

SGN press releases (archive)

January – December 2018

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SGN

Your gas. Our network.

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More of our 'future leaders' complete ILM management course

9 January 2018



The eight southern-based candidates (l to r): Stefan Dalton, Ethan Clinkscales, Albert Ogundipe, Neil Baxter, Naveen Panwar, Chris Hadfield, Matthew Payne, Russ Amarasinghe.

Eight of our southern-based employees have completed their Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) course by delivering their final presentations to colleagues and mentors.

Based in depots across the south east of England, the candidates completed their ILM course in December 2017 following 18 months of training and assignments. Their final presentations explored potential solutions to a wide range of real world issues facing the company, with some reporting that proposals were being implemented across SGN.

Speaking about the importance of investing in the candidates, Tracey McIntyre, Head of Operations for Southern Replacement, said: "SGN have a passion for developing leaders of the future so for us to invest our time in ensuring we can develop these people is absolutely fundamental to our core values."

Our Head of Technical Learning Neil Snell described the presentations as "part of the learning that they [the candidates] are getting to become future leaders of the company". Steve Catling, General Manager for Southern Replacement, added: "These all have the potential, given the right training, education, coaching and feedback, to become one of our future managers."

Youngsters encouraged to get creative in promoting carbon monoxide awareness

17 January 2018

[Note our 2018 carbon monoxide competition has now closed]

Young potential Picassos and other budding creative types with an eye for safety are being invited to take part in an annual competition warning of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Open to all school children in key stages 1 and 2 (ages 5 to 11) the competition asks pupils to produce an eye-catching poster, cartoon, video, poem or entry in another form of media which is both informative and accurate and warns of the dangers of CO poisoning and how to avoid them.

The competition has been officially launched by the companies which are responsible for running the gas networks across Great Britain, including SGN, Cadent, Northern Gas Networks, and Wales & West Utilities. SGN manages the network across the south of England and Scotland.

CO, known as the silent killer, is responsible for deaths, illness and hospitalisations each year.

First launched in 2007 the competition was previously run by charity CO-Gas Safety in partnership with the gas distribution network companies but this year the GDNs, including SGN, have taken over the running of the competition.

Entrants stand a chance of winning the following prizes:

- National winner: £300 for themselves and £600 for their school or organisation.*
- Area winner: £150 each and £300 for their school or organisation.

(*National prize will be in addition to the area prize).

SGN Head of Community Pamela Goe said: "Sadly each year lives are lost and many other people have to be admitted to hospital and suffer health problems because of carbon monoxide poisoning.

"However this could be avoided if awareness of the dangers of CO were better known and people took some simple precautions such as getting their gas appliances checked each year by a Gas Safe registered engineer and having a carbon monoxide alarm. SGN and the other gas networks companies are committed to raising awareness of CO and this competition is an important part of our strategy."

She added: "We hope the competition will be an enjoyable way to improve carbon monoxide awareness and I would encourage as many children as possible to enter.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for them to have some fun, exercise their creative talents and have a chance of winning some great prizes while relaying an important safety message."

The competition timetable is as follows:

- Friday 4 May 2018 – closing date for entries
- End of May 2018 – area winners will be notified in writing to their school/organisation or home
- June 2018 – prize-giving event will take place which winners from each region will be invited to the ceremony, where the national winner will be announced.

[Note our 2018 carbon monoxide competition has now closed]

SGN appoints new Chief Financial Officer

14 February 2018



Mick Carmedy (left) is welcomed to SGN by retiring CFO Chris Brook.

SGN has appointed Mick Carmedy as its new Chief Financial Officer.

Mick has a proven track record in the utilities industry and joins SGN following six years with Southern Water as their CFO. Before working with Southern Water, Mick has worked as the Group Financial Controller for both United Utilities and Thames Water. He joined SGN on 29 January 2018. He will be responsible for managing the company's financial risk, financial planning, budget management, cost-benefit analysis and securing new funding.

Commenting on his appointment, Mick said: "I'm excited to be joining such a fantastic company and I'm really looking forward to tackling the challenges ahead, namely GD2 as part of the next RIIO price control."

Welcoming Mick to SGN, Chief Executive Officer John Morea said: "I'm delighted Mick has joined us as CFO and his financial expertise and wide experience in utilities make him a perfect fit for our company."

The announcement follows the news that Chris Brook will be retiring after nearly ten years with SGN. Chris will be leaving the company at the end of this financial year in March 2018.

