'there's been a lot of change; we can go down the main street in my town and most people say that they get gas and electricity from the gas and electricity board. They don't know if they are on the right tariff. Yorkshire Water is just sending out their annual bills and they have gone up by 3% - and people have noticed it. When bills are 40% higher someone will know something is not right'.
- A parish councillor commented that his / her primary concern is self-disconnection. S/he added that 'one old couple measure out the water for a cup of tea and never have a light on. They have no TV and go to bed at 8.30. We shouldn't be like that in the 21st century. People have the gas, but people in need just are not using it'

Table 3

- A parish councillor commented that s/he sees 'people go into supermarkets and buy coal for £5 a bag for heating their homes as they cannot afford to buy in bulk'
- A local authority representative supported the parish councillor's comment by saying 'I have people ringing me, to tell me that they haven't been able to fill their oil tank and are using expensive alternatives instead'

Table 4

- An advisory service representative explained 'when people come to us they come about one issue such as a finance check as they are in debt or they are worried about the new bedroom tax, not to specifically declare as fuel poor. Underlying issues for fuel poverty are increasing'. S/he added, 'we had 20% more enquiries last year and I expect this year that will grow to 50% compared to two years ago'
- An emergency resilience officer added 'fuel poverty can also be due to incorrect insulation or badly operated systems so people are paying to heat their homes but on paper they have all the new kit'. S/he went on to suggest 'when energy representatives go into a home they need to check the insulation isn't still in the packet'
- An environmental representative commented that 'the era of large pots of rural community funding is coming to an end'. S/he went on to give the example of CalorFree money where his / her organisation has been 'decimated'. In fact all his / her DEFRA funded projects have ended without onward funding
- An advisory service representative said 'at a time when it is needed most, the Government have pulled the rug from under those most at need'

Table 5

- The general consensus across the table was 'yes', that fuel poverty and its associated issues are growing in importance
- A housing association representative said 'absolutely'. S/he commented that his / her 'residents wince when they receive bills as a large amount of their benefits are spent on bills'
- An advisory service representative pointed out 'housing stock is old'. S/he went on to state 'there is only so much insulating and damp proofing that can be done to an old house. However, knocking down old houses is not an option'
- An advisory service representative felt 'the recent poor weather means people will cut down on putting the heating on and this could result in bed bugs and other bugs that damage children's health'
- An advisory service representative was of the view that 'card meters are a problem as they are expensive and if an individual falls into debt they cannot move onto a cheaper tariff until they are out of debt'
- A charitable organisation representative was of the opinion that a parent will prioritise his / her children's food and nursery fees over the gas bill
- A charitable organisation representative pointed out 'fuel poverty is a rising concern for the elderly; despite appearances many are only asset rich but cash poor'
- The table agreed fuel poverty is a big issue which is growing
- A housing association representative commented 'the heart of the problem is that energy bills are always increasing and this means the problem will only get worse'
- A parish councillor was of the view 'gas suppliers will sell to countries for the highest price they can so it is difficult for gas prices in the UK to be controlled'
- A parish councillor commented 'some people are unable to afford their heating bills so sit in libraries and cafés all day to keep warm'
- A parish councillor agreed and added 'there is a stigma attached to not being able to pay for fuel bills'. S/he was of the opinion 'it is a moral duty to have simple tariffs in place'
- A housing association representative pointed out 'a future concern is when elderly residents in commercial buildings will no longer be charged a communal fee where all energy is included but instead have to pay for their bills individually'
- A housing association representative commented on how 'people are still using coal as gas is too expensive'. S/he pointed out 'coal will run out and NGN need to step in and address the issue of fuel poverty'
- A housing association representative agreed and stated 'coal is cheaper and that is why elderly people do not want to switch to gas'

Table 6

- A housing association representative said that the 'majority of our residents are going on to key meters. Although we explain it is more expensive to them, they prefer that way of paying'
- A local authority representative stated that s/he is starting to refer people to food banks because people 'have to stop eating just to keep their house warm'
- A local authority representative commented that 'the changes to benefits will cause strain to a lot of people's budgets and suck a lot of their income out'

- A housing association representative said that his / her organisation had just expanded their debt advisors team
- A charitable organisation representative said that the cases s/he is coming across are 'becoming far more complex and so much more bizarre. There seems to be such a long history before people come and seek help'. S/he gave the example of a recent client who had lost their job and is now sleeping in a tent under a bridge
- A local authority representative made the point that for all his / her efforts 'fuel poverty has gone up in our area. This is simply down to affordability'
- A local authority representative said that a recent leaflet on fuel poverty has 'resulted in the phone ringing off the hook'. S/he went on to say that not everyone contacting them fits the criteria but his / her council is 'putting people through anyway, in the hope they get some advice or some help'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative stated that people on benefits were set to be less well off under the upcoming benefit reforms. S/he added that due to the change in criteria for energy welfare schemes such as the 'Warm Front Scheme', which used to offer energy audits free of charge, vulnerable energy users in society will be at risk. S/he cited a case where a blind woman on low income was slowly losing her hearing and how her situation was a fire hazard as well as being fuel poor
- A housing association representative stated that a large number of people living in fuel poverty responded to rising prices by turning the heating down and that this was having a dramatic effect on their health and wellbeing
- A charitable organisation representative pointed out that fuel poverty did not exclusively affect people on benefits but also many elderly people who are 'asset rich' but financially struggling, and refuse to sell their property so are therefore also badly impacted
- Another charitable organisation representative was of the view that the UK's rapidly ageing population was generally a prominent issue
- An advisory service representative added that there were a great number of asset rich people in North Yorkshire. However, it has 'the third or fourth highest number of people living in fuel poverty in the country'
- Everyone agreed that fuel poverty and its associated issues are growing in importance
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that the benefits system was too complicated and many people that might be eligible for financial support were alienated by the lengthy forms that have to be filled in to register rather than being 'too proud'
- A community association representative said that people will have to choose between rent and heating and that rent will be prioritised

1.2. Q3. In your experience which individuals and groups are most affected?

Table 1

- An energy/utility company representative stated that 'fuel poverty was not just an issue for those living on benefits' and that 'fuel poverty affected working people also, particularly those in private rented accommodation'
- A local authority representative was of the view that 'people in the private rented sector who are benefit-dependent have real problems with fuel poverty' and also made the point that 'people who are not on benefits may suffer from fuel poverty but cannot receive assistance'
- An energy/utility company representative commented that 'these issues cannot be divided by housing tenure' and that 'agencies which deal with these issues need to go back to NGN and give feedback to demonstrate this effectiveness'

Table 2

- A major user highlighted that 'energy needs are very specific. If you take the example of spinal injuries, you need more heat. It is important for NGN to be aware of the energy needs of different medical conditions. For example, with incontinence issues there is a need to have washing machines on frequently'
- A local authority representative added 'sometimes you need a minimum heat of 24 degrees'
- A parish councillor added that 'it is a generational thing – the older generation aren't accustomed to asking for or getting'.
- A parish councillor commented that s/he remembers saying to his / her son 'get a job - I don't care what you do, you just do not go on the dole'. She went on to explain that 'there is sort of a different attitude today; one where the state will look after you and people don't think where the money comes from. It is easy to spend other people's money'

Table 3

- A parish councillor said 'I am from a rural community that doesn't have mains gas and I'm forced into more expensive forms of heating because of this'
- A parish councillor held the view that 'fuel poverty is across the scale and doesn't just effect the elderly and people on benefits'
- A local authority representative was of the opinion that 'pride is a major issue in stopping people from changing'

Table 4

- An advisory service representative said that s/he felt it 'was not typically who you may assume would be in need' and felt that the people 'slipping through the net' were mostly middle class. S/he went on to give the example of someone who may not get the boiler checked for three or four years as they had monthly bills that 'always came first'
- An emergency resilience officer added that fixed income pensioners have been really hit by fuel poverty. S/he added 'even if a safety-check identifies a faulty system that is only part of the story, who pays for the new boiler?'

Table 5

- A housing association representative was of the view 'it is the unemployed who are affected the most'. S/he also commented people with 'a small disposable income have also taken a real hit'
- A charitable organisation representative felt the above view was true but also that it is 'a dangerous territory to go into'. S/he stated 'people in employment face problems as well and need to have lots of information, advice and support available'. S/he went on to point out people who are currently accessing his / her charity's services are 'not the normal type of individual'. S/he felt this was because many people have had his / her working hours cut and therefore now are experiencing 'new problems'
- A housing association representative disagreed and said 'there is a big difference for those on benefits'
- An advisory service representative pointed out 'students can also be affected by fuel poverty as they are normally living in old rented houses'
- A charitable organisation representative stated 'fuel poverty can affect everyone living in private and social housing'. S/he added 'many pensioners have low income and the unemployed are also affected'
- A local authority representative commented that 'in some areas of private housing there are pockets of low income despite the area being affluent'

Table 6

- A charitable organisation representative explained that there had been an increase in numbers contacting his / her organisation. S/he added that the types of 'people we are seeing is changing. Before it was a certain sector of society, now it is everyone, people like us. It only takes one mishap in a family for people not being able to heat their home'
- A local authority representative discussed the fact that a recent customer, who had been affluent, recently admitted to sleeping in her bathroom because it was warmer than the rest of the house
- A charitable organisation representative stated that fuel poverty is now 'hitting everybody'
- An environmental representative was of the opinion that 'more and more families, more and more working people' are being affected by fuel poverty in his / her area

Table 7

- An advisory service representative commented that increasing energy prices were affecting everyone, but that people were particularly struggling with costs for oil central heating. To this end, s/he explained that people that were in need of social housing in his / her area turned it down if it was a property with oil central heating
- A charitable organisation representative stated that many people do not spend more than 10% of their income on fuel and will 'let it disconnect for a few days if costs exceed this amount rather than pay extra'
- A housing association representative commented that often 'people make the choice between eating and heating'
- A charitable organisation representative stated that people with mild learning difficulties and disabilities were especially at risk because they find it difficult to get access to help with services. S/he expressed concern over the housing benefit changes because this group will be responsible for paying their own rent in the future, whereas before payment was sent directly to landlords on their behalf and that this may lead them to lose their tenancy
- An advisory service representative commented that 'lots of people that live in rural communities don't know where to go for advice and as the number of elderly people in these communities is growing, they will become more isolated because they're not in contact with people that can help'. S/he added that rural communities were at risk of becoming increasingly isolated
- A housing association representative said 'prepaid meters are a disgrace' and felt that it was unfair that the most vulnerable people and those on lower incomes were charged higher rates through prepaid meters
- An advisory service representative stated his/her surprise at the number of households which use prepaid meters
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that Britain was moving towards becoming a 'pay as you go society' and that debt was embedded into this culture. S/he felt that many people did not want to be on credit meters through fear of debt
- A charitable organisation representative stated that 'the Government's wider agenda at the moment is making work pay. They have identified a group of people on welfare as benefit scroungers without raising awareness of the wider issues. There's a stigma attached to being fuel poor but it's not just the workshy that are fuel poor, there are lots of the issues associated with fuel poverty'
- A charitable organisation representative agreed that there was a misperception of people on benefits and that this was limited to big families spending lots of money on fuel

1.3. Q.4. How should NGN aim to identify and target those people who are most in need?

Table 1

- A energy/utility company representative stated that NGN should harness 'advice agencies on the ground' who had existing networks that were close to the people in need and that they should 'maybe go to the Citizens Advice Bureau'
- A local authority representative supported this by saying that 'community groups are better for accessing local residents rather than leaflets in a letter box which just get binned'
- A health care representative commented that as a consumer some of the initiatives discussed were 'all new to me, there is a lot of confusion over which pot of money you may qualify for. The NHS is trying to get front-line staff to raise this issue with patients but this is clearly challenging'

- An advisory service representative said that the organisation they represent 'runs a local advice line which can help gas users navigate these issues, a lot of people out there need a bit of hand-holding and encouragement to use services such as this'
- A local authority representative commented that in their borough the local fire brigade goes out and meets the local communities and discusses issues related to fuel poverty. The point was made that the fire brigade were at a good level to interact with local communities on these issues
- A community association representative was of the view that fuel poverty can directly lead to health problems. The advice networks on gas issues need to be pitched at the appropriate level as this health dimension is not always obvious
- A local authority representative said that they had spoken to a local GP to try to establish a healthcare/energy advice network but there were no referrals
- A advisory service representative commented that 'health organisations can be difficult to engage with, the networks need to be built across different organisations'
- A healthcare representative made the point that 'engagement on fuel poverty issues from health care organisations is low down on their list of priorities. Often engagement can only be two questions in a questionnaire assessment process and therefore not extensive. Gas users just want to know what they can get and how they can get it'
- An energy/utility company representative stated that the next stage for NGN is to better understand definitions about which groups are vulnerable to fuel poverty

Table 2

- A major user made the point that you 'can get to people through their GP'
- A local authority representative pointed out that 'GPs want paying, so our council is bypassing them'
- A parish councillor highlighted that 'people go to parish councils as they know and trust people there, so it could be a good idea to go through parish councils'
- A parish councillor countered that 'information is out there if you have the time and inclination. There is trust and continuity so people will come. Issue is that everyone is doing other jobs, no one is full time'. S/he added that s/he 'uses the internet to search for information and has no social life'
- A parish councillor suggested that 'it would be helpful for NGN to collect information together for parish councils'
- A local authority representative divulged that s/he 'did a project on trust looking at local authorities. We looked at rural local authorities and looked at the issues of trust and where people will go. It concluded that best point of contact is through trusted individuals within the local authority and community'
- A charitable organisation representative made the point that 'it would be better if you can get the intervention before they get into poverty'
- A local authority representative had the view that 'the community groups are a trusted brand to get in and help
- A parish councillor suggested that 'NGN could get to know an area and then can put in insulation'
- An advisory service representative pointed out that 'there is an opportunity for engagement when people move through a transition in their life such as a trip to hospital or when moving house'
- A local authority representative made the point that 'NGN could work with the charities who are also going to be working on welfare reform who work with some local authorities already'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'budgeting education is important. Everything overlaps'

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer asked 'what is being done strategically to identify the areas that need help the most?' and further added 'once issues are identified, how do we turn that into action?'

Table 4

- An environmental representative said; 'it is about raising awareness - if a health worker goes into a house and they keep their coat on because they feel cold then they need to know who to sign-post to easily'
- An advisory service representative suggested that NGN should work with local and trusted agencies, notwithstanding data protection issues

Table 5

- A housing association representative said 'active publicity is the answer'. S/he felt 'the industry is fragmented and NGN needs to take the first step and talk to shippers and suppliers to reach an agreement in which a benefit can be passed onto the consumer'
- A charitable organisation representative felt 'NGN needs to target certain geographical areas and ask residents if they are having trouble paying the bills and move forward with them to help individuals get out of fuel poverty'
- A charitable organisation representative felt 'NGN needs to look at existing organisations and schemes available in places such as Sunderland'. S/he said 'NGN should work with the schemes and become involved with doing community engagement for the vulnerable'
- A local authority representative said 'working with local authorities is key and there are lots of statistics available which highlight where there are high levels of people suffering from fuel poverty'

Table 6

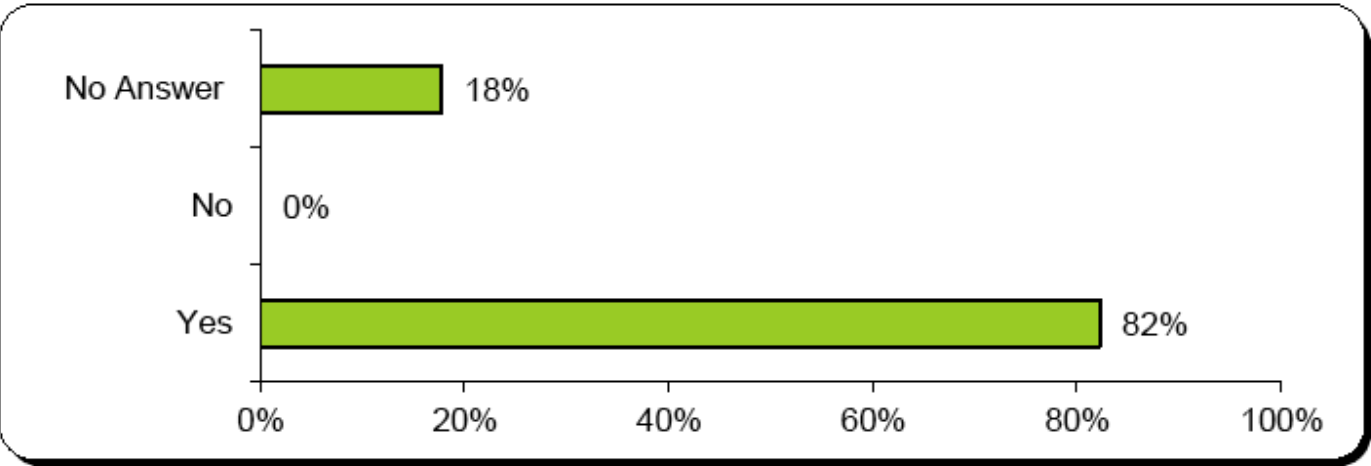
- A housing association representative made the point that identifying individuals at risk of fuel poverty is a ‘moving target’
- An environmental representative agreed, saying that ‘there are people meeting those in need all the time. It is about trying to train them to see the signs and educate them on how to refer them. There is no “pathway” at the moment’
- A charitable organisation representative commented that his / her organisation had done specific training with various groups including social workers. S/he added that ‘this has generated a massive amount of referrals’ and that this is the ‘first time in years that I feel my project has come to life and we are reaching the really worthwhile cases’
- A housing association representative said that most the information on fuel poverty at his / her organisation flows through him / her. S/he added that s/he was ‘best placed to get information out to our residents’
- A housing association representative stated that s/he was running a ‘Something is not right’ referral system at the moment
- A local authority representative suggested that there should be a ‘huge splurge on letting people know about what help there is out there. People were not aware of the existing schemes’

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative stated that s/he was ‘unsure if NGN alone would be able to identify the people who are most in need’. S/he went on to suggest that NGN ‘should work in partnership with grassroots community groups to help target those most at risk’
- A charitable organisation representative agreed that many existing community organisations had already established a dialogue and trust with vulnerable users. S/he added that charity and voluntary organisations were a ‘good place to start and that increasingly people were turning to food banks and hardship funds for help. These might also be good vehicles to reach out to people’
- A charitable organisation representative believed that lots of people were ‘disengaged’ from their local councillors and therefore they might not be the best way to reach people
- Another charitable organisation representative pointed out that vulnerable groups tend to be fearful of ‘authority types’ and that reaching out to them through trusted organisations, local churches or food banks would be more effective

1.4. Written comments

- ‘NGN should allocate appropriate funding and employ someone to feed relevant information in to communities’
- ‘Work strategically with Local Authorities’
- ‘Work with Local Authorities and use data sets to identify the vulnerable’
- ‘Work with retailers to identify defaulters’
- ‘Work with Government and non-Governmental organisations to identify vulnerable persons’
- ‘Partnership working with housing associations, community groups, local authorities’
- ‘Invest!!!’



1.5. Q5. We have seen an example of the work being carried out by NGN in partnership with CES. Do you think NGN should do more?

Table 1

- A local authority representative stated that ‘there are too many organisations out there doing the same thing and this becomes confusing’
- An energy/utility company representative stated that ‘the point when NGN’s work makes the most significant contribution to fuel poverty issues is when setting up a new heating system. At this point NGN have the opportunity to give advice to users who may be unfamiliar with how to efficiently use gas heating controls. It needs to be clear who is responsible for educating these new users. These users either need to link up with agencies such as CES or this education should be delivered directly by NGN’

Table 2

- A charitable organisation representative made the point that 'the Sunnyside project, with CES, is a good example of a whole house solution. NGN should be doing more of this'
- A local authority representative made the point that 'we have difficulty getting info as we are not a priority area for CES and we don't hear from NGN'
- A parish councillor stated that his / her council 'try to make sure that residents take the opportunity to get loft insulation'. S/he added that it is 'difficult to persuade someone to let a stranger into their house. There is no connection between loft insulation and money saving, they see it as a hassle'.

Table 3

- A local authority representative was of the opinion that 'of course NGN should do more'
- A housing association representative commented that 'some people are unwilling to change because they don't understand the benefits and the benefits need to be pushed, especially to the elderly'

Table 4

- The table generally agreed that there is scope for NGN to do more

Table 5

- A housing association representative said 'no' as NGN are already doing a good job
- A charitable organisation representative felt NGN have a bigger responsibility than just laying pipes. S/he said 'NGN have a social responsibility to all customers as well'

Table 6

- An environmental representative was of the opinion that it is 'all very well having a relationship with organisations like CES, but in Middlesbrough they have several organisations doing things already. They do not need another party like CES and NGN coming in and interfering'

Table 7

- Everyone agreed that NGN should do more to work in partnership with grassroots organisations
- An advisory service representative suggested that NGN should look into establishing a range of initiatives because 'different things work in different places, even if the issues are the same'
- A charitable organisation representative added that NGN funds his / her charity's advice hotline

1.6. Q6. Do you have any suggestions of further initiatives that NGN should undertake to address fuel poverty?

Table 1

- A major user stated that gas users just 'want to know what they can get and how they can get it' when talking about fuel poverty benefits. This needs to be achieved in a suitable way 'which is quick, sharp and easy to use'. The representative went on to say that if guidance literature had 'too many words customers will not use it'. Some customers don't know how to use their gas controls and just see it as a 'switch on the wall which can be turned on and off – this is not an effective way of using gas and therefore education at the early stages is required'
- A energy/utility company representative said that the organisation s/he represents 'paid for an advice line on fuel poverty issues but it is under used' and that 'sometimes the Citizens Advice Bureau gave referrals'
- A local authority representative stated that 'we cannot promote schemes if we do not know about them'
- A health care representative expressed the idea that a mechanism that pulled all of the avenues for advice together would be beneficial
- An advisory service representative made the point that the best approach is for a local focus using local authorities as they know where they need to target. S/he went on to say that 'a challenge of this is that local authorities do not have the capacity to engage at this depth'
- A charitable organisation representative developed this point by stating that the 'Energy Saving Trust was always a good source for communities to target'
- An advisory service representative was of the view that 'it is a shame that the poorest people spend the most as they don't use direct debit. Some people will never change to direct debit even though it's cheaper; can more be done for them to help their bills be lower? Also it can be difficult and take time to change from paying on a card to having a direct debit system, should make it quicker and easier for those who do want to change'

Table 2

- A local authority representative made that point that s/he has properties that are 'off gas networks, using expensive fuels'. S/he would like to see solid wall insulation for properties where gas connection cannot happen
- A parish councillor pointed out that if you do not have access to gas you 'have to have electric, oil, Calor gas or coal which are all expensive
- A parish councillor informed the table that his / her 'oil boiler packed up but we have electric under-floor heating, so we were ok. If it happened to an elderly couple with less money, it would be difficult'
- An advisory service representative asked 'whether NGN can work with the oil and Calor gas suppliers to work out funding schemes for their customers to alleviate pressure during the cold period and balance out in the summer?'

- A charitable organisation representative said that 'collective purchase schemes have been tried before but from what I have seen, I don't think they have been very effective as price has not shifted'
- The group concluded that the key issue is to get people getting connected to gas and that education is also important

Table 3

- A local authority representative made the point that 'educating older people is a key area to be addressed'
- A local authority representative was of the opinion that 'green deals are not being marketed to people well enough'
- A local authority representative said 'improving insulation is an issue that needs to be addressed'
- A local authority representative was of the opinion that longer-term funding initiatives are needed as many programmes are far too short and have limited effect because of this

Table 4

- A parish councillor suggested that NGN sponsor community champions in rural and areas of high deprivation. S/he added 'NGN could work with parish councils to fund projects where CAB has been cut to fund support'
- An advisory service representative commented that there are a lot of people who won't self signpost to an agency such as CAB so his / her organisation 'are working with GPs and hold surgeries in the GP practice'
- An emergency resilience officer suggested NGN look at the charity 'Dying To Keep Warm'
- An emergency resilience officer asked if 'NGN could employ someone to make the links, find the best practice like Merseyside and manage a regional network of already established agencies whilst keeping on top of the legislation'

Table 5

- A housing association representative commented 'NGN should give out winter tips on how to save energy'. S/he said 'national publicity is needed'
- A local authority representative was concerned that NGN giving out winter tips would 'have a negative effect as many people are unaware of NGN's existence and would become confused as to who they are'. S/he felt 'a better approach would be for suppliers such as British Gas to work with NGN to deliver information and advice'
- A housing association representative commented that 'education in relation to bills is important as many people accept what they are being charged despite the fact there are better deals out there'
- A charitable organisation representative stated 'the key is to engage with people and this needs to be more than just asking questions'. S/he felt it is more of an 'educational issue and budgeting skills and awareness of insulation needs to be discussed'
- An advisory service representative commented on the numerous gas tariffs available and said s/he finds them 'all very confusing and there are too many'
- A housing association representative agreed and pointed out 'many elderly people do not have access to the internet and therefore cannot find and research cheaper tariffs. S/he commented 'there should be other ways to access tariff information on offer'
- A charitable organisation representative felt 'other families experience similar problems but it can be down to literacy problems'
- A charitable organisation representative said 'NGN should not focus on educating individuals but instead focus on educating whole communities'
- A housing association representative commented on a new scheme in his / her area where 'residents are encouraged to sign up to a tariff offering the cheapest rate available'

Table 6

- An environmental representative discussed the point that fuel poverty is often linked to price. However, s/he would like to see 'more emphasis put on energy efficiency and not just looking at bringing down prices'
- A housing association representative stated that it is 'not just a case of installing things either. There needs to be instruction. Can't just put gas in to a property and walk away. They need to be taught about efficiency as well'
- A charitable organisation representative said that fuel poverty should be 'approached in the right way to avoid stigma'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative commented on the surge in food banks and that NGN should do some more research on the food vs fuel debate. S/he should also consider some 'joined-up thinking initiatives with charitable organisations and explore alternative heating methods'
- A charitable organisation representative also felt that NGN needed to consider a more joined-up approach to address fuel poverty
- A housing association representative asked whether there was 'anything that can be done to help people switch energy providers'
- A charitable organisation representative stated that collective switching was possible but that it is a complex issue
- An advisory service representative commented that people with illnesses 'need lots of heating and NGN could help them access financial help'
- A housing association representative stated that energy smart clubs have been set up through collective switching which encourage people to get together to discuss how to switch providers or save money in a familiar and relaxed context such as a friend's house

4.1.2. Written comments

- 'Assist with funding to things like the Winter Warmth campaigns'
- 'Build on existing organisations and networks'
- 'Sponsor energy champions to take the message out in to the community'
- 'Support work being done to raise awareness of fuel poverty and help with intervention programmes'
- 'All gas networks should work together'
- 'NGN should focus on educating tenants'
- 'Educate people to be fuel poverty ambassadors'
- 'Work in off-gas areas to extend pipes and offer more funding for efficient electric and oil-fire systems'
- 'Working with local partnerships, such as Affordable Warmth and other fuel poverty groups'
- 'Raise the profile of the problem in such a way as it avoids shirker vs striver nonsense'

1.1. Q7. Do you have any suggestions as to how NGN can work in partnership with other organisations to tackle this issue?

Table 1

- A local authority representative commented that their organisation 'only came into contact with NGN when there was a problem and that there was no day-to-day liaison'
- An advisory service representative made the point that their organisation ran a scheme which identified communities that need to be connected to the gas network and that 'NGN could work with us here'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that they would benefit from more 'individual referrals when NGN were doing an area-based scheme' such as the example demonstrated in the presentation
- A energy/utility company representative stated that 'NGN needs to engage with people who can help you fit into existing support networks with different agendas – particularly when working on big schemes the supplies and the delivery partners are important to engage with'

Table 2

- A local authority representative made the point that 'we have not had anything direct from you so suggest closer relations with local authorities and have had very little from CES who have prioritised other areas over ours'
- A local authority representative added s/he had to work through CES and the local authority but not directly with NGN and wondered if s/he is 'missing a trick'
- A charitable organisation representative highlighted that 'CES work on schemes driven by energy companies, so no one misses out on that basis'

Table 3

- A local authority representative commented that 'we need an external partner with resources to help with initiatives, there is a possibility for a low-level advice service'
- A local authority representative made the point that 'licensing of heat maps and data is really difficult to access because of data protection, and we could do so much more if we could access all the information'
- A parish councillor said 'information, information and information is what is needed from NGN'
- A housing association representative said 'there needs to be better communication with NGN and our organisation'

Table 4

- An environmental representative gave an example of his / her organisation training a local vicar in one remote rural area as s/he was trusted and already had local connections
- An environmental representative suggested that free safety checks managed via the parish council would 'open doors' for NGN and other agencies
- An emergency resilience officer highlighted the fact that the fire service is 'trusted in the community and they are already allowed into people's homes'. S/he suggested NGN should 'look at Merseyside & West Midlands Fire Service where they have added 16 questions on CO poisoning. Could they also add fuel poverty questions?'
- An advisory service representative stated that 'nothing is going to change, benefits are down and costs are up. We need to educate people in how to budget'
- A housing association representative added 'similarly to the advisory service representative, our residents tap into the organisations like his / hers'. S/he continued 'we have to help our residents tackle issues further up the line, ventilation and heating for example to prevent the problem at the start'
- There was broad agreement that communication and education are key tools in tackling fuel poverty
- An emergency resilience officer contended that 'some of it is education, not all of it is. The other aspect is the issue with the new gas systems, I am a little bit bothered that they [tenants] get easy to operate systems but who pays for the annual service that costs £120 they didn't have or new CO issues they don't get any support with'

Table 5

- A charitable organisation representative was of the opinion 'NGN need to utilise what is already out there'. S/he commented on the funding cuts the CAB are currently experiencing and therefore working in partnership with organisations like this is important as it is 'a better use of resources'
- An advisory service representative said 'too much information being available is confusing'. S/he pointed out 'grants and funding requirements always seems to be changing and everything needs to be linked'
- A parish councillor agreed and stated 'a one stop shop is needed for insulation and grants'
- A charitable organisation representative felt 'the council and community need to be educated in order to tackle these problems'
- An advisory service representative pointed out 'all gas companies are saying the same thing and therefore they should all have their names on one document'
- A charitable organisation representative felt 'NGN need to take a national initiative which could result creating national partnerships'
- A parish councillor was of the view that 'going into schools to educate children now and sowing the seeds will reduce the number of problems that could arise in 20 years'
- A housing association representative commented 'European countries have same problems as the UK'. S/he said s/he does not want to see any more directives in place but thinks 'NGN should look at what other countries are doing to help communities'

Table 6

- A local authority representative was of the opinion that NGN need to look at the issue holistically. S/he added that there are 'a lot of networks in our authority that already refer people'
- An environmental representative made the point that in Tee Valley, there are already Affordable Warmth teams in most areas; 'talking to them is a good place for NGN to start'
- An advisory service representative said that his / her organisation is a national organisation, but its funds do not allow them to go out and address people across the country directly. It therefore has to use local networks that are already in place. S/he was of the view that NGN should do the same by 'tapping in to those local partnerships that are on the ground already. Far more productive than some big publicity campaign'
- An environmental representative was of the opinion that 'NGN do have a role locally, but they need to talk to local organisations'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that more organisations needed to encourage people to drive forward the 'surviving winter campaign' which encourages wealthy elderly people to give their winter fuel allowance to charity
- A charitable organisation representative agreed that this was a 'good idea'
- An advisory service representative stated that more investment was needed in renewables
- An advisory service representative stated that they could link in with 'Hotspot' funded by the Department of Health

4.1.3. Written comments

- 'Broker ECO deals and make proposals to Local Authorities'
- 'Work at both a strategic and community level to raise awareness. It is also important to get the voluntary and community sectors on board, e.g. Age UK'
- Fund projects to allow more work on combating Fuel Poverty to take place'
- 'Develop projects with Local Authorities'
- 'Speak with supplier to keep prices down'
- 'Link in with Local Authorities'

1.1. Q8. Do you think it appropriate for gas customers to pay more in the future to help tackle this issue?

Table 1

- An energy/utility company representative said that 'we have these pots of money but sometimes we can't give it away, it's not too good to be true and perhaps there is a lack of trust within the industry'; the representative went on to say that 'those spending money in the industry need to remember that it is the consumers' money they are working with'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'the NGN business plans should demonstrate what they could do to help with this issue and the costs that would be passed on to the customer'

Table 2

- A local authority representative made the point that 'all of us are doing it already. People off gas are paying for it but can't get anything from it'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'already a substantial amount of bills go into energy company obligations. Like a stealth tax'
- An advisory service representative stated that an increase in the bill 'might force others into fuel poverty'
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that 'it is unfair that those who need more heat are already paying more under obligation'

Table 3

- A local authority representative made the point that 'it's easy to be socially responsible when times are good'
- A local authority representative was of the opinion that 'it's unlikely that people will want to'
- A emergency resilience officer thought it would be difficult to convince people
- A housing association representative agreed, adding 'people are suffering already and asking them to pay more is something they would not be able to handle'
- An emergency resilience officer commented that 'working with all the other utility companies is a good idea as you can support all these rural communities by working together and could then cover costs'

Table 4

- The consensus on the table in response to this question was 'no'

Table 5

- An advisory service representative simply said 'no'
- A housing association representative commented that 'the Government are good at taxing people' and asked 'why are taxes not reinvested?'

Table 6

- Table agreed that paying more for gas to fund this is not an option
- An environmental representative stated that 'no private business should be making its customers pay for its own corporate social responsibility'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative felt that ultimately it would always be the customer that would end up paying to help tackle this issue, not NGN
- A charitable organisation representative stated that an initiative designed to get people to reduce electricity use in Germany charged everyone a basic rate and higher rates for those who used the most energy or chose to have larger properties. S/he felt that this might be a 'fairer system than the existing one in the UK'
- A charitable organisation representative countered that this would not work for vulnerable individuals that suffer from illness which requires them to keep their homes heated more than most

1.2. Q9. Do you think it is the responsibility of companies like NGN to work to address the issue of fuel poverty?**Table 1**

- A local authority representative commented that 'there is a concept that NGN are just making profits and if this is the case they need to appear to give more back to the public'

Table 2

- A charitable organisation representative made the point that 'we need the integration and NGN are a key part of that. They have the ability to influence something taking place that affects what happens in someone's house. General consensus'

Table 3

- A local authority representative was of the opinion that 'these schemes work for a short time but they run out very quickly and have limited effect'
- A local authority representative made the point that 'it's vital for NGN to work with organisations to use their knowledge to benefit them, if they can't use funding'
- An emergency resilience officer commented 'it's all right getting the fuel there. It is also about improving insulation and other housing issues'

Table 4

- An environmental representative commented that 'it is everyone's responsibility; we need to get to hard-to-reach people in hard-to-heat homes. In rural areas there is no agency like CAB or if there is it is over capacity. We need to empower parish councils in this example with support and funding'
- The table strongly agreed with this view and had no further comment to add

Table 5

- A charitable organisation representative felt that 'NGN are partly responsible'
- A charitable organisation representative agreed but felt 'NGN needs to work with others to take responsibility in addressing issues such as fuel poverty'
- A parish councillor was of the view 'someone needs to take the lead'

Table 6

- The general consensus on the table was that NGN did have a responsibility to address fuel poverty

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that NGN should have a responsibility to address fuel poverty. S/he also felt that everyone needed to take some civic responsibility to address the issue
- A charitable organisation representative added that all companies have a social obligation to help address fuel poverty and that this cannot be ignored
- A housing association representative agreed that companies had a clear obligation to help the fuel poor. S/he stated that companies were slowly moving in the right direction but ultimately s/he felt that 'we've all got a role to play and we all need to pull together'
- A charitable organisation representative said 'it's not just about connecting people to gas. I didn't get the impression that this workshop was about fuel poverty from the presentation earlier. NGN need to do more work in areas where people have gas but are fuel poor'
- Everyone agreed that NGN should work in conjunction with energy suppliers to help tackle fuel poverty
- A charitable organisation representative stated that the Government also needs to link up all of its different schemes, however, s/he felt that their drivers were committed to lowering carbon



1.3. Q10. Should NGN work to raise the profile of this issue – any suggestions?

Table 1

- A local authority representative was of the opinion that 'NGN would look good' if it were to raise the profile of fuel poverty and that 'NGN need to initiate changes'

Table 2

- A local authority representative stated that 'you can currently go on to a website where people send you a disc with information on where pipelines are and which you could connect on'
- An NGN representative commented that 'the challenge with fuel poverty is that it needs to be economically viable to make an investment and individuals need to be prepared to change over to gas. Campaigners may not gain that critical mass – 25% of residents vs a whole community'

Table 3

- A local authority representative was of the view that 'it's best NGN work with local people in rural communities as they can look at you as outsiders coming in'
- An emergency resilience officer commented that 'there may be a role for NGN to co-ordinate communication with rural communities as they can help identify areas of fuel poverty'

Table 4

- The group agreed NGN should work to raise the profile of fuel poverty
- The environmental representative said 'people may call them the gas board but NGN need to ignore that and just get on with it'
- There was consensus that the only effective solution was to support and underpin already established partnerships

Table 5

- A charitable organisation representative said 'NGN should raise awareness for companies and tenants'
- An advisory service representative suggested 'adverts in the press would be a good idea'
- A housing association representative suggested 'a web page would be helpful'
- A parish councillor stated 'front leading is key'. S/he said 'instead of NGN just saying they will make changes they need to produce a timeline stating what they will be doing and when'
- A charitable organisation representative said 'NGN need to work with what is already out there'. S/he pointed out there are 'high profile campaigns such as Help the Aged'
- A local authority representative agreed and stated 'NGN need to look at services and work that is being carried out'
- A charitable organisation representative commented 'NGN need to reach out to those who need to be reached and targeted'

Table 6

- An environmental representative was of the opinion that 'what we don't need is a high-profile campaign'
- An environmental representative was of the opinion that 'handing something out is a good idea' when engaging the public because it 'pulls people in to conversation'. S/he added 'resources would also be helpful, provided it fits in with what is going on already. It is about reaching the people who need it most, rather than yet another airy fairy campaign'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that in order to raise the profile of fuel poverty NGN need to source case studies and come up with new ideas for case studies and trial innovative ways to tackle the issue
- A housing association representative stated that NGN needed to heavily publicise events to get people along and help them to connect to gas and raise profile of fuel poverty
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that due to the failure of local news outlets to give fuel poverty sufficient media coverage the message was not getting out there and this in turn helped to 'brush the issue under the carpet'. S/he believed that NGN could do more to build links with the local media and that a lot could be achieved to raise the profile of the issue, 'especially if you have good relations with the press'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'the story also needs telling at a policy level to understand the wider implications of fuel poverty'. S/he agreed that NGN needed more compelling case studies
- A charitable organisation representative agreed that getting politicians involved could be a good idea but it was difficult as there are so many other issues they are having to deal with at the moment including NHS and welfare reforms
- Everyone on the table agreed that raising the profile of fuel poverty would require a more joined-up approach
- A charitable organisation representative stated that the funding which his / her organisation use to support the fuel poor was acquired by carbon savings money
- An advisory service representative was of the view that lots of places lack community cohesion and that raising awareness is not only about understanding this but how organisations can develop strategies based on areas where cohesion is fragmented
- A housing association representative said 'we're running out of things to do, properties are standardised, insulated and double glazed. But there are lots of people living in the wider community who are living in fuel poverty that we can't reach and that's where NGN come in. However, the real issue here is that people have less money and more costs, that's the real conundrum'
- A community association representative agreed that this issue came down to economics. S/he stated that the reality of the matter is that salaries are capped, welfare is capped, bills are increasing and to help resolve the issue energy providers need to cap bill costs. S/he added that people on low incomes face the prospect of being left with no money once their bills have been paid

1.4. Any other comments?

Table 1

- A local authority representative pointed out that 'landlords who were offered grants to help improve gas using appliances often did not take up the benefit'
- A major user countered by saying that some private landlords had 'taken up these benefits'

Table 2

- A parish councillor added that 'from February time there's been very heavy marketing around the "green deal" and whether that will help, we don't know. Local residents tend to come to the parish council and expect everyone there to be an expert'
- A local authority representative said that 'the green deal is about selling, not about education. Something we have lobbied long and hard about'

- A charitable organisation representative countered that 'insulation is as equally important - insulate well enough to save money, it will protect you from increased energy costs in the future'
- A local authority representative said in his / her experience, 'landlords don't like gas so the majority will be using storage heaters with prepayment and the community has a real mix of families and agricultural lets. Also we have 3-5 storey houses let as flats so we have the CO issue'. Landlords have to pay for annual gas safety certificates – this costs money. Tenants have to pay for the Green Deal

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer held the view that 'data protection needs to be addressed at a ministerial level as it's killing people'

Table 4

- An advisory service representative explained that her organisation recently had lots of its expert frontline advice officers, in debt advice or counselling, cut as part of government cost savings so lots of people have to rely on volunteers or self-help tools
- An advisory service representative explained 'we have an hour in a room with someone with multiple issues, who are often upset, so my team need to know who to talk to'
- An emergency resilience officer commented that s/he 'generally found housing associations are the worst, some of them border on criminals, they don't like spending money'
- A housing association representative said 'hospitals can work with housing associations to access grants to improve homes, such as rewiring so elderly can be discharged, it benefits the whole system but we need to work with the council in partnership'

Table 5

- A housing association representative pointed out 'the North Sea has run out of gas and now the UK has no option but to buy from countries such as Ukraine'

Table 6

- A local authority representative said s/he had concerns about the increased cost of gas because of the recent rise in gas imports. S/he added 'this is going to push up prices when energy prices are already high'
- A local authority representative made the comment that 'the recent headlines [relating to potential gas shortages] are going to panic people'
- A local authority representative was of the view that the 'Green Deal's assessment fee is putting a lot of people off'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that the 'recommendations made on energy performance certificates are not worth the paper they are written on'. S/he offered the example of a boiler that was not working being given the same score as a working one
- A housing association representative made the point that his / her organisation 'cannot do anything to the properties any more, so all we can do is advise'
- A housing association representative discussed the point that 'some people are working better than their heating system because they are only turning it on when they are cold, if ever'
- An advisory service representative stated that 'if we are seeing more and more people who are in work having fuel poverty issues, then we are going to see an increase in accidents. If you are cold, you are more likely to fall and more likely to heat in a less safe way'
- A housing association representative warned the table that 'if you open a fire place back up without checking it, that is dangerous in itself'
- An environmental representative commented that energy efficient heating 'systems are great, for those who can use them. We need to start thinking about automated systems for those who do not know how to use them. If people do not know how to use a system, you will not make any savings'

Table 7

- An advisory service representative commented that the Government's Green Deal initiative did not have any real measures targeted at alleviating fuel poverty. S/he felt that it did not make sense that it offers loans to people for insulation when some organisations offers this service for free
- A charitable organisation representative agreed that the Green Deal would not work in deprived areas
- An advisory service representative stated that 'it won't take off at all, plus people are expected to pay even more money'
- Another charitable organisation representative commented that 'we've got £88,000 to give out and masses of things that need to be done. We can't do it all'

5. CO awareness



1.1. Q1. Is CO an issue that is relevant to your organisation?

Table 1

- A health care representative stated that s/he is ‘not currently involved in CO awareness issues’
- A major user commented that s/he works with an awareness group that gave out detectors. This approach had a ‘tremendous impacts in Kirklees which previously had a very bad record on gas safety’
- An energy/utility company representative stated that their organisation gave a free gas safety check to some households

Table 2

- A parish councillor said that s/he had ‘never done anything properly co-ordinated with CO protection’
- A parish councillor added s/he ‘worked with the fire brigade on fire alarms’
- A local authority representative stated that s/he had trained key workers such as health professionals, the fire service, landlords and the private rental sector
- A parish councillor said that s/he has a number of concerns around CO poisoning

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer commented ‘nationally 40-50 people are being killed by CO yearly’. S/he went on to say that his / her organisation ‘as a partner fit these detectors free of charge. We don’t have the funds to buy the alarms but we do have the capability to fit them’

Table 4

- The group agreed that CO awareness messaging was relevant to all population groups, not just those who were fuel poor
- An emergency resilience officer stated that s/he was a charity worker specialising in CO

Table 5

- A housing association representative said ‘gas safety is paramount’. S/he commented his / her organisation ‘has a service to tenants as a landlord’. S/he said his / her organisation ‘services and maintains the properties every 12 months and if they are unable to enter the building the gas supply is cut off as safety comes first’
- A charitable organisation representative commented on the ‘winter warmth campaign’ and stated s/he works with the Fire Service
- A local authority representative said ‘it is very important for health and safety regulations for all council tenants to include gas checks’
- A housing association representative said ‘as a landlord we have a statutory duty’. S/he pointed out ‘fossil fuels are as dangerous as gas and this is not well known’. S/he said ‘landlords are heavily regulated and individuals need to be made aware of the dangers’

- A housing association representative strongly felt there should be new rules where people have to have their boiler checked and 'this should be compulsory like a car MOT'

Table 6

- An advisory service representative said that s/he is a project manager for a CO awareness campaign in its third year. It is providing up 10,000 CO alarms and has about 40 partnerships in various parts of the country with organisations such as fire authorities, Age UK and local councils
- A councillor stated that s/he was 'quite new to CO and was here to learn more'
- A charitable organisation representative said that his / her experience 'is from the receiving end'. If his / her clients have 'spotted their CO detector card has changed colour then we send out the engineers'.
- An environmental representative confessed that s/he had no experience of CO in his / her organisation. However, s/he was 'interested to see how [CO awareness] can be added to some of the work we are already doing'

Table 7

- The table agreed that whilst not always directly relevant to their organisations, it is still an issue that they are interested in

1.2. Q2. In your experience which individuals and groups are most affected?

Table 1

- A major user said that 'the vulnerable groups that are most affected by fuel poverty are often also subject to gas safety issues. Often this is seen as a process of decline where old systems have not been serviced properly'. S/he went on to say that 'in particular the older housing stock fosters issues on gas safety, such as Kirklees which was a hot spot for these issues. Often it is most likely in the winter months'
- The table was in agreement with this point
- An energy/utility company representative suggest that in particular 'OAPs and under 5s were most vulnerable to gas safety issues'
- An energy/utility company representative stated that 'the issues can often be that landlords do not follow up these sorts of issues'

Table 2

- A major user made the point that 'fuel poverty promotes risky behaviour and increases the risk of CO' so it is likely to be those households who are most at risk
- A parish councillor commented that it affects 'not just the very young and old, but everyone'
- A local authority representative made the point that 'student accommodation is a big problem area'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'private landlords do have responsibility for the gas supply. The type of gas supply varies your risk and it also depends if you block up air vents'
- An advisory service representative was of the view that 'there is an issue with Green Deal with decreased ventilation through increased insulation. Ventilation needed for appliances to work is reduced. There are other issues if using solid fuel as it is ten times more risk than gas'
- A charitable organisation representative added that 'woodchip being stored contains natural carbon is a risk, it brews deep in the woodchip'
- An advisory service representative stated that 'a study done by a university found there was an even spread of risk between different groups. In terms of health, the young and elderly are at high risk due to physiology but a strong link between fuel poverty and CO risk due to the type of fuel sources being used and the lack of funding to make sure services are high quality'

Table 3

- A parish councillor held the view 'I think this isn't just a mains gas issue, also better insulated houses are more at risk'
- An advisory service representative stated that '2.9% of homes in London had issues with CO'
- An emergency resilience officer stated 'houses with good insulation are more at risk'

Table 4

- An emergency resilience officer commented that CO 'is no respecter of persons. It affects anyone and everyone. It is classless'. S/he commented that gas registered installers were found responsible for 60% of deaths in relation to CO
- A health care representative commented that s/he was sure all the relevant checks were made in their organisation but perhaps NGN could do more with communication of the dangers away from the home

Table 5

- A housing association representative felt 'it is not possible to categorise people into groups as CO does not discriminate and can affect anyone'
- A housing association representative felt 'home owners who have to manage their boiler themselves are most at risk as there is no one regulating them'

Table 6

- The table was in agreement that anyone could be affected by CO
- A charitable organisation representative raised concerns about how often 'some sectors of society have their gas appliances serviced. Many homeowners can't afford to'

- A housing association representative was of the opinion that 'people are less likely to have their appliances serviced as prices go up'
- An advisory service representative made the point that 'landlords are required to have their appliances checked regularly. Private homeowners have no such legal requirement'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative stated that people across the board were affected
- Another charitable organisation representative was of the view that the private rented sector was most at risk
- An advisory service representative believed that 'homeowners with fuel poverty issues were most affected'
- A housing association representative stated that a lack of knowledge amongst most people was a big problem. S/he said that a lot of private housing stock is probably not safety checked thoroughly before being leased
- A charitable organisation representative felt that part of this issue stemmed from the fact that 'everyone is trying to save money, people are draught proofing to preserve heating without paying heed to the fact that lack of ventilation is a hazard'
- An advisory service representative commented that often people 'block up' air bricks because of the draught they give out
- A housing association representative added that 'we jump through flaming hoops to get gas servicing. Landlords are liable and they have to make sure that servicing is carried out'
- A charitable organisation representative explained that his/her friend was affected by a CO leak and it took several days before s/he decided to go to a doctor and was shocked to discover the cause of her illness. S/he added that this story has spread in her local area and has helped raise awareness of the issue
- A housing association representative stated that 'it seems that tragedy has to happen to raise awareness about this'. S/he added that s/he had lost someone because they had used a grill to heat living space
- An advisory service representative commented that it was not uncommon to hear of cases where people use gas rings to heat their homes because they think that it is cheaper
- A charitable organisation representative stated that often people that self-disconnect use candles to create their own connections, especially elderly people. S/he believed that these people were most at risk because they use portable devices that may not have been safety checked
- Another charitable organisation representative commented that most people do not consider the maintenance of household utilities as important and take the 'why fix it if it's not broke' perspective when it comes to safety checks
- An advisory service representative stated that a portion of the population that do not have central heating rely on room gas heaters
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that 'the biggest issue is the private rented sector. Unless an accredited landlord scheme is set up, tenants will have no idea whether appliances are serviced or not'
- A charitable organisation representative stated that private householders also have a responsibility for checking safety

5.1.2. Written comments



Stakeholders were asked to leave written comments to this question on their feedback forms. A sample of these comments is shown below:

- 'Old, poor, young'
- 'A wide range of people'
- 'Everyone'
- 'The elderly and people on benefits'
- 'Everyone! It does not discriminate'
- 'Everyone. CO transcends all social behaviours'
- 'The elderly and the young'

1.1. Q3. How can NGN work to identify those households which are most at risk?

Table 1

- A major user stated that 'there is data currently that identifies households that are most at risk'
- A major user said that 'local authorities can be more involved in gas safe initiatives. This is often very difficult, as priorities are elsewhere. The most useful intervention is education on these issues'
- A major user commented that 'letting can be informal making access difficult. Just one bad property can be dangerous for surrounding houses'
- A local authority representative responded by stating that 'these landlords could be subject to prosecution from the Health and Safety Executive'
- An energy/utility company representative commented that 'people do not have the money or time to worry about CO. People will not even go to their GP when they are told they have been exposed to CO'
- A major user said that 'these issues are often raised at gas engineer level. The lack of understanding that users have on gas and gas safety issues is astounding, particularly confusion over carbon dioxide and CO. There are lots of cases where both of these gases are dangerous. The overwhelming solution is through education'

Table 2

- A local authority representative said s/he does not 'deal directly with council houses but trains people going into them and this might be a route to identifying those at risk'

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer commented that NGN would not have an impact 'doing things like you have today. None of your communications campaigns will have impact'
- An emergency resilience officer asked "how many GPs are aware of the issues of CO?'

Table 4

- An advisory service representative suggested that case studies and talking about reality can really hit home. S/he added that s/he would not forget some of the stories she had heard at the workshop
- An environmental representative added that 'students have a real social conscience, they will nag parents and are vocal'
- Several representatives commented that travelling communities and ethnic groups don't 'signpost themselves - don't expect them to come to NGN'

Table 5

- A parish councillor said 'working with people who live in flats would be an obvious choice'
- A local authority representative commented 'NGN needs to look at past data to see if it is true that home owners are the ones most at risk'

Table 6

- A local authority representative commented that 'local authorities are at an important level to intercept these issues' and also stated that 'working with local authorities would be beneficial as they know the housing stock'
- A charitable organisation representative said that other charitable organisation regularly carried out doorstep assessments and that 'through these they could help NGN identify people that need a CO alarm'

Table 7

- A community association representative stated that most households have smoke alarms, although it took the fire brigade a long time and several advertising campaigns to get the importance of these devices across. S/he asked NGN if they had considered their approach
- An advisory service representative stated that NGN could use the roll-out of the smart meters as an opportunity to set up a dialogue with energy service providers to identify those most at risk and NGN could provide them with a CO alarm
- An advisory service representative agreed linking in a second tier to the smart meter programme would be a good idea
- A charitable organisation representative added that cost might be an issue

1.2. Q4. What do you think of what NGN is proposing with regard to this issue?

Table 1

- An energy/utility company representative asked 'is there a commercial incentive for NGN to engage with gas safety issues?'
- A major user commented that 'even when a big organisation is trying to sell a message it can be difficult to access local authorities. NGN have been fantastic at support and guidance when trying to raise issues related to gas safety by attending events and talking to people. As these schemes go on and on the depth of knowledge can become engrained'.

Table 2

- A local authority representative made the point that 'people seem to focus on schools but what about scouts/guides?'
- An advisory service representative discussed that the 'focus has moved from piped gas to camping issues due to where deaths are. Perhaps this is giving a risk of complacency'.

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer made the point that 'education will go some way to raise awareness but until devices are in every home there will still be deaths'

Table 4

- An advisory service representative suggested that there isn't the trust or understanding of NGN in communities so it could work in partnerships; s/he suggested there is a branding issue
- A parish councillor suggested NGN should work through existing agencies

Table 5

- A housing association representative said 'fantastic' and hopes 'the next generation can carry it on raising awareness and tackling this problem'
- A housing association representative asked 'do NGN advise tenants to go to hospital if there is a CO leak?'
- A housing association representative said 'patients should demand checks from their doctor'
- An advisory service representative said 'in relation to raising awareness of gas safety NGN are better than other networks'

Table 6

- A charitable organisation representative made the point that 'if we observe someone doesn't have a smoke detector, we can refer them to the fire service. People still have to pay for their CO alarms'
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that 'education in the schools is an absolute necessity'. S/he added that it should form part of 'all these basic life skills, such as money skills, environmental awareness'
- A charitable organisation representative asked what age groups NGN have been looking at targeting with their education programme
- An environmental representative enquired what level of coverage the current workshop scheme has reached in NGN's region
- An environmental representative was of the opinion that NGN are 'never going to have enough resources to cover all schools, every year'
- An environmental representative made the point that 'if NGN were planning to implement all the plans they have across the region, they will need a lot of resources. If they do not have the resources, how are they planning to spread this across the region?'
- A councillor stated that s/he feels 'cynical about educating children. It will help in years when they have their own house but adults are the ones making the decisions about buying an alarm or having the boiler serviced'. S/he went on to say that NGN is 'not wasting its time, but it should not be the forefront of its campaign'
- A local authority representative said 'it is the things that kids come home with and think are important. If your child worries about them, you are more likely to try to make them feel safe. It doesn't have to be the only avenue, it is just another one'
- An advisory service representative made the point that 'the reasons we are using alarms on our campaign is because it is a focal point for the campaign. It is not a substitute for having your boiler serviced'
- The table liked the idea of NGN offering customers a voucher for a discount on a CO alarm

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative stated that giving people a discount could also be 'a good vehicle to promote the alarms'
- An advisory service representative stated that a discount would only be suitable for people that have money to spare
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'if you give people something for nothing, they might not appreciate the benefits of the device and put it in the bottom drawer, but if they buy themselves they might assign it more value'

1.3. Q5. Do you think NGN could do more?

Table 1

- An energy/utility company representative commented that 'NGN could help by establishing a route to help when someone has a problem with a particular appliance or service to show how functionality can be restored safely'
- A major user further developed this point by making the point that 'NGN should not just focus on detection but take responsibility for the whole process'

- A major user commented that it is common for only '75% of the properties to be accessible by the council even when gas servicing is free. Therefore there are deeply ingrained accessibility issues that NGN may not be able to combat'

Table 2

- The group generally agrees it's the right approach as people are surprised to be helped by NGN
- A parish councillor highlighted that it is 'much better to have more touch points than fewer touch points as it is about lifting awareness. It's important and children are very powerful'
- An overarching theme was that people cannot afford to buy CO detectors and the fire brigade cannot fund them.
- A local authority representative said there is an issue with supply of CO detectors

Table 3

- A housing association representative said that 'NGN can always do more'

Table 4

- A parish councillor made the suggestion that NGN should 'sponsor energy champions'
- An advisory service representative said NGN should empower the person needing help. It should 'educate, work with them and not just give them a leaflet'
- An emergency resilience officer highlighted that travellers and ethnic groups would need different services accessed in a different way
- An emergency resilience officer appealed to NGN to help with communicating that the effects of CO poisoning can last years, and it isn't just from gas

Table 5

- A housing association representative said 'it would be nice to see poster campaigns in offices, articles in newsletters'
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view that a newsletter and all other communication methods should be looked at. S/he said 'this could include promotion of CO awareness through internal and external communications such as company websites and social media'
- An advisory service representative agreed and commented 'CO awareness should be part of the fuel poverty campaign'
- A parish councillor felt that 'NGN can only do so much and that ultimately it is up to the individual to help themselves'
- A parish councillor was of the opinion that 'NGN could take a national lead and that educating children is key'

Table 6

- An environmental representative made the suggestion that some of the more visual things that NGN have shown today could get more coverage by making them available online. S/he added 'at the rate NGN are going it's going to take 30 years to reach everyone'
- An advisory service representative asked whether it has to be an NGN member of staff running a Crucial Crew event, or 'can NGN train people up to be a Crucial Crew member?'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that his / her organisation ran a project called Mad Science that taught children, in a fun way, about science. S/he went on to explain that it 'targeted 50 schools with one large assembly, so we were able to reach all the children in a school at once. NGN should consider something like this'
- A charitable organisation representative said that 'a lot of schools now have systems where children go home and do homework on the school network. Online modules of NGN's education programme could be added to this'
- An advisory service representative asked 'do NGN supply CO alarms? And if so who to?'

Table 7

- An advisory service representative stated that NGN should work with energy suppliers to do more
- The general consensus was that more needs to be done and that there has to be a partnership arrangement and an astute strategy in place to achieve more
- An advisory service representative commented that partnership linking could be achieved through community outreach to children's centres, fuel poverty schemes at local authorities

1.4. Q6. Do you have any suggestions as to how NGN can work in partnership with other organisations to tackle this issue and raise awareness of CO?

Table 1

- An advisory service representative commented that 'research can be done to understand which households are not compliant on gas safety issues. If this is understood then our campaigns would be better targeted'
- A local authority representative stated that 'it is also important to engage with the fire service and the Health and Safety Executive'
- A local authority representative stated that 'it would be useful if leaflets from trusted organisations could be distributed to users. Perhaps NGN could work with the National Landlords Association and the Association of Registered Letting Agents'

Table 2

- An advisory service representative made the point that 'diagnosis is a huge problem, it is a challenge to get GPs to recognise the signs of CO poisoning. We have spoken about doing a poster campaign but you get poster blindness'

- A major user asked ‘what about the National Union of Students? Seeing as they are at risk. NGN could do something at a freshers’ or student fair’
- An advisory service representative was ‘speaking to a colleague at a centre of excellence to get the CO message across from trusted people. They found that the fire service is a trusted group that people would welcome to deliver that message and it is more meaningful than giving away a CO alarm. Using message and delivering alarm is the way forward’
- A parish councillor stated that ‘the fire service would follow up the delivery of CO detectors to check batteries and hand over new ones if needs be’
- Overall, the group agreed that the fire service is a natural partner and the most trusted
- An advisory service representative highlighted that ‘in the US, the fire service has the responsibility to look after CO awareness and they are a lot more “clued up” than the UK. It seems NGN’s appetite to go beyond the gas remit works well with CO
- A local authority representative said s/he would like more CO detectors to distribute
- A parish councillor stated that s/he ‘gave a whole load [of CO detectors] out’
- A major user suggested that perhaps handy-person services who go in to change a light bulb could check for CO detectors and suggest installing them, or check the battery level
- A charitable organisation representative made the point that ‘CO monitors aren’t a mandatory part of the “decent homes” initiative. This is a missed opportunity’
- A parish councillor commented that s/he wants to provide CO detectors into social housing for all age groups as ‘many rely on bottled gas heaters that are not inspected’
- A local authority representative made the suggestion that NGN could sponsor a CO awareness Scout and Girl Guide badge
- A parish councillor suggested that NGN ‘email Bear Grylls to get a badge’
- An advisory service representative commented that there has been one done in Northern Ireland for safe camping

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer said that ‘if we could get access to the meters we could go and sweep around the houses’
- A parish councillor commented that NGN should ‘work with social housing and other organisations like the fire service to fit monitors’
- A parish councillor held the view that ‘carbon loss is also a money-saving issue and could be marketed that way as well as a life-saving issue’
- A local authority representative made the point that ‘the other thing that could be done is to lobby manufacturers of alarms so they can lower pricing’
- A local authority representative was of the opinion that ‘we need a central point of contact’
- A parish councillor queried ‘why don’t the meter readers get a detector so they can do both?’
- An emergency resilience officer pointed out ‘you need a device for each heating device’

Table 4

- A parish councillor made the suggestion that NGN could ‘work with councils to make it mandatory for housing associations and social landlords to install CO testers or work with the fire service to fund CO alarms to be fitted when smoke alarms are fitted’
- The group agreed that NGN should work with the fire service to have a combined CO detector and smoke alarm fitted. This would also ensure equipment is fitted correctly
- A health care representative commented that ‘community forums may be useful’
- An environmental representative suggested examples such as Energy Best Deal coffee mornings in SureStart, CABs and Age UK

Table 5

- A charitable organisation representative said ‘NGN should work in partnership with DIY stores and make it compulsory there is information about CO on patio heaters’
- A housing association representative agreed and stated ‘every customer should be made aware of gas safety when they are being sold a gas appliance’
- A charitable organisation representative was of the view ‘if NGN are not dealing with customers directly then they should make companies which are aware of CO dangers’
- A parish councillor asked ‘how are NGN working with other transporter companies?’
- An advisory service representative said ‘cross-party groups are a good idea’
- A parish councillor felt that ‘just like smoke detectors, CO detectors should be compulsory’
- A parish councillor said ‘suppliers should offer a service such as boiler checks’. S/he pointed out ‘NGN can only do so much and therefore partnerships are needed’

Table 6

- An advisory service representative commented that ‘if we can get funding for CO alarms, we can get them distributed via their local networks. We just need the money’

- A charitable organisation representative enquired about the possibility of her organisation's schemes having access to a supply of CO alarms. S/he also suggested a local community furniture charity should also have access to a supply
- An environmental representative stated that s/he is 'running training courses all the time. There is no harm with adding CO information at the end of these'
- A local authority representative commented that his / her local authority already work closely with the fire service. S/he added that the fire service already 'hand out smoke detectors so they could do the same with CO'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative stated that a 'powerful way of getting through to people is celebrity endorsement'
- An advisory service representative commented that 'Google adverts could also be a good way to reach the wider population'
- A charitable organisation representative stated that 'the breakdown of statistics of CO related deaths should be widely publicised'
- An advisory service representative added that the fire service installs free smoke alarms for vulnerable individuals and that perhaps NGN should consider doing the same
- An advisory service representative stated that CO awareness should be linked in with fuel poverty schemes. S/he felt that using this two-pronged approach would allow NGN to reach out to vulnerable users. S/he added that his/her stakeholders regularly enquired about where CO monitors can be purchased and who can fit them
- A charitable organisation representative suggested that retailers could put these on promotional offer and build a PR campaign to raise awareness about the importance of owning one
- A housing association representative commented that energy service providers could also help promote the use of meters. S/he added that 'customers that have insurance with their energy provider should be given meters free of charge'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that public health could help join up social health and care

5.1.3. Written comments

- Stakeholders were asked to leave written comments to this question on their feedback forms. A sample of these comments is shown below:
- 'Work with Gas Safe Register to help promote awareness'
- 'As with fuel poverty; work with established networks'
- 'Attendance at community events'
- 'NGN should give talks to parish councils'
- 'Concentrate on developing economies of scale to bring down the cost of units to get them in to more homes'
- 'Work with local schools and local authorities across the country regularly. Possibly once a year'
- 'Take a national level on the subject'
- 'Everyone should work together to get a consistent message out there'
- 'Provide detectors to all homes'

1.1. Q7. Are there any services that you think NGN should offer to help raise awareness about CO and help address this issue?

Table 1

- A major user made the point that 'giving advice is more effective than distributing alarms, detectors are just a second line of defence, the best interception is a properly serviced system'
- An energy/utility company representative commented that 'some kind of package of help is needed when new systems are adopted' and went on to say that 'people on low incomes use old gas appliances because they cannot afford to replace them. Perhaps the schemes discussed could link up with this so the appliances can be replaced'
- A major user commented on an American initiative where 999 calls are recorded and played through media platforms to help raise awareness
- A major user raised the issue of NGN paying for domestic detectors and stated that 'customers need to be educated on the process, otherwise the money is wasted. Money would be better spent on education. Free alarms often may not be used. The most important message is that detectors are only a second line of defence'

Table 2

- A parish councillor was of the view that 'people will say they do not need a CO monitor. It is a personal thing and you need to look people in the eye and make sure they have one and check the batteries, like the fire service has done with smoke alarms'
- A local authority representative enquired about the feasibility of giving a household a CO alarm when they sign up to the Priority Service Register
- An advisory service representative suggested that 'NGN could make vulnerable customers more aware through free safety checks. Often vulnerable people are elderly, chronically ill, disabled and poor sighted. People can move in and out of vulnerability and there are allowances for that so can be picked up in a transitional period when 'at risk'
- A major user asked if much work been done with people living in caravans, mobile homes or with manufacturers of mobile homes

- An advisory service representative made the suggestion that CO alarms should be promoted as smoke alarms have been
- An advisory service representative informed the table that a 'dual detector cannot be offered due to different densities of gases and smoke'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that the fire service's smoke alarms 'do not have a removable battery as people do take it out and forget to replace it'
- A local authority representative suggested NGN could have a 'swap campaign to trade in old alarms'
- A parish councillor made the point that 'when you buy portable gas heaters, you don't have to give your name and address. It could be like when you buy a television. NGN could then target them with CO advice'

Table 3

- A housing association representative commented that 'the retailer has a responsibility to address the issue'
- An emergency resilience officer stated that s/he believed that 'there needs to be education on how to properly use these devices'

Table 4

- An environmental representative said that there should free boiler services and training on how to be fuel efficient. S/he also suggested NGN 'work with gas providers to promote existing services or funds'
- An emergency resilience officer stated that 'boiler manufacturers should have to provide one free alarm per x boilers sold. NGN should help lobby for this'
- An advisory service representative said 'it would be great to do a holistic, all round check on gas, poverty, fuel poverty and health'
- An environmental representative highlighted that some people already have some symptoms of CO poisoning as they have long-term illness or medication so 'partnerships with health services is vital'
- The table agreed that the fire service was a good and trusted partner
- A health care representative suggested NGN work with health providers to train and signpost health workers who go into homes and are trusted

Table 5

- A parish councillor said 'NGN need to put CO detectors in more homes and give out more information'
- A local authority representative stated 'it is key to fit alarms as it is cheap'
- A housing association representative said 'no one really buys a CO detector'
- An advisory service representative pointed out 'NGN must not give people false security by telling them the detector will save them but instead it is part of helping CO awareness'
- A charitable organisation representative said his / her organisation 'works with 40 children centres'. S/he added 'it would be great for NGN to give awareness talks and this is important for children's futures and education'
- An advisory service representative commented that 'engaging with school children is good as the children will tell their parents what they have learnt'
- An advisory service representative was of the view 'gas engineers today know about CO but there is no set qualification that they have to take to be trained'
- A housing association representative disagreed and said s/he is a gas engineer and has 'a qualification'
- An advisory service representative commented 'more CO awareness is needed as some assume CO only comes from gas appliances'
- An advisory service representative pointed out 'more education is needed as some think smoke detectors also detect CO when they do not'
- A housing association representative commented on 'new floorless gas fires which get rid of the fumes'. S/he said 'there are lots of situations where gas safety needs to be looked at'
- A housing association representative suggested 'the bill payer should automatically receive a service on their boiler'
- A housing association representative pointed out 'a lot of promotion and awareness is needed in relation to holiday homes'. S/he went on to comment 'existing statutory requirements are not always understood' and praised the recent Coronation Street storyline which raised awareness of CO
- A housing association representative said 'in terms of annual safety checks, analysing and CO tests should all be carried out'
- A housing association representative suggested 'an information sheet should be available when a property is fitted with a new boiler'
- A housing association representative suggested 'NGN create a report of each house in the area and this report remains attached to the property'

Table 6

- A charitable organisation representative was of the opinion that 'we need to play it smart and have children telling children. They listen to their peers rather than their parents'. S/he also suggested that there should a CO awareness mascot
- An advisory service representative said that his / her organisation would not supply the card monitors because 'you need an audible alarm and the card ones are not as reliable'
- A local authority representative commented that s/he keeps instructions on how to use the boiler next to it so s/he knows how to use it and suggested CO advice could be stuck next to a person's boilers too. S/he added that this 'could trigger people's memories. Older people in general are very good with instruction'

Table 7

- Everyone agreed that the wider public needed to be educated more about CO
- A housing association representative asked about the cost of CO detectors. S/he was of the view that people on lower incomes 'would not spend £20 on a meter and would prefer to spend the money on feeding their family for a week instead'. S/he went on to ask why CO detectors were not free of charge
- A community association representative stated that free alarms should be given away with new connections
- A charitable organisation representative agreed that if boiler installations are a legal requirement an additional £20 for an alarm at source should not cause problems
- Everyone agreed that new gas connections and people that have new gas boilers installed should automatically receive a new detector

5.1.4. Written comments

- Stakeholders were asked to leave written comments to this question on their feedback forms. A sample of these comments is shown below:
- 'NGN should offer evidence and advice as well supplying and fitting CO detectors'
- 'CO alarms and regular inspections'
- 'It should be the supplier's responsibility'
- 'More information on the subject should be made available through a public awareness programme'
- 'NGN should fund CO alarms and let the fire service or a community partner fit them'
- 'There needs to be improved access to prevention literature. Allow the fire service to use the literature and give out during campaigns'
- 'NGN need to link in with meter replacement schemes and offer a two-tier system which is free for those at risk'
- 'Perhaps pay for advertising campaign'
- 'Fit alarms to ALL properties'

1.1. Q8. Would you, as a gas customer, be prepared to pay more in the future for additional services to be offered to gas customers to help address this issue?

Table 1

- The general consensus on the table was that the customer should not pay more because this forms part of NGN's social obligations

Table 2

- A charitable organisation representative said that 'it is difficult because the death rate is low, it is difficult to justify in my own mind'
- An advisory service representative added that 'in a way, there was just one death from CO related to mains gas last year, so if there was going to be a charge it should go towards fuel poverty not CO awareness as numbers are higher'

Table 3

- An emergency resilience officer stated 'is it worth raising awareness of funding sources already out there about offsetting costs against tax? For example, funding on landlords to use funding available to them. Possibly national association of landlords'

Table 4

- The table agreed that it was a unanimous 'no' as it is the duty of the gas companies
- An advisory service representative commented that 'there is prejudice against certain vulnerable groups so more well-off people won't want to pay for their fuel as they think they all mismanage their money'

Table 5

- A housing association representative stated s/he already pays his / her gas bill and for a service. S/he asked 'why should I pay again?'
- A parish councillor was of the view 'if Ofgem allow NGN to make a profit then why should an extra charge be added?' S/he felt 'the amount of profit NGN can make should be reduced'
- A housing association representative asked 'is there is a pot of money?'

Table 6

- A charitable organisation representative commented 'if an extra charge is 10p that is good and I am happy to pay. If it is £10 I would not be happy and ask why should I have to pay?'
- A housing association representative commented 'if everyone paid an extra £1 a week that amounts to the cost of a boiler service'

Table 7

- An advisory service representative stated that 'people will be in up in arms if they have to pay more; they pay enough as it is. The Times recently reported the short reserves of gas supplies last week highlighted that prices will probably go up again'

1.2. Q9. Do you think it is the responsibility of companies like NGN to provide services to tackle this issue or help to raise awareness?

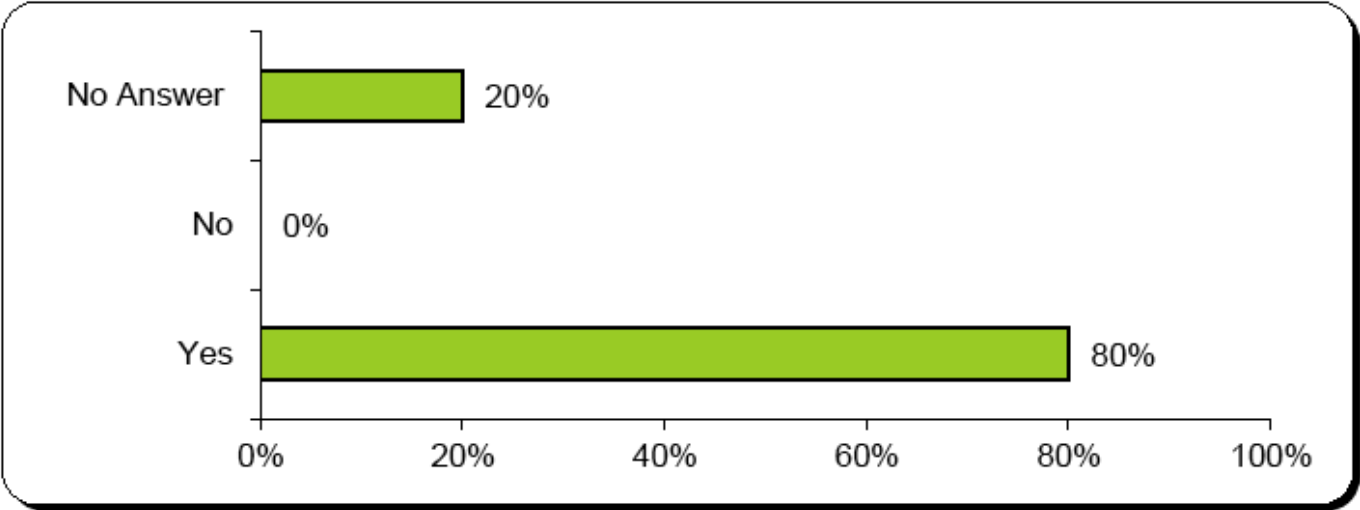


Table 1

- An energy/utility company representative said that there are ‘different levels of responsibility throughout the supply chain, the job of people in the gas business is to be active on these issues. However, the ultimate responsibility at the end of the day is with the homeowner’

Table 2

- An advisory service representative stated that ‘primarily it should fall to the gas safe register of engineers and secondly focus on CO detector alarms and try to get as many people as possible to have them installed in annual safety checks. Messaging from the network is a good place to start and directly deal with the issue. Face to face is the best way to get it to sink in as people bin leaflets’. S/he added that detectors last between 5 – 7 years because it’s a newer technology
- An advisory service representative commented that there is a ‘duty on the energy industry to sort out how gas is burned’

Table 3

- A parish councillor said ‘yes, to a degree. If every parish council did it, it wouldn’t work but needs a bigger force, like wearing seat belts’

Table 4

- The table were in agreement that it the responsibility of companies like NGN to provide services to tackle this issue or help to raise awareness
- The advisory service representative added that the cost of CO poisoning was over £178 million to the NHS alone. This consisted of ambulance, A&E, care and treatment costs

Table 5

- The table was in agreement that NGN do have a responsibility to tackle CO awareness

Table 6

- An environmental representative said that ‘it needs someone like NGN to take ownership’

Table 7

- A housing association representative felt that this issue was everyone’s responsibility and that people needed to work in partnership to educate about the dangers of CO and meters can be offered free of charge for people on lower incomes

5.1.5. Written comments

- Stakeholders were asked to leave written comments to this question on their feedback forms. A sample of these comments is shown below:
- ‘It is NGN’s responsibility but this needs to spread wider to other organisations’
- ‘NGN are not 100% responsible’
- ‘It needs to be a multi-agency approach from supply line to consumer including statutory authorities’
- ‘It is everyone’s responsibility - lead the way!’
- ‘Yes, along with everyone else’

1.1. Q10. Should NGN work to raise the profile of this issue – any suggestions?

Table 1

- An energy/utility company representative mentioned that ‘further funding or awareness of grants would be beneficial’

- An advisory service representative made the suggestion that 'a national, co-ordinated campaign between suppliers, networks, and gas safe register then would be a good use of resources'

Table 2

- There was a consensus with the group that a campaign needs consistency
- A local authority representative advised to focus on the personal approach as people ignore adverts on buses
- A parish councillor agreed with the local authority representative
- An advisory service representative suggested that there is too small a number that die from CO for the government to take an interest. S/he highlighted that 'more data and communication with companies like NGN would be useful. There are good communications already but data is something that is lacking to make a compelling argument'

Table 3

- A local authority representative suggested that 'a television campaign would be the best'
- An emergency resilience officer added 'if NGN could fund the units that would be the best possible result'
- An emergency resilience officer made the point that 'involving all stakeholders together could help find funding'
- A parish councillor was of the view that 'servicing the units should be pushed'
- A housing association representative added that even when servicing is recommended people 'don't actually get them serviced'

Table 4

- An emergency resilience officer stated 'what is needed is a regulator who will enforce regulations, such as 1998 gas regulations. S/he added that 'The HSE don't go after the landlord, they go after the gas installer or the big company, not the house owner even though he knew he was breaking the law'

Table 5

- A housing association representative said 'promotion of CO through housing newsletters is a good idea' and went on to ask 'why can't we legislate on gas safety? We need it to save lives'
- A parish councillor said 'NGN need to take a national lead and also work with the fire brigade'
- An advisory service representative disagreed and said 'whilst the fire service is ok their main concern is fire and not CO'
- A charitable organisation representative commented 'a subject as serious as this should mean NGN should work with every idea'
- A charitable organisation representative said it is 'not one size fits all'
- A housing association representative was of the view that 'home owners are being missed in terms of raising awareness of fuel poverty and CO awareness'

Table 6

- An advisory service representative commented that 'we cannot get away from the fact that there are many adults that are unaware of the risks of CO'
- An environmental representative was of the view that CO awareness 'might be more suitable for a high-level approach than fuel poverty'
- A charitable organisation representative commented that 'a radio jingle would be good. Not everyone watches the television in the evening'
- An environmental representative was of the view that 'there is a lack of awareness on CO because I have never seen a campaign about it. It is not being raised as an issue'

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative commented that NGN needs to do more to raise awareness about CO
- A charitable organisation representative stated that television advertising would be the best way to raise the profile of CO issues
- A charitable organisation representative added that a recent storyline about a CO-related incident in "Coronation Street" was a powerful way of raising awareness about the issue whilst targeting a broad audience

5.2. Q11. Any other comments?

Table 1

- An advisory service representative commented that energy suppliers 'have a large underspend on the priority service register because they do not promote this service'

Table 4

- An advisory service representative gave an example where British Gas was door-knocking in his/her area and s/he 'asked them to refer customers to us. We were also prepared to have their literature for cheaper tariffs but they did not send us the information through'

Table 5

- A housing association representative commented 'appliances such as patio heaters are dangerous and there is no requirement to have a qualification when using them'

Table 6

- A local authority representative discussed the fact s/he is ‘coming across more and more people using Calor gas heaters, as heating is not as affordable. We do not know if they have ever been tested. These can be old, passed from family to family’
- A councillor stated that ‘public buildings should be mandated by law to have CO alarms. This should include student accommodation’
- An environmental representative made the point that ‘not all students are in university-accredited accommodation’
- A housing association representative stated that his / her company has installed CO alarms in all of its properties. S/he was going to go back and check with his / her colleagues about whether or not electric-only homes have them too
- A local authority representative informed the table that 25 years ago s/he bought a second-hand gas cooker through a newspaper and killed her canary because of a leak
- A housing association representative asked whether or not there had been ‘any thoughts on ensuring the right location for the alarm? With a gas boiler on the landing, cooker in the kitchen, and fire in the lounge where should people place them?’
- A charitable organisation representative responded saying that ‘this is where some good training will come in helpful’
- A charitable organisation representative stated that ‘there were attempts in the past to make it a legal requirement to have a CO alarm in the house to sell it, but this was dropped I believe’
- A councillor said that s/he imagines the fact that ‘when the battery runs out it beeps incessantly is a real headache for people’

Table 7

- A charitable organisation representative said ‘Ofgem are instrumental in all of this’
- Another charitable organisation representative explained that all communities are very different ‘whether in Newcastle, Huddersfield or Yorkshire; these all present very different challenges’. S/he added that NGN should also link in with local authorities
- A charitable organisation representative added that the fire service and NHS Primary Care Trusts should get involved. S/he felt that medical symptoms were part of their discharge process and that NGN could use interactive TV screens in hospital waiting rooms to get its message across

6. Future engagement

Due to the importance of the topic, some tables made the decision to concentrate their time on the topic of CO awareness and did not discuss all the Future Engagement section in great detail. However, stakeholders were eager to have their views on Northern Gas Networks’ future engagement plans recorded and completed the feedback forms after the event. All stakeholders were encouraged to submit their comments in writing by completing a feedback form after the event.

1.1. Q1. Are improvements to NGN’s communications necessary?

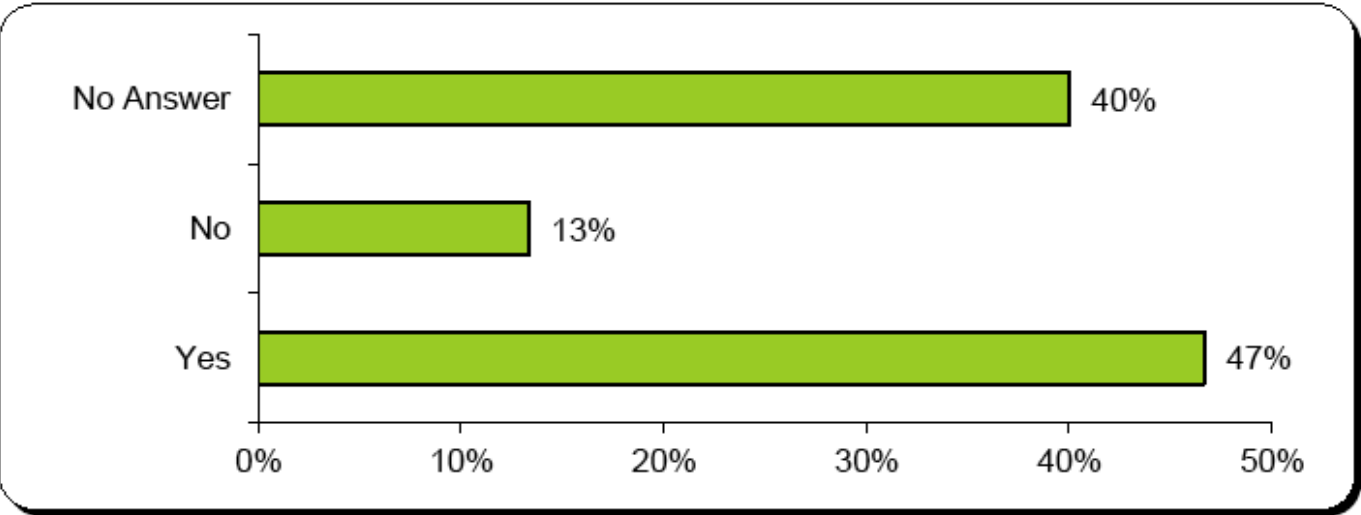


Table 1

- A charitable organisation representative commented that ‘getting the message into classrooms was really important’
- A local authority representative agreed with this point and suggested that ‘NGN could increase their communication with local authorities and other stakeholders’

Table 2

- The table generally thought that NGN could improve its communications and stakeholders would like NGN to do more

Table 3

- A local authority representative said ‘establishing a strategic partnership with local authorities is something NGN should look at’
- A housing association representative stated ‘I don’t know who to contact if I have an issue’

- A housing association representative made the point that ‘there are no contact details on the information we have been given today’

Table 4

- An advisory service representative commented that s/he ‘was surprised when I heard from them recently’, through his / her work, but it seems they are getting much better at communicating
- An environmental representative commented that s/he had only looked at the NGN website because s/he was attending the stakeholder day
- The health care representative suggested that NGN could ‘use digging the road up as an opportunity to engage with people’ as this is one of the only ways that the public may come into contact with NGN: ‘use the hoardings and the signs cleverly to communicate about CO or how to get help’
- The advisory service representative suggested NGN do something to raise awareness of issues in fuel poverty week

Table 5

- An advisory service representative was of the view ‘it is good that NGN are having a workshop today’

6.1.2. Written comments

- Stakeholders were asked to leave written comments to this question on their feedback forms. A sample of these comments is shown below:
- ‘Please keep us up to date with developments as a result of this workshop. However, please do not bombard us with emails’
- ‘This is the first time I’ve become aware fully of NGN. Regular two-way comms with those that attended today would be good’
- ‘Keep us informed on stakeholder events in general’
- ‘This method works for partners and stakeholders’
- ‘NGN should hold smaller events in local venues’
- ‘I would like to see follow-up events with similar representation’
- ‘Improve channels of communications, disseminate information and regular emails’
- ‘I am interested in contributing to issues that impact on people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable groups’

1.1. Q2. Should NGN work to embrace social media as a way of improving its communications? E.g. Twitter, Facebook etc.

Table 1

- A local authority representative stated that ‘young and vulnerable people would not engage with these issues through social media’

Table 2

- The consensus on the table was that face-to-face contact was better than social media
- An advisory service representative did, however, make the point that young people may prefer different methods

Table 4

- An environmental representative commented that ‘it really works’
- An advisory service representative stated that ‘social media help you reach people you never would before, particularly young people’
- An environmental representative commented that ‘people are lazy so YouTube ads would be good’
- The advisory service representative suggested real examples of people helped out of fuel poverty with a new boiler or financial support would be useful
- An emergency resilience officer commented that his / her charity had been supported by a third party with strong social media presence and one of their messages had reached thousands more people from one simple web link

Table 5

- The table agreed that use of social media such as Facebook is a positive idea
- A charitable organisation representative said ‘social media is important’. S/he said ‘NGN working with companies and charities to increase supporters and numbers is the key and increasing likes and followers on Facebook is a small part of what needs to be done’

1.2. Q3. Do you think NGN needs to improve its website?

Table 3

- A housing association representative was of the opinion that the website ‘needs updating’

Table 4

- The majority of the table commented that they did not know it existed before being invited to the stakeholder workshop
- The emergency resilience officer said that using Facebook or Twitter would be a way of helping ‘an arrow to your site’

1.3. Q4. Would you like to participate in NGN's engagement activities in the future?

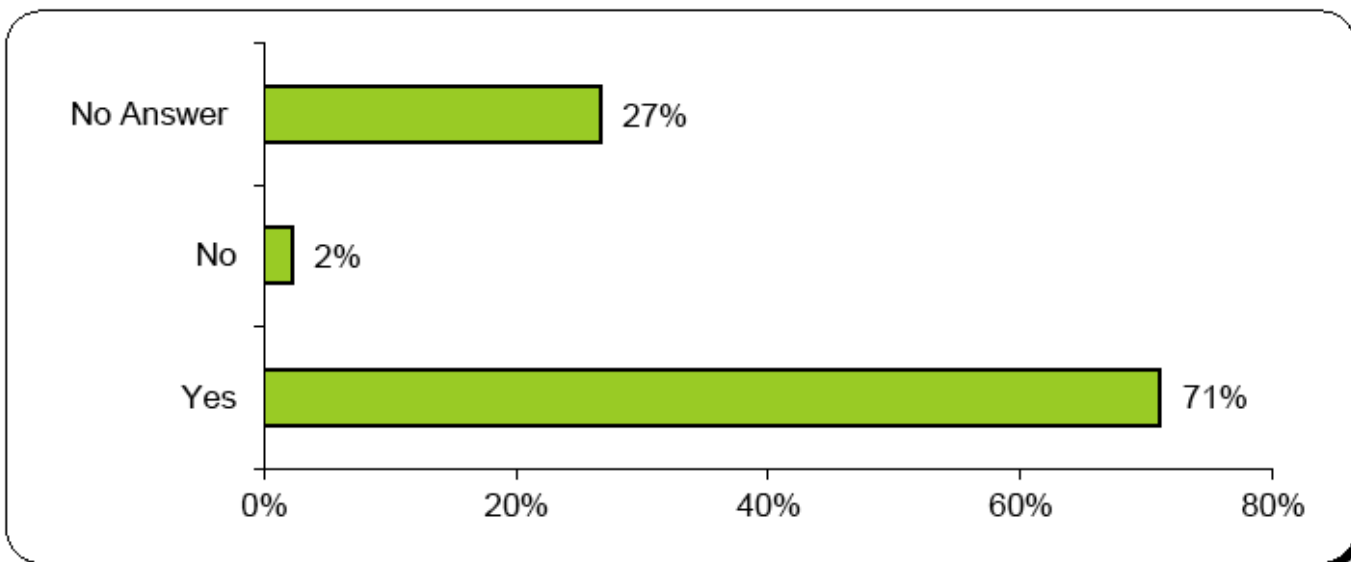


Table 1

- The table agreed that they would all like to participate in future engagement activities
- A local authority representative said that s/he had 'found out a lot of important information'

Table 2

- The table agreed that they would all like to participate in future engagement activities

Table 3

- A local authority representative was of the view that 'these events are very useful when there is something that needs to be said'

Table 4

- The table agreed that they would all like to participate in future engagement activities
- An environmental representative said the day had been very useful

1.4. Q5. How would you like to participate?

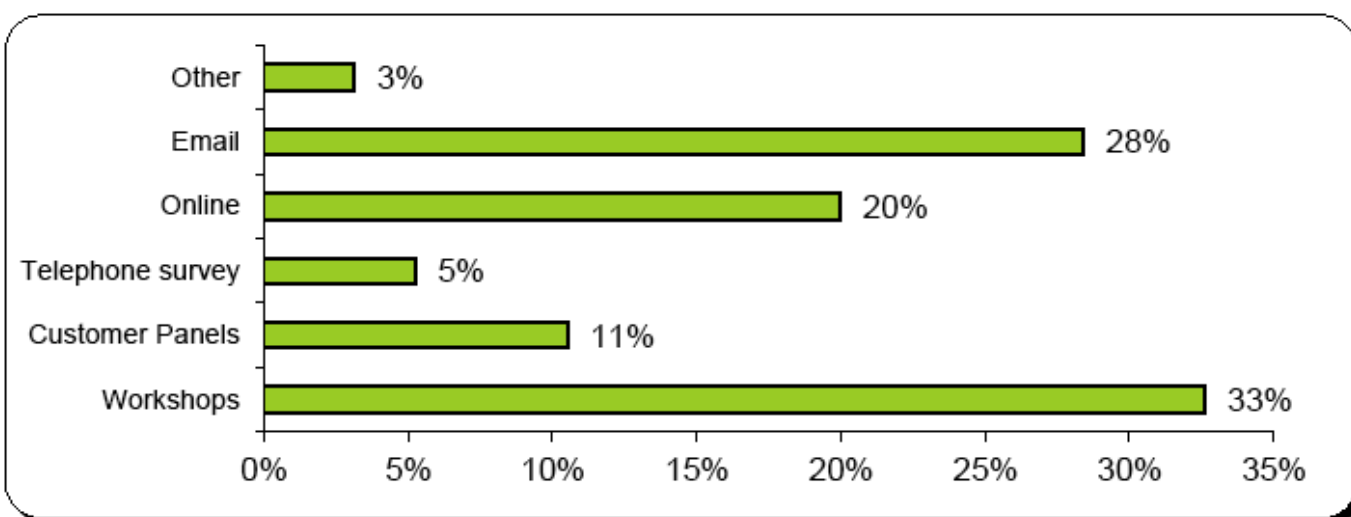


Table 1

- All agreed that workshops like this were seen as a valuable tool and they would like to be involved in the future

Table 2

- The table would like to see more events like the stakeholder workshop being held
- A parish councillor said s/he would like to see customer panels but not surveys by telephone

Table 4

- There was agreement that all would attend more stakeholder groups or could keep up via newsletters

1.5. Q6. Would you or your organisation appreciate a one-to-one meeting?

Table 2

- A local authority representative, charitable organisation representative and two parish councillors agreed they would appreciate a one-to-one meeting