Following the appointment of his successor, Chris said: "It has been an absolute privilege to work for SGN and in particular for John Morea, the Executive team and our shareholders. I first met Mick nearly ten years ago at United Utilities and I'm sure he'll prove to be a valuable addition to SGN."

Our Innovation Project Manager Mark showcases our Hydrogen 100 project at HSE Future of Gas Conference

15 February 2018



Mark Wheeldon

Our Innovation Project Manager Mark Wheeldon is today speaking at the HSE's inaugural energy conference 'Safety Excellence in Energy: Future of Gas'. We're proud to sponsor the conference, which aims to bring together representatives from government, energy and industry to discuss how we can work together to provide safe and sustainable energy for the future.

Mark is presenting our hydrogen-based H100 project, which is looking to demonstrate that hydrogen can be distributed and used safely in a gas network. Here's more from Mark about our innovative project:

"At present, natural gas is the principle fossil fuel used for domestic heating in the UK. The UK government has given a commitment to reduce carbon output and progress towards the 2050 UK Government carbon target by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. However, to meet this very challenging target, it's essential all methods of decarbonisation are explored.

It's widely recognised the UK has an advanced and efficient gas network which currently supplies the energy to heat 82% of the UK's buildings and supplies the vast majority of the UK's industrial heat. The demand for heat is highly variable with both seasonal and diurnal swings. The gas network delivers around four times of the UK's peak energy demand than the electricity network and because of this, the gas network has a major role to play in the journey to decarbonisation.

Reducing and eliminating carbon can be done in a number of ways in the short, medium and long-terms. In the short-term, it's a case of substituting bio fuels such as bio-methane for natural gas and by widening the range of gases the gas networks' can accommodate without expensive processing. In the medium-term, it can be done by blending zero carbon gas such as hydrogen or in the long-term by removing carbon completely and using hydrogen.

The introduction of hydrogen into the energy mix is a potential solution and could form an important part of the UK's low carbon future. Our H100 project will look to build on previous good work and develop site-specific evidence to support the construction of a physical 100% hydrogen demonstration project. The intended demonstration will be small scale, but sufficiently representative to draw conclusions from the evidence it provides.

The new hydrogen demonstration network will also need to be commercially viable as well as UK scalable. One of the field trial criteria is the collation of ongoing running costs such as maintenance, training of operatives and managers, compliance and the continued supply of renewable hydrogen. This information will form the basis of the cost benefit analysis at the end of the field trial.

Our H100 project is a five-phase project which will seek to do all of the above, with the fifth phase being a city gate conversion. The project is currently at phase one, which is the feasibility and FEED for the construction of a new small hydrogen demonstration network. In short, phase one will aim to research and evaluate the feasibility of the construction and operation of the first 100% hydrogen gas distribution network.”

Our employees raise money for charity while learning about fuel poverty

23 February 2018



23 February is National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day. We're showing our support by challenging our employees' knowledge of fuel poverty issues while raising money for charity.

We have published a quiz about fuel poverty on our employee smartphone news app. The quiz highlights the scale of fuel poverty in the UK and its impact on the physical and mental health of the thousands of families affected. We will donate five pounds to National Energy Action (NEA), the national charity seeking to end fuel poverty, for every employee who takes part.

SGN Stakeholder and Community Manager Robbie Stevenson said the company was delighted to once again be supporting NEA on National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day: "With fuel poverty levels across the UK at over 20%, the question of heating or eating continues to be an issue for many households. By supporting National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, we hope to raise awareness of this issue, not just among our own employees, but also in the wider community."

We're committed to reducing fuel poverty all year round, not just on Fuel Poverty Awareness Day. Through our Help to Heat scheme, we're helping make thousands of homes warmer every year by improving energy affordability. Our Help to Heat scheme aims to lift over 27,000 homes out of fuel poverty before 2021. Through the scheme, low-income and vulnerable households across Scotland and southern England can qualify for free or discounted gas connections. [More details, including the scheme criteria, can be found here.](#)

To further demonstrate our commitment to reducing fuel poverty, we've recently partnered with national charity Groundworks by supporting their Green Doctor initiative. Through this partnership, we're able to identify local areas with high levels of fuel poverty and organise energy cafes where we issue energy advice. Mr Stevenson added: "As part of the Green Doctor initiative, we conduct home visits for those most in need. During these visits we can install energy saving measures such as LED light bulbs and radiator reflectors which prevent heat from radiators escaping into the wall. We also carry out safety checks and supply CO alarms."