Table 4

- The table agreed that their organisations would all appreciate a one-to-one meeting
- An advisory service representative suggested that it would also be useful to have some specialist sessions and group like-minded sectors such as different advisory groups or different health services

1.6. Q7. Should NGN work to raise its profile?

Table 1

- The table agreed that NGN should work to raise its profile
- A local authority representative made the point that 'the man on the street does not know what NGN does'
- A major user said that 'there was a lot of scope for NGN to raise its profile in the industry'; a common view is that 'they are still Transco and they need to sing about what they do'
- An energy/utility company representative agreed, stating that 'NGN need to talk more about what sort of difference they have made'
- A charitable organisation representative developed this point by commenting 'they can measure the impacts of what they do'
- An energy/utility company representative asked 'who is the individual customer - where do you promote yourself?'
- The energy/utility company commented that 'NGN needs to engage more with local communities on major development projects so they understand the issues in more detail'

Table 2

- A local authority representative made the point that advertising on vans and buses does not work from his / her experience. S/he added that NGN should 'look at joined-up campaigns and profile raising as an industry as a whole rather than NGN alone'

Table 3

- A local authority representative commented that 'there is a need for NGN to give themselves better visibility'

Table 4

- An environmental representative said that NGN should if it is relevant

1.7. Q8. Would you like to receive updates on NGN's activities in the future?

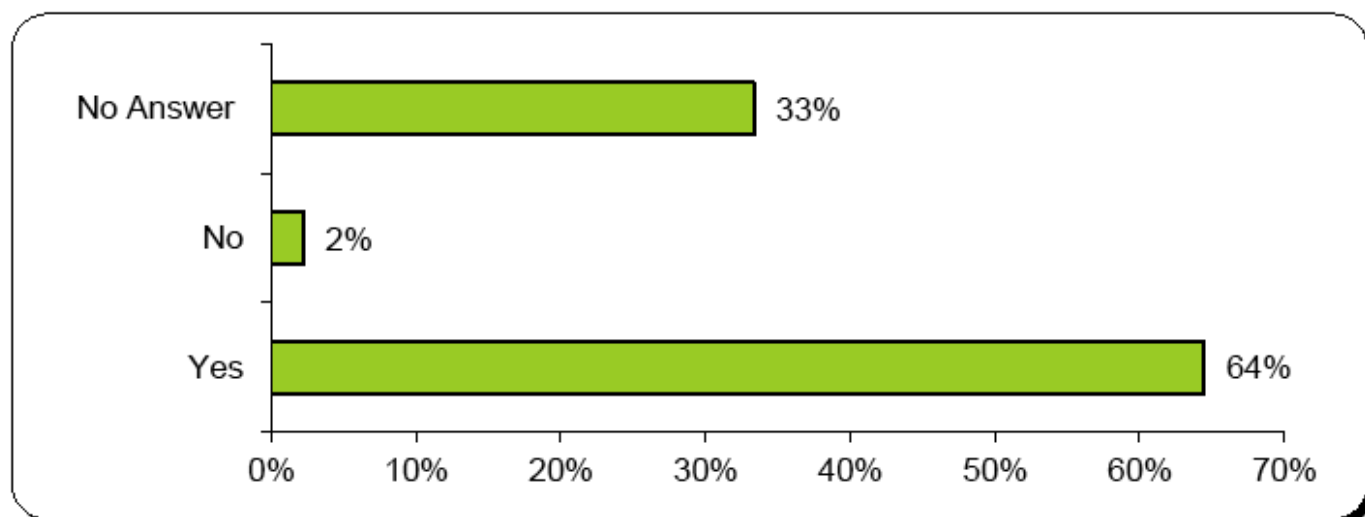


Table 1

- There was general agreement on the table that further contact on these issues would be beneficial
- A charitable organisation representative commented that it would be beneficial if the result of the day's discussion could be relayed by NGN
- A local authority representative asked if the report could be emailed out as this would help with setting agendas and funding

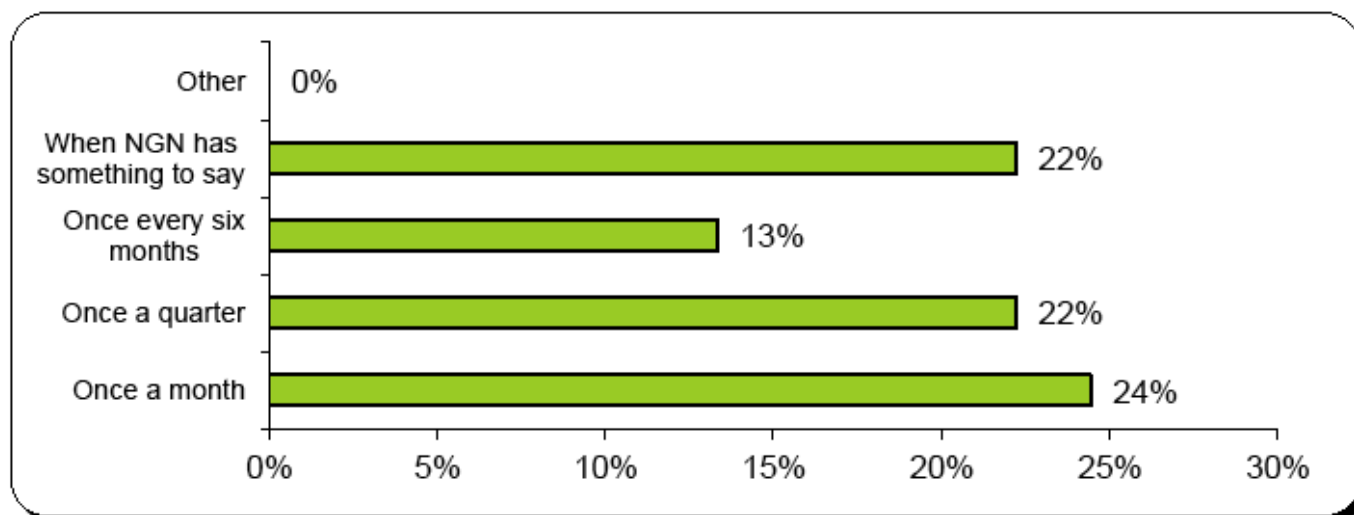
Table 2

- A parish councillor asked for monthly updates
- A parish councillor and charitable organisation representative agreed with this

Table 4

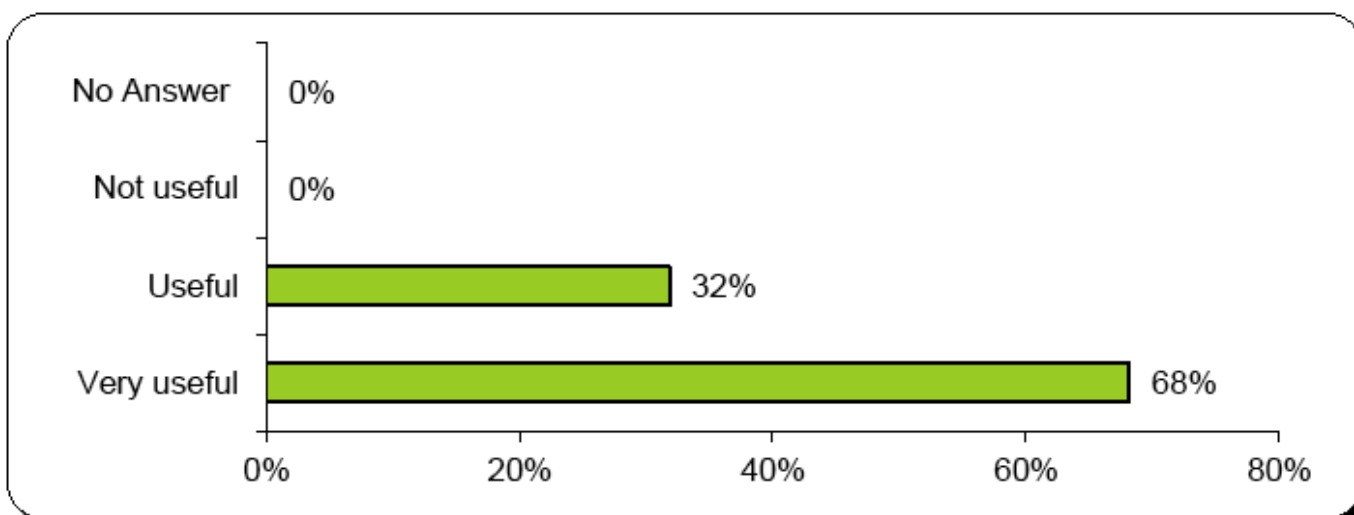
- The table all agreed and suggested emails/newsletters when NGN have something to say would be helpful. These should not be more than monthly

6.2. How often would you appreciate an update on NGN's activities?

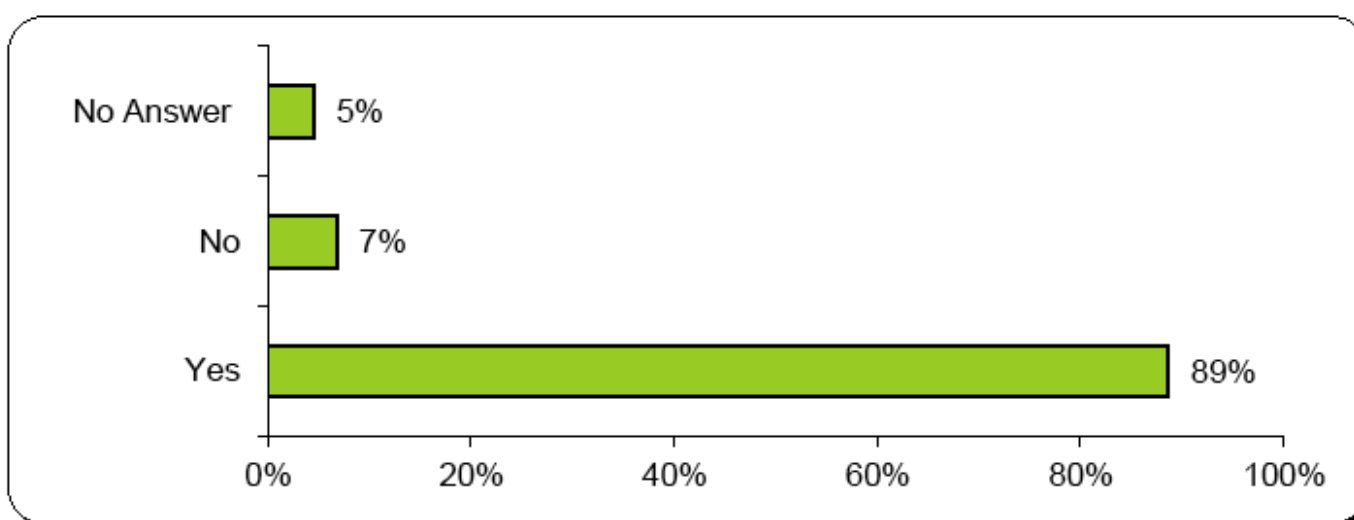


7. Stakeholder Feedback

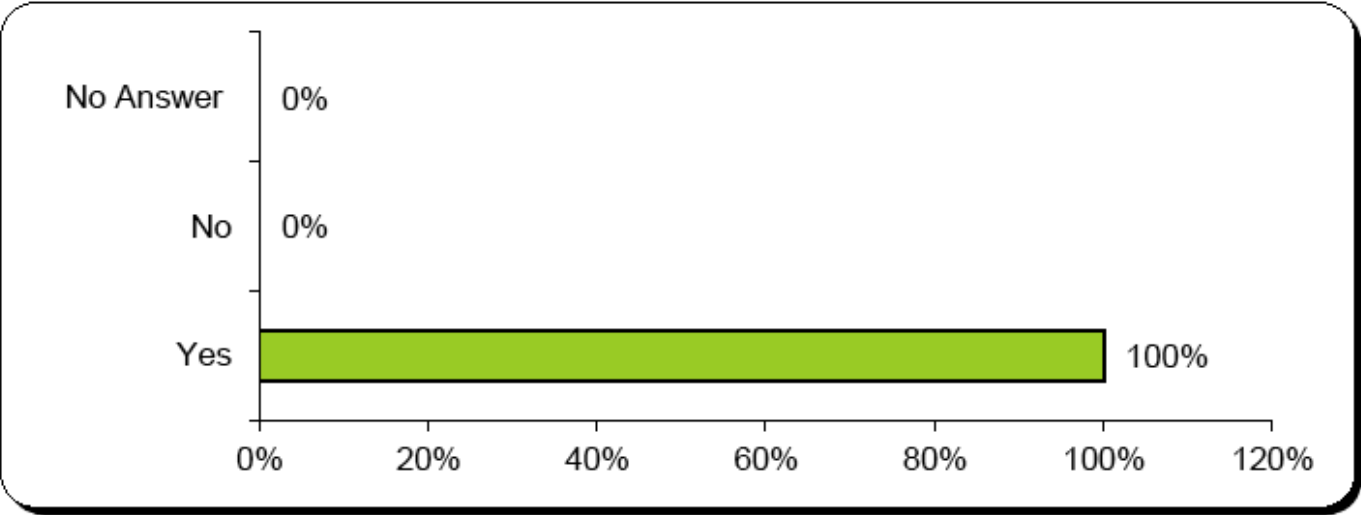
7.1. Q1. Did you find the workshop useful?



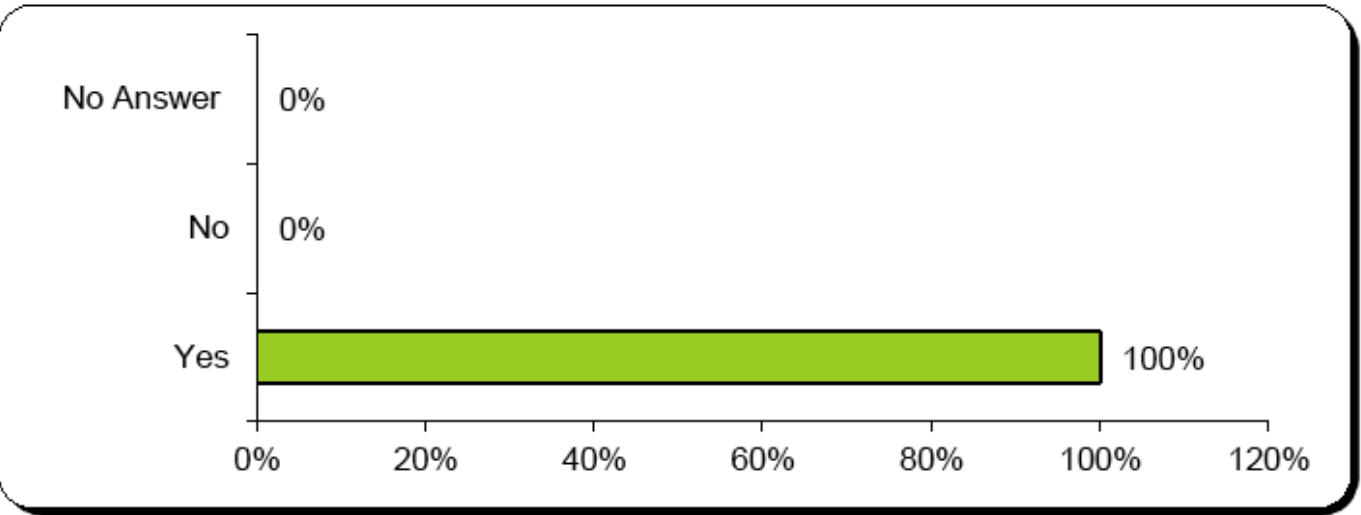
7.2. Q2. Was the venue conveniently located for you?



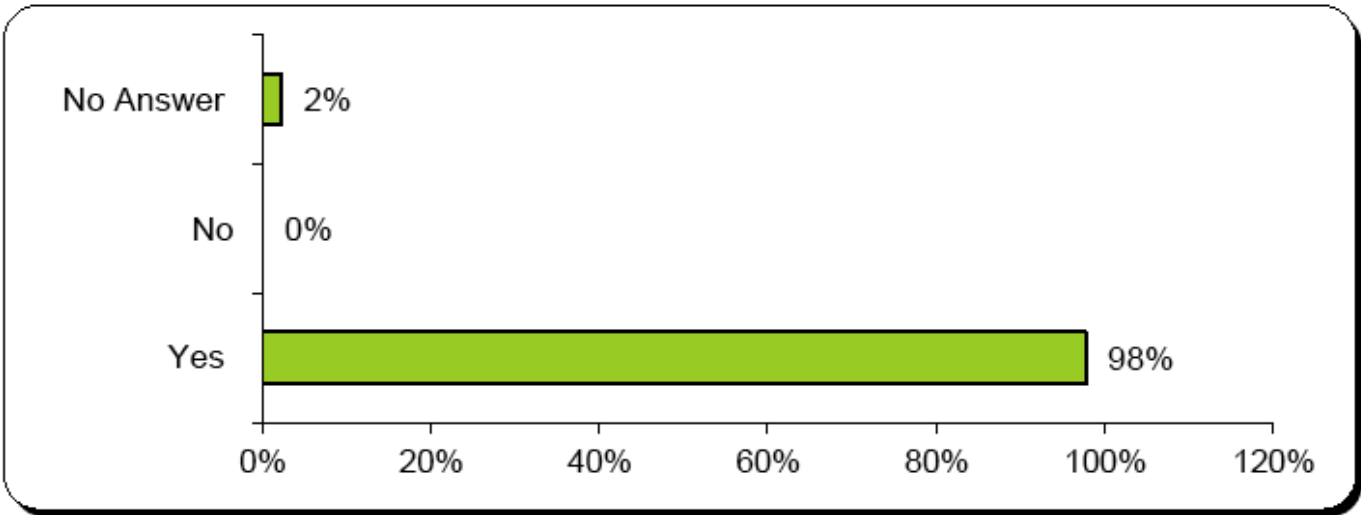
7.3. Q3. Did we provide enough information at the workshop?



7.4. Q4. Did you feel you had sufficient opportunity to express and discuss your views today?



7.5. Q5. Did you feel we covered the right topics?



**Stakeholder workshop
report:
Carbon monoxide
workshops**



GreenIssuesCommuniqué

| 20th and 27th January 2014

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2. Introduction

This report details the discussions held at Northern Gas Networks Stakeholder Workshops on 20th and 27th January on carbon monoxide. The report has been compiled by Green Issues Communiqué (GIC), a specialist, independent stakeholder engagement and community consultation company. GIC facilitated the workshops by providing a facilitator for each workshop table and an analyst to make detailed notes of all points made by attendees. Following the workshops GIC has carefully analysed the reports from each workshop table and has undertaken further analysis to create the following report.

2.1. Dates and venues of workshops:

The workshops took place on 20th January 2014 at The Royal York Hotel, Station Road, York YO24 1AA and on 27th January at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 5DH. Both venues were chosen based predominantly due to their location and accessibility, in particular proximity to public transport links.

2.2. Attendees

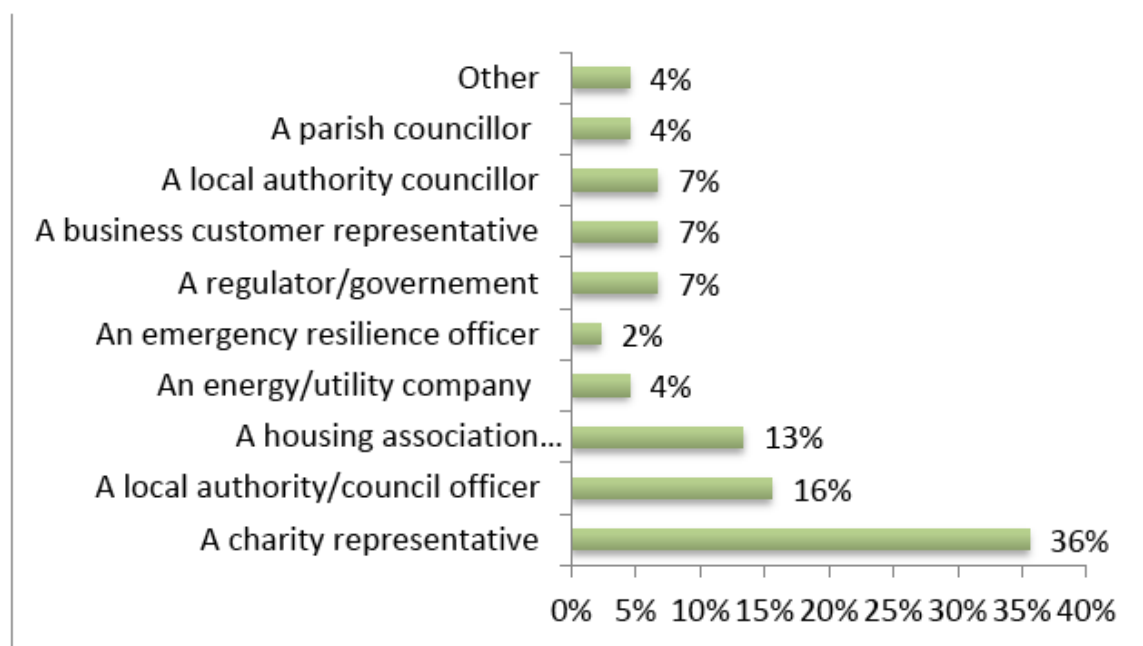
The workshops comprised a morning session on fuel poverty and an afternoon session on carbon monoxide. 101 stakeholders attended the workshops - 57 at York and 44 at Newcastle - with around 70% of these attending the afternoon carbon monoxide sessions. The photos below illustrate the high numbers of attendees.



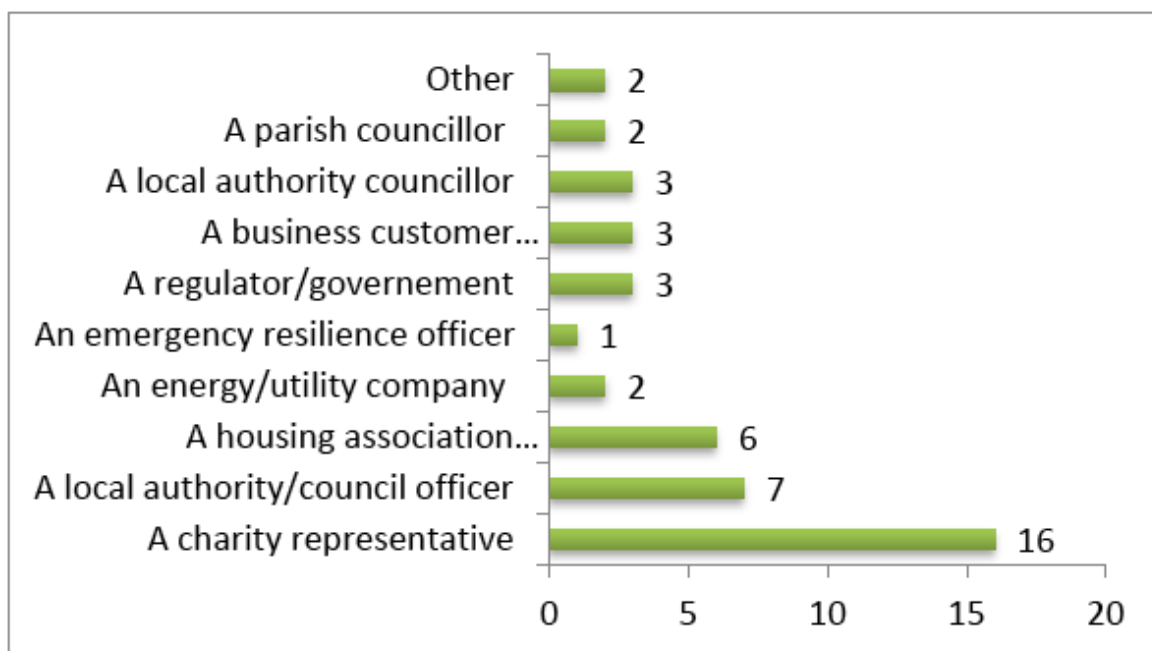
2.3. Stakeholders

The split of stakeholders who attended the CO workshops according to the type of organisation they represent is shown below:

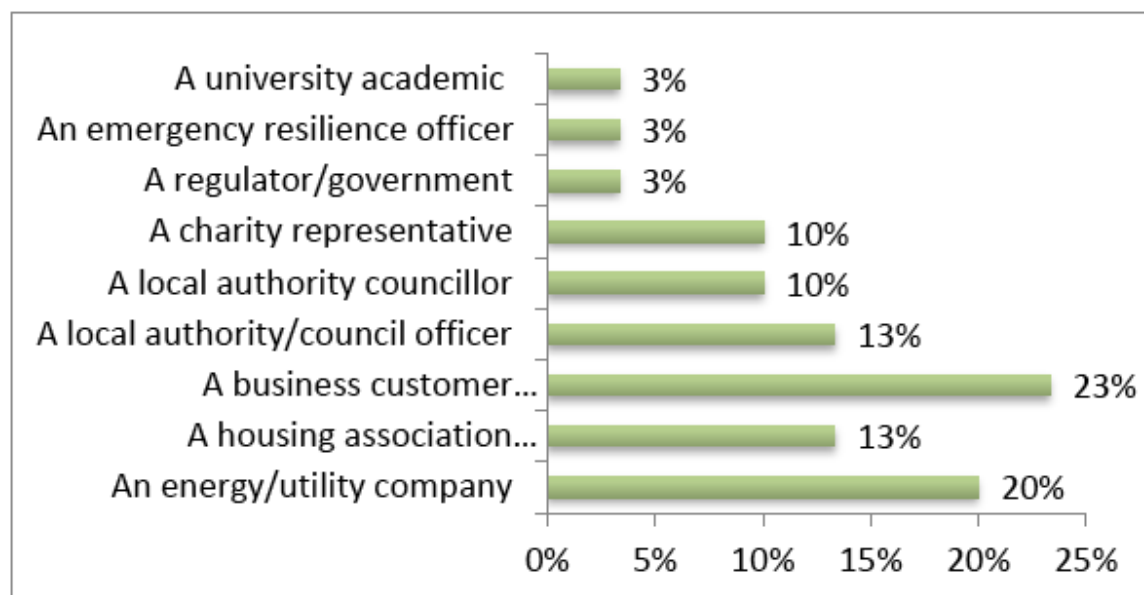
York (attendees by stakeholder group as a percentage of total attendees):



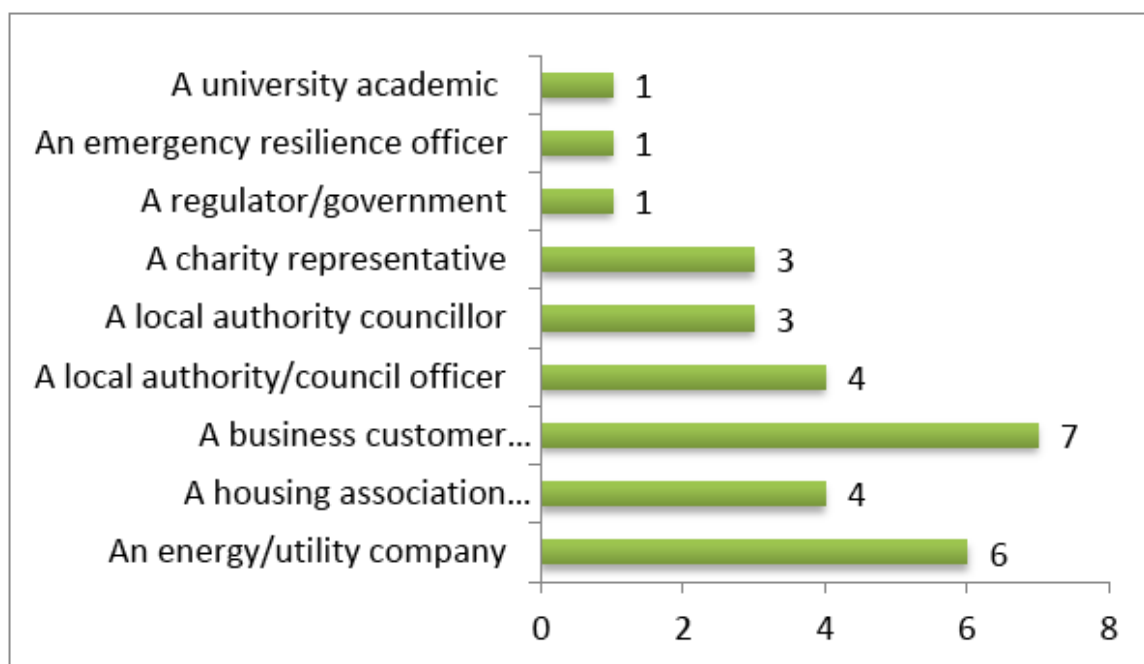
York (numbers of stakeholders per category)



Newcastle (attendees by stakeholder group as a percentage of total attendees):



Newcastle (numbers of stakeholders per category):



Attendees from Northern Gas Networks

David Gill - Director of Stakeholder Relations
Brian Dobson – Head of Stakeholder Relations
Eileen Brown – Head of Customer Experience
Tom Notman - Head of Customer Operations Support
Kirsten Jameson - Customer Experience Support Officer
Howard Forster - Customer Operations Director
John Peacock - Programme Manager - Connections
Gareth Mills - Head of Asset Investment & Innovation
Alec Breen - Innovation Manager
Garry Farnhill – Customer Operations Area Manager – North Riding
Andy Irwin – Regional Manager - East
John Pickering – Customer Operations Area Manager – East Riding
Richard Hynes-Cooper – Customer Operations Area Manager - Leeds
Paul Sadler – Emergency Officer
Ian Waddle – Regional Manager North
Barry Watson – Customer Operations Area Manager, Cumbria
Paul Common – Customer Operations Area Manager, North Tyneside
John Richardson – Customer Operations Area Manager, Wear
Gordon Thompson – Customer Operations Area Manager, Teeside
Andy Goodfellow – Emergency Officer

Attendees from Green Issues Communiqué (GIC)

Kelly Edwards - Executive Director (workshop facilitator and GIC's overall manager of the workshops)
Nick Bohane - Executive Director (workshop facilitator)
Richard Sutcliffe-Smith - Executive Director (workshop facilitator)
Emma Webster - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
Harry Hudson - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
Chris Brown - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
Ian Biddulph - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
Mike Townend - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
Nick Osborne - Consultant (workshop facilitator)
Lizzie McCann - Events Assistant (workshop analyst and GIC's administrator for the events)
Gareth Turner - Executive (workshop analyst)
Farah Pasha - Executive (workshop analyst)
Amy Dicks – Assistant Executive (workshop analyst)
Jen Horsman - Executive (workshop analyst)
Louis Peake - Executive (workshop analyst)
Monika Samoraj - Executive (workshop analyst)
Cyra Parkes - Consultant (workshop analyst)
Rob Hill - Consultant (workshop analyst)

2.4. Next steps

Northern Gas Networks will carefully review the points made during the workshops and will confirm what actions it will be taking as a direct result. The consultation reports will be placed on-line and all those who attended the workshops will be informed of this.

3. Executive Summary

Having carefully reviewed each individual workshop table report GIC has compiled the main points of consensus from the workshops in this executive summary. However, this is not an exact science and NGN will, therefore, also be reviewing each individual workshop table report (included at the end of the report).

After each workshop, table facilitators reported back to all attendees to share the key findings from their workshop table. The discussions demonstrated attendees felt that NGN's approach to CO is right and that the right actions from the 2013 workshops have been taken on board by NGN. There is also strong support for partnership working. Attendees also made a number of suggestions for actions for NGN to consider taking to further assist tackling tackling CO.



3.1. York:

The following section of the report highlights the main consensus issues and suggested actions that emerged during the January 2014 NGN York CO workshops.

Major points of consensus:

- It is not just the purchasing/obtaining of a CO alarm and installation that is important but also regular checks to ensure it is still working
- Engaging children was viewed as a particularly worthwhile activity
- Private landlords were seen as a key target group
- Concern that people are blocking flues
- Support for iCOP app
- Support for national lobbying activities (detailed suggestions follow)
- Support for the TV and media to cover CO more

Key suggested actions:

- Education is key to raising awareness
- There was support for the provision of alarms, especially to community groups so that they could choose how to distribute them. However, other attendees said that education has to happen rather than alarms being given out
- Support for those servicing boilers to provide information on CO

Strong support for education. Specific groups suggested included:

- Festival organisers (to provide information on tickets for example)
- Maternity wards
- Students
- Boat shows, leisure events
- Camping industry
- Elderly who may have old appliances

- Strong support for targeting education at children
- Lobby developers to provide CO alarms when they build new houses
- Lobby for CO alarms to be compulsory in rented homes as is the case for smoke alarms
- Campaigns to include the big six
- Several mentions of immigrants needing to be made aware of the dangers and for information on CO to be available in a range of languages
- Suggestions of using advertising to promote awareness, e.g. 'freebies' and bus stop advertising
- A council officer suggested that NGN could campaign for the inclusion of CO alarms on the list of compulsory safety devices for social housing and specifically target households which qualify for free safety checks through Priority Services Register. S/he also felt that NGN could ask suppliers to include information on CO alarms on the back of bills
- A housing association representative requested a stock of leaflets to give out to his / her tenants
- If the Fire Service will fix smoke alarms, perhaps they could do the same for CO alarms

Newcastle:

- The following section of the report highlights the main consensus issues and suggested actions that emerged during the January 2014 NGN Newcastle CO workshop.

Major points of consensus:

- Major concern regarding private landlords, safety and CO – this was mentioned by all tables
- Gas Safe Registered does not necessarily mean an alarm is in place
- General support for NGN's approach to CO
- At least four charity attendees said they did not know what NGN did or how it could help prior to the workshop. They suggested general information giving/profile raising within the charity sector
- Support for NGN's plan to widen out activities into the camping and festival arenas. One fire authority representative said that the majority of their CO incidences in his area are from camp sites
- Agreement that it is not just gas that causes CO poisoning and that activities should not just be restricted to gas
- Mixed views on sharing of data: some organisations had a great interest in this, e.g. one housing association said they would welcome data on which rooms in houses a gas seeker had identified CO in, whilst other groups did not require data for their activities
- Most tables mentioned education as the top priority action for NGN
- Positive feedback from attendees that NGN is listening to them and is doing a good job holding events such as these

Key suggested actions:

- Create an app for younger children, base it on the current ICOP app but make it more 'cartoon like'. Children as young as 3 and 4 use apps these days (this point was made by one table but most attendees appeared to agree with it when the point was shared with them in the facilitator feedback session)
- Consider a traditional style game too, perhaps something made of card that opens up and the child can take home from school and play with their parents. There were comments that the app would be good for raising awareness with children but that a more traditional style game would be played by children and adults together, so a request to consider an app and traditional game (this point was made by one table but most attendees appeared to agree with it when the point was shared with them in the facilitator feedback session)
- NGN to lobby to make it compulsory for private landlords to install and maintain working CO alarms (this was raised by at least three workshop tables)
- Support for NGN's efforts to be focused on education, in particular at the child level via a drip feed, repetitive process (from the majority of tables)
- Support for general profile raising of the issue and for NGN and those working in energy to look at every opportunity for raising awareness, e.g. when an engineer visits on another matter, still raise CO as a message with householder (again raised by majority of tables)

At a national lobbying level focus on trying to:

- A: impact legislation (all tables mentioned), e.g. regarding private landlords, labelling, make it compulsory to wire in a CO alarm when selling a house (one attendee noted this has been done in one state in the USA)
- B: to see awareness campaigns launched at a national scale, e.g. via TV advertisements (at least two tables specifically mentioned TV ads)
- C: lobby for labelling re CO by shops that sell relevant products, e.g. BBQs (again at least 2 tables mentioned this)
- Most tables supported focusing education on children and students, although one table asked for a focused education effort aimed at the elderly
- Regarding whether NGN is detailed enough on the signs and symptoms in its communications: the general feeling from tables was that this is about right but consider making literature simpler and larger text, e.g. on the black and yellow leaflet. Positive comments were made regarding the DVD shown with many attendees saying they would like to see it on national TV

4. Written stakeholder feedback:

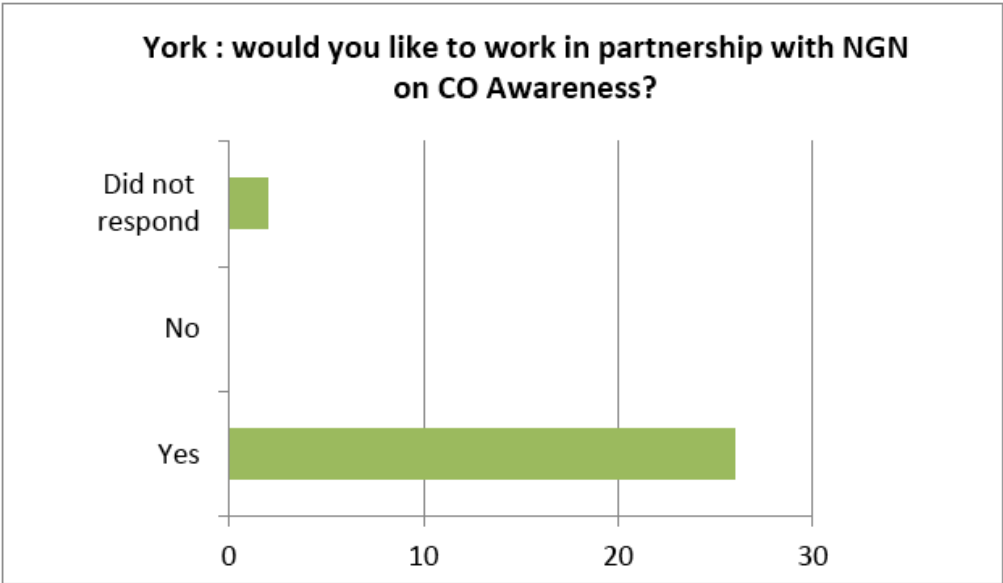
In addition to the round table workshop discussions stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to provide written feedback on the topics of partnership working and on the format and themes of the workshops.

4.1. Partnership working:

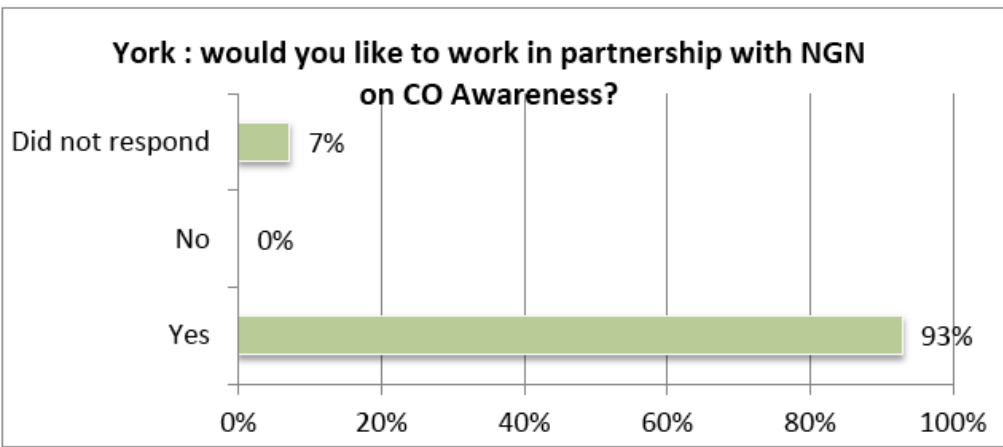
The vast majority of attendees from the York CO workshops (93%) signed up to the concept of partnership working and 89 % from Newcastle as the tables below demonstrate.

4.1.1. York

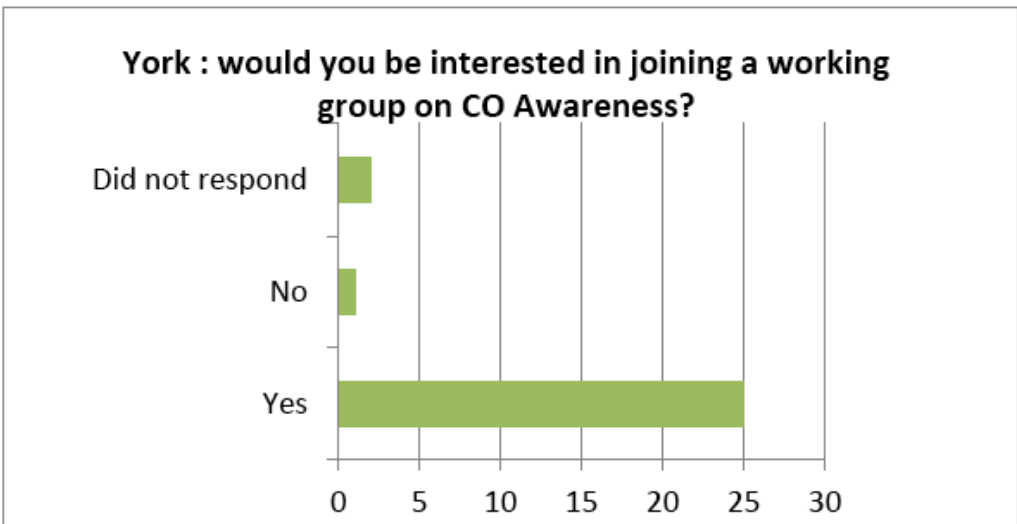
Responses in numbers:



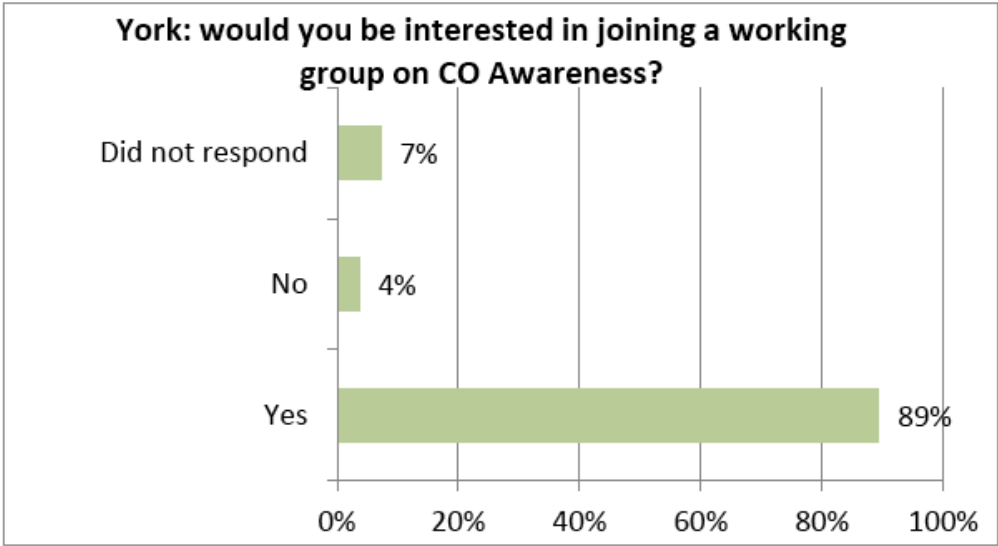
Responses by % of attendees:



Responses in numbers:

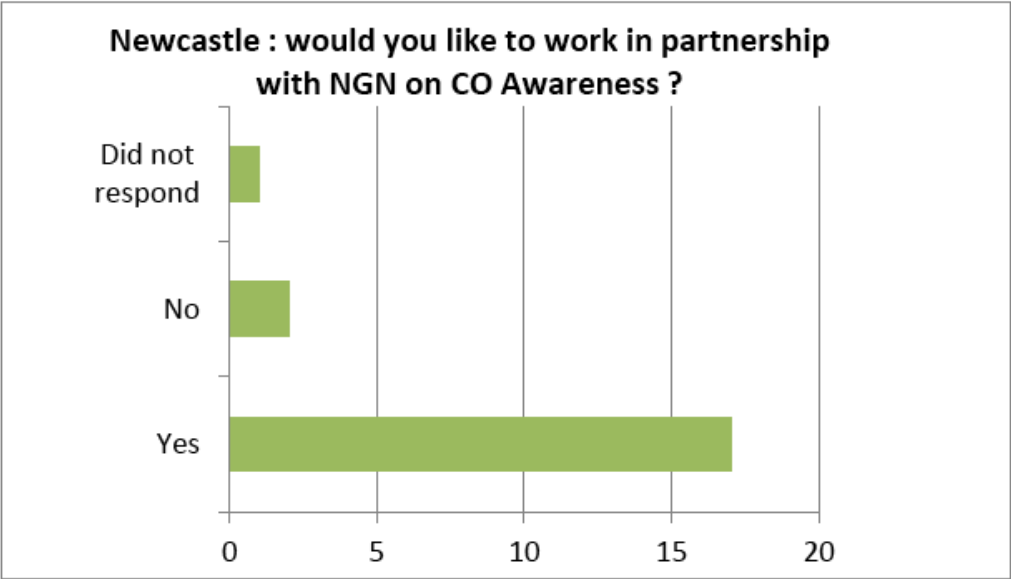


Responses as a % of those who attended:

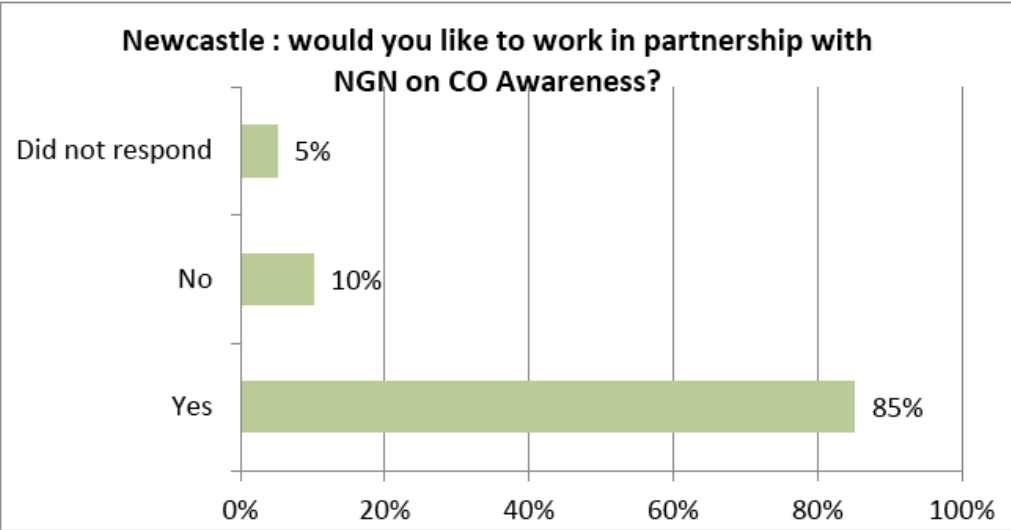


4.1.2. Newcastle

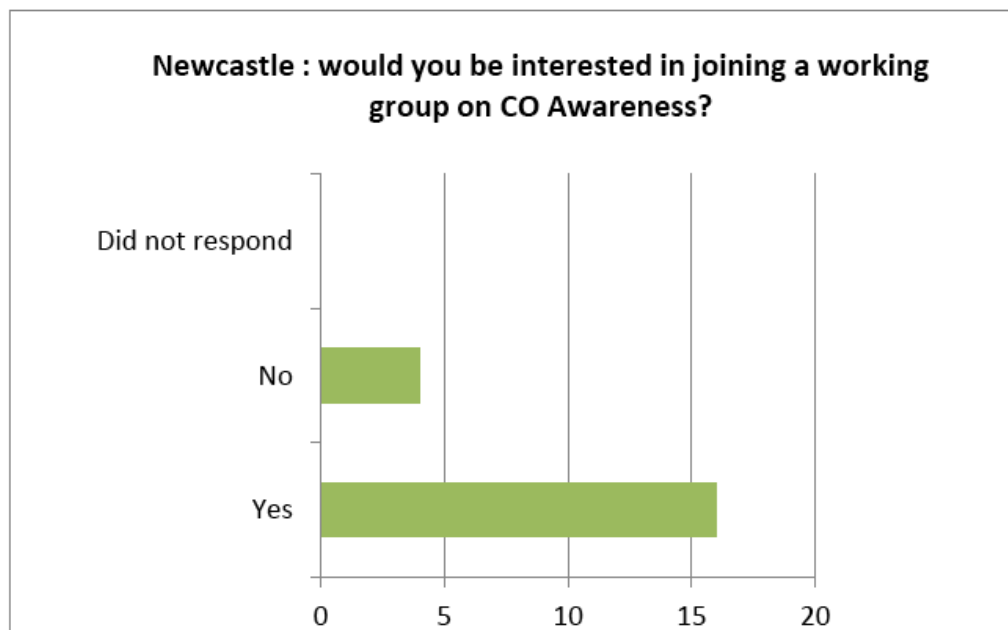
Responses in numbers:



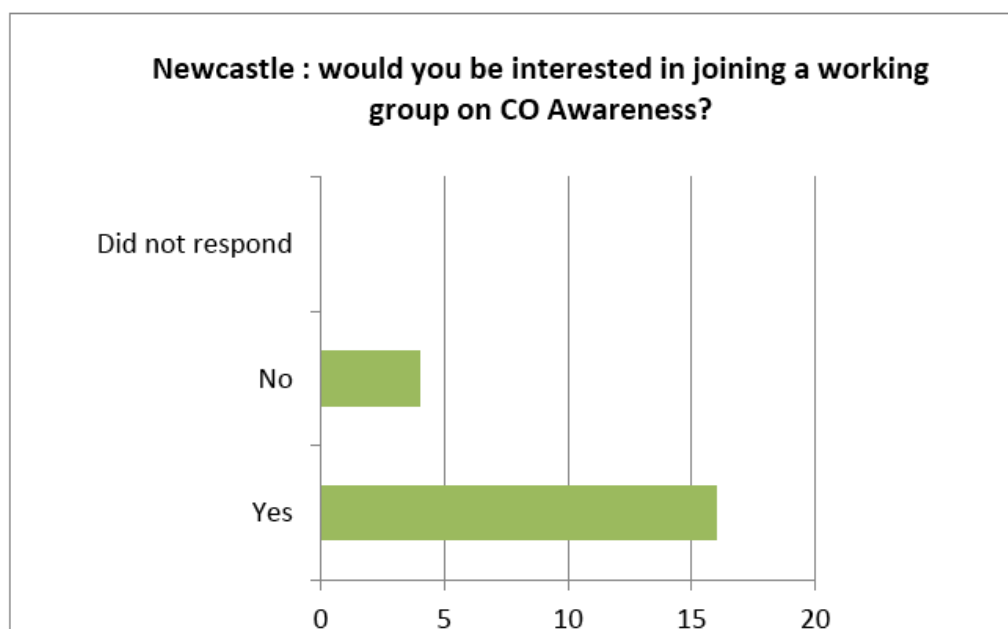
Responses as a percentage of attendees:



Responses in numbers:



Response as a percentage of attendees:



Stakeholders who signed up to partnership working and/or a possible working group represented the following sorts of organisations:

- University
- Consumer group
- Local authority
- Charity sector, for example charities that provide advice on financial matters
- Safety organisation/emergency service

4.1.3. Feedback forms

At the end of each workshop attendees were provided with feedback forms to complete. The information below summarises the responses to the four main questions asked in these feedback forms. NGN will undertake a thorough review of all feedback forms as a number included detailed suggestions for next steps, contacts/partnerships to make and regarding preferred methods of future communication.

100% of returned forms agreed that the workshops were either very useful or useful (with most stating the workshops were very useful). The vast majority of attendees stated that there was sufficient opportunity to express their views, that their venue was conveniently located and that the right topics were covered. A breakdown of the feedback from each workshop is contained in the table below.

	Did you find the workshop useful?	Was there sufficient opportunity to express your views?	Was the conveniently located for you?	Were the right topics covered?
York CO workshop	94% of returned feedback forms said the event was very useful or useful - 18 feedback forms said the event was very useful (47% of returned forms) and 18 forms said the event was useful (47% of returned forms) and two were left blank	35 feedback forms replied yes (92% of returned feedback forms)	36 feedback forms replied yes (94% of returned feedback forms)	32 feedback forms replied yes (84% of the returned feedback forms)
Newcastle CO workshop	12 feedback forms (66% of the returned forms) stated that the event was very useful. 6 forms said the event was useful (33%)	18 feedback forms replied yes (100% of returned feedback forms)	17 feedback forms replied yes (94% of returned feedback forms)	18 feedback forms replied yes (100% of the returned feedback forms)

5. Detailed workshop discussions: CO, York

This section of the workshop report includes a detailed note of the discussions from each workshop table. Names of those individuals and the organisations that they represent who contributed to the discussions have been removed. At the start of each workshop attendees were informed that names would not be referred to so as to encourage open discussions.

5.1. Table A, York, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

5.1.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A local authority/council officer commented that s/he found it difficult to understand how much NGN can really help in regards to CO related issues
- An NGN representative explained the procedures their engineers follow when attending a potential CO leak
- A charity representative pointed out that people don't know the dangers of CO, such as that it can seep through brickwork, which happened to her son who passed away
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that CO alarms are a good device, but s/he was not aware that NGN did any campaigning on this issue
- A charity representative explained that his / her organisation has got CO alarms from RoSPA, but was not aware of how to get them from NGN
- An NGN representative explained that it does not hand them out for free
- A local authority councillor pointed out that in his / her area they did receive alarms but they are not regularly checked by NGN
- A local authority/council officer asked who is NGN working with, whether it's working with private landlords and if it's working in London as well
- A charity representative recalled his / her experience of a CO leak in a charity refuge centre which occurred after a boiler was repaired: the levels of CO were so high that s/he could smell the gas, but luckily no one was hurt. NGN was called and an investigation by the landlord is now under way
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that most people have smoke alarms but CO alarms are not as popular

5.1.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- No comments were made

5.1.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A charity representative questioned whether people can pay for a CO check to be carried out, and whether there is a market for this
- A charity representative pointed out that most cases of CO poisoning are from the extraction fan of a cooker
- A charity representative commented that snow can also cause CO poisoning by blocking flues
- A charity representative is of the view that education is extremely important
- An NGN representative noted that it gives talks to schools about home safety
- A charity representative is of the opinion that the most vulnerable people are those sleeping downstairs near a gas fire
- A local authority/council officer explained that s/he knew someone who had had a fire fitted incorrectly and was being poisoned as a result. Therefore, perhaps there needs to be something more about raising awareness about where CO can arise
- A local authority/council officer questioned whether migrant workers were receiving information about the dangers of CO
- A charity representative was of the opinion that the elderly are at risk because they have old-fashioned appliances
- A charity representative responded by pointing out that there is a Priority Service Register for pensioners and people with disabilities, to allow them to have a free annual gas safety check; s/he was of the opinion that it isn't promoted enough
- A local authority/council officer commented that there is also a home heat helpline set up by the big six energy companies which offers free energy advice
- A charity representative was of the view that NGN should lobby to make shippers obliged to tell their customers about the help that is available to them
- A local authority/council officer agreed, stating that 'signposting customers' to help is really important

5.2. Table A, York, workshop two: NGN's response to carbon monoxide

5.2.1. Is NGN's approach on carbon monoxide on a day-to-day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- A local authority/council officer was of the view that NGN's approach is fine, but there needs to be more focus on students and migrant workers. S/he would like to know what NGN is doing in relation to CO and private sector housing and who they are working with in this area
- A charity representative asked which languages NGN is publishing its in leaflets because the UK is very multi-lingual
- A local authority/council officer questioned whether NGN is working with the Institute of Environmental Health, and recommended that NGN should do so

5.2.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do. Is there anything it should stop doing?

- A charity representative commented that s/he agreed with the app concept, especially where students get free CO alarms
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that there have been a higher number of deaths in the student community
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that landlords have a duty of care to students, and that despite being required to have a gas certificate renewed yearly, many landlords don't do it and do not care
- A local authority/council officer responded by questioning whether students are the right ones to target, or if letting agents and landlords would also be worth involving
- A charity representative commented that s/he hears a lot of case studies about CO poisoning

5.2.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer questioned whether NGN were working across the whole of Yorkshire or just in the west
- A local authority/council officer commented that his / her organisation works regionally and is happy to spread pilot schemes out in their county, and questioned whether NGN had an intention to roll its CO campaigns out further
- A charity representative pointed out that West Yorkshire Fire Service have a Hot Spot scheme, and when they go into a property for risk assessment, they leave a card asking if they need energy advice which is passed on to the hot spots officer who sends out the relevant information
- A local authority/council officer suggested that Wellbeing Boards can be used here once the at risk groups are highlighted
- A charity representative was of the view that if NGN is giving advice and leaflets to households, they should knock on the two adjacent houses as well per each vulnerable person they visit
- A local authority/council officer countered this idea by suggesting that cold calling is not popular

5.2.4. Views on improving communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer questioned what a vulnerable customer campaign was and how it was run
- An NGN representative explained the vulnerable customer campaign
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that all agencies have a vulnerable people list, but they need to be put together to become complete
- A local authority/council officer asked 'how is vulnerable defined?'
- A charity representative raised the same point

5.2.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A charity representative made the point that schemes exist which provide funding to give out free CO detectors
- A charity representative thought that using more case studies of tragedies caused by CO helps to promote CO detectors

5.2.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer was of the view that NGN should link with national groups

5.2.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

5.2.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- No comments were made

5.2.9. What should NGN's key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- A charity representative questioned whether there are any timelines that NGN has set in order to meet these objectives
- An NGN representative explained that is a part of their social responsibility and that it is on-going
- A charity representative queried if NGN was required to tackle CO poisoning by Ofgem
- An NGN representative said it was not
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that CO detectors should be handed out to those who are off gas but it was not necessarily NGN's responsibility to do because they are not connected
- A charity representative questioned whether NGN give out CO detectors when they make new connections
- A charity representative agreed and suggested that 'kick-starting the awareness when connections are made would be positive' because when people ask for a connection they are engaging directly with NGN voluntarily

5.2.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- No comment was made

5.2.11. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic, e.g. young people?

- A local authority/council officer was of the view that migrant workers and immigrants should be prioritised
- A charity representative recalled an experience s/he had with an immigrant who thought it was the 'British air' which was making her unwell when in reality she was being poisoned by CO

5.2.12. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- A local authority/council officer pointed out that data protection and data sharing is a big problem' s/he was of the view that government needs to be lobbied to relax this in order to establish more accurate information
- A charity representative was of the view that a targeted lobbying campaign would be useful, focusing on positioning of alarms or asking for free detectors the same way as fire alarms

5.2.13. Is NGN's targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- No comments were made

5.2.14. Is NGN's campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- A charity representative was of the opinion that there is not enough information on the signs or symptoms, and people need more information
- A charity representative pointed out the importance of educating GPs in order to ensure that they are aware of the symptoms of CO poisoning. S/he is of the view that people go to the doctor thinking they have flu to find that they get told to go home and not visit the surgery because of it

5.2.15. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- A charity representative said that as a stakeholder s/he would like to be kept informed about NGN's future plans in this area

5.2.16. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- A charity representative thought that NGN needs something that is going to keep students involved after the initial hook because the app could be easily deleted

5.3. Table A York, workshop three: partnership working

5.3.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN: how can we be more effective as a group?

- Attendees were willing to partner with NGN

5.3.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make an impact at highest level?

- A local authority/council officer pointed out the importance of ensuring the right partners influence nationally, reach the right vulnerable groups, and top stakeholders are involved
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that someone has got to be responsible for giving the detectors out, even if it comes to shops
- A charity representative made the suggestion that more media coverage was needed for the campaign, such as on TV soap operas. S/he said that CO featured on EastEnders in the past two years
- A local authority/council officer countered this idea by pointing out that targeting an audience was important because not everyone watches soap operas
- A charity representative suggested that a CO awareness advertisement may be more effective
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that retailers such as Wicks, B&Q and Kingfisher Group could all stock CO alarms
- A charity representative commented that Lloyds pharmacy had a money-off deal on CO alarms previously
- A charity representative made the point that smoke alarms are fitted for free and funded by the government but CO alarms should be too
- A local authority/council officer stated that the upkeep of the detectors was also important to ensure they are working, and fitting the detectors in the right place as well otherwise they won't work. S/he was of the view that it is important that people are educated about this
- A charity representative commented that there is a CO helpline, but it is not publicised enough

5.3.3. Should NGN run a carbon monoxide working group? Would attendees be willing to join?

- A local authority/council officer queries whether this group would be at national level
- An NGN representative commented that it would be a regional group
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that representatives should sit in on meetings in London and nationally
- A charity representative stated she s/he knew the national contacts in this area, but the problem is that the public do not know them
- A local authority/council officer agreed by saying that education is the right area to focus on
- A charity representative was of the opinion that computers should be used to engage children at schools because children will not listen to business people
- A charity representative made the suggestion that freebies are key. S/he created a programme for primary schools by teaming up with a science group doing experiments which was piloted in 50 schools, and cost £20,000
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that s/he had seen success in using bus stops for advertising as it caught people's attention

5.4. Table B, York, workshop one: NGN's response to carbon monoxide

5.4.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A parish councillor felt that enthusiasm for the CO campaign had 'got lost' over the last year. S/he felt that although there is Carbon Monoxide awareness, this was not in the foreground
- A charity representative added that a year was too long between stakeholder engagement events
- A parish councillor said 'the CO issue is easily forgettable, last year we discussed free detectors, not sure how far it went, it would cost nothing to implement'
- A housing association representative added 'NGN needs to be clear about where responsibility stops and starts. There is no legislative requirement to fit a carbon monoxide alarm if you're a private landlord. Social landlords have to check appliances by law; however, if a landlord doesn't own it, it's not his/her responsibility. We need to extend this law to private sector'
- A council officer suggested that NGN could campaign for the inclusion of CO alarms on the list of compulsory safety devices for social housing and specifically target households which qualify for free safety checks through Priority Services Register. S/he also felt that NGN could ask suppliers to include information on CO alarms on the back of bills
- A charity representative was of the view economy of scale may reduce costs per unit to roughly £2 per household, although supplier or NGN would have to take the lead in achieving this
- A housing association representative requested a stock of leaflets to give them out to his/her tenants

5.4.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.4.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.5. Table B, York, workshop two: NGNs response to carbon monoxide

5.5.1. Is NGN's approach on carbon monoxide on a day-to-day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- A parish councillor was of the view 'public education is the key issue with CO awareness'
- A council officer stated that closer involvement with enforcement bodies was necessary to combat rogue private sector landlords
- A parish councillor added that CO detectors needed to be compulsory for landlords
- A council officer said 'why don't gas safety checks link in with wider safety checks? As an Local Authority, we don't know where private landlords are'
- A parish councillor [whilst examining the detector] stated 'the print is too small inside the detector, and 0800 numbers are charged at premium rates on most mobile phones, so this needs to be changed to a geographic number'
- A stakeholder commented that if the Fire Service will fix smoke alarms, perhaps they could do the same for CO alarms

5.5.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.5.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A parish councillor was of the view that NGN needed to adopt a multi-faceted approach and capture people by tagging on to events (e.g. boat shows, leisure events distributing out CO detectors for free to promote them etc.)
- A parish councillor commented 'look at some of the European gas networks, and then begin collaboration with Honeywell; this would transform it into an international brand. Germany is very good at implementing safety requirements'
- Everyone agreed that a national approach is the best to draw attention/build profile
- A stakeholder stated that the inclusion of the monitor in new appliances would be a clever way to increase the take-up
- A council officer stated 'gas safety needs to be integrated into the health agenda'
- A parish councillor added 'we've concentrated on gas, but all fossil fuels carry similar risks, diesel is actually the key risks on boats'
- Another parish councillor was of the view 'if a large percentage of CO deaths are camping related, you need to build a targeted campaign around this, but you have to remember that carbon monoxide awareness is fairly low down on the list of what kills people'
- A parish councillor said 'there is scope to campaign because it's an easily preventable death, if you get all utility companies together and get them all lobbying Government, you'll have a better chance of getting the message across'
- A council officer stated that Richard would be interested in the outcome of Dave Walton meeting, and asked where he was carrying on the same work with other fire groups (to be sent to client)

5.5.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A parish councillor added that s/he would like to see the video that was played during the presentation to appear on television
- A parish councillor suggested that NGN could target the public via television advertising or programming during peak viewing hours. S/he felt that building a CO story into soap operas would be particularly effective
- Another parish councillor said 'the app is a brilliant idea'
- A parish councillor added 'start by writing a press release about this workshop'
- Another parish councillor was of the view that the majority of CO incidents happen in leisure industry, in particular during camping holidays
- A parish councillor added that people should be educated at an early level
- A housing association representative said 'the CO message really needs to hit home'

5.5.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A council officer suggested that NGN should encourage people to take mini detectors on holiday
- A parish councillor felt that if NGN were to give out detectors for free it would be a very quick easy way to cut CO death rates
- A parish councillor suggested that a partnership with a manufacturer such as Honeywell could help lower unit prices. S/he was of the view it was such a partnership would be a 'win-win' situation as Honeywell would increase their profile on the back of a national-scale campaign
- A parish councillor added 'Honeywell will make money through an eventual mass rollout, for instance, having mobile alarms for holidaymakers could be a good way to increase profit margins'
- A parish councillor spoke about a smouldering house fire which went undetected for weeks because the smoke detector didn't activate. On this basis, s/he made the suggestion of interlinking household detectors
- A housing association representative commented on how technological innovation could also help encourage take-up
- A parish councillor stated that it was not just about getting the alarm needs free of charge, but that it needs to be positioned correctly, and the instructions were too complicated. S/he was of the view that NGN needed to create a visual leaflet with summarised information
- A council officer added that the lengthy leaflet was the manufacturer 'covering itself'

5.5.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.5.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.5.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- Everyone was broadly okay with the information on CO alarms and associated Comms materials, but it was felt that the font size on the presentation slides needed to be increased

5.5.9. What should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- The Table agreed that reducing costs for CO alarms and getting backing from high-profile MPs and key influencers was the way forward

5.5.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.5.11. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- A parish councillor said 'if you make it cheap to provide CO detectors, it'll encourage take-up, which will gradually build up and get passed down to the kids. If you partner internationally, you'll raise the profile of the issue whilst driving costs down'
- A parish councillor added 'you need to get young people aware as soon as possible'
- A council officer stated 'you need to put emphasis on certain communities, in particular with BAME groups, we've seen terrible practice with the installation of second hand boilers'
- A parish councillor said 'the Government should add it to the National Curriculum'
- Everyone agreed that it was important to up lobby Government on this issue

5.5.12. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- A charity representative added 'NGN could be a trailblazer when it comes to Carbon Monoxide lobbying, but who do you lobby?'
- A charity representative was of the view that utilising politicians to trigger e-petition and/or setup debates in parliament would help NGN raise the issue's political profile
- A parish councillor stated that with upcoming 2015 General Elections, NGN could 'give politicians something to latch on to, and that way NGN could get money out of them before the next Government comes into power'
- Another parish councillor agreed that national lobbying before the general election was a good time to drive the campaign forward
- A parish councillor concluded that in order to influence Government, NGN needed to target more marginal seats, for example, by getting Barry Sheerman MP more involved and get advice from MPs on how to influence Government
- Another parish councillor said 'look at the ladders, and try to get direct line to a minister, carefully target the right people that actually have influence'

5.5.13. Is NGNs targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.6. Is NGNs campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- See earlier response

5.6.1. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- There was very little commentary in response to this question

5.6.2. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc.

- Everyone agreed that the iCOP app was a good idea

5.7. Table B York, workshop three: partnership working

5.7.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- A council officer said 'there's no point in replicating and duplicating campaigns at a time when most are financially stretched, partnering is absolutely the right approach'
- A council officer mentioned that the national landlords forum was missing
- Everyone agreed that a leader is needed to make national lobbying work and that NGN needs to take the lead, and create one organisation with clout to take the agenda to Westminster

5.7.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- There commentary in response to this question can be found under other questions

5.7.3. Should there be a carbon monoxide working group that NGN runs administration of? Would attendees be willing to join?

- A council officer stated his/her willingness to partake in a working group but felt that this needed to be at a more strategic level and should include 'the big 6', key players, (including shippers) because in the grand scheme of things the authority that s/he represented is geographically small

- A parish councillor said that it was important to have clear strategic plan in place before setting up a group
- A parish councillor added that s/he would like to come back in a year and see that progress has been made

5.8. Table C, York, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

5.8.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- General consensus of the table was that this was a comprehensive list
- A stakeholder made the point that there need to be links with the electrical network 'as when electricity is down, most gas appliances do not work and people turn to alternative sources of fuel for heat'
- A regulator/government representative stated that 'there has to be a coherent message regarding risk, getting alarms, etc'
- A regulator/government representative believed that 'CO alarms should be available to all households, considering the relatively cheap price'

5.8.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- A regulator/government representative commented that 'it goes without saying that NGN should be collaborating and adopting best practice'

5.8.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A local authority/council officer said that 'there should be work done with the gas appliance industry to build in CO alarms into appliances'
- A regulator/government representative countered that 'this would not cover all sources that produce CO as it is released from many different sources around the home'
- A local authority/council officer said that 'there is no reason for lots of organisations to be doing the same job, for example NGN could work in collaboration with the fire service to help them to fit CO alarms at the same time as smoke alarms'
- A regulator/government representative commented on awareness and that more communication needs to be given on the location of alarms in the home, to allow homeowners to fit them where they are most useful
- A local authority/council officer made the point that 'it is difficult to check that CO alarms are working (unlike with smoke alarms), so there needs to be a universal testing system in place and monitoring of the industry'
- A regulator/government representative made the point that 'it is vital that gas networks collaborate to lobby national government on this issue and needs more emphasis'
- A stakeholder countered that a lot of problems come from appliances that are not attached to the gas network, 'so this is a much wider issue, and therefore collaboration needs to be wider and include more organisations to build a national cohesive message'

5.9. Table C, York, workshop two: NGN's response to carbon monoxide

5.9.1. Is NGN's approach on carbon monoxide on a day-to-day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- General consensus was that this is the right approach
- A housing association representative said that it would be good to understand the cost of the campaigns, to see how effective they have been

5.9.2. Views on raising awareness with students – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer said that in his / her locality, there is a multi-agency referral unit which allows consumers to request support on a range of issues from one central point: 'could NGN use this system to gain access to other groups?'
- A housing association representative made the point that targeting school age children would be effective as they often educate their parents

5.9.3. Views on more effective partnerships – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer said that there are many areas of contact within local authorities that NGN can access, such as environmental officers who already do home visits, Sure Start centres, etc
- A local authority/council officer made the point that as it is compulsory to have smoke alarms in rented accommodation, 'there needs to be a campaign to ensure that the same consideration is given to CO alarms'
- A local authority/council officer proposed the NGN could link in with the Gas Safety register to encourage landlords to carry out CO checks and install alarms alongside the mandatory annual gas certificate
- A housing association representative stated that his/her 'housing stock is required to have a CO check each year, alongside the gas safety checks'

5.9.4. Views on improving communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer commented that more work should be done to communicate with migrant workers who have potential language barriers or who live in sub-standard accommodation due to their lack of understanding of the UK systems

5.9.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer stated that there is an issue around removal of batteries in alarms for use in other appliances, so 'there needs to be more communication around the dangers of this'
- A local authority/council officer made the point that 'perhaps it would be more effective and safer to issue mains wired alarms, if this was possible'
- An NGN representative explained its innovative approach to 'smart' alarms, working with a local authority on a trial of monitoring alarms remotely
- A regulator/government representative made the point that 'the cost of giving CO alarms to every customer is obviously prohibitive, and therefore alarms should be given to those who are most in need'
- However, it was universally agreed that the education campaign is definitely applicable to all groups
- A local authority/council officer commented that 'perhaps there could be a link up with organisations that provide EPC for house sales, to rate homes on their CO safety'

5.9.6. Views on more national approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer stated that there should be national media campaigns, along the same lines of the 'fire safety campaigns around Bonfire Night'
- A local authority/council officer said that there should be a national CO day or week, to give organisations the opportunity to do specific activities and gain national awareness/profile/media coverage
- An NGN representative was of the view that there needs to be more support for the charities already doing work in this area in order to build momentum for a national campaign
- A local authority/council officer commented that more work could be done with retailers that sell CO alarms, with a focus on education/advice rather than giving away free gifts that are not used effectively by the consumer
- A local authority/council officer made the point that having a national figure to spearhead the campaign would raise more awareness

5.9.7. Views on build on our strengths – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There were no comments on this topic

5.9.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- A local authority/council officer commented that his/her local authority 'has a large data team and that these reports would be of use to influence future direction with regards to CO'
- An NGN representative stated that it might be possible to drill the data down to local authority areas to be more usable for councils
- A local authority/council officer said that 'it might be possible for NGN to work with local authorities on their housing stock condition report (a legal requirement to be carried out every five years by every authority) which would help the network to prioritise geographical areas for support'

5.9.9. What should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- A stakeholder commented that 'education is key theme as people are aware of the risks of CO but not necessarily how they pertain to them, such as from barbeques'
- A regulator/government representative countered that although education is key, as most people are not aware of CO issues, 'it is important that the message is the right one, e.g. how to respond when exposed'
- There was a general agreement that all representatives would like more information from NGN regarding messages on the levels of risk and how to respond

5.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- A local authority/council officer said that there needs to be a legal requirement to check electricity or CO as these issues are both as important as gas safety checks
- A regulator/government representative stated that 'all issues that affect public health should be brought together under one umbrella organisation with one coherent argument on which to lobby for change'

5.10.1. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- A local authority/council officer commented that 'there are no groups that are more vulnerable than others' and therefore s/he would be wary of targeting specific groups

5.10.2. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- The general consensus of the table was that it is essential to have a coherent message across the whole UK, working with other networks, retailers and local authorities

- A regulator/government representative made the point that 'if all bodies involved in CO were singing from the same hymn sheet, with meaningful data, that would assist the lobbying agenda'
- A regulator/government representative continued by saying that 'there is an argument to be made, it just needs to be cohesive and consistent'

5.10.3. Is NGNs targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- A regulator/government representative commented that 'perhaps the education initiative needs to be widened in age to include secondary schools, as there is a gap between the end of primary and university age'
- A local authority/council officer agreed, stating that the message should be included in the current school curriculum, to be included as part of the national lobbying campaign

5.10.4. Is NGNs campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- There was no discussion in response to this question

5.11. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- This was discussed in response to an earlier question

5.11.1. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- A housing association representative stated that as his/her organisation has student housing stock nationally, iCOP would be a good item to promote and asked whether the awareness campaign would be rolled out across the UK

5.12. Table C, York, workshop three: partnership working

5.12.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- All organisations represented agreed that it would be a good idea to get involved with future NGN initiatives
- A housing association representative stated that they are already doing a lot, but all support, collaboration and extra information is appreciated to share learning, a point echoed by a regulator/government representative

5.13. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- A local authority/council officer made the point that NGN, as an organisation, has a low profile among potential key stakeholders so more work needs to be done to raise awareness of its initiatives
- An NGN representative said that for householders, it is a very confusing issue and most people believe that they need to be connected to the gas network to call NGN, which is not the case – this is a national issue
- A local authority/council officer commented that 'perhaps a more explanatory strapline would help the branding issue'

5.13.1. Should NGN run a carbon monoxide working group? Would attendees be willing to join?

- The table agreed unanimously that a working group, consisting of all stakeholders present at the event, would be very useful

5.14. Table D, York, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

5.14.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A parish councillor commented that the 'list is good and it is very important to lobby nationally'

5.14.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- There were no comments on this question

5.14.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A regulator/government representative made the point that NGN needs to 'avoid duplication'. S/he then explained 'that there are many organisations all wanting the same thing and it's the smaller groups that have slight different aims'. S/he suggested that things need to be 'simplified and a common goal needs to be established'
- A business customer representative said that 'there needs to be some common sense and some analysis of our actions and what effect these actions have'
- A business customer representative asked what was missing in the video. S/he then explained that 'not all alarms actually work so even if the video did have an alarm there isn't a guarantee that the alarm actually works'. S/he added that '16% of alarms out the box don't work, even though they have 18 months warranty creating a long-term liability on the reliability of the CO alarms. It is the sensors that don't work, not the electrics within the alarms, that is the bit that needs to be tested'
- A business customer representative stated that it is 'very important to the camping industry'
- A business customer representative made another point that 'the emphasis should be on the alarms working and making sure there are test kits to check it'
- A local authority/council officer asked 'is there a target area where there are more fatalities like a student population, for example; is there data to back up any theories?'
- An NGN representative replied that there were no target areas. However, the 'national agenda has moved towards the caravan and leisure industry'

- A business customer representative highlighted the point that 'it is all about education and raising the profile'. S/he then added that 'CO gas is released any time a fossil fuel is burnt which a lot of people don't realise'
- A local authority/council officer agreed it is all about 'education' and mentioned that there 'are many of the older generation who refuse to move to gas and are a threat but they remain hard to target'
- A parish councillor pointed out that there are many people who 'just aren't aware that having an open fire for example can reduce the oxygen in the room so if there is a gas heater which will be turning out CO this will increase the danger even more'
- A parish councillor said that 'a film is a good idea to educate about how it kills exactly and more should be done at an early age'
- A parish councillor stated that 'schools should be involved and get children to use the app'
- A local authority/council officer asked a business customer representative 'how do we know or how can we find out if a CO alarm doesn't work?'
- A business customer representative explained that 'installed CO alarms have a seven- year warranty. However, 26.7 % of these alarms were tested after two years and weren't working' . S/he said that a testing kit can be brought to test CO alarms

A local authority/council officer made the point that we need to 'teach and educate not, just hand out literature'

5.15. Table D, York, workshop two: NGN's response to carbon monoxide

5.15.1. Is NGN's approach on carbon monoxide on a day-to-day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- A parish councillor stated that it was 'good and thorough, especially the student campaign'
- A local authority/council officer suggested that NGN could link with energy efficiency in educating people
- A parish councillor commented that 'insulation doesn't help with CO risks as draughty old houses are probably less likely to be at risk from CO as the gas can escape'
- A regulator/government representative made the point that '18-21 year olds feel like they are bullet proof and it is up to the parents to be the ones asking the questions and making sure they are living in safe rented accommodation; NGN needs to address the needs of the audience'
- An NGN representative responded that the app was created by students and has been used at fresher fairs with the aim of targeting that audience
- A business customer representative suggested that they could 'use the language of the students and make it relevant'
- A regulator/government representative highlighted that 'the app the silent killer is a good idea as it is linked to horror movies and NGN has clearly found their audience which is promising'
- A local authority/council officer said that 'parents need to be targeted, especially in student housing as it could be a factor that the landlord can use as a selling point'
- A regulator/government representative mentioned that the 'Chief of the Fire authority was promoting a campaign called blue watch - a scheme linked with landlords'
- A parish councillor asked the table what the numbers are for CO suicide and are these figures included in the numbers of deaths in the UK
- A regulator/government representative responded by saying that suicide deaths would not be included in the national figures of CO fatalities
- A business customer representative said that there are around '4,000 people going to A&E with CO poisoning a year and most of the time the symptoms are misdiagnosed and not considered to have anything to do with CO poisoning'
- A business customer representative claimed that some people can be 'more susceptible' to CO than others
- A parish councillor said that there is 'clearly a link with fuel poverty'

5.15.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There were no comments on this question

5.15.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A business customer representative thought it was all about 'keeping an open mind and acting on the information that is out there and sharing this information and working with other people and organisations'
- A business customer representative stated that 'I don't think you can do enough as there is clearly free information out there'
- A regulator/government representative considered that 'consistency is important especially when it comes to data and people's private information'
- A regulator/government representative said that it is all about 'collecting the data and constantly contributing and updating it'
- A regulator/government representative stated that 'we should have a measurable outcome we can check and see'
- A parish councillor thought that 'it is more difficult to check now that so many private companies own the housing'
- A business customer representative said that 'partnerships are important as it will allow NGN to reach certain groups of people'

5.15.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A regulator/government representative said that s/he 'doesn't think it is an either or and both communication and awareness should be improved'
- A business customer representative said 'let's spread the news'
- A local authority/council officer suggested that 'health visitors like carers or nurses could help spread awareness as they could be trained about the symptoms and what to look out for'
- A charity representative stated that 'English isn't always the first language for some households and although children may speak English the owners of the house, the parents and grandparents may not. The English-speaking children, if they are educated at school, could then go home and pass on this information to their parents and make them aware of the risks'
- A business customer representative highlighted the point that some households have multiple occupants and are more likely to be 'cooking larger volumes for longer'
- A local authority/council officer suggested that discount vouchers could be used instead of giving out free CO alarms, 'as it will give people the incentive to go out and get them and therefore they are more likely to install the alarms'
- A regulator/government representative commented further on free CO alarms, stating that 'if you give something out for free then it implies it doesn't have any value.' S/he then mentions that 'if an engineer installs the alarm then it would be done by a trusted professional and be in the correct place as it does make a difference with CO alarms'
- A business customer representative said that 'people who buy CO alarms are more likely to have their boiler checked; therefore we need to target the people who aren't acting'
- A business customer representative said that in rented accommodation the 'landlords should have safety checks like when boilers are being checked: couldn't a CO alarm be fitted or tested at the same time?'
- A regulator/government representative said that 'a negotiation with the insurance companies to help lower premiums is an idea'
- A business customer representative stated that 'the insurance companies will not endorse the fact that their alarms aren't safe as it will highlight that they have a seven- year guarantee on these alarms and many don't work straight out of the packet'
- A local authority/council officer then asked 'if a boiler could include a CO detector as part of the package?'
- A business customer representative stressed that the alarms need to be fitted and not just be given out 'to be left in the kitchen drawer'
- A local authority/council officer suggested that NGN 'targets vulnerable groups'

5.15.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There were no comments on this question

5.15.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.1. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.2. What should NGN's key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.3. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.4. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.5. NGN supports national lobbying: do you agree?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.6. Is NGN's targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.7. Is NGN's campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.8. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- There were no comments on this question

5.16.9. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- There were no comments on this question

5.17. Table D, York, workshop three: partnership working

5.17.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN. How can we be more effective as a group?

- All delegates said 'yes' and filled out their forms
- A charity representative stated that 'information share is a good way to get people working together as you can only go on what you know, therefore the more people that input, the more information that can be shared information and get something done'
- A local authority/council officer supported working with landlords
- A parish councillor said that 'people are suffering and if we aren't careful we will get to the point when people can't afford to live, let alone put the heating on'
- A parish councillor asked what s/he could do to help. S/he suggested that all s/he can do is try to communicate with the public and encourage people to come and listen to advice and generally make them aware of the risks of CO. However, s/he said how it can be difficult in his / her area as 'social networks have been lost as some can't even afford to go out and have a half pint at the local pub'
- A local authority/council officer commented that 'word of mouth is useful and can help when spreading CO awareness. However, some social groups may miss out, for example older people who are less mobile and less social. Therefore, it is something that cannot be relied upon'
- A business customer representative said that 'spreading the word for CO awareness is a huge job as there are an awful lot of networks to reach out to'
- A local authority/council officer said that his / her local council started a local campaign called 'Find Eric, a scheme to find the isolated old man.' S/he added that they went through 'churches and other religious groups to find those people who live in isolation'
- A business customer representative stated that 'TV is a very good tool to use' to which the parish councillor agreed
- A local authority/council officer said that 'charities like Age Concern and children's charities are organisations who target vulnerable people and are important to work with'
- A regulator/government representative made the point that 'it can be difficult when working with commercial companies as you have to trust them not to use the information and data in a negative way'
- A business customer representative thought that 'you are always going to get people who don't open the door, especially vulnerable people who live on their own. It is hard to gain people's trust, especially if they are vulnerable and often won't accept help'
- A business customer representative suggested that 'caravan companies and caravan sites who provide these services should be made more aware and offer advice and information on CO as the last thing they want to happen on their holiday site is a fatality'
- A parish councillor said that 'the big companies may forget about the small individual person whereas Age Concern wouldn't and can be trusted with the elderly as they have the appropriate skills'

5.17.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- There were no comments on this question

5.17.3. Should NGN run a carbon monoxide working group? Would attendees be willing to join?

- A business customer representative agreed and thought there should be a group and it would be a good chance to gather data and information
- A charity representative suggested that having a mobile unit in the community could be useful: 'have it outside B&Q directing people to the CO alarms'. S/he then stated that it is also 'a good way to gather information'
- A local authority/council officer made the point that having groups on a Friday could also help and a lobbyist could be involved
- A charity representative said 'it is all about finding the right partners to reach out to, and ones that will have the right skills'

5.18. Table E, York, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

5.18.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A business customer representative suggested that 'educate more' is the correct approach, but it needs to be shown as a broad education programme and not purely for risk groups
- A business customer representative wondered if the initiative can be used across the other networks. NGN responded, saying that no gas network is trying to be exclusive and they can share findings
- An emergency resilience officer questioned how clearly NGN can define who is 'vulnerable'. He/she continued, pointing out that 'vulnerability' can mean a number of things, 'including being unable to afford a CO detector, ignorance and lack of education'
- A business customer representative suggested that 'these aims might overlap with those of the emergency services in educating and protecting the vulnerable'
- A housing association representative pointed out that 'it is difficult for fitters as there are many things that can cause a "false activation" of the alarms including smokers and hairspray'. To educate and train other organisations is therefore crucial
- A regulator/government representative would like to see some research into the exposure levels of CO to different groups of people. S/he suggested that NGN could support this research, or even do their own

- An emergency resilience officer felt that research would be 'a useful tool to educate and back up the message regarding the importance of CO detectors'
- A business customer representative stated that 'housing associations must be made to share analysis of CO detectors being activated in order for people to understand the dangers of the gas'
- An environmental representative noted that 'smaller organisations put a message across but there is no co-ordination'. There needs to be more structure in order to make CO a national issue
- An environmental representative suggested that the vulnerability debate is a 'red herring' as CO is not selective of its victims

5.18.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.18.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19. Table F, York, workshop two: NGN's response to carbon monoxide

5.19.1. Is NGN's approach on carbon monoxide on a day-to-day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- An environmental representative remarked that students are a very good audience to target. However, s/he insisted that 'targeting the housing fairs is not solving the issue of how some houses are susceptible to CO leaks'
- A regulator/government representative suggested 'that there is a disconnect between the landlord's safety check and testing for CO'
- A business customer representative said there should be direction towards the parents of the students as 'if there is a choice between a CO alarm and a pint, the student will always choose the pint'
- A regulator/government representative concurred, saying 'it is all very well that the student understands there is a problem, but what are they doing to solve the problem?'
- A business customer representative said 'it was worth noting that there is a database of rented accommodation - Bluewatch - focusing on CO and other issues'
- A housing association representative stated that there are issues when they take housing from landlords regarding the condition of appliances, possibly resulting in CO risks. He/she suggested that 'there should be a duty of policing for gas fitters in these houses'
- A housing association representative said that the main question to ask is 'what would you say to your child?' There should be emphasis on educating the parents on what their child would need to see when moving in to new accommodation
- An environmental representative pointed out that 'there is a difference in legislation between social and private landlords. Ideally, there would be consistency across all landlords'

5.19.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A regulator/government representative said that 'there is an inconsistency in the way universities recommend housing to students'
- An emergency resilience officer insisted that education of children is vital. 'Pester power' is very influential on parents
- A business customer representative has noted that 'there is a trend in safety culture among new parents, such as Mumsnet and new parents packs'. NGN recognised this as a 'blind spot'
- An emergency resilience officer said that a leaflet drop along the lines of 'there has been a CO incident in your area' could be effective
- An environmental representative and a regulator/government representative both suggested that a leaflet in a doctor's surgery could be effective. They also felt that GPs should be more aware of the symptoms of CO
- There was unanimous agreement that there should be a particular education drive in 'CO Season' between October and March

5.19.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- An environmental representative suggested that 'the priority should be the servicing of appliances that cause CO leaks'
- An environmental representative explained that 'there should be a number of alarms given away, but people must be aware that they do not prevent CO and there needs to be education provided alongside the alarm'
- There was widespread agreement that prevention must come before detection
- A housing association representative remarked that he 'would not have to put CO detectors in every house as modern appliances are often so safe'

- NGN countered this, suggesting that the CO is not necessarily confined to that area. Neighbours' faulty appliances could leak CO into the surrounding houses
- An emergency resilience officer insisted that 'detectors need to be in the right places, used properly and with a good amount of education to make sure they are used effectively'
- An environmental representative stressed that 'the alarms should be fitted to prevent them from being shut away in drawers'

5.19.6. Views on more national approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A business customer representative felt that 'the messages should be tailored to specific communities by using different languages and culturally relatable content'
- An environmental representative mentioned September's Gas Safety Week. The table agreed that CO issues could be included more in this event
- An environmental representative pointed out that 'a radio and television campaign would be ideal as they are constant and persistent'
- A business customer representative drew the table's attention to a CO-related Coronation Street storyline which had 'a huge positive impact on monitor sales'

5.19.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.9. What should NGN's key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.11. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.12. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.13. Is NGN's targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.14. Is NGN's campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.15. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.19.16. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- There was no discussion on this point

5.20. Table F, York, workshop three: partnership working

5.20.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- There was no discussion on this point

5.20.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- A regulator/government representative said that there is potential to use recent energy bills and green issues to get CO on the parliamentary agenda. He/she suggested that 'a joint campaign between the networks could make the government piggyback the idea'. He/she added that there needs to be a consistent message across all organisations

5.20.3. Should NGN run a carbon monoxide working group? Would attendees be willing to join?

- An environmental representative stated that s/he does not see the gas suppliers taking the lead position on the CO issue that they should be, 'possibly because each has their own CSR issues'
- A regulator/government representative agreed that the gas companies' impact on CO awareness is much lower than it should be
- An emergency resilience officer recommended that 'there should be a preventative piece about CO run alongside the reform of the healthcare system'
- A business customer representative assumed that 'manufacturers of appliances are reluctant to provide CO information as they feel it makes them appear unsafe'
- A business customer representative stated that 'there is a link between COGDEM and parliament, in which there is potential for influence'

- A business customer representative said that 'most vulnerable' could mean those who are most susceptible to the effects of CO or who have the highest risk of CO incidents. NGN expanded on the point, explaining that the most at risk are the 18-24 year olds and the over 70s from previous data, but the 'goalposts are constantly shifting'

5.21. Table G, York, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

5.21.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A council officer commented that the three most important themes from last year's workshop were 'issuing alarms, educating more and lobbying nationally'
- A district councillor responded that the two most important themes from last year's workshop were 'educating more and lobbying nationally'
- A charity representative suggested that the two most important themes from last year's workshops were 'issuing alarms and collaborating more with existing networks, particularly the fire service'
- A council officer stated that the three most important themes from last year's workshop were 'educating more, lobbying nationally and issuing alarms'
- A council officer stated that the three most important themes from last year's workshop were 'educating more, lobbying nationally and issuing alarms'

5.21.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- No comments were made

5.21.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- No comments were made

5.22. Table G, York, workshop two: NGN's response to carbon monoxide

5.22.1. Is NGN's approach on carbon monoxide on a day-to-day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- A council officer commented that it is 'now possible to purchase battery-operated combined smoke and CO alarms'. They are available for £30 from Argos, with an operating life of five years. S/he suggested that NGN distribute these alarms to the public
- A council officer stated that his / her council acts as a distributor of CO alarms, but that s/he has had difficulty getting hold of them. Those that they have got hold of have mainly come from British Gas. S/he asked for NGN to provide his / her council with CO alarms
- A council officer suggested that NGN should offer discounts for CO alarms
- An NGN representative responded that it had been difficult to identify the people who needed CO alarms and issue them efficiently
- An NGN representative stated that making people aware of the consequences of CO poisoning is the most important issue for NGN

5.22.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A council officer commented that s/he was really impressed with NGN's student programme. S/he added that it represented 'excellent planning'
- A district councillor commented that NGN should work with universities to target second and third year students as these groups tend to live in privately rented housing in which CO poisoning is more of a risk. S/he added that universities have approved accommodation lists which students tend to make use of, so it would be possible to contact the majority of students. S/he also stated that technology, via social media campaigns and apps, was the 'best way to contact the student audience'
- An NGN representative stated that it was important to know the right people to contact about raising awareness in regard to CO poisoning
- A council officer suggested that NGN should contact letting agents and landlords to distribute information about CO poisoning amongst the student population. S/he also added that local authorities can make landlords more aware of CO poisoning through their landlord accreditation schemes. S/he explained that an 'excellent' accreditation rating could be made dependent on providing a CO alarm, and that this would be a very good conduit for distribution information

5.22.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A charity representative commented that NGN should contact regional voluntary action groups to inform ethnic minorities about the dangers of CO poisoning
- A charity representative suggested that large employers could distribute information on CO poisoning through their HR departments. 'Advice could be printed on pay slips'
- A district councillor commented that farmers use a large amount of gas and are at risk from CO poisoning. S/he suggested that NGN provide advice and information via the National Farmers' Union
- A charity representative suggested that collaboration with service companies, like heating engineers, would be a good way of spreading information. S/he explained that 'engineers could provide information to customers after they have finished projects'
- A district councillor stated that people who service boilers should distribute information about CO poisoning. S/he suggested Gas Safe as the most appropriate organisation to provide the information

- A district councillor suggested that NGN give CO alarms to the fire brigade to distribute, as they already give out smoke detectors
- A council officer commented that his / her council has very good links with fire brigade, who do 'a very good job educating the community' on fire safety issues. In his / her opinion, the fire brigade would be an excellent way of distributing CO alarms
- A district councillor suggested that NGN form closer partnerships with gas suppliers, as in his / her experience, gas cylinders are often unprotected
- A council officer suggested that NGN develop a partnership with caravan site owners to distribute information about CO poisoning
- A charity representative suggested that NGN give CO alarms to community groups, as they are in a better position to issue the alarms

5.22.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A council officer stated that the fire brigade would be the best way of getting the message out there, as they have a more 'visible profile' than NGN
- A council officer commented that the fire brigade could give the best advice as they are readily accepted in the community and have legitimacy
- A council officer suggested that the fire brigade go into schools and educate children on the dangers of CO poisoning, as then this information would be passed on to the parents. This route has been very successful in raising awareness around other issues like chip fires. S/he added that this was 'the best route' for NGN to go down
- A council officer commented that the internet can be an inefficient way of disseminating information as some groups, particularly in rural areas, do not have access to it. Social media campaigns can therefore only play a 'limited role' in distributing information
- A district councillor asked if any information about CO was currently sent out on gas bills. S/he suggested that it would be a good way of communicating because people read their bills carefully and often keep them for long periods of time
- An NGN representative suggested that children in schools could make murals to educate themselves and others about the dangers of CO poisoning. S/he asked if there is an age where it would be inappropriate to talk to children
- A charity representative replied that below Key Stage 2, children may not be able to understand about the dangers of CO
- A council officer replied that Brownies (age 7-10) may be the earliest appropriate age group.
- A district councillor stated that day/community centres would be a good conduit for distributing information on behalf of NGN
- A district councillor suggested that NGN distribute information about CO poisoning via refuge sites
- A council officer suggested that story lines involving CO poisoning on TV or radio soap operas would be an excellent way of distributing information. In his / her opinion, NGN should think about forming a relationship with a broadcasting company
- A charity representative replied that such a campaign would reach a mass audience very effectively
- A charity representative stated that a mixture of leaflet material and personal contact with people is necessary to get the message on CO poisoning across
- A council officer commented that in his / her opinion, it is vital that NGN provide information to the public online, as it make it easy for other organisations to reference during PowerPoint presentations or in emails
- A council officer stated that 'too much information is provided on NGN's leaflets and that it is in too much detail'
- A council officer stated that local authorities shy away from producing leaflets in foreign languages, but that this can isolate people within ethnic minority communities, placing them in danger
- A charity representative suggested that foreign language leaflets be provided online on NGN's websites, so that customers can download if necessary. S/he explained that this would be a cheaper option than printing and distributing leaflets in various different languages
- A charity representative added that the Citizens Advice Bureau has existing capability to translate information into foreign languages, as they already translate advice on welfare and benefits
- A district councillor posited that NGN should distribute information on CO via the Citizens Advice Bureau, who may be able to more effectively identify those who are at risk
- A district councillor suggested that NGN make use of billboards around supermarkets and retail sites to raise awareness about the dangers of CO poisoning
- A charity representative suggested that baby care retail outlets like Mothercare may be particularly good places to raise awareness
- A district councillor stated that NGN should be looking at opportunities to work with the corporate social responsibility departments of large retail companies to raise awareness on CO poisoning. They may be able to work together on informational campaigns
- A district councillor commented that people who install CO alarms should carry information on CO poisoning
- A NGN representative commented that if campaigns with the corporate social responsibility departments of retail outlets are to be successful, they need to be co-ordinated on national scale
- A council officer commented that in his / her opinion a two-pronged approach was necessary to raise awareness on CO poisoning. 'Individuals need to receive information from community groups, but action also needs to be taken from the top, from NGN, from local authorities and from politicians'

5.22.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A council officer stated that s/he would like some alarms to give out to her customers, but does not have enough. S/he asked NGN to provide them for her to distribute to the public
- A charity representative commented that if NGN were to provide a discount off the price of a CO alarm it would have to be 50% plus to allow consumers to afford them
- A council officer stated that CO poisoning was much more dangerous in the privately rented sector, and that currently the fire brigade come to her for alarms but due to a shortage, s/he is often unable to provide them
- A council officer said that NGN needs to clarify its criteria for who is eligible for a free CO alarm
- A charity representative commented that community groups could provide information to NGN on who is in danger of CO poisoning and who should receive a free alarm
- A council officer stated that housing developers should be made to install CO alarms when building new homes

5.22.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

5.22.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

5.22.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- No comments were made

5.22.9. What should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- No comments were made

5.22.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- A charity representative commented that 'issuing CO alarms and fitting them for customers was the most important thing that NGN had done'. Vulnerable groups like wheel chair users often are unable to fit them themselves so it is vital they receive assistance

5.22.11. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- A district councillor suggested that NGN should make contact with people who go on caravan holidays, as they potentially are at risk from CO poisoning
- A district councillor commented that rented holiday homes are an important group for NGN to target. S/he continued that NGN should distribute information via the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and also scouting groups
- A charity representative also suggested that NGN should contact people who attend summer music festivals, as they may be cooking outside on gas stoves
- An NGN representative stated that festival organisers should educate people about the dangers of CO poisoning. It is not talked about enough presently. Advice should be printed on tickets
- A charity representative commented that NGN should form partnerships with Age Concern, as elderly people are at risk of CO poisoning

5.22.12. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- A council officer stated that 'politicians have a role to play in educating people about the risks of CO poisoning'
- A charity representative stated that 'legislation should be enacted to make it a requirement for private landlords to fit CO alarms, as currently people in privately rented accommodation are amongst the groups most in danger'
- A council officer replied that 'private landlords often do not connect their properties to the gas network as they do not wish to pay for boiler servicing'
- A charity representative countered that if central government took the issue of CO poisoning seriously it would cascade down to other groups and organisations

5.22.13. Is NGNs targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- A charity representative suggested that NGN distribute information to students on Carbon Monoxide during Freshers' Fairs. S/he also added that the message needed to be sustained so that students did not simply 'take a leaflet and then forget about the issue'
- A council officer replied that the message on CO was most important when students move into privately rented accommodation, which is typically in their second year

5.22.14. Is NGNs campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- No comments were made

5.22.15. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- No comments were made

5.22.16. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- A charity representative stated that an app is an excellent way of reaching the student audience as it is a sustainable mechanism

5.23. Table G, York, workshop three: partnership working

5.23.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN; how can we be more effective as a group?