SGN holds Parliamentary Reception to discuss how they keep customers safe and warm

23 February 2018



Clare Adamson MSP, John Lobban, Chris Bielby and Colin Thomson

On Thursday 22 February, we held a Parliamentary Reception to meet with key stakeholders and MSPs and discuss hot topics such as the role of the gas network for future energy needs, tackling fuel poverty, and how we take care of customers in vulnerable situations.

We distribute natural and green gas to nearly two million homes and businesses across Scotland. Our Managing Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland John Lobban was the first to speak to the attendees at our event, held in the Scottish Parliament. John highlighted that he believes SGN will have a key role to support a future lower carbon Scottish economy. He said: "It was fantastic to be able to engage with so many MSPs and key stakeholders. We're passionate about SGN's role for future energy solutions, and exploring how we can continue to keep our customers safe and warm through innovation and new initiatives."

Investment Strategy Manager Colin Thomson presented on the future of the gas network, and how innovation, research and development are all essential to help meet our future energy needs. Chris Bielby – who is our Director of Industry Liaison – went on to deliver our CO (carbon monoxide) strategy, which ultimately looks to highlight raising awareness of its dangers and reducing the number of UK CO incidents.

Clare Adamson MSP, who hosted the event for us, said: "It has been a pleasure to again host and welcome SGN at the Scottish Parliament and to celebrate their continuing contribution to meeting Scotland's energy needs and tackling our safety challenges. It has been very encouraging to hear more about their inclusive and innovative approaches, especially for vulnerable consumers and in raising awareness of the risks of CO poisoning. I look forward to continued work with them in the very active partnership for safety that we have in Scotland."

Volunteers transform local scout hall

1 March 2018



The volunteers. Back row (l to r): Iain McClafferty, Nathan McKenzie, Gordon McMillan, Konstantinos Gallios, Grant Richardson and Andrew Boxall. Front row (l to r): Simon Harkins, Gary Robertson, Barbara Kowalczyk and Lisa Taylor.

Volunteers from our Edinburgh office visited 42nd Pentland (Currie) Scout Group to give their activities hall a complete makeover.

The team of 27 colleagues gave up their time through our Community Action Programme which gives all our employees one day off each year to spend volunteering for a cause close to their hearts.

Scouts Scotland is the largest volunteer-led movement for young people in Scotland. The 42nd Pentland Scout Group is based in Currie and its run-down hall is used not only by the Scouts, but also by the entire Currie community for activities like yoga, slimming groups, keep-fit classes, dance lessons and even dog training.

Network Officer Gary Robertson said: "The hall is maintained by a small group of parent volunteers who give up their evenings and weekends to keep it in a usable condition. Both of my boys have attended the 42nd Scout Group at all age groups. My youngest son Sean is still in the Scouts, so I organised the event to help take the pressure off the parents."

Gary reached out to his colleagues in our Edinburgh office and the response was overwhelming with 27 colleagues offering to paint and decorate the hall over three days.

Network Assistant Grant Richardson helped paint the hall on the second day. He said: "It was a tough job, but being able to see the finished result made the experience incredibly rewarding." Grant's colleague Iain McClafferty added: "The day was really enjoyable, especially knowing that we were helping not just the Scouts, but the entire Currie community."

Our team totally transformed the building's main entrance and corridor as well as the main hall itself. Parent Volunteer Andy Cooper said: "Great to see such numbers arrive fully committed to doing a great job for the Scouts. It will spare us parent volunteers a few weekends of hard graft." Parent Volunteer Val Reid, who's also Facility Convener at the Scouts, was delighted with the results. She said: "It looks like a new hall! On behalf of the 42nd Pentland Scout Group we want to thank everyone from SGN so much for all their hard work and effort."

Has your boiler stopped working?

1 March 2018

The National Gas Emergency Service won't be able to help with boiler or appliance issues. Here's what to do if your boiler has stopped working in the cold weather:

Call a [Gas Safe registered engineer](#) for further assistance on 0800 408 5500.

Alternatively, contact your gas supplier if you have home care cover.

Has your boiler's condensate pipe frozen? Cold weather can freeze the condensate pipe, which is the external pipe that takes condensation from your boiler to your drain outside. If you suspect your boiler isn't working because your condensate pipe has frozen, here's some top tips from [British Gas](#) on how to safely thaw your pipe:

1. Hold a hot water bottle, or heat wrap, around the pipe.
2. Pour hot, not boiling, water over the frozen end of the pipe with a watering can or kettle
3. If you think the pipe is unfrozen, try switching the boiler on again. You might need to reset it.
4. If your boiler fires up, it's fixed. If it doesn't, then pour hot water on the pipe again.