- A charity representative commented that s/he would like access to resources so his /her organisation can distribute information and alarms to clients. Financial help to assist clients would make a partnership much more successful
- A council officer suggested that NGN link their fuel poor and CO poisoning awareness programmes. In his / her opinion, the 'people that suffer from one may well suffer from the other'
- A council officer commented that s/he would like simple information that details the symptoms of CO poisoning to distribute to clients
- An NGN representative commented that NGN needs to foster closer relationships with local authorities

5.23.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- No comments were made

5.23.3. Should there be a carbon monoxide working group that NGN runs administration of? Would attendees be willing to join?

- A councillor officer commented that s/he would like to know how many people die of CO poisoning per year. This may convince him / her to join the working group.
- An NGN representative replied that the Carbon Monoxide Gas Safety website maintains a list of all accidents in any given year
- A charity representative responded that perhaps this website should receive funding from NGN to publicise the statistics. In his / her opinion it may help raise awareness
- A district councillor stated that s/he was unsure whether s/he would joining group, as it 'may be no more than a talking shop in which little is actually achieved'. S/he continued that it may be useful if it had influence, particularly if the local media was involved. Fundamentally, in his / her opinion, it was more important that 'the right information be distributed to the right people'

6. Detailed discussions, CO, Newcastle

6.1. Table A, Newcastle, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

6.1.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A local authority/council officer commented that more education is a key area of focus; s/he, for example, was not fully aware of the protocols and processes that take place in the case of CO incidents and emergencies
- A housing association representative explained that the first point of call in an emergency is the gas provider, and suggests that contractors then need to have their own processes to follow up on the incident, which means that more communication is needed between NGN and people working in the housing industry
- A local authority/council officer expressed their agreement and advised that people caught up in CO incidents do not always know if they have been exposed to CO and need to be educated on what to do
- A housing association representative said s/he didn't know what would happen when people called to report an emergency; s/he would like more information about this
- A local authority/council officer highlighted that 99 per cent of incidents involving CO are caused by a cooker, not a boiler, but no one gets the cooker serviced whereas modern boilers are much less of a problem and gas fires are not as common anymore
- An NGN representative countered this view by stating that s/he would be 'surprised' at how many flue fires there still are
- A housing association representative explained that when the flame isn't blue anymore and if the flame becomes 'floppy' then it is a sign that CO may be leaking
- A business customer representative pointed out that the government started to compile a strategy where when you sell your home you have to have everything serviced, but because people complained about the cost they got rid of it

6.1.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- No comments were made

6.1.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A business customer representative questioned whether NGN will use advertising campaigns and commented that NGN needs to ensure that the adverts are ran at the right times to reach the relevant audiences
- A local authority/council officer made the point that s/he has seen success previously following TV advertisements about CO, which had made more people show an interest in the topic by taking the leaflets that his / her organisation provided
- An NGN representative commented that educating the public seems to be the key idea here
- A housing association representative made the suggestion that those in housing stock are safer than those in private housing because there is no regulation or servicing undertaken in these homes by law
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that NGN 'needed to think outside of the box because the solution isn't clean cut' s/he was of the view that younger children are a good target because they are keen to learn
- The table agreed that children should be targeted

- A business customer representative made the suggestion that scare tactics are sometimes necessary to make an impact, such as using the emotional association between parents and children
- A business customer representative further suggested that creating a game where children could achieve something by understanding what CO does would be effective, especially if it can be taken home where parents can also play it

6.2. Table A, Newcastle, workshop two: NGNs response to carbon monoxide

6.2.1. Is NGNs approach on carbon monoxide on a day to day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- Attendees said yes
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that it was good
- A business customer representative questioned whether CO leaves a trace of any description during a leak
- An NGN representative explained how CO can be detected
- A business customer representative queried whether there was something that can be brought into the industry which can detect CO better
- A housing association representative pointed out there is a card which detects CO but it wears out over time and can be affected by other factors such as smoking

6.2.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A housing association representative commented that social media is an effective way to target millions of people because even in poorer areas people have smart phones
- A business customer representative highlighted when listening to the radio or watching programmes online you have to watch a compulsory advert, which you cannot avoid, therefore a partnership with a radio station could be very useful

6.2.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer pointed out that people working in housing wanted to know what had happened after CO reported incidents, which required NGN to leave legible information for them
- A housing association representative commented that tick sheets do not help, s/he is of the view that more information is needed in a more understandable format, not just whether there is or isn't CO in a property
- A business customer representative questioned how NGN defines who it educates, 'does it start with stakeholders and work top-down?'; s/he expressed concern over how NGN will educate those living in social housing because many find CO alarms irritating if they go off rather than taking the relevant actions needed, which could be life saving
- An NGN representative stated that it is the stakeholders who NGN wants to learn from, including how they should target and educate at risk groups
- An emergency resilience officer pointed out that there is a degree of lobbying going on but all the ideas that are being 'thrown in the pot' need to be consolidated in order to make a bigger impact

6.2.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority/council officer described his / her experience with people who have experienced CO leaks and stated that most people didn't go to a doctor after, and so NGN and organisations need to work together to encourage people to have a check-up after being in contact with CO. There should be a strict national protocol on engaging with residents if CO is detected in the home
- Both a local authority/council officer and a business customer representative agreed with this point
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that data - such as what room CO was detected in and the level of CO found per parts – should be passed on. S/he stated that 'gas seekers are the way forward' as long as the information is left with the relevant people
- A housing association representative made the suggestion that when new supplies are fitted in a property you should give residents information on the potential dangers of the appliances; s/he was of the view that written or spoken communication is more effective than recordings or DVD's
- A local authority/council officer agreed that private houses are the most at risk, and therefore estate agents should provide details of dangers in the home when they sell someone a property
- A business customer representative also agreed with this point and continued by suggesting that there should be a pack provided in the house for when the new owners first move in

6.2.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- An emergency resilience officer pointed out that alarms are necessary but the public needs to know what to do once the alarm is raised
- A housing association representative responded by stating that if they receive a call saying that someone is feeling unwell, or an alarm goes off, the call centre tells the tenants to ring the gas service provider, go outside and open windows and then NGN will go to the property

- An NGN representative said that NGN's response time was up to two hours dependent on certain safety factors
- A housing association representative continued by stating that engineers from his / her organisation have to follow up from NGN engineers once they attend a property and then go in to secure the building, but s/he is of the view that they need more information to do this effectively rather than just a sheet of paper
- An emergency resilience officer is of the opinion that NGN needs to make people aware of the dangers, not just using an alarm because they do not detect all traces of CO
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that there should be a detector on boilers

6.2.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

6.2.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- An emergency resilience officer was of the view that the film was brilliant because the 'shock factor' has a real impact
- A business customer representative agreed and stated that the emotional side is the best way to make a strong effect
- A housing association representative further commented that the film was educational, the message that missing out on having a CO alarm could be fatal no matter how prepared a family is in other areas was very clever

6.2.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- No comments were made

6.2.9. What should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- A housing association representative was of the opinion that on or attached to people's gas bills there should be a warning or information about the dangers of CO because it will reach everyone that is connected to gas
- A business customer representative countered this view by suggesting that when the public reads such information they still do not believe that they will be effected
- An NGN representative pointed out that if just one death is prevented then it is worth it
- A housing association representative was of the view that energy companies should subsidise and maintain appliances, and offer a reasonable price for a gas checks to ensure safety
- A business customer representative agreed with this statement and suggested that there should also be more regulation over the second-hand selling of white goods

6.2.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- A business customer representative was of the view that 'adults can be more dismissive'; people do not always respond to smoke alarms and it is less obvious with CO alarms because they can't see or smell the effects like fires; alarms shouldn't be an irritant

6.2.11. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- An emergency resilience officer suggested that targeting the young is better because they will take information in more, it will take time to filter up as the younger become older but it is a long-term journey that needs to start early on
- A local authority/council officer agreed and commented that 'it is a ripple effect' as children talk to grandparents and parents, they are excited about what they learn and parents will then listen too

6.2.12. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- A local authority/council officer was of the view that NGN is a bigger organisation, which will be more able to lobby effectively, and will get a better response as a result
- A business customer representative stated that lobbying took place to create a home buyers pack with safety information in it. Projects need to be continued and not allowed to just vanish, momentum needs to be kept up. There is a need to discuss different things, and change what people expect; there needs to be momentum to change, from the top down

6.2.13. Is NGNs targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- An emergency resilience officer explained that from his / her experience the majority of incidents are around the camping and BBQ situations, even if the BBQ is cold it can be deadly. Campsites are giving out information about this and awareness packs but more needs to be done
- A business customer representative pointed out that there should be labels on portable BBQs that tell people how to use them safely, lobbying should take place for this
- An emergency resilience officer agreed and stated that 'companies need to be encouraged to be responsible'
- A business customer representative also noted that supermarkets pigeonhole certain food that is good for a BBQ and food labels could therefore also contain warnings about BBQ safety
- An emergency resilience officer also made the point that everyone is at risk in when it comes to camping with BBQs

6.2.14. Is NGNs campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- A housing association representative asked when and where the literature is delivered
- An NGN representative replied saying that literature is delivered when engineers are called out

- A housing association representative was of the opinion that leaflets have limitations
- An emergency resilience officer commented that the leaflet does not jump out at you as illustrating danger
- A business customer representative expressed the view that danger is usually associated with red; we all know red is dangerous and pointed out that the leaflet is monotone and the colours do not depict danger
- An emergency resilience officer pointed out that CO Awareness had produced a red credit card-sized card, which said 'give a red to co' it was simple with a contact number and was visually effective
- A local authority/council officer suggested that people might read literature but it can go in the bin, but a fridge magnet or key ring would be better
- An emergency resilience officer agreed and highlighted another idea of a shopping trolley coin because they will be visible on a regular basis

6.2.15. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- An emergency resilience officer explained that an existing project his / her organisation was working on involved gathering information around ownership, fraud, CO levels found in properties, and linking this information to GPs and the symptoms they should look out for; s/he was of the view that data was key as a starting point for education and lobbying

6.2.16. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- An emergency resilience officer expressed the idea that it could be possible to target younger children using the app but making it in a cartoon format because s/he was of the view that children all use smart phones now as well
- A housing association representative agreed that for younger children engagement must be quick to keep getting the message across
- A local authority/council officer countered this argument by suggesting that a board game is now a novelty and may be more engaging because they are already used to electronic devices
- A local authority/council officer stated that physical games are more inclusive and it is a way of getting more people involved interacting
- An emergency resilience officer pointed out that apps could be used initially to promote further games, which could then be taken home
- A housing association representative suggested that a game could be produced in parts and the kids build it in school, which would be creating momentum

6.3. Table A, Newcastle, workshop three: partnership working

6.3.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- Attendees were willing to partner with NGN

6.3.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- An emergency resilience officer was of the view that working together, not as individual groups was most important because there has been the talking now, so action needs to be taken and someone needs to take control, get something going through parliament, and create national standards

6.3.3. Should there be a carbon monoxide working group that NGN runs administration of? Would attendees be willing to join?

- An emergency resilience officer expressed the idea that NGN should work through APPG in order to prevent diluting the work already being done
- A housing association representative suggested that the Big Six energy suppliers should also be involved
- A business customer representative stated that to get policy through parliament there needs to be an emotional trigger; case studies, for example, can have a big impact on parliament and mobilising the public
- A local authority/council officer made the point that legislation needs to change, and alarms need to be universal by law
- A business customer representative agreed and was of the opinion that unless laws are made, there will still be people at risk
- An emergency resilience officer pointed out that in America you aren't allowed to sell your house or put it on the market unless it has a CO detector
- A business customer representative was of the view that CO needs to be seen as a considerable and real risk
- An emergency resilience officer queried whether an organisation could be set up by government to fund adverts for CO, the same way adverts exist for fire alarms
- A business customer representative made the suggestion that the entertainment industry could create storylines in soaps or on television about CO to make people think about it more
- A local authority/council officer explained the way in which putting posters in particular locations - such as in cinema toilets - can reach audiences in a targeted way
- A business customer representative said that barcodes that can be scanned by mobile

6.4. Table B, Newcastle, workshop one: NGN's response to 2013 workshops

6.4.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A regulator suggested to add that gas appliances should be annually safely checked and serviced; a detector is a second line of defence
- A manufacturer said carbon monoxide detectors should be annually tested
- A charity sector worker didn't know NGN did anything about carbon monoxide; its profile regarding this needs to be raised
- A housing association representative suggested education is important; from a social housing point of view they do checks, but were considering doing their own education; the message NGN is involved needs to be disseminated
- An NGN representative stressed partnership is important
- An education representative outlined that the private sector is a big issue; housing associations are very effective but the message needs get out to private landlords
- A manufacturer highlighted there are other places at risk from carbon monoxide; not just housing e.g. caravans, tents, BBQs
- A stakeholder asked whether caravanning and mountaineering groups are contacted/awareness was raised
- A regulator felt lobbying was helping
- An NGN representative outlined training initiatives
- An NGN representative also outlined how they are 'an emergency service'; they take a passive sample when called out
- A housing association representative explained they have a gas safety team in-house who carry out safety checks
- A housing association representative drew attention to the fact wood burners are becoming an issue

6.4.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- An NGN representative explained they don't issue CO alarms
- An education representative suggested an alternative to issuing alarms could be an engineer could do a safety check; but acknowledged the cost for this is high
- A housing association representative highlighted that people use the batteries from CO alarms for something else/don't replace them; on new housing they are hardwired

6.4.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- No attendees were at the 2013 workshop, so could not comment on this

6.5. Table B, Newcastle, workshop two: NGNs response to carbon monoxide

6.5.1. Is NGNs approach on carbon monoxide on a day to day basis about right?

- A housing association representative reiterated the general public don't know what NGN is doing; more publicity is needed
- An education representative did not know who in their area (Liverpool) provide the service NGN does, so felt NGN was doing more than others
- A housing association representative felt the education part is good, especially with children; but questioned whether 'the kids were taking the message home?'; it's the parents that buy detectors
- Another housing association representative felt the marketing communications material was good and it would be useful to have to disseminate; s/he wasn't aware of it before

6.5.2. Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- A regulator suggested better promotion of NGN
- A manufacturer reiterated annual servicing and testing detectors

6.5.3. Overall what should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- An education representative felt that raising awareness, and getting people to change their habits (e.g. recognise symptoms and go to a doctors) were key objectives
- A manufacturer suggested the education side is good, but adding to this is outlining the types of fossil fuels that can produce CO, not just gas. Testing appliances is key
- A regulator added they had been trying to give out gas safety advice for years, but the HSE has said they need to get people to change their behaviour. They do an annual survey to try and help with this.
- The issue of literature in different languages was raised
- A stakeholder suggested people are resistance to safety testing and trust issues e.g. they think they will be sold something else
- A regulator said they do events, but people thought they were being sold to; but working with the fire service on this helped as they were trusted; home fire safety checks could be extended to CO
- The table suggested using the media e.g. soap operas

6.5.4. Out of the actions NGN is currently taking which are you priority ones?

- The table agreed education is the priority

6.5.5. Should any groups of people be prioritised when dealing with these day-to-day activities e.g. Young people, students, elderly, vulnerable, fuel poor and so on?

- A housing association representative said the issue affects everyone, not just the vulnerable
- An education representative informed the group Richard Medley and Charlotte Church had suffered from CO poisoning, but weren't willing to help publicise the messages
- A manufacturer felt it requires legislation/regulation; private households are at risk

6.5.6. NGN believes focussing on a national level to lobby those with responsibility will have the most impact on tackling carbon monoxide. Do you agree? If not, what should NGN be focusing on?

- The Chair suggested documentaries/soaps; the education representative said Coronation Street had done this about a year ago
- A stakeholder asked if there was any engagement with the Outdoor Industries Association; they could get information out to members
- An education representative thought it was difficult to identify who to lobby

6.1. Is NGNs approach to targeting universities, festival goers and schools something you support. Are there other groups NGN should target to raise awareness?

- An education representative highlighted the outdoor associations again
- The chair suggested the house builders' federation

6.1.1. Is NGNs campaigned details enough on signs and symptoms?

- An NGN representative outlined they do promote this in the literature and briefings

6.1.2. NGN has gathered much data on carbon monoxide should we share this with anyone, would our organisation be interested in it, what else can we do with it, would you make use of it?

- An education representative said they would 'love to use it', but need access to it
- A regulator asked which areas were covered

6.2. Do you support the ICOP app?

- An education representative felt it was interesting and engaging, but hard to tell what comes from it/whether behaviour changed

6.2.1. Data – NGN has much data how should it use it/share it, would your organisation use it?

- An NGN representative outlined the data they gathered and talked about trending e.g. people tend not to go to doctors if they had symptoms. S/he explained they also collect mapping data and demographics, in relation to CO cases, to target high risk areas
- A housing association representative said they could make use of any of that data; the charity and education representatives confirmed this would be the same for them
- Getting through to hard-to-reach communities and disabilities was discussed e.g. language translation

6.3. Newcastle Table B, workshop three: partnership working

6.3.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- Attendees were encouraged to fill in the forms

6.3.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- An educational representative said there wasn't a trade body; a few other universities did some research, but there needs to be a 'CO centre of excellence' to share work. There is a champion in House of Lords and Commons
- An educational representative suggested COGDEM
- A regulator outlined they lobby through the HSE, as their main client
- A stakeholder thought there could be a regional pilot focusing on the outdoor community
- A housing association representative said they connect with National Federation of ALMOs
- A charity representative said they only work locally
- An NGN representative mentioned HSE changes the culture of work safety; we need to change the culture of individuals.
- The chair summarised the co-ordination of views and prioritising messages needs to be done to make high level impact

6.4. Should there be a carbon monoxide working group that NGN runs administration of? Would attendees be willing to join?

- An educational representative agreed yes, on both counts

6.5. Table C, Newcastle, workshop one: NGNs response to 2013 workshops

6.5.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A housing association representative states that s/he likes the literature but it is the first time she has seen it
- A housing association representative says there aren't any legal requirements that allow us to check for alarms
- A housing association representative suggest that NGN 'need to do more to raise awareness as there is no legal requirement can we not contact landlord groups before winter and everyone has the heating on and doesn't want to let the heat out'
- A business customer representative responds saying that 'it is difficult'
- A business customer representative states that 'more national lobbying is needed to make it illegal not to have a CO alarm in every household'
- A housing association representative highlights that if smoke detectors haven't even been made compulsory then it will be difficult to make CO alarms
- A charity representative said that NGN should stop giving away CO alarms as so many were just being shoved in the kitchen draw. NGN should send them out to vulnerable people
- A housing association representative comments further and asks 'who will install these alarms?'
- A housing association representative asks if there a hand man service you can send them out to install as some people don't follow the instructions and just stick it anywhere
- A business customer representative responds by saying it is an awareness thing and education thing
- A local authority / council representative said what 'we need is better communication with NGN as I fortunately have contacts with some NGN employees however other council representatives may not have these contacts and their area may lose out'
- A business customer representative states that 'the installers and builders need to be safe and carry detectors if they are going in and out of properties that maybe at risk'
- A housing association representative asks 'if companies are legally obliged to install co alarms in commercial facilities?'
- A local authority / council representative responds by saying that there is no legal requirement to test the alarms
- A business customer representative states that 'it is the legal test isn't it? It isn't about testing the sensor like it potentially should be'
- A housing association representative says that 'education is the main part. TV story lines and magazines are a good way to raise the profile however I do understand that it is expensive'
- A business customer representative states that she wants these relationships to be formed and points of contact to be created so that these organisations and NGN can 'work together'
- NGN says it is all about 'moving the story onwards and extending the message wider and sharing information. We need other ways to get the message out so that we can lobby it and can get a national action on the matter'
- A housing association representative informs the table that his / her associations offers a move on pack for people who are going from supported accommodation to independent living to educate and inform people
- Ngn Fire service if you do suspect CO, everyone knows what to do and what the national number is to call for help. That message needs to spread.
- A business customer representative In the US the fire authority takes responsibility. If ngn take responsibility then that would be good.
- A charity repetitive says that s/he isn't not sure what his/her organisation can do, of course raising awareness will be useful. He/she is also involved in organising a festival so that could be useful as a place to target

6.6. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- None were specified

6.6.1. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- None were specified

6.7. Table C, Newcastle, workshop two: NGNs response to carbon monoxide

6.7.1. Is NGNs approach on carbon monoxide on a day to day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- A local authority / council representative suggested education in school as well as Leisure centres and parks like camp sites and so on
- A local authority / council representative states that all camping sites should have literature on CO
- A charity representative highlights the fact that in cities where there is a large diverse ethnic population a good way to target and communicate with different cultures is through the children, 'education in schools will educated children to then go home and tell their perhaps non English speaking parents about CO awareness'
- A local authority / council representative feels that 'CO alarms should be made mandatory and it is something that the council should do, Lobbying therefore is crucial'
- A charity representative makes the point that 'educating and getting the message out there is protecting people'

- A business customer representative said that 'a lot of the old boilers are being replaced and that has brought the numbers of CO death down'
- A housing association representative makes the point that houses are getting more air tight, which is good but increasing the CO risk if there was a leak'
- A local authority / council representative says that log burning has increased and there is 'no control over what people are burning'
- A housing association representative states that s/he has a tenant that is 'burning old scaffolding planks to keep warm.' S/he continues by saying that 'If people are on the bread line then they are going to do whatever it takes to keep warm and will burn whatever'
- A local authority / council representative said 'what NGN is doing with students is fantastic and the festival idea is brilliant the reaches that age group'
- NGN asks the table 'Do you have statistics that NGN can use to help us?'
- A housing association representative states that his / her organisation builds student accommodation and suggests maybe that 'this is something that we could help raise awareness on or maybe they could target the parents of students'

6.7.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments

6.7.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A housing association representative suggests a chimney sweep as that was who in fact made him / her aware, 'the more associations and variety of companies the wider the message will spread'
- A charity representative says that if people are living in fuel poverty the last thing on their mind is going to be to check their boiler
- A housing association representative makes the point that 'new accommodation will still be at risk'
- A local authority / council representative highlights that 'people are not be educated where to put the CO alarms which could make all the difference'
- A charity representative says that 'a video like we just saw was very shocking and had an impact that will make sure the message and point remain in your mind'
- NGN responds by saying that 'it is so hard to get air time and we need that support to make it onto the TV and into a national campaign'
- A local authority / council representative responds by saying that 'TV producers must have some coordination to angle stories'

6.7.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A housing association representative asks 'why is it so hard to get the message out there?'
- A business customer representative responds to the above question by stating that 'they don't want the bad press to highlight the fact that many of the CO alarms are faulty and break after a year and go against the warrantee as they would of course have to pay for the processing of the complaints'
- A charity representative states that 'a campaign to work together is needed'

6.7.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A local authority / council officer says 'the message is quite simple so keep it simple'
- A local authority / council officer said 'the symptoms are very common and vague so are GPs aware of the symptoms as I'm sure they fall short and ignore the little signs' A local authority / council officer then goes on to ask if there is a help link in doctor surgeries or if they offer any advice on CO alarms
- A charity representative responds by saying 'if a CO alarm goes off does everyone know who to call? Or where the number would be to call and what the procedure is?'
- A local authority / council officer states that 'the next step needs to be clear and the process obvious'
- A charity representative suggests that 'social networking is an excellent point' and get some popup adverts on iTunes to get more downloads for the app –ICOP
- A local authority / council officer says that 'the local services teach the young to learn through playing with the firemen and police men which is memorable and will bring in the mothers and educated them'

6.7.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments

6.7.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments

6.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- No comments

6.8.1. What should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- No comments

6.8.2. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- No comments

6.8.3. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- A housing association representative questions if it is useful to have a specific target and be more direct to these groups to get the message out there
- A local authority / council representative highlight that word of mouth is a powerful tool
- A housing association representative agrees that targeting the parents is a good idea

6.8.4. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- A business customer representative states that 'surely one death is enough'
- All agree that lobbying is of national importance

6.8.5. Is NGNs targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- No comment

6.8.6. Is NGNs campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- The symptoms are general and not specific enough so it is difficult
- A housing association representative asks 'if doctors are recognising these symptoms and are aware and advising people on the risks or are they just dismissing these very general and nonspecific symptoms?'

6.8.7. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- A local authority / council representative suggested 'sharing and exchanging data so that we can use all the information that is out there and work together'

6.8.8. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- A local authority / council representative suggests that 'making pop ups on iTunes to promote the app could help spread the word and increase downloads'

6.9. Table C, Newcastle, workshop three: partnership working

6.9.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- All agreed to filling out the partnership form
- A local authority / council representative said that 'money is obviously one of the main reasons behind any business. If business are going to make money then they can make money and help each other and it is for the greater good'
- A local authority / council representative states that 'there has to be a change in old habits'
- A housing association representative made the point that the 'big companies can help promote more than smaller companies can'
- A housing association representative asks if there should there be a working group that focuses on CO within NGN
- A local authority / council representative says that 'commercially for NGN it is good PR, as they are taking responsibility. This is especially important when as there has been a lot of bad press so the public would like NGN to be proactive'
- A charity representative says 'if you don't trust energy suppliers then it makes it difficult for NGN'
- A local authority / council representative comments that 'knowing that the barriers are there is a good starting point'

6.9.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- No specific comment

6.9.3. Should there be a carbon monoxide working group that NGN runs administration of? Would attendees be willing to join?

- No specific comment

6.10. Table D, Newcastle, workshop one: NGNs response to 2013 workshops

6.11. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- The concept and structure of NGN's regional operation managers was clarified by a NGN representative
- A local authority representative began the discussion by raising housing enforcement and housing conditions stating s/he was very concerned about CO in general. A big concern for the local authority was around private landlords (in general) with a lack of awareness being a major issue. An example was given by the local authority representative that due to a boiler not being serviced properly a father and daughter ended up in hospital
- Both representatives from local authorities and energy providers agreed that CO detector prices were too high and this needs to be reduced to smoke alarm prices. It was suggested that a more pro-active approach from Gas Safe should also be encouraged
- The discussion then focused around private landlords and a local authority representative observed that there was no register of private landlords for councils. S/he pointed out that with private landlords it was a '80/20 issue of dealing with 20% of private landlords 80% of the time'

- A NGN representative raised the issue that even if a landlord's property is Gas Safe registered, the tenants do not necessarily have alarms.
- In reply the local authority representative commented that s/he would like NGN to lobby for CO alarms to be a legal requirement for all landlords. S/he provided the example of Scotland introducing legislation on new build property with gas connection requiring developers to provide CO alarms
- An energy provider representative gave his / her view from a homeowner perspective. S/he did not know enough about signs of CO and had heard mixed reports about the effectiveness of alarms. S/he also stated that the local fire service had come around to his / her house completing health safety checks and recommended smoke alarms but did not mention CO alarms
- A representative from NGN agreed that there probably was not enough information about the types of alarms available.
- A local authority representative mentioned that the quality of alarms these days is very good
- The question of whether NGN does checks when operatives go around to properties was raised by a representative of an energy provider.
- A NGN representative confirmed that it is rolling out new detection equipment to include CO detection; this will be completed by March 2014. An energy provider representative followed up the question by asking whether the NGN operatives are educated about CO? Representative of NGN confirmed they are and provided information about the process as well as the accompanying information leaflet (provided to delegates as a handout)
- An energy provider representative asked how they can get NGN to come out if they receive a phone call about CO? NGN agreed to review the current process and work with energy providers
- The table discussed the dangers and lack of awareness from the general public. An energy provider representative asked whether NGN can partner with an organisation that distributes alarms. NGN stated it has links with Honeywell who supply NGN with CO alarms
- An energy provider representative said he was looking at CO alarms and was not sure which one to buy. S/he also commented on the information leaflet that it does not tell you where or which CO alarms to get. A NGN representative agreed, but did raise the issue that it cannot be seen to have a bias towards any manufacturer or distributor
- A local authority representative mentioned that they have a limited supply of CO alarms, but actually take them out the packet and put the battery in before giving the alarms to members of the local community
- A NGN representative discussed the awareness of CO from the general public, s/he felt awareness was increasing but at a 'trickle'. Servicing of boilers was raised by an energy provider representative and the suggestion that awareness could be increased at that point of contact
- The discussion moved on to advertisements and a NGN representative discussed how they are looking at promoting the Katie Haines Trust advert. Charity representatives and energy provider representatives on the table all agreed that awareness needs to be raised and suggested face-to-face contact being the most effective method. A NGN representative also agreed that it has found this the best process and stated that its operatives are trained to provide a presentation about CO, the dangers and the alarms. An energy provider representative queried how this was working and a NGN representative confirmed it was bringing in customer accolades about the presentation from its operatives
- A discussion began around engaging community groups and a representative of NGN said it was targeting a number of community groups and organisations. S/he provided an example of NGN agreeing to attend a housing association's AGM to provide details about CO awareness and alarms
- Funding streams for information material and subsidised alarms were raised by a charity representative. A NGN representative pointed out that although not a funding stream per se, they can get funding money back via OFGEM on ideas that demonstrate innovation. Charity representative commented that they were always looking for funding for innovative types of projects and there could be the potential to work in partnership with NGN

6.11.1. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- No comments were made

6.11.2. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- No comments were made

6.12. Table D, Newcastle, workshop two: NGNs response to carbon monoxide

6.12.1. Is NGNs approach on carbon monoxide on a day to day basis about right? Is there anything that stands out that should be accelerated or removed from what it is doing?

- The approach of not giving everyone CO detectors and the emphasis on educating people about CO and CO detection was questioned by a local authority representative.
- The potential cost implication was raised by a NGN representative who stated it would cost around £50 million to send out CO detectors to everyone on the NGN gas network. It was therefore important to focus on those most vulnerable to potential CO incidents
- An energy provider representative asked if NGN could do something nationwide, particularly using the advert (Katie Haines Trust) shown in the presentation. A NGN representative confirmed there is a national advert campaign
- Outdoor activities were raised by a local authority representative who provided an example of camping pods where a local councillor died from CO poisoning when visiting the Lake District. A charity representative mentioned that portable CO alarms are available

- An energy provider representative explained that it is about sharing the burden for organisations involved in promoting CO awareness and that organisations who are visiting houses for other reasons should be involved. S/he also commented that they would want to see further thought given to the strategic role of raising awareness at a national level (including lobbying government)
- A charity representative asked a generic question about what were the issues to getting CO alarms to everyone. The table all agreed it was a cost issue with who would bear that cost. A local authority representative discussed Scotland's approach via regulation being a possible way to implement CO alarms in every household
- An energy provider representative stated education is the key from a supplier perspective giving the example of a school campaign. S/he stated that most energy suppliers have community engagement programmes and this could be packaged up with CO discussions

6.12.2. Views on raising awareness with students– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A charity representative pointed out that the elderly should also be considered as a target group and that this links in with fuel poverty, as people who cannot afford servicing are often the ones who will not be buying the CO alarm. The rest of the table agreed that this is a key issue and a vicious circle
- A charity representative also raised those with mental health issues being a potential target audience
- This moved the conversation on to discussing how to educate hard-to-reach groups. A local authority representative raised an earlier discussion point (from the morning workshop) about the possibility to link information with council tax bills, but he felt it might be inappropriate to put the two together
- Raising awareness was brought up by a charity representative and the potential to use the local council magazine. Further options were raised by a charity representative, suggesting information being made available by doctors and dentist surgeries. An energy developer representative said the key to getting as many people to spread the word about CO safety as possible would be linking with social media. S/he elucidated the point by stating that the advert, for example, could be shared with partners' social media channels
- The table discussed the hard hitting advert and felt it sent a strong message and discussed how CO can build up slowly over a period of time and symptoms mimic cold symptoms. A local authority representative suggested boiler companies should include CO alarms in new boilers
- The topic moved on to CO spillage and a NGN representative commented that if there is physical evidence of CO spillage it has to disconnect the person.
- A local authority representative provided the example of the council phoning NGN with a commercial CO spillage and NGN came around to cut off supply within 15 minutes. S/he felt this was an excellent example of the very good service NGN offers
- An energy provider representative linked CO safety with gas (leak) safety and how the information should be given out on both topics simultaneously. S/he provided the example of his / her boiler being serviced and although information on gas safety was provided s/ he did not receive any information about CO
- The local authority representative reiterated his / her view that Gas Safe needs to be more pro-active

6.12.3. Views on more effective partnerships– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

6.12.4. Views on improve communication and awareness – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A NGN representative mentioned adverts could be placed in supplier outlets (e.g. B&Q) and the discussion went on to NGN partnering up with outlets during CO awareness week to reduce price of the alarms for the week

6.12.5. Views on more carbon monoxide detectors – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- A table discussion on how many people from the table had CO alarms in their own homes. Those who did not have CO alarms (two on the table) were going to buy an alarm that evening. The discussion moved on to prices and whether cheaper alarms are effective
- An energy provider representative discussed how they will take the discussion over CO safety back to their company to discuss raising awareness with other staff members

6.12.6. Views on more natural approach – your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

6.12.7. Views on build on our strengths– your views on what NGN is doing and proposes to do, anything it should stop doing?

- No comments were made

6.12.8. Views on data and how to share it/would you use it?

- No comments were made

6.12.9. What should NGNs key objectives be in tackling carbon monoxide?

- No comments were made

6.12.10. Out of actions NGN is taking which are your priority ones?

- No comments were made

6.12.11. Should any groups be prioritised on this topic e.g. young?

- A charity representative referred to the previous discussion and how there needs to be raised awareness amongst the elderly

- A representative from NGN wanted suggestions on how the company can engage with minority groups. A charity representatives on the table felt the best approach for NGN would be to go through local community groups with good connections to minority groups
- NGN representatives and charity representatives discussed how information could be disseminated in the local community via community groups e.g. food banks. On the topic of food banks a local authority representative discussed the changing profile of who is utilising food banks
- The table discussed how it is the people who struggle to pay the fuel bills, struggle to pay for services, and who are unlikely to buy alarms. The question raised was how to engage these people? An energy provider representative stated the potential of engaging through word of mouth

6.12.12. NGN supports national lobbying do you agree?

- No comments were made

6.12.13. Is NGNs targeting of students right? E.g. festivals

- No comments were made

6.13. Is NGNs campaign detailed enough on the signs and symptoms?

- No comments were made

6.13.1. Views on data collected and would you use it?

- No comments were made

6.13.2. Views on the iCOP app for smart phones etc

- No comments were made

6.14. Table D, Newcastle, workshop three: partnership working

6.14.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN, how can we be more effective as a group?

- No comments were made

6.14.2. What are the challenges, what needs to be done to make impact at highest level?

- An energy provider representative asked about the 'Warm up North' project and how it can be linked in with NGN's work on CO safety
- Charity representatives and local authority representatives agreed that 'Warm up North' had a 'slow start but was hoping it would quicken up'. An explanation for the slow start was provided by a local authority representative who felt that the reason for the slow uptake was to do with changes in Green Deal and other funding streams. On whether NGN was working on the project a local authority representative stated he did not know if British Gas was working with NGN
- An energy provider representative suggested NGN should look to partner with national organisations such as the Gas Safety Trust on CO safety and this could help future lobbying efforts
- A suggestion from an energy provider representative was NGN should link with other partnership groups and the approach should be 'targeted and forceful with those key partner groups'. Further discussion on the role of small local groups and how they should try to link together to get greater penetration was brought up by charity representatives

6.14.3. Should there be a carbon monoxide working group that NGN runs administration of? Would attendees be willing to join?

- No comments were made

Stakeholder workshop report: Fuel Poverty workshops



GreenIssuesCommuniqué

| January 20th and 27th 2014

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2. Introduction

This report details the discussions held at Northern Gas Stakeholder Workshops on 20th and 27th January on fuel poverty. The report has been compiled by Green Issues Communique (GIC), a specialist, independent stakeholder engagement and community consultation company. GIC facilitated the workshops by providing a chair for each workshop table and an analyst to make detailed notes of all points made by attendees. Following the workshops GIC has carefully analysed the reports from each workshop table and has undertaken further analysis to create the following report.

2.1. Dates and venues of workshops:

The workshops took place on 20th January 2014 at The Royal York Hotel, Station Road, York YO24 1AA and on 27th January at the Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 5DH. Both venues were chosen based predominantly due to their location and accessibility, in particular proximity to public transport links. Following on from the

2.2. Attendees:

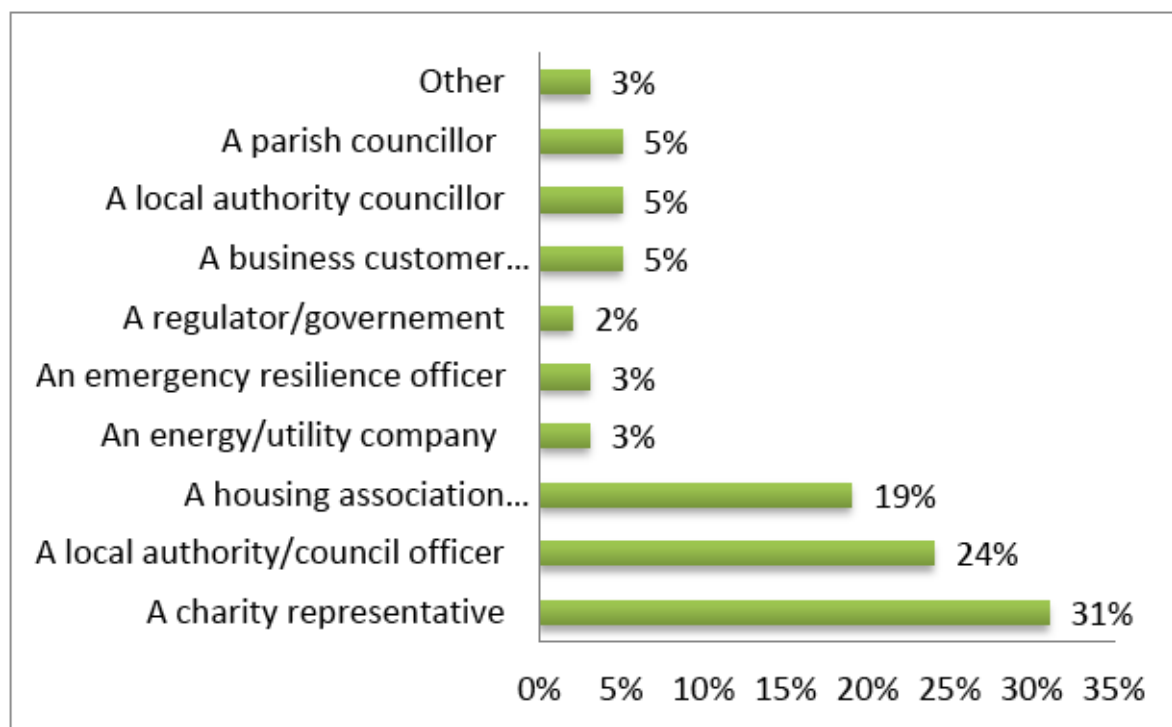
101 stakeholders attended the workshops - 57 at York and 44 at Newcastle. It is GIC's professional opinion that the two workshops were attended by a high number of stakeholders from a wide range of relevant organisations to the agenda. In total 101 stakeholders attended the events and many other stakeholders asked to be sent information/kept informed. The photos below demonstrate the high numbers of attendees.



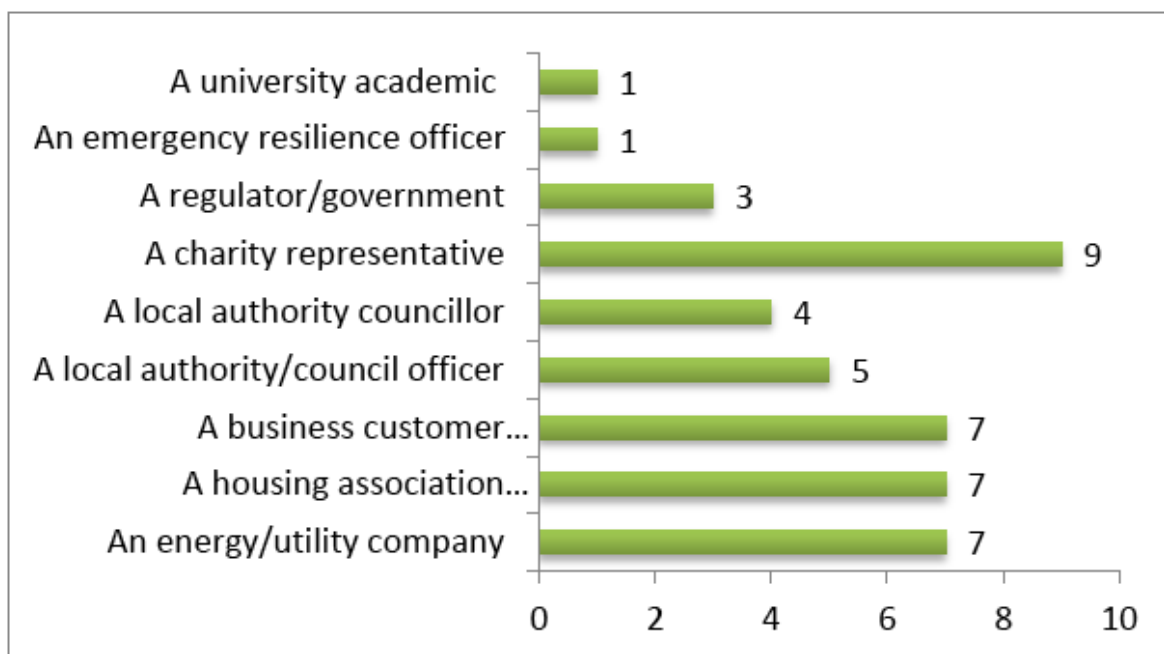
2.3. Stakeholders

The split of stakeholders according to the type of organisation they represent is shown below:

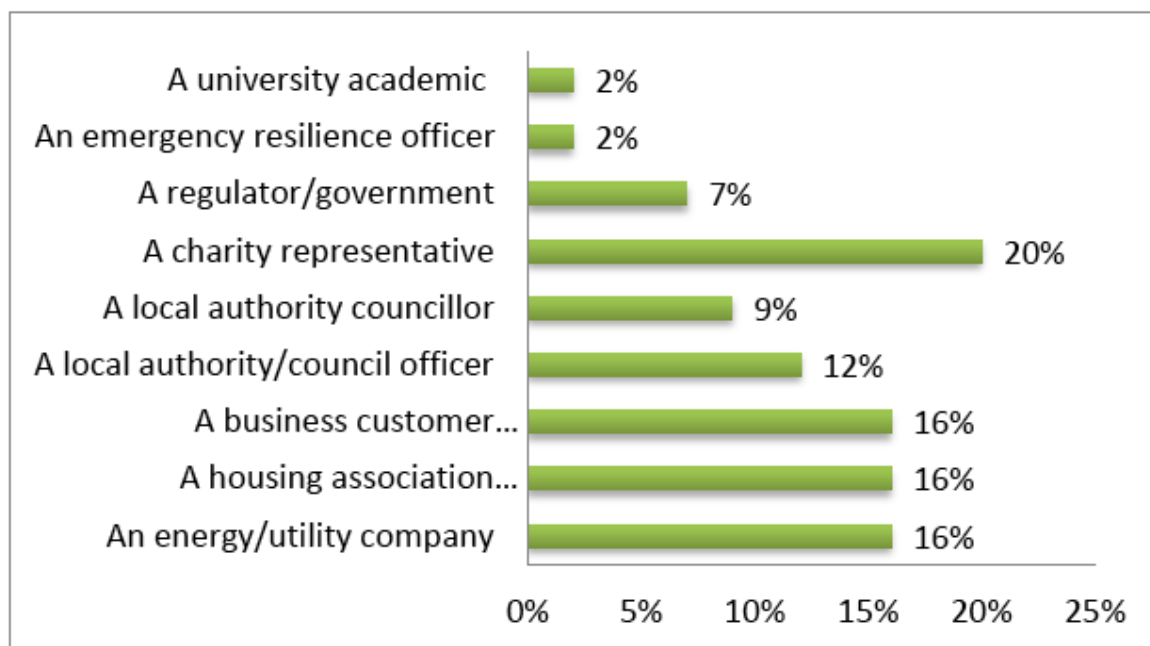
York (attendees by stakeholder group as a percentage of total attendees):\



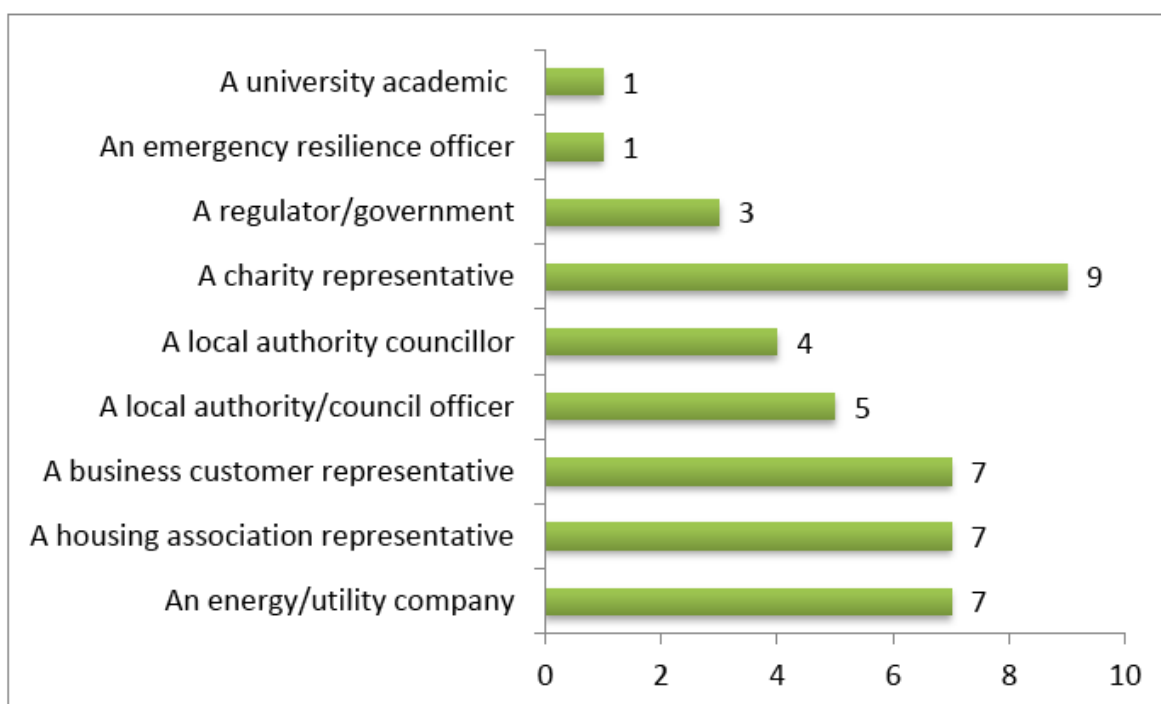
York (attendees by stakeholder group in numbers):



Newcastle (attendees by stakeholder group as a percentage of total attendees):



Newcastle (attendees by stakeholder group in numbers):



Attendees from Northern Gas Networks

- David Gill - Director of Stakeholder Relations
- Brian Dobson – Head of Stakeholder Relations
- Eileen Brown – Head of Customer Experience
- Tom Notman - Head of Customer Operations Support
- Kirsten Jameson - Customer Experience Support Officer
- Howard Forster - Customer Operations Director
- John Peacock - Programme Manager - Connections
- Gareth Mills - Head of Asset Investment & Innovation
- Alec Breen - Innovation Manager
- Garry Farnhill – Customer Operations Area Manager – North Riding
- Andy Irwin – Regional Manager - East
- John Pickering – Customer Operations Area Manager – East Riding
- Kate Tyson – Not aware of an NGN employee by this name
- Richard Hynes-Cooper – Customer Operations Area Manager – Leeds
- Paul Sadler – Emergency Officer

Attendees from Green Issues Communiqué (GIC)

- Kelly Edwards - Executive Director (workshop facilitator and GICs overall manager of the workshops)
- Nick Bohane - Executive Director (workshop facilitator)
- Richard Sutcliffe-Smith - Executive Director (workshop facilitator)
- Emma Webster - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
- Harry Hudson - Associate Director (workshop facilitator)
- Chris Brown - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Ian Biddulph - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Mike Townend - Senior Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Nick Osborne - Consultant (workshop facilitator)
- Lizzie McCann - Events Assistant (workshop analyst and GIC's administrator for the events)
- Gareth Turner - Executive (workshop analyst)
- Farah Pasha - Executive (workshop analyst)
- Amy Dicks – Assistant Executive (workshop analyst)
- Jen Horsman - Executive (workshops analyst)
- Louis Peake - Executive (workshop analyst)
- Monika Samoraj - Executive (workshop analyst)
- Cyra Parkes - Consultant (workshop analyst)
- Rob Hill - Consultant (workshop analyst)

2.4. Next steps

Northern Gas Networks will carefully review the points made during the workshops and will confirm what actions it will be taking as a direct result. The consultation reports will be placed on-line and all those who attended the workshops will be informed of this.

3. Executive Summary

Having carefully reviewed each individual workshop table report it is GIC's opinion that the main headline consensus issues and suggestions for action can be summarised as follows. However, this is not an exact science and NGN will, therefore, also reviewing each individual comment made from every workshop table discussion as documented in section 5 of this report.

After each workshop, facilitators were asked to speak for a few minutes to share the key findings from their workshop table. GIC feels it is fair to say that this feedback confirmed that the majority of attendees felt that NGN's approach to fuel poverty is about right, that the right actions from the 2013 workshops have been taken on board by NGN and that there is strong support for partnership working. Attendees also made a number of suggestions for actions for NGN to consider taking to further assist tackling fuel poverty.

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3.1. York:

The following section of the report highlights the main consensus issues and suggested actions that emerged during the January 2014 NGN York fuel poverty workshops.

Major points of consensus:

- People who are fuel poor do not come from any one demographic – they can be elderly, young, parents or be in another category
- The definition of fuel poverty is ambiguous
- NGNs approach is 'about right'
- Rural areas and fuel poverty was a particularly consistent theme from the York workshops
- Vulnerable people need to be approached, they will not make contact themselves and if they do phone for information/help they will contact other organisations not NGN
- There were no suggestions from York regarding removing items from the list of NGN proposed activities
- Popular suggested actions:
 - NGN to prioritise which charities/groups it partners with, it is not possible to partner with everyone. NGN must target activities and prioritise (many attendees stressed this point), 'do not spread yourselves too thin'
 - General consensus that a priority action must be getting new gas connections but there was also support for engagement and assistance to those who are not on the network and cannot be connected to it through other fuel poverty assistance schemes
 - General consensus that partnerships should be a priority area for NGN
 - Engaging private sector landlords was a consistent theme
- The vast majority of attendees were keen to sign up to partnership working with many workshop tables seeing all attendees agree to partner
- Consider funding a charity, e.g. Npower funds fuel poverty advisors. Macmillan is looking to work with the big six, how about NGN contacting Macmillan?

- Work with local authorities - many having mailing lists and can contact people for NGN to raise awareness
- A charity representative stated that NGN should focus on the creation of a cheaper standard tariff for everyone by lobbying, a number of attendees supported lobbying of shippers regarding this, in particular re prices for those who are ill
- Some support for prioritising those with long term illnesses
- Talk to/lobby house builders to make new homes more energy efficient, came up a number of times
- A representative of the City of York said that it has done some good actions regarding gas connections for fuel poor and it obtained its data from the Energy Saving Trust to help York council
- 'Affordable warmth' has less stigma than the words fuel poverty
- Suggestions that NGN work with Cabinet Members at local authorities although one attendee suggested officers as councillors may not be around for long
- Awareness training for NGN staff came up from almost every workshop table with suggestions that charities could provide this training
- Planning activities came up more than once - one suggestion was for the need to create a plan when approaching local authorities so to not create extra workloads. Another suggestion was for NGN to create a more general plan: 'create an action plan with a strategy, key milestones and measurable to define how we're going to get there. Then you can figure out what level you need to go in on'
- A local authority officer was of the view that NGN needs better data to create a strategy on replacement programmes, s/he asked whether local authorities have a role to play in helping to spread the message
- There are already many existing maps of poverty in place, e.g. local authorities can have them. Work in partnership with those who have them already, NGN does not need to compile from scratch
- A charity representative said that commissioning 'cash strapped voluntary organisations' to compile a heat map which identifies fuel poverty hotspots could be one way forward
- Target activities at letting agents and housing providers who are not local authorities as their homes may not be up to the same standards of insulation, heating etc
- The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) plus Well Being Partnerships were frequent organisations suggested to partner with. The Fire Brigade was also mentioned as was the Childrens Society and Age UK
- One attendee said it is difficult to know who to contact at NGN
- NGN to raise its profile so that more organisations knows what it is, does and how it can help
- Help for rural areas, cheaper ways of connections or other help please

3.2. Newcastle:

- The following section of the report highlights the main consensus issues and suggested actions that emerged during the January 2014 NGN Newcastle fuel poverty workshops.

Major points of consensus:

- Attendees felt that NGN needed to do significantly more partnership working and build on-going relationships with named contacts. The housing association sector, in particular, was keen to see more interaction with NGN
- General consensus that it is not just the elderly who are the fuel poor
- General support from most tables regarding NGNs 2013 and 2014 action lists on fuel poverty
- Tenants need to understand how to use energy efficiently but agreement that this is difficult to achieve awareness of
- There has been a step forward from NGN from the 2013 workshops
- Desire to see the 'big 6' at the table, comments that they are best placed to identify which customers are in fuel poverty
- Excellent partnerships already in place, work with existing agencies and charities
- People who are connected need to be able to afford to be connected, there is no point connecting then someone cannot pay
- In terms of who to partner with local authorities and parish councils were the most popular suggestions out of many partnerships
- Fuel poverty is also about the house design, UK needs to build better insulated properties
- A number of attendees, in particular from housing associations and councils said that prior to the event they did not know about NGN
- General concern that fuel poverty is going to rise

Popular suggested actions:

- In terms of which groups for NGN to focus on, in general the view was that there is no one group who suffers from fuel poverty. Vulnerable people/groups was one suggested priority area, including for people who had an illness. Another suggestion was on a street by street level depending on the profile of a street, e.g. a council representative stated they could provide information on old poorly insulated homes in their authority area and information on low income areas
- Numerous suggestions (almost from every workshop table) regarding providing some funding for charities to help them raise awareness as they are known and trusted. One attendee mentioned their charity had received funding from Npower which paid for three full time advisors on fuel poverty and this was working very well

- A suggestion supported by a number of attendees (not all) was distributing fuel poverty NGN leaflets/flyers with the council tax bill with one council volunteering to consider testing this
- NGN to not stick rigidly to the definition of fuel poverty when assessing who it can help. It should be based on if someone is in need rather than statistics of earnings
- Private landlords were mentioned as a group that needed specific work. A number of attendees talked about cold, damp homes that were not looked after, especially those rented to students. However, due to the lack of legal requirements regarding landlords (excluding the social rented sector) attendees noted that it would be difficult to impact behaviour. However, GIC would add that this was a frequently recurring comment and we believe it would be worth NGN exploring some activity regarding landlords even if it
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- Take awareness raising out into the community where footfall is high. A council representative referred to the 'Choice for Energy Scheme' in their area and this is run out of a shop in an area of high footfall and reaches a wide audience. Could NGN do something similar or partner up with an organisation to help this happen elsewhere?
- Request on a number of occasions by different attendees to avoid the word 'fuel poor' due to stigma, people don't want to engage. One suggestion was to use 'affordable warmth'
- The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is a good point of contact regarding the most vulnerable people but due to shop opening hours should not be the only method of distributing messaging from NGN on fuel poverty
- Suggestions of NGN working with a charity to train staff, e.g. Age UK so that they can help educate service users on fuel poverty and understand how NGN may be able to help. Likewise, the CAB was suggested with one CAB manager offering to use their local branch to test this, explaining that until the workshop they did not know that NGN was a potential route to help a service user in fuel poverty
- Several suggestions of working with local authorities to 'map' where poorly insulated housing is/homes occupied by residents on low incomes live to create priority areas for fuel poverty actions
- Mixed feelings about awareness raising with some attendees saying it should not be NGNs main focus, others saying charities should lead on awareness and others stating NGN should be raising awareness
- Information in other languages was suggested a few times
- Numerous attendees spoke of the need to 'lobby' the energy providers
- Several requests for NGN to liaise more with Parish Councils who can reach out to communities, especially in rural areas
- Housing associations want more contact and one suggested from a 'named contact' not an email address
- More emphasis in supporting those who are already connected to gas
- Use council accreditation schemes to promote the issues
- There were many wide ranging suggestions of partnership working and partnership working was popular. GIC will compile a separate list of the suggestions which included named charities, health partners, unions and more
- Several instances of requests for literature from NGN to have bigger text and be easier to read. One attendee mentioned an NGN leaflet aimed at older people which had too much information on a small space

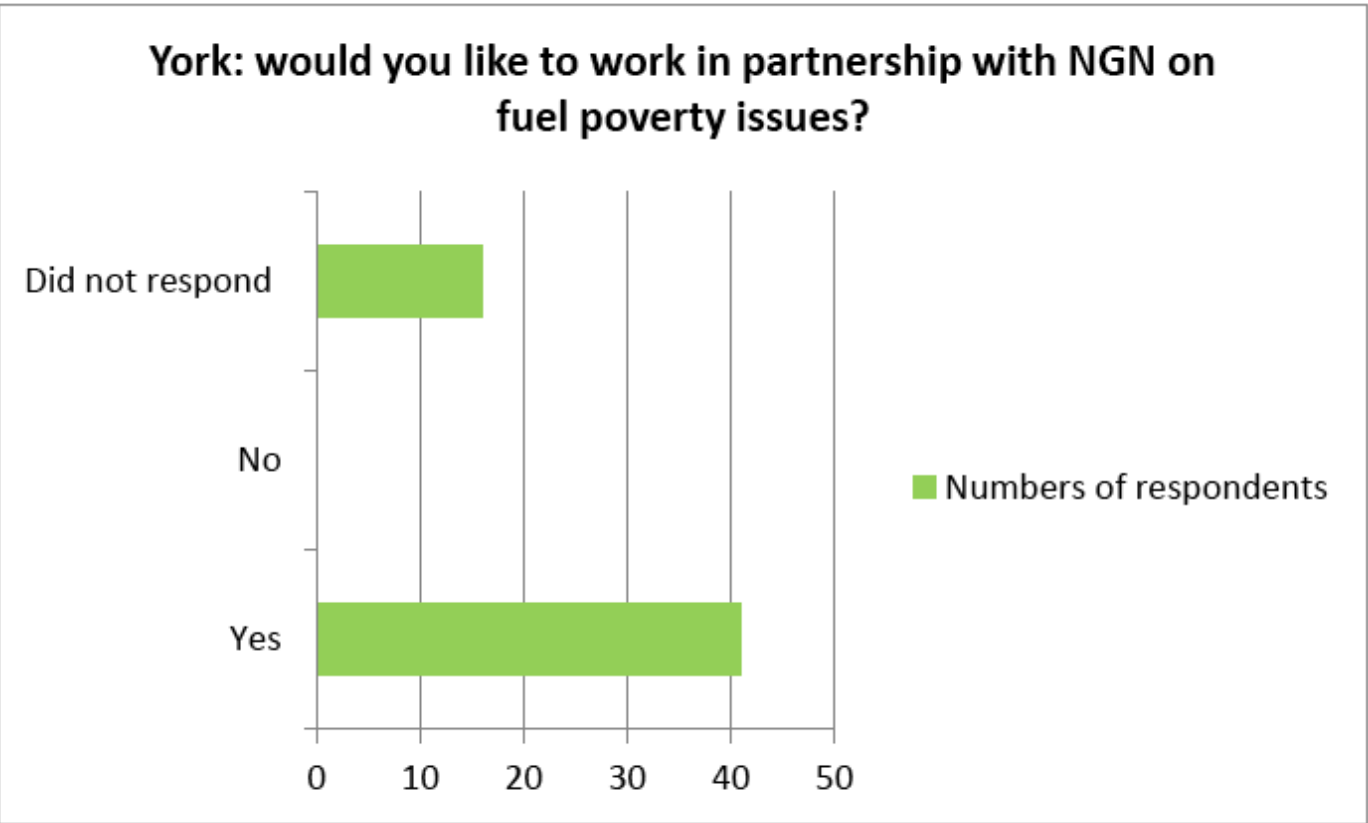
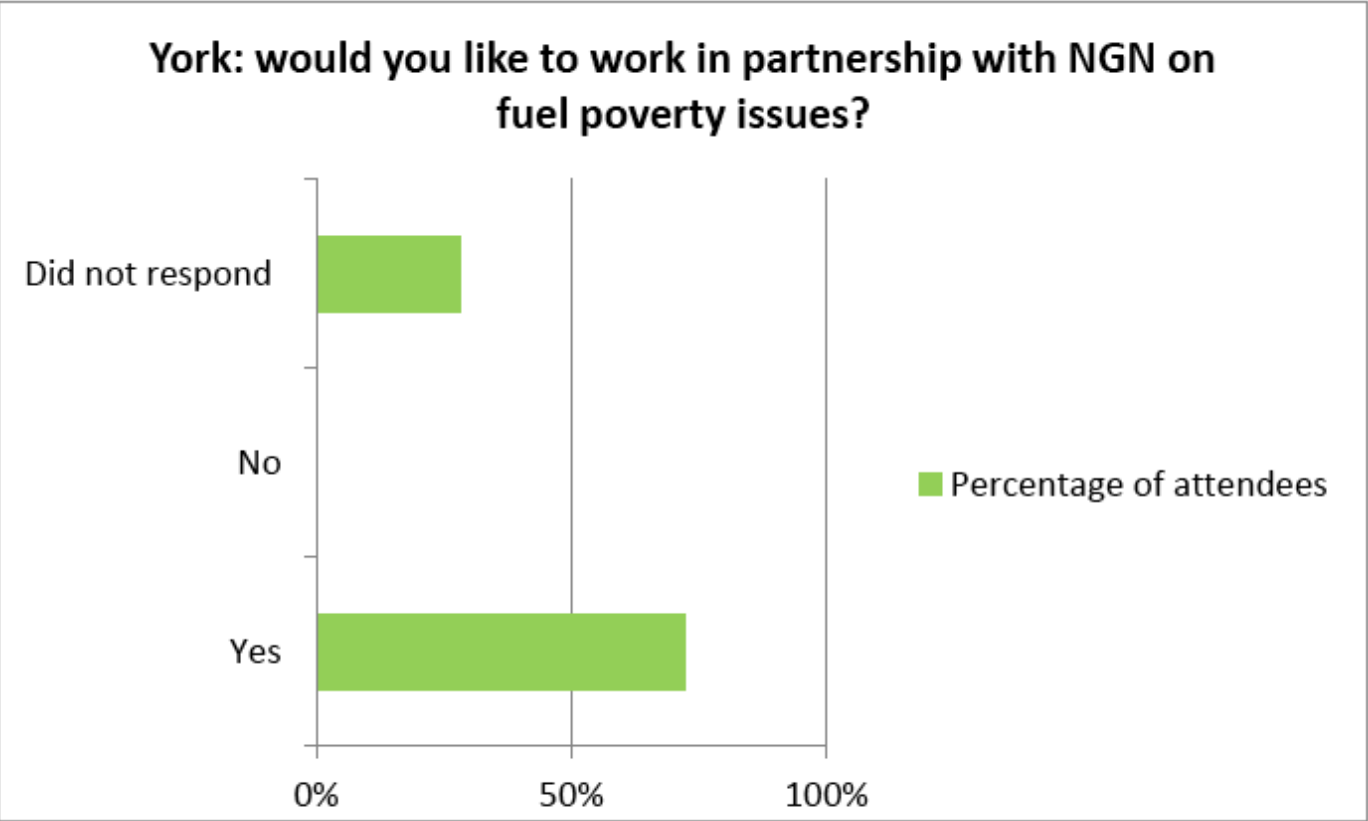
4. Written stakeholder feedback:

In addition to the round table workshop discussions stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to provide written feedback to a number of questions as follows:

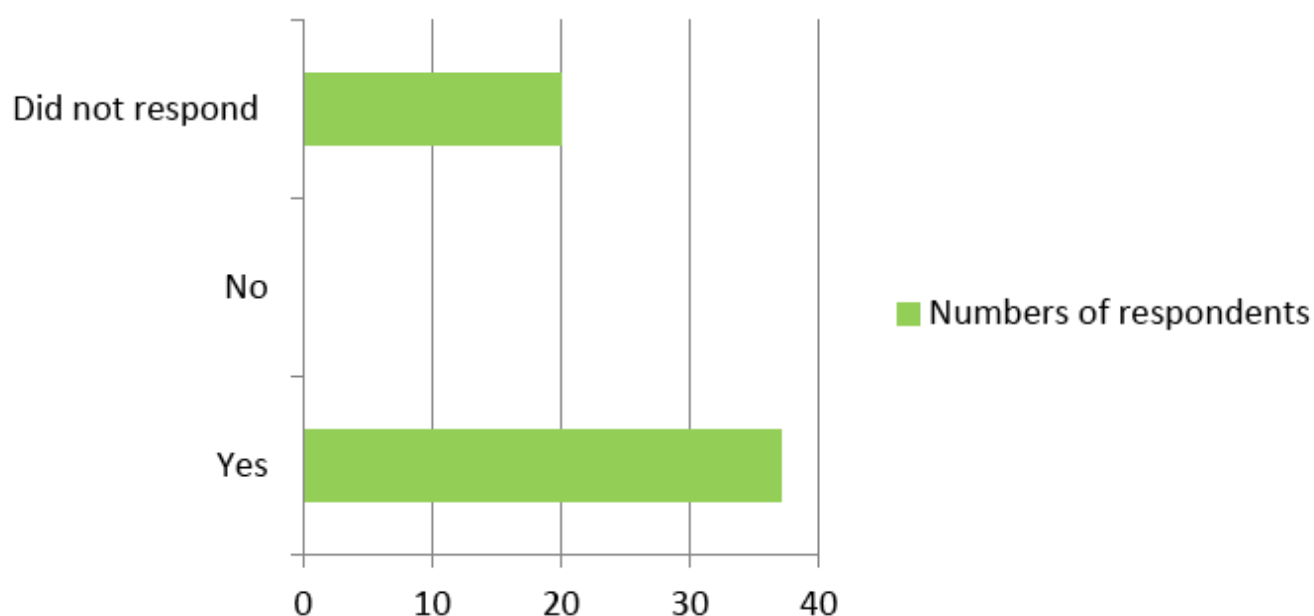
4.1. Partnership working:

- The vast majority of attendees from the York workshops (72%) signed up to the concept of partnership working on fuel poverty issues with an even higher number signing up to this concept at the Newcastle workshop (80%) as the tables following demonstrate.

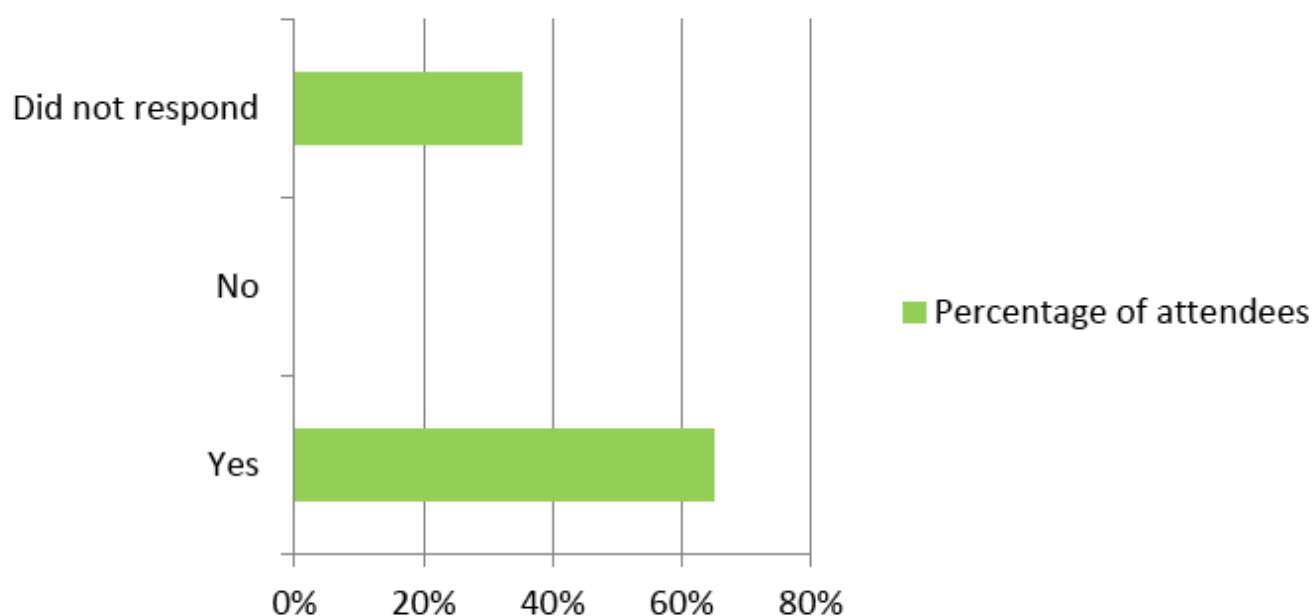
4.1.1. York

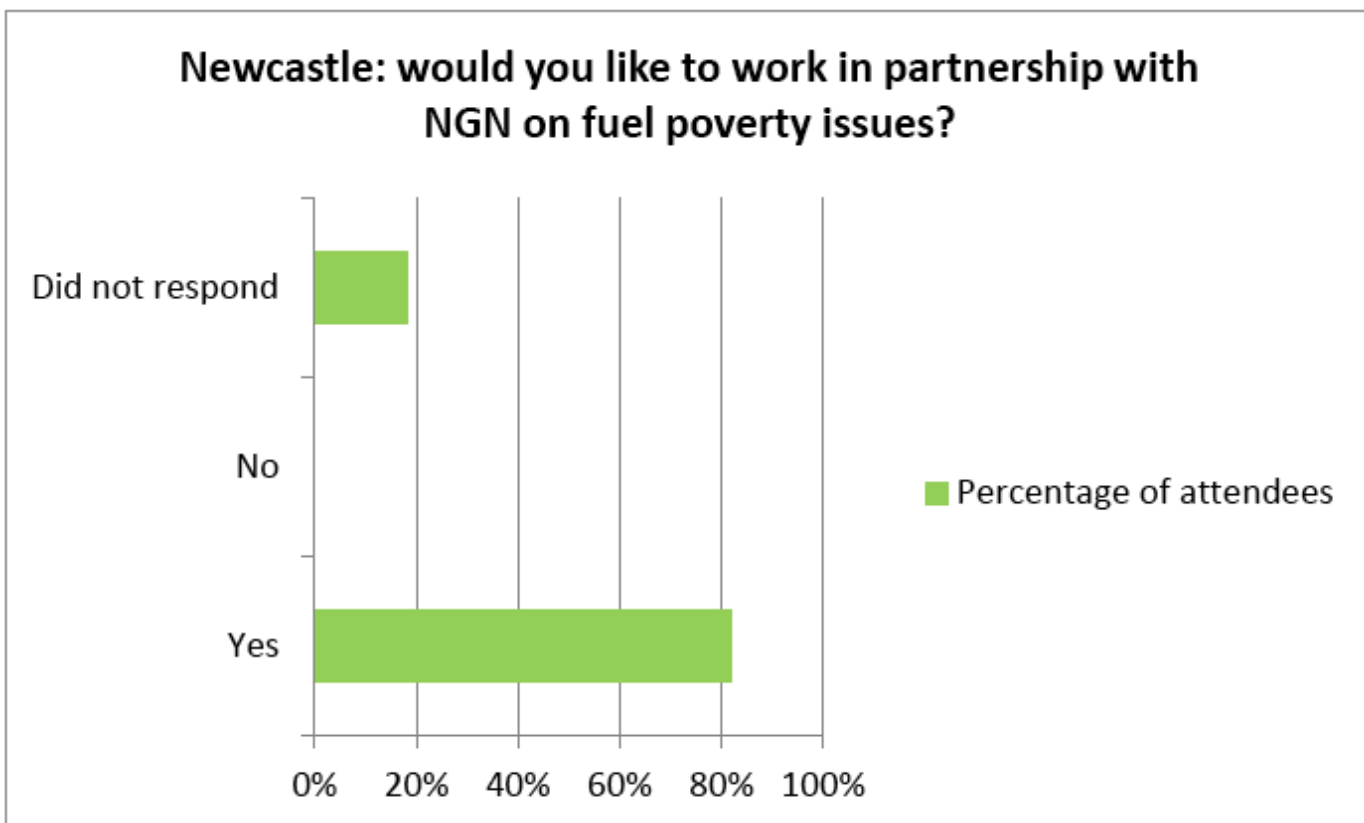
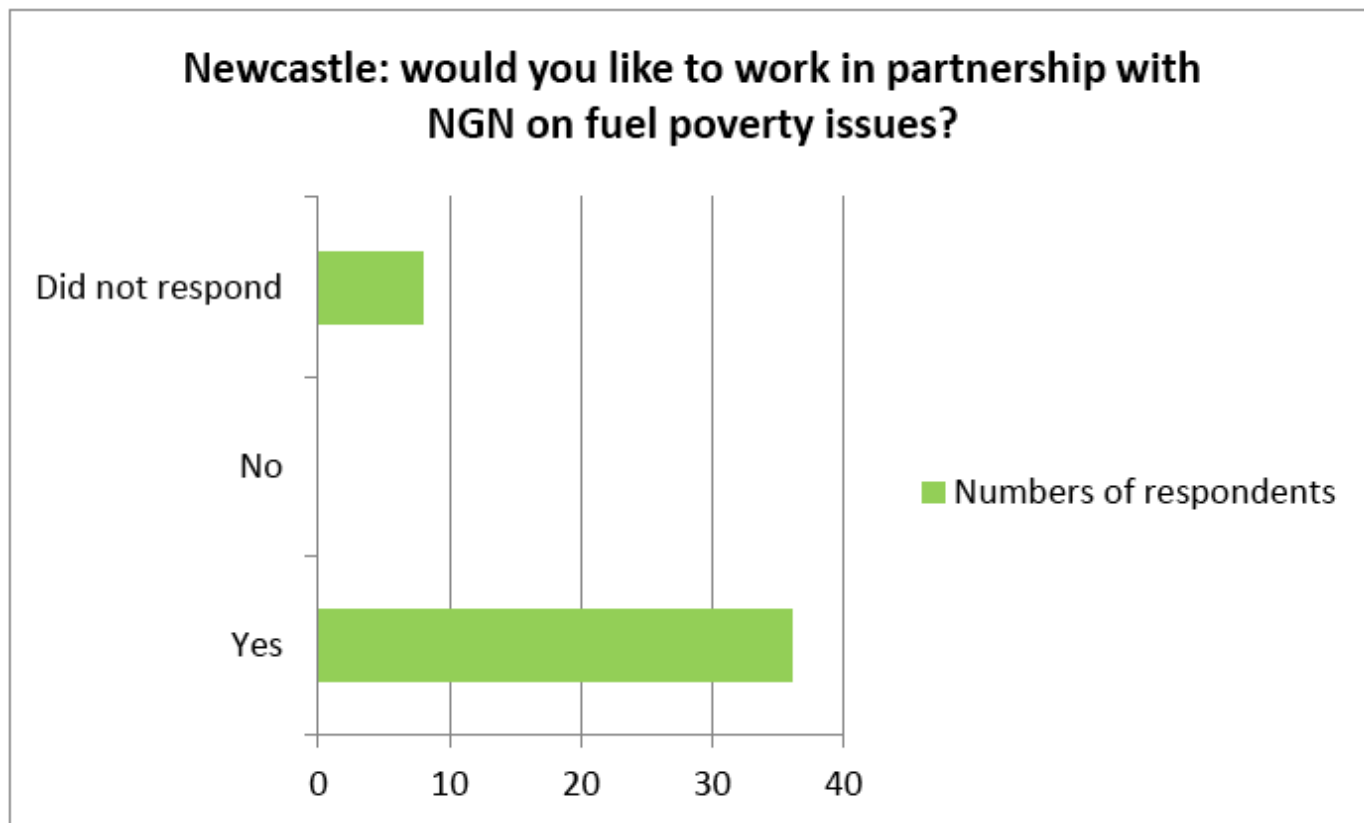


York: would you be interested in joining a working group on fuel poverty?

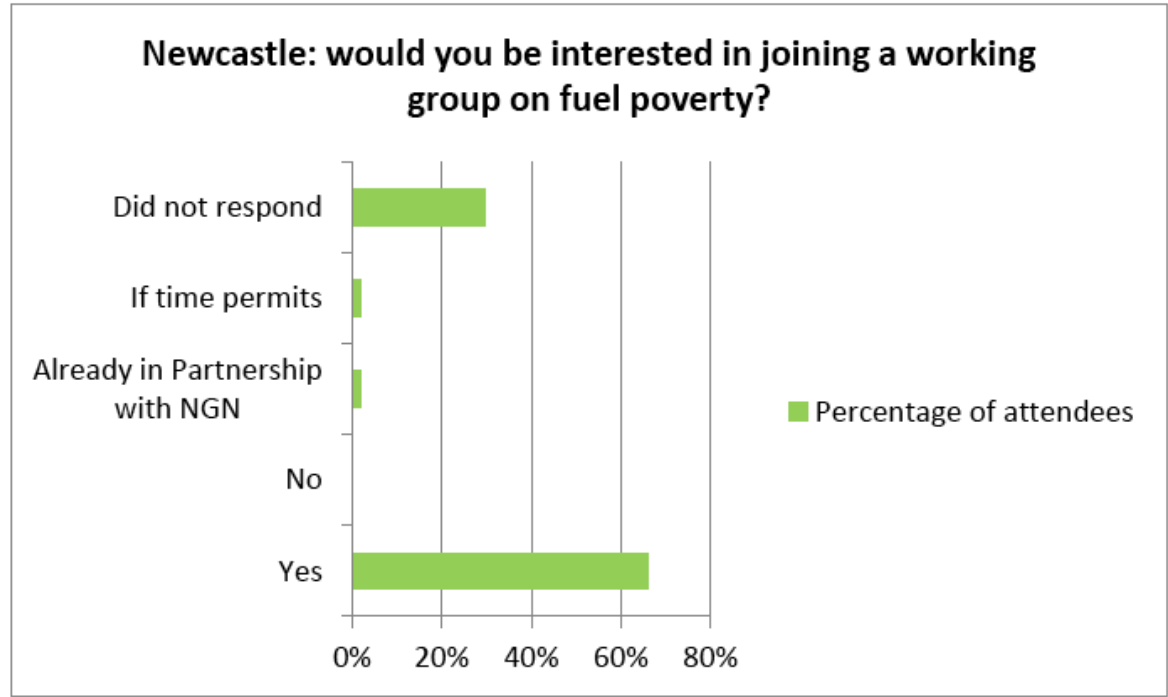
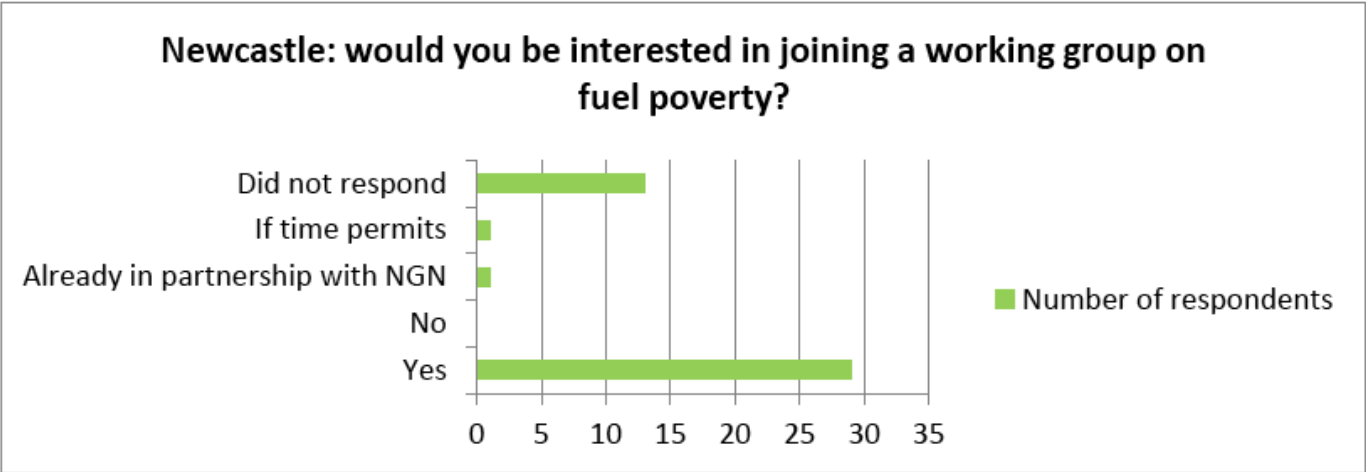


York: would you be interested in joining a working group on fuel poverty?





The majority of attendees (66%) from the Newcastle workshop signed up in writing to being interested in joining a working group on fuel poverty as the tables below demonstrate:



Stakeholders who signed up to partnership working and/or a possible working group represented the following sorts of organisations:

- University
- MP's office
- Consumer group
- Local authority
- Charity sector, for example charities that provide advice on financial matters

4.1.3. Feedback forms

At the end of each workshop attendees were provided with feedback forms to complete. The information below summarises the responses to the four main questions asked in these feedback forms. NGN will undertake a thorough review of all feedback forms as a number included detailed suggestions for next steps, contacts/partnerships to make and regarding preferred methods of future communication.

100% of returned forms agreed that the workshops were either very useful or useful (with most stating the workshops were very useful). The vast majority of attendees stated that there was sufficient opportunity to express their views, that their venue was conveniently located and that the right topics were covered. A breakdown of the feedback from each workshop is contained in the table below.

	Did you find the workshop useful?	Was there sufficient opportunity to express your views?	Was the conveniently located for you?	Were the right topics covered?
York poverty workshop	16 feedback forms said the event was very useful (61% of returned forms). 10 forms said the event was useful (38%)	27 feedback forms replied yes (100% of the returned feedback forms)	26 feedback forms replied yes (96% of returned forms), one form said no	27 feedback forms replied yes, (100% of returned feedback forms)
Newcastle poverty workshop	16 feedback forms said the event was very useful (61% of returned forms). 10 forms said the event was useful (38%)	27 feedback forms replied yes (100% of returned feedback forms)	26 feedback forms replied yes (96% of returned feedback forms)	27 feedback forms replied yes (100% of the returned feedback forms)

5. Detailed workshop discussions: fuel poverty, York

This section of the workshop report includes a detailed note of the discussions from each workshop table. Names of those individuals and the organisations that they represent who contributed to the discussions have been removed. At the start of each workshop attendees were informed that names would not be referred to so as to encourage open discussions.

5.1. Table A York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

5.1.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

The general consensus of the table attendees was yes to the above question

- A local authority/council officer commented that the definition of fuel poverty has changed; it was his / her opinion that this definition is really important because in order 'to employ dedicated resources' NGN needs to know who it's targeting them at
- Another local authority/council officer asked 'how is NGN going to prioritise who it helps?'
- A local authority/council officer asked 'what information has been given to people offering them help?' S/he commented that they 'haven't seen anything in the papers', but is of the opinion that some charities are better at providing information
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that 'NGN needs to raise its profile'
- A local authority/council officer agreed, stating that they had struggled to find a point of contact at NGN when trying to work with them
- A local authority/council officer offered the view that it is important that people aren't just looking for 'social capital' but look to create 'effective partnerships' without 'spreading yourselves too thin'
- A charity representative agreed with the above point

5.1.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- No comments were made
-

5.1.3. Are there any actions that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A local authority/council officer pointed out that fuel poverty is also about house design and location, and stated that it would be difficult to convince people living in rural areas that they should have shale gas extraction, for example
- A charity representative suggested that the link between energy efficiency, new homes, and planning permission is really important and s/he was of the view that NGN should provide resources in this area
- A local authority/council officer concluded that NGN is 'missing a go-to person' in terms of planning and making buildings energy efficient
- An NGN representative stated that it would be necessary to discuss this further
- A charity representative stated that it was the first time s/he had attended NGN's stakeholder workshops, and questioned if NGN offered grants for vulnerable people
- An NGN representative explained where details of grants can be found
- Another charity representative commented that those who are eligible can receive a free gas connection
- A charity representative responded by pointing out that 'awareness is really important', s/he did not know how to find out about such schemes or reading materials with grant information
- A local authority/council officer queried the ways in which NGN works with housing providers, because s/he was of the view that more fuel poor are in housing provider properties where there is inefficient heating, and therefore communication is necessary between NGN and housing providers
- A charity representative was of the opinion that NGN would work with anyone, wherever required
- A local authority/council officer suggested that a key issue is the elderly who live in single occupancy houses 'that are far too big', and energy inefficient. S/he continued by stating that for them maintaining independence is important, which is a big problem in rural areas
- An NGN representative stated that they would like to link with partners to work on these issues
- A local authority/council officer replied 'you have a lot to do'
- A local authority/council officer said that in his / her area a lot of the fuel sources people are using are off the gas network, and are not regulated. There are also problems with having a monopoly of gas providers, particularly for LPG users, and people don't have a lot of choice
- Another local authority/council officer replied, stating that parish councillors may want to look at things like that
- A local authority councillor responded by agreeing and stating that some people aren't even double-glazed

5.2. Table A York, workshop two: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- A local authority/council officer made the point that in most sparsely populated areas local government is aware of who is claiming benefits, who the landlords are, the issues with negotiation, local plans for new developments and they know the 'people who have hit crisis point' and do not have heating. S/he continued that all this information exists but it needs to be mapped altogether
- A charity representative stated that national agencies need to meet together to look at individual cases to share information, as is done in domestic abuse cases
- A local authority/council officer gave the view that 'you can get lots of data and interpret it in different ways, we map where pre-1920 housing is, we map deprivation' and s/he suggests that NGN could duplicate this mapping but there is little point in doing so when the information could be shared instead
- A local authority/council officer advised that 'everyone needs to go gloves off and share information for a certain period' and then see what the results are
- Another local authority/council officer commented that an agreement needs to be made about what people are prepared to do with the information that is shared
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that there is the potential for information to be misinterpreted, but this process needed to begin because a lot could be done in just 'a few hours'
- A charity representative asked, 'what do you think would trigger this process?'
- A representative from NGN explained that a strategy would need to be formed
- A charity representative responded with the suggestion that an NGN rep could work with partners to help to move this forward
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that s/he can see that the strategy will only be successful if NGN works with partners and stakeholders
- A local authority/council officer said regarding NGN's activities on improving communications and information awareness that they admire NGN's enthusiasm 'to give this a go' and suggests that it is right to take a 'bottom-up' approach from community, geography and onwards

- A local authority/council officer continued by querying 'where is the government strategy in this?' S/he is of the view that the government has conducted a recent review on fuel poverty in addition to calling for further research, but none of this information has been shown to the public. S/he suggests that this is a problem because it may affect what NGN is able to do
- Another local authority/council officer responded by asking 'what is the commitment that the government has asked the gas companies to make?'
- A local authority/council officer points out that research indicates that fuel poverty is going to increase by 50 per cent
- A charity representative was of the opinion that fuel poverty is a massive issue and 'the government needs to step up' because 'everyone is cash-strapped'; s/he questions who is going to pay for all the help that people need
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that NGN is not 'permeable enough' as an organisation and suggested that it is difficult to know who to contact at NGN to discuss such issues
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that this information is not easy to understand
- With regards to partnerships a charity representative questioned how NGN picks which areas it helps in such a big region where funds are limited
- A charity representative was of the view that poverty awareness training should be undertaken by NGN with charities because they have the most experience of working in this area
- A charity representative thought that NGN should receive training from charities
- A local authority/council officer wants his / her colleagues to be using their time effectively; therefore, they need to know where their help can be most effective
- A charity representative pointed out that getting the right partnerships is vital to NGN's success in this area
- A local authority/council officer commented that NGN will be 'missing a trick' if they do not make connections in the community sector
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that the community sector had most of the answers

5.2.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty?