SSE has also produced a useful video to explain how to thaw your condensate pipe:

We look after the gas pipes leading up to your gas meter and provide the National Gas Emergency Service across Scotland and the south of England. Our engineers are here to help 24/7 all year round. If you smell gas, have a gas emergency or are concerned about carbon monoxide, call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

SGN engineers go above and beyond to keep the gas flowing

5 March 2018



Our engineers north and south responded to extremely high workloads last week, as high snowfall and sub-zero temperatures continued to cause dangerous driving conditions and make it very difficult for us to get around.

On Thursday 1 March, the National Gas Emergency Service received around 40,000 calls, which is more than double the previous record high of 18,000. Last year, the largest number of calls received in one day was less than 9,000.

Red and amber weather warnings were in place throughout the country for most of the week, and extra resources from all teams throughout the business pulled together to make sure our customers were kept safe and warm during the severe bad weather spell. Some of our depots were also kept open extended hours over the weekend to help deal with the high workload.

Colleagues share selfies to #PressforProgress on International Women's Day 2018

8 March 2018



Colleagues from across our company are marking International Women's Day 2018 by sharing selfies of their #PressforProgress pledges in support of gender parity.

International Women's Day is an event held annually on 8 March to inspire women across the world to celebrate their social, economic, cultural and political achievements throughout history and today. This year's theme, #PressforProgress, is about motivating and uniting friends, colleagues and communities to think, act and be gender inclusive in order to accelerate gender parity. According to the World Economic Forum, women will not achieve gender parity with men until 2133 at our current rate.

Across the company, our colleagues have been demonstrating their support for the #PressforProgress campaign by sharing selfies of their own personal pledges to help accelerate gender parity.

As a company, it's not just on International Women's Day that we're focused on progressing gender parity. In recent years, we've taken our own steps to close the gender gap and we will continue to do so in the years to come. We're committed to achieving greater representation of women and other underrepresented groups by using fair and inclusive practices to attract and retain the best talent.

Kirsty Richardson, our Head of Employee Experience, said: "We're delighted to recognise and celebrate International Women's Day. This important day allows us to showcase employee stories, stimulate conversations on gender diversity and inspire our people to take bold steps to improve their working lives. Today we're hearing from senior females from technology, engineering and HR who'll be sharing their career journeys and offering useful advice.

"This year is more poignant because it's the 100th anniversary of some women getting the vote. We can all pledge our support to #PressforProgress. On a personal level, I pledge to influence the beliefs and actions of others. What's great about our era compared to the suffragettes is social media, which means everyone can get involved if they choose to. Every pledge counts as an action, so take that step."

We're celebrating our apprentices on National Apprenticeship week 2018

9 March 2018

To mark National Apprenticeship Week 2018, we've been celebrating the achievements of our current and former apprentices, and catching up with some of our SGN Apprentices of the Year to find out where they are now and what they enjoyed most about their apprenticeships.

Commercial Services Manager Wallace, who joined us in 2009, said he felt a career with SGN would offer him job security and a job for life, with plenty potential to progress within the company.

Our gas emergency engineers John and Mark both agreed that learning from experienced engineers and getting hands on was the most enjoyable part of their apprenticeships. Mark went on to say: "I'd say to someone considering applying to become an apprentice, do it, it's a good job. For those who currently are apprentices, listen to your tutors, listen to the older guys and the other engineers who are already doing the job – they have a lot of knowledge for you to learn."

Since launching our apprenticeship programme in 2008, we have recruited 115 apprentices for our six depots in Scotland and a further 191 for the South of England. We invest between £90,000 and £140,000 in each apprentice and that investment has been rewarded by the fact that the programme has a 97% retention rate.

Horley volunteers help hospice shops get sorted for spring

15 March 2018



The team from SGN's Horley head office get stuck in sorting through donations. Pictured left to right are: Gillian Foley, Laura Rickard, Rob Ryland, Lubna Khan, Esme Sheldrake, and Michael Driver.

A team of volunteers from our Horley head office spent a day earlier in March sorting through thousands of donations received by St Peter and St James Hospice.

Six of our employees helped at the hospice, which provides care for terminally-ill patients from Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, Lewes, Uckfield and the surrounding villages.

The team offered their support as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which every employee is given one day a year on company time to offer help in their community.

The colleagues worked in the hospice's warehouse alongside regular volunteers to help sort through donations of clothing, toys, books and electrical items before they were sent on to be sold in one of the Hospice's eight charity shops.

For Network Assistant Robert Ryland, this was his fourth time volunteering with St Peter and St James Hospice. Robert says: "I've previously had a family member in a hospice and volunteering is a way of me giving a little back. It's a lovely place to go as the hospice is set in picturesque grounds and the people are so welcoming. Working in the warehouse is interesting, as well as hard work, and it's very surprising to see what people donate."

Robert's colleague Esme Sheldrake, Network Planning Assistant, enjoys the opportunity to take a day away from the office to support the community and explains: "CAP days often bring a new experience and it's refreshing to be in a different location. The day was enjoyable and the staff were really appreciative of the help we gave. A tour of the hospice gave us a really nice insight into the workings of a hospice, where their funds come from and what they're use for. It was lovely to see the beautiful, friendly and clean haven they've created for the older generation."

The day ended with the hospice thanking the team for their work with a cake made especially for them. Wendy Agate, Community Fundraiser for St Peter and St James Hospice, said: "We rely on the generosity of our community to cover more than 80% of our running cost as we receive about 17.5% from the government, so we're always extremely grateful to companies such as SGN who support us. Anyone interested in volunteering or making a donation to support our vital services can visit our website at stpeter-stjames.org.uk or call 01444 471 598."

Our CEO discusses the future of gas at the annual Future of Utilities Conference

21 March 2018

On Wednesday 21 March, our CEO John Morea delivered a key note speech to a global audience at the 23rd Future of Utilities Conference held in central London.

Seen as the UK's premier energy and water industry conference, senior executives travel from around the world to hear from the UK's energy leaders.

John took the opportunity to explain to the audience why gas networks have such a crucial role to play if the UK is to get a low carbon and integrated energy system.

Publication of the gender gap report

28 March 2018



On Wednesday 28 March, we published our gender pay gap report, which can be viewed [here](#) in full.

Gender pay reporting is a legal requirement for organisations over 250 employees to publish details of the gap in both pay and bonuses between their male and female employees.

Commenting on the report, HR & Services Director Kate Naylor said: “This is an important report which confirms our commitment to ensuring no-one is put-off working at SGN because of perceived diversity or fairness issues. The ageing workforce in our sector means we face a skills gap over the next five to ten years which makes it crucial we widen our pool of candidates to include women at all levels and ensure we hang on to female talent. We’ve started to make some positive changes, but accept change will take time. We are however, committed to building a more diverse SGN and creating a culture of inclusion where everyone, regardless of difference, is valued.”

We joined forces to help Northern Gas Networks get the gas back on in Silsden

4 April 2018



SGN Team Manager Dekland Gosden (front right) pictured with the different GDNs who worked together in Silsden

Engineers from our depots in Scotland and the south east of England offered their help to fellow gas distribution company Northern Gas Networks during the Easter weekend, after a third party damaged one of its gas mains in Silsden.

The damaged main left around 3,500 customers in the West Yorkshire town without gas, and it was a significant task for Northern Gas Networks to get supplies back up and running over the holiday weekend.

When Glenn Norman, our Director of Operations (South), received the call asking for help, he immediately began to pull a workforce of volunteers together. Glenn commented:

“I got a call on Friday [30 March] asking for mutual aid support, alongside the other gas distribution networks. We were more than happy to help out and send our own engineers to support Northern Gas Networks in restoring supplies.

“We had a great response from volunteers willing to help and in total we sent 11 FCOs from Scotland and the south of England, as well as a team manager.”

Team Manager Dekland Gosden travelled from our Solent depot on the south coast to help out and was impressed by the team spirit shown by everyone on site from all the different utilities.

He said: “We all do the same job, and it was great to see how everyone came together and worked outstandingly well to get the gas flowing again. I was really impressed.”



After outstanding efforts from Northern Gas Networks, supported by the UK's other gas networks, gas supplies to all properties were restored on Monday evening. More information about this incident can be found on [Northern Gas Networks'](#) website.

Launching the first collaborative Gas Network Innovation Strategy

9 April 2018

Together with our fellow gas distribution network companies, National Grid Gas Transmission and the Energy Networks Association (ENA), we have launched the first joint Gas Network Innovation Strategy which sets out our future innovation plans.

Since 2004, over 1,300 innovation projects have been delivered across both gas and electricity networks. These projects are already helping energy networks like us identify new ways of better serving our customers by helping us develop quicker, more efficient and cheaper ways to deliver a cleaner energy system.

The Gas Network Innovation Strategy sets out shared areas of focus where we, alongside the other network companies, can provide continuing benefits to our customers from innovation projects. It also illustrates how we will share the lessons learnt from those projects with other organisations to roll out the benefits more widely and better shape future innovation.