- A charity representative suggested that target groups should be young people, those on benefits, and single mothers
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that there must be help for the elderly, and communication is key to this
- A local authority/council officer was of the view that in order to identify vulnerable people individual organisations need to bring their existing maps together to get the whole picture
- A local authority/council officer commented that NGN need to identify the most vulnerable people
- A local authority/council officer queried whether 'fundamentally this is about getting more gas connections?', with stakeholders stepping in to help people once these connections were made
- An NGN representative explained that as new connections are made NGN looks to connect others in the same area too

5.2.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- A local authority councillor expressed that s/he is from a very deprived area, and hopes that vulnerable people will now be aware that help is available to them; s/he has been trying to promote this in their authority's magazine
- A charity representative explained that his / her organisation do home safety checks, signpost people to particular agencies and tell them how to go about getting grants. S/he needs to be well informed about the help NGN offers and how it can be accessed
- A charity representative was of the opinion that raising fuel poverty is most important action because many people will not know they are in fuel poverty, or don't know where to find advice or how to manage their money
- A charity representative commented that gas payment methods are a key issue because debts can build up if people do not have the right payment methods dependent on their needs
- A charity representative suggested that fuel poverty is complex because a family may have a high income, but their children may be being refused heating during the day. S/he commented that this may be apparent in domestic abuse situations which organisations should raise awareness about, and be aware of themselves
- A charity representative was of the view that all the above points are important and momentum needs to be upheld, but a problem is the high volume of stakeholder agencies based within and outside of the region who will want to work closely with NGN; it is hard to be selective in choosing who to work with
- A charity representative was of the opinion that collaborations and partnerships need to be higher in the list
- A charity representative pointed out that 'the police have got on to multi-agency working' which s/he suggests involves getting all agencies around a table, and discussing a problem in order to develop a 'mosaic effect'

5.2.3. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- A local authority/council officer expressed concern that 'business pressures' could lead to NGN's efforts to tackle fuel poverty diminishing; s/he is of the view that NGN needs to understand the business reasons for these actions before investing in the voluntary sector
- An NGN representative explained why NGN wants to work with stakeholders
- A local authority/council officer expressed concern that NGN are 'only one part of the system' which needs many further parts and comments that s/he is unsure how everyone will collaborate
- A local authority/council officer questioned how NGN will control and measure its success

5.2.4. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- A local authority/council officer stated that NGN needs to provide their organisation with funding

5.2.5. Who are the fuel poor?

- A local authority/council officer pointed out that s/he represents a rich area, but there are many elderly people who are not on benefits because they are asset rich. However, they suffer because they cannot access any help or are too proud to ask for it in some cases
- A local authority/council officer indicated that current changes to the benefit system are affecting working families on low income, as well as those who are unemployed. S/he noted that 'perceptions and the data do not always stack up'
- A charity representative was of the view that there are hidden people who are affected, such as those suffering from family problems and domestic abuse. His / her organisation looks to secure homes but warmth and heating 'could easily come into that' including fuel poverty

5.2.6. The definition of fuel poverty has changed how do we apply that?

- A local authority/council officer was of the view that it is important to look at both the old and new definitions. S/he offered an example that they expect to see in their area of a wealthy family who are spending over 10% of their income on their heating, but they do not struggle as their income is large
- A local authority/council officer suggested that the new definition could and should include elderly people on the wrong benefits, or those living in a tower block with debt; these zones need to be targeted by NGN
- A local authority/council officer contributed the view that those who need more fuel because of illness must be considered in the new definition
- A charity representative indicated that putting in a more efficient system may not benefit some poor households because it may lead to them using more gas because they think it is cheaper, rather than using it cautiously when they were on a less efficient system and being able to afford this cost
- Another charity representative responded by suggesting that if NGN put in new pipe lines in an area and then optimised connections it may be more efficient. S/he stated that this is about low income, and the high cost of fuel
- A charity representative agreed, stating that new connections may have an initial cost but the end result is making savings

5.2.7. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- No specific comments made as the above discussions took prominence during this workshop

5.2.8. NGN has lots of statistics: would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- A local authority/council officer discussed that NGN needs to work with different organisations in order to collate its statistics and work out which are useful for particular organisations because broadcasting statistics to everyone won't work
- A local authority/council officer explained that his / her organisation has strong lobbying partners, but it is important that they know what the government is doing in order to utilise this
- A local authority/council officer stated that the voluntary sector would like to be involved and this includes the sharing of statistics

5.3. Table A York, workshop three: partnership working

5.3.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN?

- All stakeholders agreed that they would be willing to partner up with NGN

5.3.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

- A local authority/council officer thought it would be beneficial to work with RSLs
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that letting agents are relevant to an extent because of issues surrounding landlords
- A charity representative agreed, suggesting that any national or regional bodies which represent the private rented sector should also be involved in partnering
- A local authority/council officer also agreed, stating that there are landlord associations who are looking to save money as well
- A charity representative questioned whether local strategic partnerships could be developed
- A local authority/council officer made the suggestion that partnering with Health and Wellbeing Partnerships would be beneficial
- A local authority/council officer agreed, saying that NGN needs to engage with health and wellbeing boards, because they are about social services, fire, police, everybody under an umbrella company rather than LSPs
- A local authority/council officer commented that NGN needs not only full coverage of the area it works but also statutory and non statutory bodies
- A charity representative was of the view that NGN needed to make partnerships in order 'to find the key to the doors' and gain the information they required
- A local authority/council officer suggested that those who represent the church should also be included
- A local authority/council officer pointed out that North Yorkshire is so huge that there are very many smaller bodies
- A local authority/council officer suggested that NGN should work with associations that represent sparsely populated areas

5.4. Are attendees willing to sign up to a form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- All attendees said yes

5.4.1. For those working in housing and local authorities, what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?

- A local authority/council officer stated that people cannot afford to put their heating on so houses are cold, there is mould and damp, and children suffer from asthma because of the mould spores
- A local authority/council officer replied, saying that the Housing Association's solutions to mould problems, such as using bleach, do not work
- A local authority/council officer agreed, stating that young people and the elderly suffer most and they are seeing a lot more cases of asthma
- A charity representative commented that older people tend to live in older houses which are harder to make energy efficient
- A local authority/council officer said that pre-1920 houses are virtually impossible to make energy efficient because so much energy needs to be pumped in and this is very expensive
- A charity representative mentioned that people who inherit stone properties often can't afford to heat them
- A local authority councillor pointed out that many elderly people's properties are without double glazing, even in local authority housing for the elderly

5.4.2. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- A charity representative suggested that planning restrictions placed on old and listed buildings can stop people having gas connections as well as making their home more energy efficient because, for example, they have to buy special double-glazed windows which are expensive
- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that planning regulators look at houses as just buildings and not look at the people inside; s/he stated that there should be a relaxation in housing and planning permission rules when it comes to energy and heating

5.4.3. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor. Is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- A local authority/council officer was of the opinion that contacting people in Health and Wellbeing Partnerships is a key to doing this
- A local authority/council officer suggested that Local Economic Partnerships could be useful as well
- A charity representative suggested that working with Age UK may be beneficial, starting at a national level and filtering down to local agencies
- A charity representative commented that this method may also be useful for contacting Citizens Advice Bureaux as well

5.5. Table B York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

5.5.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- The general consensus was that the actions list was 'about right', with some suggestions for further improvement listed below
- A charity representative spoke about how s/he was surprised that NGN did not appear to know exactly who the fuel poor are
- A parish councillor discussed the importance of NGN exploring cheaper ways of gaining access into rural areas
- The table agreed that NGN needs to lobby shippers on gas prices
- A charity representative asked about NGN's plans for new connections locations
- A parish councillor asked whether there was an assessment check for switching from gas to oil
- A local authority officer was of the view that a contractor would not survey without it being off the network
- A parish councillor stated that there needs to be a 'one stop shop' when it comes to improving gas connections, adding that 'too many grants cause too much confusion for a lot of people'. S/he was of the opinion that the best way for NGN to improve outreach was to link in with and fund existing partnerships
- A charity representative commented that NGN needed to adopt better outreach communication strategies through a diverse range of information outlets (e.g. GP surgeries), as well as better managing the expectations of those that are off grid
- A charity representative asked 'why isn't there more discussion between network operators and suppliers? Can you clarify the definition of 'fuel poor'?
- Everyone agreed that the exact definition of fuel poverty was fairly ambiguous
- An NGN representative answered this question
- A parish councillor stated that people were more likely to be in fuel poverty when using gas in rural areas
- A charity representative expressed concerns over the Government's redefinition of fuel poverty
- A parish councillor commented on the confusion that is caused by multiple tariffs
- Another parish councillor stated 'whenever politicians discuss energy, they always discuss the urban scenario – this needs adjustment'

- A charity representative was of the view that the energy suppliers unwilling to work with NGN to get bills down should be 'named and shamed' to help bring the issue to the forefront of their priorities, as well as prompting consumers to switch to those that are willing to work with NGN
- A local authority officer said 'this list is great, but we need an evidence base on what is actually deliverable'
- A charity representative stated that NGN needed to fund voluntary groups to improve outreach and engagement with the fuel poor
- A parish councillor said that NGN needed to create good datasets to identify fuel poverty hotspots

5.5.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- There was very little comment in response to this question
- Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?
- There was no discussion of this question

5.6. Table B York, workshop two: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- A parish councillor commented on the absence of hard metrics in NGN's presentation. S/he felt that there was a lack of statistics on the number of people NGN has reached and taken out of fuel poverty. S/he was of the view that the evidence base in the presentation needed to become more tangible before s/he could confirm whether theirs was the 'right' approach
- A local authority officer agreed that there is a need for more measurable outcomes, i.e. the number of connections installed, dates, objectives and targets etc
- A charity representative said that commissioning 'cash strapped voluntary organisations' to compile a heat map which identifies fuel poverty hotspots could be one way forward
- A parish councillor asked 'what's your overall budget to carry out this type of activity?'
- An NGN representative replied
- A charity representative asked 'what happens to the people who remain fuel poor once you've implemented your plans?'
- A member of the NGN team answered this question
- A charity representative stated 'we don't have a handle on the specific costs of energy as these are negotiated by suppliers. You could influence a standard charge, how clear is that to us as consumers?'
- A charity representative said 'gas companies wouldn't pass the savings on to us, they'll just pocket the profit'
- A parish councillor added 'and if they tell Ofgem about the situation, they'll put the transportation price up, which shippers will have to pay and this will lead to an increase in bill costs'
- Another parish councillor discussed the type of person that might face fuel poverty
- A charity representative was of the view that the fuel poverty victims vary considerably but are usually underpinned by low wages and high rents
- A parish councillor said that NGN needed to 'look at the bigger picture' in terms of its approach
- A parish councillor was of the view that to improve its communications, NGN needs to 'use less jargon'
- A charity representative asked about the 10 additional people to support fuel poverty within the NGN team
- An NGN representative answered this question
- A parish councillor questioned who was being trained on fuel poverty awareness
- A charity representative commented that NGN needs to raise its profile among consumers to 'help spread knowledge'. S/he felt that a marketing campaign to raise awareness on fuel poverty and promote understanding of NGN's network better would be a good way to alert people to grants, and that NGN also needed to be branded in a way that's more approachable to consumers
- A local authority officer added that NGN needed to be careful not to clash with the National Energy Advice Service
- A charity representative said 'the root cause of fuel poverty is cost, how will you address that?'
- A parish councillor was of the view that an Ofgem incentive would allow NGN to increase its margin and in turn lower prices
- A charity representative suggested that NGN could make use of the information from this workshop to help identify potential partners. S/he added, 'the fact that we're here is ticking a box, but you need to engage with mass numbers. By way of example, why not use social media to Tweet leaflets?'

5.6.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty?

- A charity representative stated that NGN should focus on the creation of cheaper standard tariffs for everyone
- A parish councillor said that all fuels were charged at standard measure kWph
- A housing association representative mentioned that s/he had tried to source funding for energy but had been refused
- A parish councillor said that his / her daughter had just moved into a housing association home, and noted that this should have prompted updating of household energy units, but didn't

- A charity representative discussed his / her concerns about a friend who did not qualify for the Government's boiler scheme even though s/he was on Job Seekers Allowance
- A charity representative added, 'just about everyone is fuel poor in my area'

5.6.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- It was felt that this had already been covered during earlier discussion

5.6.3. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- Everyone agreed that people with long-term illnesses needed to be prioritised when it comes to supporting vulnerable customers as it can affect their condition
- A charity representative was of the view that NGN needed to work with energy suppliers to develop schemes to support people with illnesses on reduced incomes to access cheaper fuels. S/he suggested that NGN needed to consider the types of interventions that can be implemented; for example bills could be charged on the basis of their income rather than on how much gas is consumed

5.6.4. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- No comments were made

5.6.5. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- A local authority officer was of the view that NGN needs better data to create a strategy on replacement programmes. S/he asked whether local authorities have a role to play in helping to spread the message
- A charity representative requested a batch of NGN leaflets to distribute to students
- A parish councillor stated that NGN could raise the profile of fuel poverty by using it as a platform to lobby for a living wage where fuel poverty doesn't exist to 'get politicians on the bandwagon'
- A charity representative said 'people shouldn't be out in the cold in a civilised society'

5.6.6. Who are the fuel poor?

- It was felt that this had already been covered during earlier discussion

5.6.7. The definition of fuel poverty has changed: how do we apply that?

- Everyone agreed that fuel poverty is much more fluid than the Government's definition

5.6.8. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- A stakeholder was of the view that NGN had a duty to identify the fuel poor, come up with a strategy to support the people identified and help get them out of fuel poverty
- A housing association representative stated 'our difficulty is customers are struggling to balance their income, it's not clear as to what Government is doing to help either, we really need to focus on a more affordable system'
- A stakeholder agreed that it was important to 'keep warm cheaply'
- A charity representative suggested that NGN should consider lobbying house builders on heating and homes
- A local authority officer added that s/he wanted to do more with private sector landlords and discussed plans for a potential awareness programme to promote the merits of gas
- A parish councillor felt that a feasibility study for his / her village would be useful
- A parish councillor pointed out that an audit of fuel poverty hotspots would help NGN to decide where to target in future and use it as a platform to monitor progress
- A charity representative felt that it was important for NGN to pursue a joint approach with energy companies

5.6.9. NGN has lots of statistics: would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- A charity representative said 'it depends, if you're targeting young people you need to gauge where we fit into it, and you need baseline data not just percentages'
- There was much support for lobbying at a national level
- Everyone agreed that fuel poverty is much more fluid than the Government's definition (although funding priority needs to go to most vulnerable/unwell)

5.7. Table B York, workshop three: partnership working

5.7.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN?

- Everyone was willing to work in partnership with NGN
- A local authority officer said 'we need to create an action plan with a strategy, key milestones and measurable to define how we're going to get there. Then you can figure out what level you need to go in on'
- A charity representative suggested that NGN should set up mobile stalls with balloons and give out information leaflets, local events and job fairs to capture more people

5.7.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

- A charity representative suggested that Age UK would be a natural partner for NGN. This was because reducing hyperthermia deaths was one of its organisational aims; NGN could develop and help Age UK reduce hypothermia deaths and produce more tangible outcomes. S/he added that AgeUK comprises individual charities (with one brand) and therefore has a good grassroots footing. S/he also felt that food bank networks, local churches, Community Voluntary Action organisations with big memberships/ umbrella groups and Local Affordable Warmth organisations would make much more useful partners than the Children's Society
- A stakeholder added that Healthwatch could be a potential partner
- A charity representative suggested that NGN could involve CCGs; in order to do so it would need to map out key CCG contacts, forward on invitations to them to pass on to patients not to avoid triggering data protection issues
- A local authority officer stated that every area has a Local Affordable Warmth partnership
- A local authority officer said that the Charms Group (Calderdale Housing Association Group) would make a good partner
- A charity representative was of the view that when it comes to local authorities, chief executives would be the best starting point
- A parish councillor made the point that politicians (from parish councillors and cabinet members to MPs) would also be a good entry point into local authorities
- Another parish councillor supported this view
- A charity representative added that church groups and religious groups were good channels to break into hard-to-reach groups
- A parish councillor stated that nurseries and Homestart were also good communication outlets
- A stakeholder stated that it was worth contacting local authorities regarding their safeguarding vulnerable adults scheme

5.7.3. Are attendees willing to sign up to a form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- Everyone was willing to sign up

5.7.4. For those working in housing and local authorities what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?

- A parish councillor queried NGN's partnerships with suppliers
- A charity representative added 'you could ask your partners to give you ideas on how to engage with stakeholders'

5.7.5. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- A parish councillor enquired 'do you talk to house builders? Part of the battle is making sure house builders are spending money wisely. In Germany, house builders have to construct according to regulations, which is a logical way of making builds more efficient'
- A housing association representative noted that 'Housing Associations have come a long way when it comes to becoming more energy efficient; by nature we have asset management strategies'

5.7.6. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor: is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- A charity representative was of the view that NGN needed to set up an online spreadsheet to track data, test effectiveness of strategies and create a FAQs next year to provide answers
- A parish councillor stated that 'the lack of detail in your data is very striking; we shouldn't have to wait till next year, we want an update in 6 months! You should pull together a test group for ideas, with interim thoughts
- A charity representative added 'why not have public engagement events all over your area and ask voluntary sector groups to attend and work with them to encourage attendance?'
- A stakeholder requested details of the hardship fund and how to access it
- A charity representative said 'if partners were more aware of how effective you want your strategy to be, we'd be able to help'

5.8. Table C York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

5.8.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A council officer commented that since the last workshop there has been much better communication and partnership between NGN and other organisations. For example, the leaflets produced by NGN provide much clearer contact information for groups and individuals
- Attendees felt the right themes/actions had been taken on board

5.8.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- A council officer stated that in his / her region, the Choices 4 Energy scheme has been 'very successful' in distributing information about fuel poverty. The scheme operates out of a shop in a town centre, which makes it very easy for people to access services. The scheme had a highly visible and physical presence
- An NGN representative replied that they would find similar schemes very useful. S/he said that if they know that there is something around with a physical presence, it is very easy to connect with that organisation and hopefully form a partnership
- A council officer commented that a very wide range of people suffer from fuel poverty, it is not just the elderly. In his / her experience, families are often fuel poor

- A district councillor agreed, stating that there are a lot of people who own their homes who are in fuel poverty. It is really not just elderly. However, if there is a shop, like in the Choices 4 Energy scheme, then it becomes much easier for all sorts of people to access help
- An NGN representative said that 'gas cannot be the answer on its own, it is also necessary to explore other sources of heating for those in fuel poverty', including renewable energy sources. S/he stated that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) can be a useful way of distributing information to the public
- A council officer countered that the CAB is often not open enough to be an effective communication channel for NGN. GPs' surgeries are more useful, particularly in rural areas, as people can read and digest information whilst they wait for their appointments
- A district councillor agreed that 'the CAB is not a useful way of distributing information to the public'
- A council officer commented that leaflets are a particularly useful medium for distributing information, because people can take them home and use them for reference in the future'
- A charity representative stated that district nurses can be good for distributing leaflets, as they form relationships with people and actually go into homes
- A council officer disagreed, and said that district nurses simply do not have the time to distribute information; 'Doctors' surgeries are more effective because people can just pickup leaflets when they need to'

5.8.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- No comments were made

5.9. Table C York, workshop two: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- A housing association representative countered that s/he did not see many representatives from housing associations in the North East: 'NGN needs to be more proactive about approaching organisations in order to foster partnerships'
- A council officer replied that organisations from the North East may wish to attend the NGN event in Newcastle instead of York
- An NGN representative admitted that they had lost contact with some housing associations in the North East. S/he stated that NGN was 'perhaps not approaching the right people within these organisations'
- In terms of communications a housing association representative stated that 'NGN need one guru who directs the fuel poverty agenda, as existing staff often have another primary job'. There needs to be one individual who interacts with partnership organisations and NGN need to be clearer about how they can help people suffering from fuel poverty issues
- A housing association representative replied that currently s/he had to approach organisations like NGN to find energy solutions for residents. S/he wanted 'a much more proactive approach from NGN in the future'
- An NGN representative stated that s/he wanted to turn this situation around, and that a programme was currently under way to open communication channels with a whole range of organisations, including housing associations.
- The NGN representative agreed that they should be more forthright about approaching organisations, and asked stakeholders which medium they believed was best for approaching them
- A housing association representative stated that 'NGN needs to network much more effectively'. They need to use their existing contacts, their contacts' contacts, and so on, to get their message on fuel poverty across and form partnerships with the organisations that can be most useful
- A local authority councillor commented that within councils, 'NGN should direct its communication efforts to council officers rather than members, who frequently come and go. NGN's message is getting through, but it could reach more people if it targeted the right individuals'
- A housing association representative stated that 'communication could be significantly improved if NGN had an understanding of different organisations' business plans'. If NGN is not aware of the projects of other organisations, it will not be able form effective partnerships and will not meet its targets on fuel poverty
- A charity representative stated that 'NGN needed to improve its communication strategies. NGN should approach churches and parish councils to cascade information down to communities'
- A council officer asked if local newspapers could be used to distribute information on NGN's behalf
- A charity representative answered that local newspapers would be an excellent way of distributing advice telephone numbers, particularly as some local newspapers are free
- A council officer stated their council has been using community centres/hubs to distribute information to customers, as they have direct access to vulnerable people. However, s/he stressed 'the importance of giving training to people in community centres in addition to leaflets', so they are able to talk and engage with customers personally
- A council officer stated that most vulnerable people do not get in contact with organisations to seek help in addressing fuel poverty. They need to be approached directly. S/he added that the CAB has been particularly useful in this respect because they have direct access to some of the most vulnerable people in society
- A council officer commented that because very vulnerable people have to be approached when they are in fuel poverty, there is often a delay in accessing help

- A housing association representative commented that it had taken him / her a year to get 300 fuel switches completed for residents
- An NGN representative agreed that 'NGN needs to improve on the design and delivery of its programmes because presently schemes take far too long'
- A council officer asked the NGN representative who is on the specialist external stakeholder panel
- An NGN representative replied that s/he was unsure
- A district councillor asked the NGN representative if membership will be split between grassroots and other individuals
- The NGN representative answered that it will be people that know the legislation and are able to give NGN guidance on its fuel poverty strategy
- A district councillor countered that the implications of legislation, and also local conditions, differ remarkably in different regions. S/he commented that 'two or three smaller panels would be more relevant for NGN than just one'. Some areas do not even have access to gas, for instance
- A council officer commented that s/he 'wasn't exactly sure what the people on the specialist external stakeholder panel did. They need to get out into communities and offer practical support to partners, otherwise they will just operate in an ivory tower'
- A charity representative asked if there was 'any evidence of the impact of the panel'
- The NGN representative answered that personally s/he did not have the evidence. S/he had just appointed three team leaders to look into the feasibility of connecting areas without gas to the NGN network
- A council officer asked why NGN was doing fuel poverty awareness training. S/he said that 'other organisations are already running education and awareness programmes, and that NGN was duplicating the efforts of others'
- A district councillor countered that people do need to be made aware of fuel poverty and the best ways to combat it
- A housing association representative replied that if someone is in fuel poverty, they would not go and ring NGN to ask for help: 'they would ring a long list of other organisations first, or even just turn the heating off'
- A charity representative added that staff need to receive training if they are giving out advice on fuel poverty. 'It is vitally important that they are able to talk through people's problems with them'
- A council officer stated that this training should be provided by organisations. Particularly in large organisations, staff are often not released for training by external providers: 'online training is also difficult because people often do not complete it. They are simply too busy'
- A council officer replied that separate people with specialist knowledge need to be employed to interact with different organisations like housing associations, local authorities, charities etc
- A housing association representative commented that 'although NGN has a social responsibility to do its bit on fuel poverty, any actions taken should be alongside councils, energy companies, and other organisations'. Partnerships are vital. What is currently being done by NGN is often also done elsewhere, in a possibly more appropriate manner
- An NGN representative commented that individuals can make a huge difference to partnerships. If someone in an organisation has a real passion for the partnership, it is much easier to work together and much more can be achieved
- A housing association representative stated that s/he 'did not see any co-ordinated approach from NGN to removing people from fuel poverty'. There need to be many more partnerships. NGN should have relationships with all the major housing associations across the network, rather than just a few
- A charity representative answered that 'most local town councils have a council for voluntary services (CVS)'. These people have a network of contacts, and could cascade information down to those who are most active in the community on NGN's behalf. This may be the most efficient way for NGN to form partnerships
- A housing association representative commented that s/he 'did not see any energy companies at the event. Partnerships must include the energy companies, otherwise we are limited in what can be achieved'
- An NGN representative replied that a representative from British Gas was in attendance, but that s/he believed they had only been at the company a short period
- A housing association representative commented that from his / her perspective 'it was vital to have a relationship with energy companies'
- A charity representative stated that as NGN was only able to connect homes with the gas network, 'it was vital to involve the energy companies in any partnership'
- All stakeholders agreed that it was vital to secure the involvement of energy companies in partnerships
- An NGN representative asked if anyone had got into contact with NGN to enquire about forming a partnership, and if they had, what route had they taken
- A housing association representative replied that s/he 'had contacted NGN to get some properties connected to the gas network, and that this had happened through a contact of a contact, who facilitated the partnership'

5.9.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty?

- A council officer stated that NGN's focus on addressing fuel poverty 'should first be on building partnerships with other organisations, and secondly on providing funding for community groups who have direct access to the people in need'
- A district councillor commented that 'NGN's focus should be on providing funding, and communicating clearly to people how best to access this funding'

- A charity representative stated that 'NGN's focus should be on operating holistically'. The organisation should form partnerships with other organisations to identify vulnerable consumers, install a gas connection, and then work with energy suppliers to install a heating system
- A charity representative commented that 'NGN's focus on fuel poverty should be on providing funding for community organisations'
- A housing association representative stated that NGN's focus on fuel poverty should be on 'contributing to the solution'
- A council officer posited that NGN's focus on fuel poverty should be on 'understanding where the links between organisations lie, in order to form more effective partnerships'. They should also define and clearly communicate what is meant by vulnerable people and who is eligible for support
- A council officer commented that NGN's focus should be on improving communication: 'if information is not shared on funding and NGN's on-going projects, people will not be able to access help'

5.9.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- No comments were made

5.9.3. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- No comments were made

5.9.4. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- A housing association representative stated that 'NGN's actions on awareness are not as important as others, because other organisations also have education programmes'. It could potentially be confusing as there is already a plethora of information out there. S/he commented that 'NGN are not the first point of call for customers who are struggling with their fuel bills'
- A charity representative stated that perhaps 'funding should be taken from the specialist external stakeholder panel, and given to community organisations like the CAB, as the latter are better at identifying vulnerable people than NGN'

5.9.5. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- A charity representative replied that npower has funded three advisers and a team leader for three years within his / her organisation, and that 'this has been a real help for people struggling with fuel poverty issues'
- A district councillor commented that 'there should be a common approach to addressing fuel poverty, as currently there are too many disparate projects and sources of assistance'. There needs to be better communication between organisations to facilitate this. S/he explained that different customers have quite different tariffs, so advice on bills is sometimes unhelpful. What people want above all else is simplicity

5.9.6. Who are the fuel poor?

- A council officer stated that 'the definition of fuel poverty changes depending upon the region in question'. There is currently too narrow a definition of fuel poverty. S/he is aware of people living on £71 a week who technically are not defined as being in fuel poverty
- A housing association representative replied that even people in employment with good earnings are in fuel poverty. The definition is expanding. 'There is no single definition of fuel poverty'
- A council officer stated that in his / her experience, 'fuel is the third most important item on a budget list for a client, below rent and room tax, as if the last two are not paid, the client may lose their house'
- A housing association representative commented that 'people are leaving housing association properties and moving into private rentals because they cannot afford the bedroom tax'

5.9.7. The definition of fuel poverty has changed how do we apply that?

- A charity representative stated that 'NGN should not label those who suffer from fuel poverty as the "fuel poor" '. The term carries a huge stigma and puts people off from seeking help
- A housing association representative disagreed, and commented that it wasn't an issue
- A council officer stated that there was no need to use the term 'fuel poverty' or 'fuel poor'. Literature on fuel poverty does not need to employ the term

5.9.8. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- A council officer commented that s/he wanted 'better networking between organisations', and added that s/he would provide information about today's discussions to his / her colleagues
- A council officer stated that s/he too wanted better networking between organisations
- A housing association representative said that s/he wanted 'meaningful action' to achieve NGN's targets, and asked the organisation to 'do things'
- A charity representative stated that s/he wanted 'positive outcomes' for vulnerable people
- A charity representative commented that s/he wanted 'meaningful partnerships' between organisations
- A district councillor explained that s/he wanted meaningful partnerships. Information should be provided in a clear format to individuals as well as organisations
- A council officer stated that s/he wanted meaningful partnerships between organisations and specific targets to work towards
- An NGN representative commented that s/he would have liked to have shown some case studies which demonstrate what NGN has accomplished in the last year

5.9.9. NGN has lots of statistics would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- A charity representative stated that in his / her opinion, it is more important for NGN to give assistance to community organisations than to provide access to statistics. S/he continued that statistics can be misleading, as people's heating needs can be very different depending on their circumstances. For example, someone may be able to afford to heat their house to 21oC, but not 25oC, which may be necessary on medical grounds.

5.10. Table C York, workshop three: partnership working

5.10.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN

- Stakeholders unanimously replied that they would be willing to partner with NGN.

5.10.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

- A council officer responded that 'NGN should partner with the fire brigade, because they go into people's houses and can identify cases of fuel poverty'. She added that they are also a trusted organisation
- All stakeholders agreed that 'NGN should form close partnerships with the energy companies
- A council officer stated that 'the Department for Work and Pensions would be a good partner organisation for NGN, as they already provide advice on benefits'. They therefore have a large database of potentially vulnerable people and would be a good mechanism for distributing information about how NGN can provide assistance to those suffering from fuel poverty
- A charity representative suggested that 'it would be useful for NGN to partner with other utility companies'. S/he explained that if a consumer is struggling with one they may well be struggling with another, so it would be useful for organisations to share information
- A housing association representative commented that NGN should form partnerships with insulation firms, boiler firms, renewable energy firms, to form procurement groups and source cheaper equipment for clients when providing connections to the gas network. S/he also suggested that NGN 'drag in other stakeholder groups' when completing projects, as this may allow organisations like housing associations to get equipment cheaper than might otherwise be possible
- A charity representative stated that his / her organisation was trying to form procurement partnerships with the big six energy suppliers to source cheaper equipment for clients
- A council officer stated that 'the Home Improvement Agency is a key organisation for NGN to work and form partnerships with. They help people identify benefits they are eligible for, apply for grants, access charitable funding and fill in forms amongst other things'

5.10.3. Are attendees willing to sign up to a form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- The stakeholders unanimously agreed that they were willing to sign up to the form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnerships

5.10.4. For those working in housing and local authorities what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?

- No comments were made

5.10.5. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- A housing association representative posited that the process of getting into contact with local authorities and housing associations needs to be simplified NGN needs a major marketing campaign to explain to organisations how they can provide assistance for those at risk of fuel poverty, for example, that they can provide gas hook-ups for vulnerable people
- An NGN representative responded that NGN is not a seller of gas, and so cannot overtly push gas connections as a solution to fuel poverty issues
- A council officer stated that NGN should be more proactive about approaching organisations, particularly when fuel poor households are already near the gas network
- A council officer asked where NGN's funding for addressing fuel poverty comes from
- An NGN representative responded that NGN's funding comes from the government. NGN receives funding to connect properties to the network if they are relatively near, depending on the size of the house and the demand for gas
- A housing association representative commented that within his / her organisation's stock of housing, 4/8 tower blocks have electric heating as opposed to gas: 'it can be a very effective way to heat a property, particularly if the flat is in the middle of the tower block, as it will be well insulated'. Renewables on the other hand are typically too expensive

5.10.6. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor: is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- A council officer commented that 'if the fuel poverty definition changes and becomes narrower, there may be apathy at the local level to helping people struggling with their fuel bills, as vulnerable people may no longer be technically classified as fuel poor'
- A charity representative stated that links between NGN and other organisations need to be formed from the top down
- A district councillor commented that his / her council has no housing stock at all. Those councils that do need as much assistance as possible, whilst those that do not have a social obligation to ensure that people in housing association properties are adequately heated. 'This requires partnerships between councils, housing authorities and energy companies. It is not up to just one agency'
- An NGN representative stated that communities may be split if hook-ups are provided for some houses and not others. When providing free hook-ups, NGN does typically offer to connect other houses in the area to the network, but that it is necessary to charge a fee

- A housing association representative stated that in the past s/he had found it difficult to form a partnership with NGN to get hook-ups for properties. The communication process had been very convoluted'

5.11. Table D York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

5.11.1. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A stakeholder stated 'it is not just about putting things in letterboxes, it is about partnerships and creating effective relationships'
- Another stakeholder commented that 'people might not know whether to identify with the label of fuel poverty' and continued that people need to be educated for this reason. S/he added 'we need to get to people prior to these situations, prevention is better than intervention'
- Another stakeholder said that it's 'no good just having a gas connection, people need to use it, and know how to use it'
- Overall people felt that better communication is needed, as are effective partnerships. Education for people should also be a priority

5.11.2. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- None were mentioned

5.11.3. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- None were mentioned

5.12. Table D York, workshop two: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- A regulator/government representative believes people aren't aware of the definition of fuel poverty, and that there needs to be a 'shift in the perception of fuel poverty within society as a whole'. This would mean it's easier for the message to 'permeate through the ranks'. It's not about the label, it's about what it means
- A charity representative questioned what NGN are offering people who are fuel poor. S/he added 'we need to be working to help people get out of fuel poverty, not just to identify them. We aren't hearing how to get people out of it, just whether they fall under this label'
- A stakeholder believed that 'supplying a gas connection to people isn't going to solve fuel poverty', which is why NGN need to work in partnerships
- A housing association representative added that it can be difficult to bring partnerships together, but it is needed
- Another stakeholder saw that there was a big change in funding during 2013, which was a positive step in the right direction, but it doesn't seem to have moved any further on due to the 'big political debate about fuel poverty'
- A local authority/council officer said that through local authorities, there is a powerful mailing service available for NGN to use, to really push out its message
- A charity representative added that s/he knew someone who switched their gas off at the wall once they used their allocated amount for the week. S/he continued that 'they doesn't understand how it all works' and also felt for this reason people needed educating. S/he concluded that we need to teach people 'how to use their heating systems effectively'
- A regulator/government representative believes GPs should be assessing people in regards to fuel poverty. S/he also said GPs 'should report those people back to others so they can get the help they need'
- A housing association representative believed that it was all positive action
- Another housing association representative agreed that it was good action too, but that 'consumers often get confused and are thrown by the amount of different organisations and companies they need to deal with, so this needs to be simplified'
- A local authority/council officer suggested fuel poverty awareness training. There should be people allocated to 'advising about everything rather than signposting to other people'. This way 'NGN can be part of a developmental programme rather than just about fuel poverty'
- A stakeholder said NGN should be bringing different elements together in providing assistance; 'there should be plenty of advisers available for those that need help'
- Another local authority/council officer believed there should be 'priorities for those on the lowest income and it should be crucial that we help them first'
- A regulator/government representative said NGN needed to get more positive stories in the media to raise awareness
- A charity representative added that NGN 'need a positive advertising campaign as people don't know what to do in tough situations'
- A local authority/council officer followed that 'maybe NGN could help fund areas that aren't able to reach gas with other non-gas functions'
- Overall the table felt it was generally good
- A charity representative said the qualifications to be eligible for the free NGN gas connection are too complicated: 'NGN need to make it simpler so people can easily understand'

- A regulator/government representative said that through health organisations NGN could build valuable databases and while this would be difficult to collate, there are other ways to approach this hurdle, such as 'quaff points' for GP's [quaff points are like Nectar points; the more a GP has the more likely they'll get better pay etc]
- Another charity representative said 'priority should be given to health service registers for people who have agreed to be contacted about this information to raise awareness'

5.12.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty

- A housing association representative responded that getting into people's houses is difficult, but 'once your foot is in the door people are more willing to talk about their problems'
- Another housing association representative said that NGN are sending out a pamphlet targeted to over 70s that is very hard to read. This could deter people from following it up, so s/he advised that 'NGN need to think about how to reach people who are fuel poor without unintentionally turning them away'

5.12.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- No discussion on this point

5.12.3. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- As above

5.12.4. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- As above

5.12.5. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- As above

5.12.6. Who are the fuel poor?

- As above

5.12.7. The definition of fuel poverty has changed how do we apply that?

- A local authority/council officer said 'society spends too much time on how to identify people living in fuel poverty and worrying whether people are eligible, more emphasis should be given on how to assist households that are'. S/he concluded that the bottom line should be whether people are in need; it doesn't matter about whether they are eligible

5.12.8. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- No strong feedback

5.12.9. NGN has lots of statistics would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- No strong feedback

5.13. Table D, York, workshop three: partnership working

5.13.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN

- All attendees on this table said they would be willing

5.13.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

5.13.3.

- A regulator/government representative suggested NHS England
- A charity representative said linking to health organisations is very important, and could 'be a huge step forward' in doing this
- A local authority/council officer said parish councils 'might be worth partnering with as they can help and, unfortunately, aren't aware they can actually help people living in fuel poverty'
- A housing association reps/he saw potential with private landlord partnerships, which could be 'a very valuable thing'
- A stakeholder said 'the private landlord sector is one of the hardest to communicate with, though there is a lot to gain here. It's a diverse environment and isn't linked to any other groups or organisations'
- Another housing association representative added there is the possibility of also teaming with letting agents or estate agents

5.13.4. Are attendees willing to sign up to a form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- All at the table said they would

5.13.5. For those working in housing and local authorities what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?

- A housing association representative saw issues with increased gas prices, which 'ultimately frighten people off'. S/he continued that 'people think they can manage without gas due to media coverage'
- Another housing association representative said NGN should 'have a system to immediately identify where people are able to connect to gas pipes, like a postcode finder'. Some areas may be unreachable, and we should make people aware of alternative solutions
- A stakeholder agreed that this would be a great approach, yet 'the information to do this doesn't exist'

5.13.6. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- A local authority/council officer said fuel poverty is dynamic and changes all the time due to factors like fuel prices. 'We need to keep tabs on people who have been assisted to see where it's going in order to provide meaningful updates to Ofgem, and see whether this has been negated by other circumstances'

5.13.7. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor: is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- A charity representative stated it isn't just about people on benefits. 'We can refer people that we know are eligible for other reasons, but there are so many places you can fail in the criteria it's difficult to judge'. S/he concluded that it was a very complicated system
- A housing association representative agreed it was too complex, and there was 'an urgency to make it more simplified'
- A local authority/council officer agreed that you couldn't 'just arrive at a house and determine if the people living there are eligible, it's a very complex system. For this reason the system doesn't lend itself to area approaches which is unfortunate'
- An NGN representative said there was a pressing need for 'more definition in how to bring organisations together, such as common data or simply an address, perhaps even getting GPs to refer people'
- A regulator/government representative confirmed that difficulties arise in the approach. 'You need more leverage. Teaming with larger over-arching bodies like NHS England would see a massive benefit to this system'

5.14. Table E York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

- The consensus was that there are some excellent partnership networks that already exist; it is up to NGN to tap into these, rather than recreating the wheel
- An energy/utility company representative stated that with implementation whole house solutions are critical, working with partners, as this might be the only opportunity to visit individual homes to make real inroads and offer solutions that make a real change
- An energy/utility company representative made the point that offering free safety checks, 'whilst offering a real practical benefit', is also an opportunity to make contact with households with which the organisation would not normally make contact
- This point was echoed by an environmental representative, who also commented that it is down to training of partners who can spot the signs of fuel poverty and call in trusted engineers

5.14.1. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- A housing association representative pointed out that free safety checks may set a level of expectation with tenants that may be difficult to maintain in the long term

5.14.2. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- An environmental representative asked what NGN is doing to help those who are not connected to the gas network, as it is unintentionally creating a two-tier system by being unable to carry out safety checks for all
- An energy/utility company representative asked whether NGN is concerned with homes with gas/CO issues which are not connected to the network, and was assured that this is the case
- An energy/utility company representative talked about the need for better, uncomplicated communication around the fuel poverty issue. Sensitivity is required, a point with which a housing association representative agreed

5.15. Table E York, workshop two: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- An energy/utility company representative was of the view that although it is important to focus on connecting people who not on the network, there needs to be more emphasis in supporting those who are already connected
- A housing association representative stated that there are a number of tenants who have had their gas capped off due to an affordability issue, so there are two sides – people who need to be connected and then being able to afford to be connected. Intermittent supply can affect health and therefore s/he would like to see an effective partnership locally and nationally to help people live in a warm house
- An energy/utility company representative made the point that this is part of a far wider issue around finance, education and getting people into work and paid in order to climb out of fuel poverty
- An energy/utility company representative stated that there is more that distribution networks can do to raise awareness 'that they are here and they do have an interest in helping' and to communicate how organisations with an interest in fuel poverty can tap into additional resource and support
- An environmental representative pointed out that it was important that 'this is not lip service and does make a real impact', e.g. lobbying government, to allow the partnership organisations to promote trusted information more widely
- A local authority/council officer commented that a potential route for interaction with more private-sector landlords for NGN is a link with council-run accreditation schemes, such as Accreditation Network UK
- There was a general query over the purpose/definition of Fuel Poverty certificates

- A housing association representative stated that 'more effective partnerships will require more people on the ground to support fuel poverty' at NGN, especially to attend meetings in the community
- An environmental representative said that the 'fuel poverty appointments were a good start', but that the emphasis needs to be on training especially, more localised information for organisations and volunteers to spot and support those who are in fuel poverty
- An energy/utility company representative agreed with that point but said the ten people need to have a real depth of knowledge in specific areas or to understand the breadth of partner organisations to which they can refer in order to efficiently help customers
- An environmental representative commented that 'it is great to connect people to the network, but there needs to be technical solutions and follow-up to ensure that there are central heating systems in place and support for using them'
- An energy/utility company representative stated that there is a need to understand the householder – e.g. research into the elderly householder – to give a duty of care as to whether they actually use gas
- An energy/utility company representative said that there needs to be care around the statement of removing people from fuel poverty due to the fluctuating price of energy and therefore it is a difficult statistic to prove
- An environmental representative said relationships are key and crucial as 'we can't know everything', effective partnership working can help when charity funding has been cut to give other people a choice or alternative of where to go
- An energy/utility company representative made the point that there are far more organisations that need to be included in the partnership mix, which was echoed by an environmental representative
- A local authority/council officer stated that more collaborative work with local authorities would be helpful as they are constantly trying to implement improvements and applying for funding to help their constituents, which would allow NGN to keep up to date and localise funding options
- A local authority/council officer commented that there are many organisations 'doing their own thing' and we need to better understand the whole landscape in order to be effective

5.15.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty

- Consensus of the table was that partnerships are key
- An energy/utility company representative said that all information sent out from NGN needs to be easily understandable so that it can replicated across the regions through different networks, allowing cohesive messages to be shared nationally
- An environmental representative suggested that NGN should link with large local employers to access their lower paid workers who could be struggling
- A local authority/council officer commented that trade unions could also be a good point of contact as they cover a breadth of members

5.15.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- The general feeling around the table was that effective collaboration with partner organisations was the most important aspect of NGN's work

5.15.3. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- No views were expressed

5.15.4. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- A housing association representative stated that a joined-up approach to crisis measures is required – for example, local authorities can offer food bank vouchers but some are unable to cook due to their level of fuel poverty. Therefore automatic links with crisis organisations are essential
- Another housing association representative said that they already offer fuel top-ups to those most in crisis, something which is much appreciated by lots of different groups, but there is still more that needs to be done in a joined-up approach

5.15.5. Who are the fuel poor?

- An environmental representative said that park homes and immigrant groups are important, particularly foreign nationals with no experience of the UK benefits system
- An environmental representative also commented that it is not just the elderly, more emphasis needs to be given to young people, especially those coming out of care and young mothers, who are especially vulnerable
- An energy/utility company representative made the point that although there is a 'wealth of support for those on specific benefits', those who are just outside of that group are also vulnerable and more needs to be done to access these people
- An environmental representative said that carers and especially young carers are often struggling and there are umbrella organisations that NGN can access to get in touch with these people

5.15.6. The definition of fuel poverty has changed: how do we apply that?

- An energy/utility company representative stated that the new definition has made it possible to assess the depth of fuel poverty and allows organisations to see who is in the most need
- An energy/utility company representative also commented that the emphasis is now on reducing the gap rather than removing people from fuel poverty, which can be difficult to define
- An environmental representative made the point that 'the definition is flawed' and on-the-ground practitioners tend to instead look at individuals on a basis of need and on those who ask for help

- A local authority/council officer suggested that the energy companies are in the best position to help identify those who are using less or are already in arrears and therefore need to be more proactive, but agreed that there are data protection issues around this
- An energy/utility company representative pointed out that the offer of help needs to be positive and softer – if communication comes from the energy company this could be seen as frightening to those already in crisis

5.15.7. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- A local authority/council officer would like to see a commitment from energy companies to 'charge less to those who are struggling'
- An energy/utility company representative stated that s/he would like to see a list of tangible actions that have resulted from today's workshop, including case studies, practical lists and testimonials
- A housing association representative said that s/he wants NGN to use its influence to lobby government, to maybe create an energy bank along the same lines as a food bank

5.15.8. NGN has lots of statistics: would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- No strong views expressed

5.16. Table E York, workshop three: partnership working

5.16.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN?