We believe the existing gas infrastructure has a continuing role to play in meeting demand for power, heat and transport in a low-carbon economy. The strategy identifies the most important opportunities and challenges facing the gas industry, and how we will focus our innovation efforts around these seven themes: the future of gas; safety and emergency; reliability and maintenance; repair; distribution mains replacement; environment and low carbon; and security.

ENA Chief Executive David Smith explained: “Decarbonisation, digitisation and decentralisation are driving revolution in the energy sector, and our energy networks are on the frontline of delivering the kind of world-leading innovation that is making that happen. The publication of the first joint Network Innovation Strategies is a major milestone and we look forward to working with our innovation partners to ensure our network infrastructure, our wider energy system and our customers benefit from new technology, business models and unique opportunities.”

Further details can be found in the [‘At a glance’ guide](#) to the strategy and in the full [Gas Network Innovation Strategy](#).

Huge thanks to the Sidcup and Bexley local community

15 May 2018

We'd like to extend a huge thanks to Sidcup and Bexley residents and businesses after a burst water main led to a loss of gas supplies to over 1,700 properties over the May bank holiday weekend.

Glenn Norman, SGN Director of Operations, said: "When a water main burst in Sidcup over the May bank holiday, it damaged our gas network affecting more than 1,700 gas supplies in Sidcup and Bexley. The water flooded around 24 miles of our underground gas mains and, in many cases, it spread into the smaller gas service pipes leading into people's homes.

"It was a highly complex engineering operation to remove all the water and restore gas supplies. We had over 100 engineers on the ground each day, drafted in from across the south of England. They pumped out over 220,000 litres of water from our gas pipes using syphon tankers operating day and night.

Glenn added: "We appreciate it wasn't easy for people to be without their gas supply and we are very grateful for the tremendous support we received from residents, local businesses and community organisations."

Glenn said: "We'd like to thank all Sidcup and Bexley residents and businesses who were without their gas supply after our gas network was damaged by the burst water main. The local community was extremely understanding of the situation and their support ensured that our engineers could focus on removing the water and restoring gas supplies as quickly as possible."

Our Team Leader John wins Apprentice of the Year at 2018 Gas Industry Awards

18 May 2018



John Brady with his Apprentice of the Year award

Our emergency engineer John Brady has won the Apprentice of the Year award at the 2018 Gas Industry Awards.

John, who now leads an emergency team at our Edinburgh depot, received the accolade for “making a significant contribution to his workplace and setting a fine example to future engineering apprentices”, according to the panel of judges.

John said: “I was delighted, shocked and very humbled to have won the award. Having seen the scale and range of exciting opportunities within the gas industry that were highlighted at the awards ceremony, it gives me further incentive to continue to push myself and find exciting new challenges within the diverse industry we work in.”

Neil Snell, our Head of Technical Learning, said: “It gives us great pride that John has been recognised through the award. Not only is it a recognition of John as an individual, but it’s a reflection of the excellent development programmes we have in place.

“Since completing his apprenticeship, John has demonstrated a willingness to engage with the induction of new apprentices into the company, telling them about his experiences as an apprentice and giving them advice.”

The Gas Industry Awards are organised by the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM) and The Energy and Utilities Alliance (EUA). This is the largest and most prestigious event in the gas industry calendar. Held on Tuesday 15 May at the Hilton Park Lane in London, this year’s event was attended by over 500 people and hosted by broadcast journalist Jennie Bond.

The Apprentice of the Year category was included as a special award at this year’s ceremony, in recognition of the Government’s [Year of Engineering](#) campaign aimed at raising awareness and inspiring young people to pursue a career in engineering.

Reflecting on the campaign, John commented: “The best thing for me about being an engineer is being challenged on a daily basis, challenged to provide a safe and effective option for every customer. It is

important for young people to be inspired about being successful in the industry as the next generation can bring fresh perspectives to an exciting and varied industry as well as learning core skills which will allow them to have a long and fulfilling career.”

Dunfermline gas engineer uses Dementia Friends awareness to help elderly customer

24 May 2018



Chic Faulds, SGN First Call Operative from our Dunfermline depot

One of our emergency engineers from our Dunfermline depot recently used his Dementia Friends awareness to help an elderly customer in danger.

We were recently called to a gas escape where an elderly customer had accidentally left the cooker on causing a strong smell of gas in their home. Chic Faulds, a First Call Operative, was told by the customer's neighbour that this wasn't the first time he'd accidentally put himself in danger.

Chic carried out relevant checks and disconnected the customer's cooker to make the situation safe. Shortly after speaking to the customer, a former gas engineer himself, he noticed the man was rather distressed and repeating himself. He also noticed a large amount of unopened mail, including some from social care services. It became apparent the customer could have dementia.

Chic called the customer's daughter to tell her about the situation. During the call, he also told her about our locking cooker valve – a free and simple safety device we fit to existing gas cooker pipework allowing a carer or relative to make sure the cooker can't be unintentionally turned on or left on. This helps our customers living in vulnerable situations retain their independence at home and provides reassurance to their family, friends and carers. Within two days, we revisited the customer and a locking cooker valve was fitted.

Chic said: "I was really happy to be able to put my Dementia Friends training into practice and help ensure the safety of this nice gentleman and his neighbours."

We're working with the Alzheimer's Society on their Dementia Friends initiative to encourage everyone at SGN to use the Dementia Friends awareness raising tools to learn about what it's like to live with dementia and turn that understanding into action, just like Chic was able to do with our elderly customer. We're aiming for at least 1,500 of our people to use the Dementia Friends awareness tools and we're already well over halfway to reaching our target just a few months after launch.

We've also partnered with the other UK gas distribution networks to make sure our free locking cooker valve service is available nationwide. If you know of someone living in vulnerable situations that could benefit from our free locking cooker valve, such as people with dementia or autism, visit sgn.co.uk/LCV to find out how to make a referral.

SGN volunteers Rock at West Sussex community farm

29 May 2018



SGN colleagues take a brief break from farm work for a team photograph

Over 50 volunteers from our HR team spent a day lending a hand at Rock Farm, a therapeutic horticultural community farm in West Sussex.

More than 50 HR colleagues – our biggest ever team of volunteers – from across Scotland and the south of England took part in the one-day project. The team offered their support as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which every employee is given one day a year on company time to offer help in their community.

Rock Farm offers horticultural therapy and community gardening for various voluntary groups and vulnerable people at its six-acre site near Steyning. Working alongside the farm's regular helpers, our team participated in a range of activities necessary for the upkeep of the farm. These activities included building raised beds in the polytunnel, digging out an area for a pond to be built, wheelbarrowing different supplies to better locations, weeding, cutting the vegetables and building fences around the patches.

It was Employee Experience Officer Kirstin Gemmell's first time organising a CAP day. She said: "Organising an event of this size was challenging, but hugely enjoyable and rewarding. It was lovely to see the difference made by the work we had done and the determination of the team to help as best they could."



Georgia, Maria, Clare and Neha get stuck in

Caroline Williams, Head of Talent and Development, was keen to take part in the project as a way of getting to know the team even better. She said the CAP project was “a great way to do team building, working on something much bigger than the team itself. Volunteering at Rock Farm is a great idea and some of our team intend to visit again in their own time”.

Rock Farm’s Project Development Manager Ben Szobody has thanked the team for their hard work and shortening the farm’s job list substantially. Ben said: “Rock Farm is a six-acre site, with a lot of room to accommodate a lot of people. Literally anyone can volunteer. SGN became part of the community for a day, while reshaping the site in ways that will have long-term impacts on the people we serve and the cutting-edge growing techniques we’re developing.”

Inverness volunteers help provide garden access to local resident

4 June 2018



Inverness volunteers help provide garden access to local resident

Volunteers from our Inverness Depot gave up their time to provide a local resident increased access to his home and garden through our Community Action Programme (CAP).

Last week, the six-strong team helped rejuvenate a nearby property to offer Jim Howieson access to his garden once again after being left wheelchair bound due to leg amputation.

Our CAP scheme gives all our employees one day off on company time each year to spend volunteering for a cause close to their hearts. When our engineers met Mr Howieson and his wife Shona while upgrading the gas network in the area, the team decided they wanted to use their CAP day to help the couple make the most of their home once more.

Mrs Howieson explained to the team working nearby that although they managed to install a wheelchair ramp at the front of their property, they could not afford to replace the pebbled driveway which prevented her easily pushing Mr Howieson to the rear to enjoy the garden. The team decided to relay part of the driveway with concrete slabs to allow a smooth surface for Mrs Howieson to push the wheelchair on.

Team Manager Alex Torrance said: "I'm very proud that the efforts of my team will make such a difference to Jim and Shona's enjoyment going forward."

Commenting on the finished project, Mrs Howieson said: "We're delighted with the outcome and are able to make full use of the garden again, especially with the recent great weather.