- This was agreed by all stakeholders to be a good idea

5.16.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

- A number of groups had already been mentioned, for example, organisations that deal with non-English speaking groups, those who support carers etc
- An energy/utility company representative commented that it is not easy to decide whether there is a need to go to national or local level, especially when looking at charities
- A local authority/council officer stated that 'public health teams in local authorities are a good place to access local communities' as fuel poverty can affect many health issues
- An energy/utility company representative stated that networking forum events, such as today's and NEA events, are crucial to allow the sharing and developing of ideas
- Specific examples from the table included Acre (an umbrella organisation that has branches across the UK – specifically deals with rural fuel poverty); financial inclusion forums and organisations such as the CAB; Public Health England for more strategic long-term
- A housing association representative made the point that NGN should start at a local authority base as they pull together a lot of different strands and contact details
- An energy/utility company representative commented that it is not always most effective to deal with geographic boundaries, and it is often better to engage with different groups on their terms, to tailor the campaign message to individuals rather than making assumptions based on postcodes

5.16.3. Are attendees willing to sign up to a form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- General consensus was that stakeholders would be happy to be involved in future projects with NGN

5.16.4. For those working in housing and local authorities, what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?

- No comments were made

5.16.5. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- A local authority/council officer said that it depends on the individual councils, but that many have management organisations that would be a good point of contact
- An NGN representative explained the collaborative working between networks, to ensure that geographic boundaries do not get in the way of improving services

5.16.6. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor: is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- An energy/utility company representative said that this would be beneficial if you can do it, but that there is an 'etiquette' to working in a particular area/region – it is often better to go to the local authority with its overarching responsibility
- An energy/utility company representative commented that due to the wider issues around fuel poverty it is best to contact local authorities as they will have links to education, work, benefits etc
- A local authority/council officer said that contacting housing departments is the best link, but that it is often private households that have the issues
- A local authority/council officer also stated that 'it is possible that local authorities would work with organisations to help those who are in receipt of specific benefits'
- A housing association representative commented that there needs to be a cohesive offering/plan when approaching the local authority, 'to ensure that NGN is not adding to an already busy workload'
- A housing association representative said that it is important to be involved with strategic partnerships in councils to find out where housing is being refurbished or to help find community projects, 'but it is about resource'

- A local authority/council officer said that CCGs are a good point of contact 'but again it is down to individual councils'
- A housing association representative believed that the onus is on all stakeholders at the event to take the information back to their organisations to increase awareness and communications, to cascade the information to best contacts to get in touch with NGN
- An energy/utility company representative made the point that no one agency has a responsibility to deal with fuel poverty, a range of organisations drive this issue with some areas having a very cohesive plan, but others do not
- A housing association representative stated that 'some areas will have an Affordable Warmth partnership board, which brings together members of lots of different organisations' but that this is not always the case due to resource

5.17. Table F York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

- A business customer representative attended last year and said that the themes have been 'dumbed down' from the list last year. S/he pointed out that there was no follow-up after last year's workshop and that s/he failed to receive any further information other than a booklet a few months after the workshop. S/he suggested that a 'newsletter every quarter would be useful'
- A charity representative asked if NGN had any follow-ups with people from last year. S/he stated that 'these people have clearly made an effort and showed a high interest to turn up to these workshops so they should be made priority and be kept well informed'
- A business customer representative highlighted that s/he received a follow-up in October which is in his / her opinion 'is just too late'

5.17.1. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- There were no comments

5.17.2. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A charity representative made the suggestion that 'new properties are automatically linked up with the cheapest fuel company'. S/he explained how 'My Home Energy Switch contacts the customer to switch users so new or old customers aren't automatically linked up with the most expensive and are aware of the different costs'
- A local authority/council officer said that 'educating the public and educating the energy companies as well as improving communication with the public and customer is essential'
- A parish councillor made the point that 'privacy laws that we all believe are in operation make it difficult for companies and councils to talk about energy and fuel poverty and it is fundamental in getting down to people's problems'
- A local authority/council officer responded by saying that his / her local council has a form for new buyers to sign when they buy a house that allows their information to be classed as open
- A local authority / council officer asked 'how can I address a village to see if they are interested in getting on gas if I don't know what the criteria are and if it would be cost-effective?'
- A local authority / council officer said that s/he 'would like a fast track way to check who is connected to gas and where the gas mains are'. S/he then suggested that 'a quick and easy system with all this information would make it possible to highlight who is and isn't connected'

5.18. Table F York, workshop 2: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- A parish councillor made the point that 'gas isn't the sole cause for fuel poverty'. S/he said that 'it seems that so many organisations are fighting against each other instead of working together, surely NGN can help and bind these companies together?'
- A local authority / council officer suggested that 'fuel poverty training would be a good idea. If there are more people trained who can identify signs, for example health professionals and local authorities, even fire authorities'
- A local authority / council officer suggested using volunteers
- A local authority / council officer stated that there should be a 'big effort in communication with partners and getting that timing right'
- A parish councillor pointed out that 'communication needs to more effective and clear'
- A charity representative made the point that 'communication is of course important' but s/he wasn't sure what is being done. S/he then suggested that 'pro active discussions with LA and landlords' could be a way to get information
- A local authority / council officer highlighted the point that 'if there are 100 properties off gas and it is easy for these people to be identified then they can target these areas and provide information and work with NGN to share as much information with the area as possible'
- A charity representative said that 'making assumptions that people don't have gas doesn't help when making a 20-year plan as there are so many unknowns with planning, especially when it is for future housing the more partnerships the more communication is needed'
- A charity representative then made the point that any 'ongoing dialogue requires links and websites that allow information to be passed on and NGN needs to be more active and open to answering any related questions'

- A local authority / council officer questioned if new connections are the 'right idea' and if it is 'long term' and therefore affordable
- A local authority/council officer asked if anyone had heard of the campaign 'Do you know Mr Smith is in fuel poverty?'. S/he then explained it is about an old man called Mr Smith who 'slipped through the cracks' and remained unnoticed; he didn't seek help and wasn't offered help
- A local authority/council officer suggested there should be a map of where there were people suffering from fuel poverty and 'if NGN doesn't have specific households that are fuel poor then they should at least know who isn't connected to gas'
- A parish councillor stated that s/he is struggling to get people to move to gas because they are fuel poor and 'scared of extra charges and hidden costs'
- A local authority/council officer agreed that 'people on electric think it is more expensive to get gas or change to gas'
- A local authority/council officer said that the 'City of York Council have done some good stuff with gas connections and fuel poverty and have been able to get data from the Energy Saving Trust to help the council'
- A charity representative asked NGN 'could you not use that data that you have collected or if there isn't enough, collect more relevant data so that you can work out who is fuel poor or in need of a connection?'
- NGN responded
- A local authority/council officer highlighted 'that clearly the main aim is to remove people from being classed as fuel poor; however, there are clearly many other factors to be considered. There is, of course, no point connecting people to gas if they can't afford to use it'; boiler maintenance was one suggestion
- A parish councillor stated that 'gas needs to be affordable if it is put in and insurance services prevent people then being able to afford the gas'
- A local authority/council officer went on to say that 'having more communication with organisations that NGN is working with and allowing for a more transparent view of who does what could be beneficial'
- A business customer representative suggested giving 'updates on how the pilot is doing and what is happening with that'
- A charity representative pointed out that NGN has set these partnerships up but they haven't affected the people around the table and therefore 'they haven't done enough'
- A charity representative commented that 'feedback is wanted as some partnerships are in discussion stages and haven't actually been fully established but this is why these workshops are useful'
- A charity representative stated that 'the Pilot is looking to support the area that doesn't have a gas connection'. But it 'needs to be established who has and hasn't got gas who would use it and who can't use it because they have a broken boiler, for example'. S/he then concluded that it was all about 'working with people to see what can be done'
- A charity representative said that 'reconnecting people with gas may have a hidden charge for reconnection which may impact them being able to pay for the next month's bill.' S/he then highlighted that in his / her area there is a huge problem in boilers being stolen as it is a deprived area and one that has many living in fuel poverty

5.18.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty?

- A local authority / council officer asked who s/he is to speak to if they 'want to get gas connected to a village'
- NGN answered this
- A local authority/council officer suggested that 'representatives from public health should be targeted but this will need an NGN representative to work with, to communicate with and be a point of contact so any information the public health worker doesn't know the NGN can inform and educate'. S/he continued, 'the local government has changed things recently and has become stricter and created more hurdles preventing the job being done so if NGN can offer help to get around these processes this would be very useful'
- A business customer representative suggested NGN could create a 'web-based map' of their partners so it is clear 'who is doing what and what each organisation wishes to achieve and how'
- A local authority/council officer made the point that it would be helpful to know where the gas supplies are so the council can contact people that aren't connected: 'that's the first move'
- A charity representative suggested that 'web-based information will make it quick and easy for a council to look up local information. If it was combined with other data shared resources that would be useful - like a partnership intranet, for example - . contacting within the same system can enhance engagement'
- A charity representative stated that 'knowing who to contact for what is half the battle'. S/he then goes on suggest that 'geographical maps that highlight the pipelines so they know where isn't connected and maybe a system that responds to the inputting of a postcode to find where there is a gas connection'
- A local authority/council officer suggested that getting from the Centre for Sustainable Energy a list of all the national postcodes which s/he believe they have 'could help in creating a national gas network map'. S/he did state, however, that it 'took forever' to download as an Excel doc and that s/he wasn't 'sure how they got that information and how it can be used by NGN or even how useful it would be'

5.18.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- A charity representative highlights that NGN could use a 'property based approach' S/he then goes onto suggest that 'when trying to identify who is most at risk of being in fuel poverty they could look at different data sheets, like who is under occupying a house and would be charged bedroom tax or where the off gas properties are. This will all increase the amount of data and help in finding out who is at risk of becoming fuel poor and who is actually fuel poor' S/he concludes by saying that NGN needs to 'prioritise those at risk and people suffering, however I understand the limitations with data protection'

- A charity representative comments that 'policy work at national level' is needed
- A local authority / council officer makes the point that 'installing gas boilers and funding these installations in the North of Yorkshire would help target the fuel poor and help those who are vulnerable'
- A business customer representative believes that 'targeting known properties that are in fuel poverty is the most sensible starting point'
- A local authority / council officer states that 'from a strategic and delivery point of view a 3 year plan for greener homes is a working document action plan and what they are delivering locally. What they have achieved developing new housing strategy including Fuel Poverty and CO awareness. NGN needs to develop schemes to aid and look at different levels as well as training elected members. It is however at a bit of a stand still due to funding'
- A parish councillor says that s/he doesn't have a policy for applying for the social so s/he isn't sure what s/he can do as a parish councillor

5.18.3. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- There were no responses to this question

5.18.4. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- There were no responses to this question

5.19. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- There were no responses to this question

5.19.1. Who are the fuel poor?

- A charity representative made the point that 'changes in the economy mean that everything has come to a stop. Especially changes to the definition of what fuel poverty is which creates some confusion and blurs the lines of who is actually classified as being fuel poor. The height of the problem seems impossible and all negative, it almost seems that there is too much to do and not enough help and support for people'
- A local authority/council officer made the comment that 'it is going to be even more difficult now'

5.20. The definition of fuel poverty has changed how do we apply that?

- There were no responses to this question

5.20.1. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- There were no responses to this question

5.20.2. NGN has lots of statistics would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- There were no responses to this question

5.21. Table F York 3rd workshop: partnership working

5.21.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN

- A local authority/council officer said s/he 'would have to take it further up the chain but yes'
- A parish councillor also said s/he would be in favour. However, s/he would have to report to his / her council
- A local authority/council officer said 'yes, most definitely'
- A business customer representative commented that 'if it reduces fuel poverty then yes of course'
- A local authority/council officer said 'yes'
- A charity representative also said 'yes'
- A charity representative also said 'yes'

5.21.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

- A charity representative talked about advice agencies such as telephone advice services, especially related to health charities like Macmillan who offer financial advice to people with cancer. S/he said that 'any charities with direct services to vulnerable people could be of great use and be very important to co-operate with'
- A local authority/council officer stated that s/he 'found it difficult to get in contact with people who may be vulnerable to fuel poverty, especially as some people have no idea there is help available. Contacting these ill and vulnerable people is of great importance and therefore working with charities and organisations that help care for the more vulnerable people in society and providing services could be a good place to start'
- A local authority/council officer suggested 'credit unions'
- A charity representative mentioned that the Energy Advice Choices4energy at Scarborough Council has done a 'fantastic job and impressed a lot of people'
- A charity representative thought that post offices could be a good organisation to partner with and could offer a 'good distribution point as many OAPs collect their pensions from the post office'
- A charity representative then stressed that 'children centres are another potential partner' as they already provide a large amount of information about health

5.21.3. Are attendees willing to sign up to a form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- All agreed and signed their forms
- 5.21.4. For those working in housing and local authorities what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?
 - A local authority/council officer said that 'people just don't have the money, especially with the bedroom tax which reduced disposable cash and in some cases the ability to pay the bills which are increasing due to energy prices going up. The food banks are overloaded. So a lot of people are sticking their heads in the sand and not wanting to deal with their financial problems. It is a hard time for a lot of people and a lot of families'
 - A local authority/council officer highlighted the fact that parish councils can talk to people as they know the situation in their communities and encourage them to take small actions. S/he said that 'word of mouth is a powerful thing, therefore encouraging communities and people to simply switch energy suppliers might just make all the difference. It is all about encouraging people to take actions and being supportive'
 - A parish councillor agreed and said that s/he does know about people's private lives within his / her community and it is a 'very difficult time' at the moment for many
 - A charity representative suggested that 'it is all about getting over the trust thing - parish councillors hold a lot of trust from their wards and in their communities. If parish councillors then pass on the message of other people in the community making these changes and saving X amount people will be more likely to make a change. Many people just don't trust the big energy companies'
 - A charity representative said that the 'lack of money and funding reduces the chance of them being able to deliver any projects on the ground'. S/he then pointed out that it is 'difficult to offer anything other than talk'. S/he added 'the cost of living is on the rise and this leaves many of us in a state of limbo. Engagement has improved with fuel poverty and engaging with the public and communication is getting better but it is all about being proactive. I have a team of three and find it very difficult to achieve what we want to achieve because of this limitation'

5.21.5. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- A local authority/council officer stated that 'it is all about the timing as things need to be lined up in the right order and planned well in advance'
- A parish councillor made the observation that in his / her area it can 'take a few months to settle' and s/he realised 'how bad things have been and the impact of such things like the bedroom tax'
- A local authority / council officer made the point that 'NGN could go to the local authorities to find out if there is any scheduled work in certain areas so work can be done at the same time, but who should be contacted?'

5.21.6. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor: is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- A charity representative said that 'if NGN could tap into it a national campaign like Energy Saving Week, which this year was 27-31 January, that would be fantastic to get larger organisations involved and help raise awareness'

5.22. Table G York, workshop one: NGN's response to the 2013 workshops

5.23. Have the right themes/actions from the previous workshops been taken on board?

- A local authority/council officer felt that NGN did not understand fuel poverty, 'perhaps due to a lack of legal obligation'
- A charity representative suggested 'NGN have to take on board that they need to educate people in order to change their fuel habits'
- A local authority/council officer said 'actions do not make sense to those not involved in the previous workshop'
- A local authority/council officer questioned funding for 'whole housing solutions' as 'there is no obligation for NGN to act on the matter; ethical obligation lies with the provider'

5.23.1. Are there any actions that should be removed from the list?

- A local authority/council officer felt that the list is 'brilliant' yet difficult to understand to those not at the previous workshop

5.23.2. Are there any that should be re-considered for inclusion?

- A housing association representative said there is a lack of education in terms of technology, ambient temperature and using gas economically. 'Tenants do not want to be educated'
- A local authority/council officer suggested 'the focus needs to be on how to use technology effectively'
- A local authority/council officer continued, saying that 'information provided by NGN should be offered in various languages'

5.24. Table G York, workshop two: NGN's response to fuel poverty

- During these discussions attendees were also asked to review the PowerPoint presentation that NGN had just presented (printed copies were available) and to raise any views on specific aspects of the PowerPoint covering what NGN is doing on communications, information awareness, developing internal knowledge/capability, continue with strengths and more effective partnerships.
- A local authority/council officer felt 'positive positioning' cheapens the idea of fuel poverty, 'making it seem a softer issue than it actually is'
- A local authority/council officer wanted 'more details available on how NGN identify the "fuel poor"'

- A housing association representative wanted NGN to share outputs from 'developing network partnerships'
- A housing association representative has noticed that 'the goalposts are moving on defining fuel poverty'
- A charity representative said there are many people who do not consider themselves as 'fuel poor', particularly in off-gas and rural areas. 'Using the term "affordable warmth" removes the stigma of fuel poverty'
- A charity representative insisted that 'there needs to be community engagement, particularly in areas where there is partial gas coverage'
- A local authority/council officer was pleased that there has been a massive step forward, with people discussing fuel poverty a year on from 'NGN having no idea on the issue'
- There was unanimous agreement that 2013 outcomes and plans for 2014 are reasonable
- A housing association representative wondered how people would know to contact NGN and the customer contact centre
- A local authority/council officer felt 'there needs to be clarity surrounding NGN as a referral partner'.
- An NGN representative agreed that they need to work on spreading messages and becoming an active part of the community
- A charity representative said that 'parish councils could be a possible bridge between NGN and the community'
- A local authority/council officer admired NGN's aim to tackle fuel poverty as it is a bold ambition, 'but how much can NGN do? What influence do they have on energy companies and is the goal a realistic one?'
- Another local authority/council officer agreed and felt that the political nature of the industry is making it increasingly difficult to tackle fuel poverty. 'You can get gas connections to people but where is the funding going to come from for the fuel poor?'
- There was widespread agreement that the funding is an issue; councils do not have the funds available to support tackling fuel poverty as cutting green levies has had a heavy impact on finances
- A local authority/council officer was happy that NGN have been talking to the right people, especially National Energy Action
- A local authority/council officer suggested that the principal responsibility should be 'to get as many people as possible on the gas network'; secondary is to network with the right people in order to widen the reach
- A local authority/council officer was adamant that 'a collaborative approach to maintenance with power and water companies would be a good idea'
- An NGN representative concurred, adding that 'working with electricity companies allows them to reach more people as everybody has electricity, but not everybody has gas'

5.24.1. Where do you think NGN's effort and focus should be re fuel poverty

- A housing association representative would like NGN 'to be able to communicate what they can do for people in order to gain partnerships'. Door knocking is a reasonable approach if people are made aware that it is not a salesman
- A local authority/council officer would like to know 'what is available to current off grid areas'
- A local authority/council officer reckoned that 'supplying to off grid areas should be the main focus'
- A local authority/council officer said that partnerships should be the focus. 'Pooling our resources would be very effective'. S/he explained that such partnerships are opportunities for councillors to discuss potential schemes that can help the people in their area
- A local authority/council officer stated that lobbying the energy providers could be an option. He/she argued that 'NGN's ambitions are good and could be used as an effective lobbying tool'
- An NGN representative agreed, but felt that they have to act on a massive scale in order to force change in providers
- A local authority/council officer reiterated the earlier point that 'the focus should be on getting people who are off the grid on gas'. Also, engaging with communities and making them aware of how NGN can help could be effective, 'particularly by educating the vulnerable'
- A charity representative remarked that 'getting a gas supply line is one thing; putting it into action and what is done with it after that is the main issue'. S/he felt that hard work is wasted if a connection is put in but the residents do not know how to make the most of it
- There was unanimous agreement that partnerships are crucial as some organisations may have inroads into local councils that NGN doesn't
- A local authority/council officer stressed the need for specifically targeted markets and tactical partnerships to maximise reach and increase knowledge of the services NGN offers

5.24.2. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- A local authority/council officer reckoned that NGN need, more than anything, 'to understand the market and have realistic expectations'

5.24.3. Out of the actions NGN is taking which one/s are most important to you/your organisation?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.24.4. Are there any actions that NGN should decelerate so others can be prioritised?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.24.5. How is your organisation tackling fuel poverty? How can NGN help?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.24.6. Who are the fuel poor?

- A housing association representative said that 'there are a large number of people who cannot afford any outlay on fuel costs'
- A local authority/council officer insisted that the label of 'poor' or 'poverty' should be replaced by 'affordable warmth' in order to shed the stigma

5.24.7. The definition of fuel poverty has changed how do we apply that?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.24.8. What is the number one thing you would like to see come out of today?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.24.9. NGN has lots of statistics would your organisation use these? What can we do with them?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.25. Table G York, workshop three: partnership working

5.25.1. Would you be willing to partner up with NGN

- There was unanimous support at the table

5.25.2. Who else should NGN partner with?

- A local authority/council officer suggested specific NGOs should be targeted
- A charity representative added that specific councils, particularly in rural areas for non-gas, should be explored as potential partnerships
- A local authority/council officer said NGN should engage with the contractors on councils' eco-framework
- A local authority/council officer stated that councils and housing associations should be a good way to reach communities of people in fuel poverty
- A local authority/council officer urged NGN to keep existing contacts with big social housing and right to buy schemes

5.25.3. Are attendees willing to sign up to form agreeing for NGN to contact them about partnership working?

- There was no discussion on this topic

5.25.4. For those working in housing and local authorities what issues in relation to fuel poverty are you finding at the moment?

- A local authority/council officer had a scrutiny review and there has been a group set up in order to discuss tackling the issue of affordable warmth. It is a community project, not a council project, and it has been well received
- A local authority/council officer continued: 'if the current political regime continues it is difficult to act on the plans. The previous scheme allowed for those who are able to contribute to the fuel bills of those in need: this is not happening any more'
- A local authority/council officer agreed with this point. Workers contributing to make housing more efficient are losing jobs in his/her area. 'There are serious restrictions to what can be done at the moment, with cavity wall and loft insulation making up the majority of the solutions'

5.25.5. NGN is keen to get the fuel poor connected to gas. How can it work with housing associations/councils to achieve this?

- There was no discussion on this topic

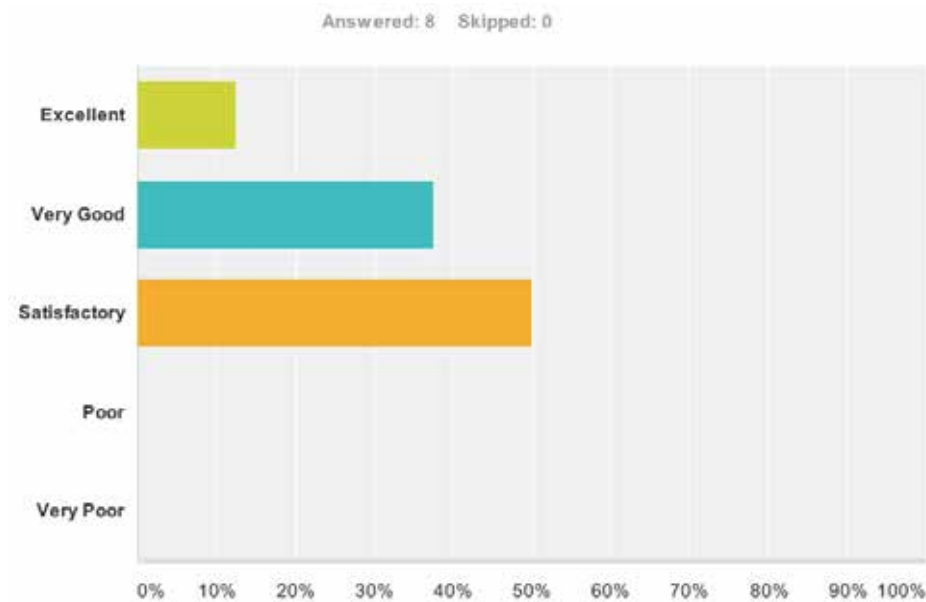
5.25.6. NGN is keen to have stronger links to benefits agencies, social workers and the NHS re fuel poor, is this possible and who do we contact to make this happen?

- A local authority/council officer suggested that NGN needs to stay involved with fuel poverty discussions (NHS specifically re winter deaths) but needs to be seen to do things, not just discuss the issue
- A charity representative felt that, from his / her organisation's perspective, 'local councils and organisations are a good way of spreading knowledge. In an off-gas community, they run events to engage the community'
- A charity representative agreed that 'community interaction is key to targeting the truly vulnerable'
- A local authority/council officer said that, from a councillor's point of view, 'using data to inform is a good way to engage the community'
- A charity representative backed this up, adding that statistics help reinforce the point. 'It's education'
- A local authority/council officer insisted that there needs to be widespread change and acknowledgement that we are 'still a northern European country and should be more adequately prepared'

2014 Highways Authority Survey Results

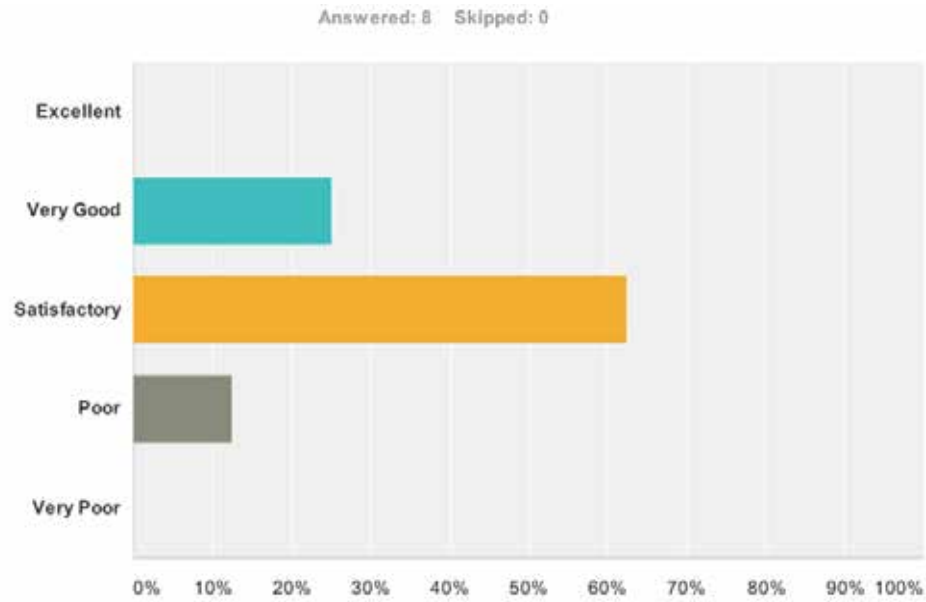


Q1 When you make contact by telephone is it easy to get through to the right person and do you find them to be helpful and polite?



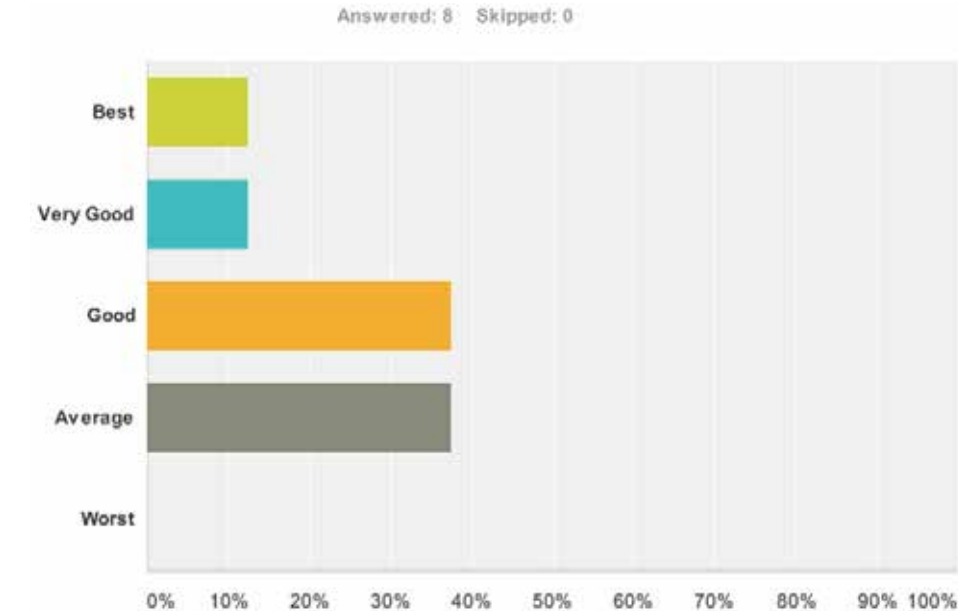
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	12.50%	1
Very Good	37.50%	3
Satisfactory	50.00%	4
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		8

Q2 How would you rate the quality and timeliness of our responses to your enquiries?



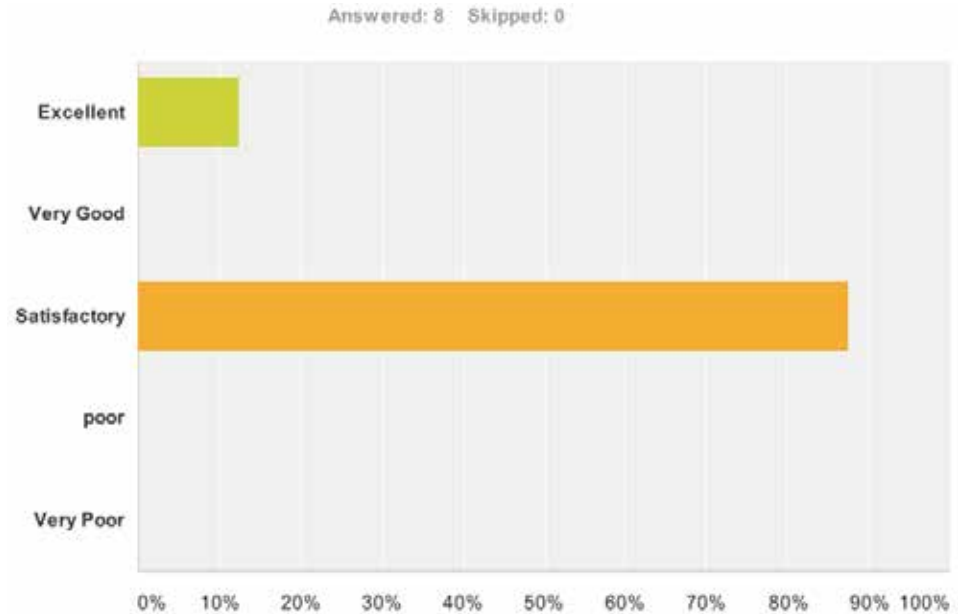
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	25.00%	2
Satisfactory	62.50%	5
Poor	12.50%	1
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		8

Q3 In comparison with other utility companies, how do you rate our performance on the way we coordinate works?



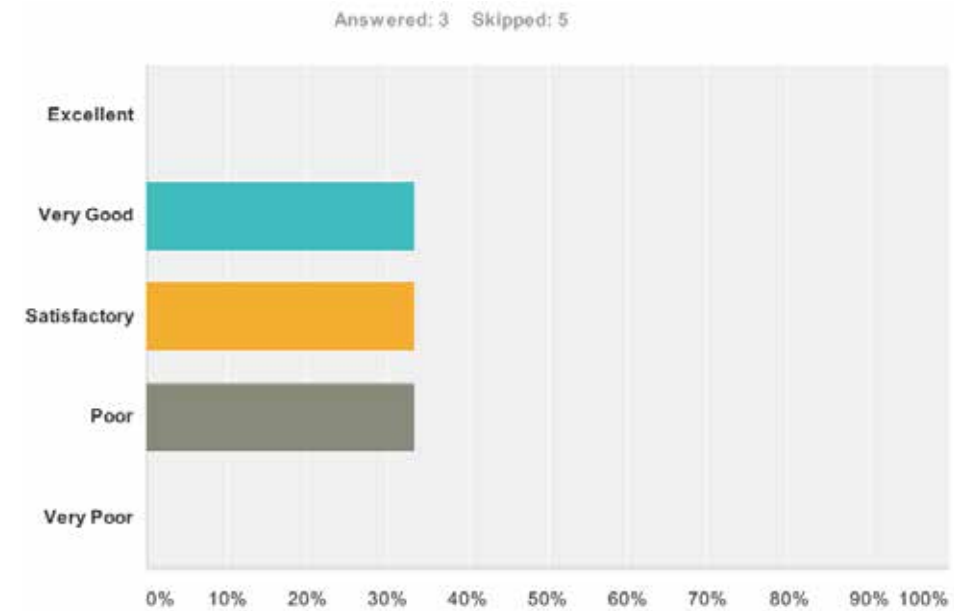
Answer Choices	Responses	
Best	12.50%	1
Very Good	12.50%	1
Good	37.50%	3
Average	37.50%	3
Worst	0.00%	0
Total		8

Q4 How do you find our approach to the quarterly performance process?



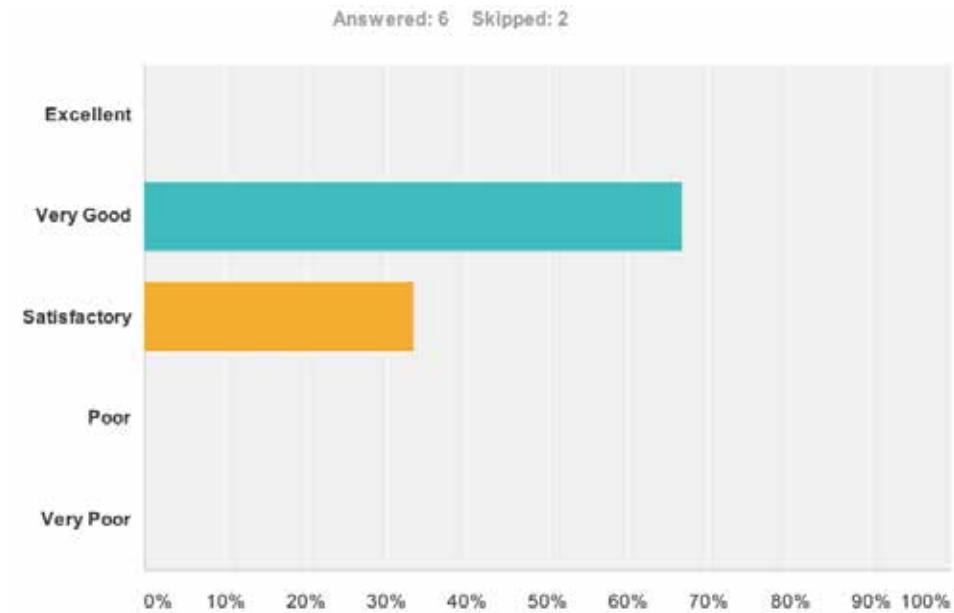
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	25.00%	2
Satisfactory	62.50%	5
Poor	12.50%	1
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		8

Q5 If applicable, how do you rate our joint site audits?



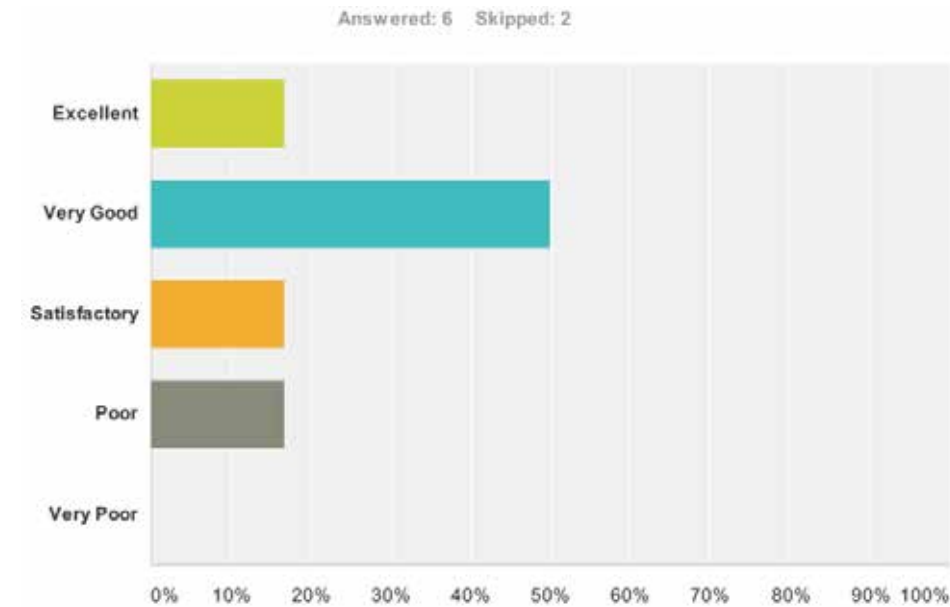
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	33.33%	1
Satisfactory	33.33%	1
Poor	33.33%	1
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		3

Q6 How do you view our approach to innovative solutions and process improvements?



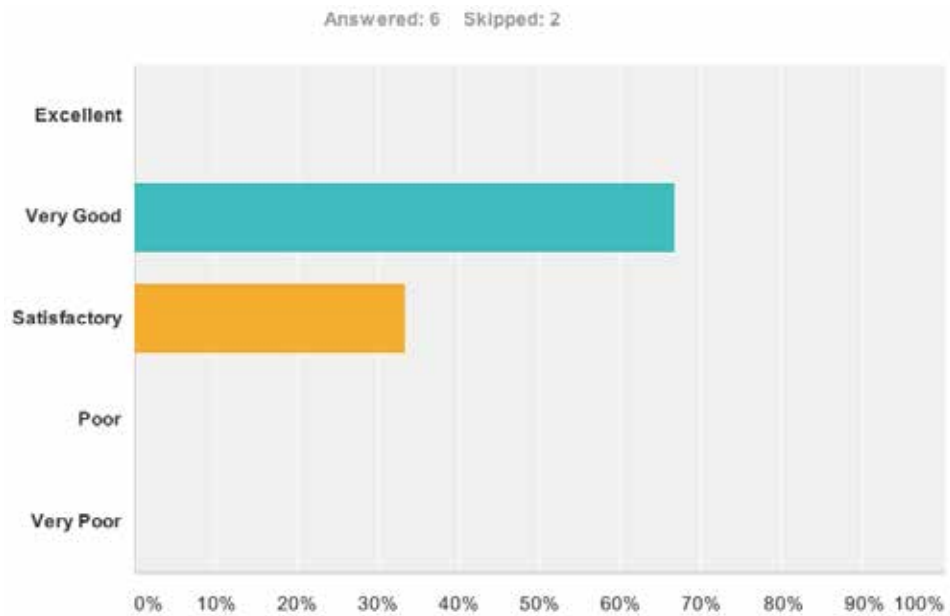
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	66.67%	4
Satisfactory	33.33%	2
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q7 How do you rate our knowledge of the 'NRASWA 1991' & the 'TMA' regulations?



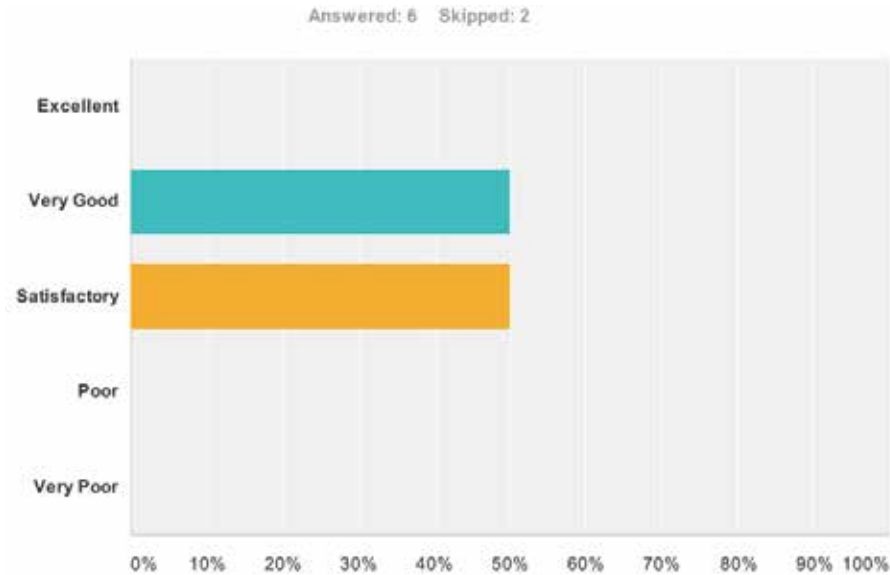
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	16.67%	1
Very Good	50.00%	3
Satisfactory	16.67%	1
Poor	16.67%	1
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q8 How do you rate the quality and relevance of our communications to you?



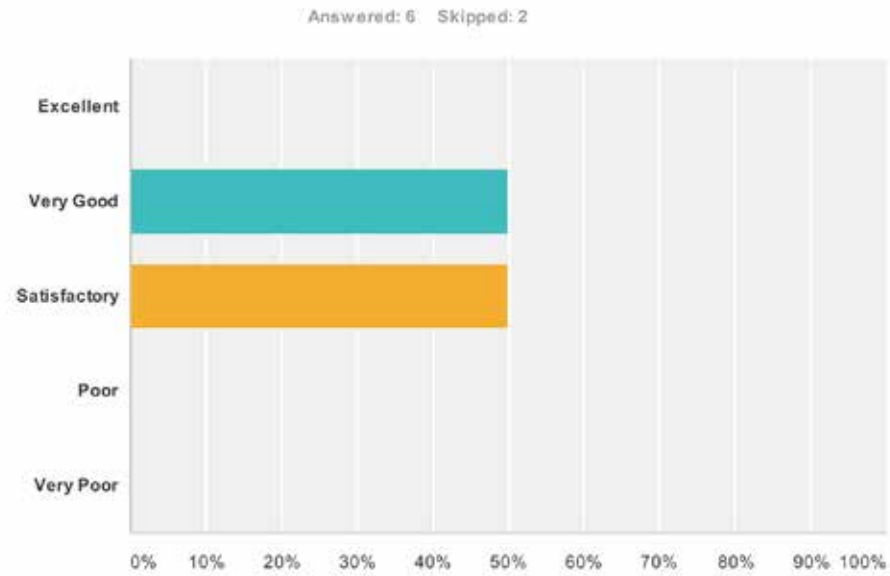
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	66.67%	4
Satisfactory	33.33%	2
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q9 How is our management of defect inspection charges, S74 over stay invoices, fixed penalty notices?



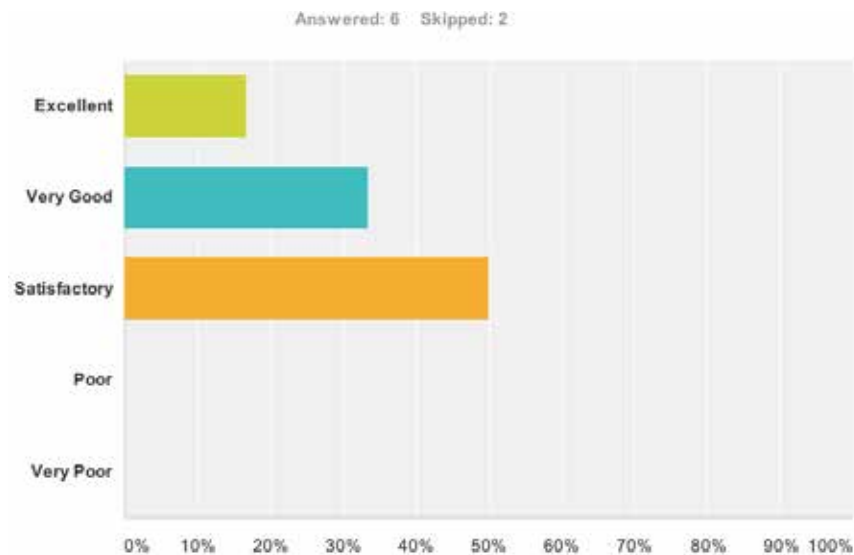
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	50.00%	3
Satisfactory	50.00%	3
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q10 How would you rate the way we plan and execute our works?



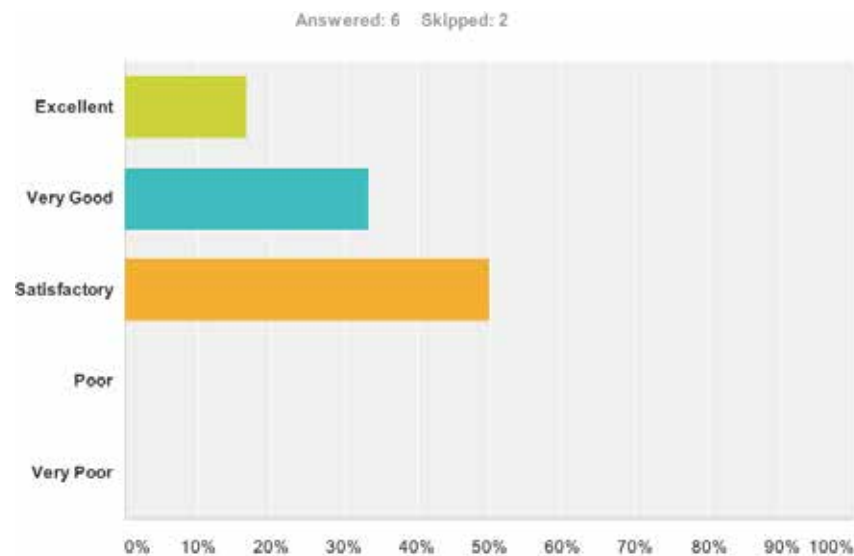
Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	0.00%	0
Very Good	50.00%	3
Satisfactory	50.00%	3
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q11 How would you rate our compliance with the Safety at Streetworks and Roadworks Code of Practice?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	16.67%	1
Very Good	33.33%	2
Satisfactory	50.00%	3
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q12 How would you rate your overall perception of Northern Gas Networks?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	16.67%	1
Very Good	33.33%	2
Satisfactory	50.00%	3
Poor	0.00%	0
Very Poor	0.00%	0
Total		6

Q13 Finally, please use the space below to make any suggestions that you feel could improve our level of service and what added value activities you ideally would like us to provide.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 5