"Jim and I are so grateful to the team of SGN volunteers as they've been so helpful. It's made such a big difference to us as we couldn't enjoy the garden together before the hard work."

Volunteers from our London West depot give Teddington riding centre a makeover

12 June 2018



Our volunteers stop work to pose for a group photo in front of the school's newly painted entrance

Volunteers from our London West depot recently spent a day painting at Park Lane Stables, a riding school in Teddington near London which is part of the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA).

The team of 25 colleagues – including contractors from our partners KLT Construction and Cappagh – offered their support as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which every employee is given one day a year on company time to offer help in their community.

Park Lane Stables is a small family-run riding school in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. The school is part of the RDA which means that as well as providing riding lessons to the local community, it also provides therapy, achievement and enjoyment to people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Our team gave the school's 13 stables, fences, walls, gates and railings a fresh coat of paint. Project Manager Joe Daniels, who helped organise the event alongside his colleague Ryan Smeaton, said: "We were working to upgrade the gas network in the area when we noticed the fantastic work the school does for people with disabilities. This was our chance to give something back to the school and, at the same time, thank the local community for their patience during our works."

Natalie O'Rourke, the owner of Park Lane Stables, said: "We are really truly grateful to SGN for giving us their valuable time. We are delighted with the appearance of the stables and the building. It now looks so much brighter and smarter."

Our Innovation Project Manager Alex reaches the final of prestigious gas industry competition

18 June 2018



Our Innovation Project Manager Alex presents on our Real-Time Networks project

Our Innovation Project Manager Alex Webb has excelled as a finalist at the 2018 IGEM Young Persons Paper Competition Grand Final.

Alex, who works at our Edinburgh depot, joined ten other regional winners at the event held at IET Austin Court in Birmingham on Thursday 14 June, after winning the Scottish heat earlier this year.

The event showcases the gas industry's best engineering and management talent, with finalists delivering a 15-minute presentation and provide an extended paper on projects they have led or been involved with to the team of judges from across the industry. Alex presented on our innovative Real-Time Networks project for the competition, which aims to demonstrate how a flexible gas network could efficiently meet the changes of the GB energy sector.

"Alex showcased his excellent presentation skills and demonstrated a thorough understanding of the project's journey as well as his passion for it as project manager", according to the panel of judges.

Alex said: "It was great to be involved in such a competitive Grand Final. The standard of the presentations was high with some truly inventive ways of demonstrating a diverse range of topics from across the industry.

"The competition provided a good opportunity to spread the word about the innovative work we are doing with the Real-Time Networks project."

Our Innovation and New Technology Manager Gus McIntosh said: "Alex has been involved since the early stages of the Real-Time Networks project, supporting the bid preparation for the Ofgem Network Innovation Competition, and subsequently being appointed to manage the successful £8m project in partnership with DNVGL. During this process, he has developed significantly and now has an intimate understanding of the complex issues the project seeks to address.

"Winning the regional heat is recognition that this is a key project for the future of energy in the UK and that Alex has the presentation skills to explain a complex project to any audience."

The competition is run by the Institute of Gas Engineers & Managers (IGEM) and is open to anyone working in or alongside the gas industry aged 35 or under.

Commenting on entering the competition, Alex said: "I'd recommend any young person in our industry to test themselves in future competitions. It is a good development opportunity as well as a chance to learn about many of the great initiatives going on across the industry."

Our CEO John Morea sets out our vision for the future of the gas networks

21 June 2018



Speaking at today's 2018 Utility Week Energy Summit in London, our CEO John Morea has set out our vision for the future of the UK's gas networks.

We – along with our fellow gas networks – have a major role to play in delivering a decarbonised energy system and meeting the country's 80% decarbonisation targets by 2050. Our [Opening up the gas market project](#) in Oban set the pace for change as it investigated allowing different types and specifications of gasses to be safely used in a gas network.

Following this, we've launched [our Real-Time Networks project](#) which is designed to demonstrate how a more flexible and sensor-led intelligent gas network could adapt to all the varied gas sources we have, and will continue to see develop. One of these sources is hydrogen, which we're exploring through our H100 project. This aims to develop the evidence needed to construct a 100% hydrogen demonstration project in Scotland.

John closed his speech by calling for Government to put in place a system of total energy planning and ensure future regulatory settlements look to the long term. Both these, John concluded, will help our industry attract investment so we can, in turn, encourage innovation and bring transformation to ultimately deliver decarbonisation.

You can find more in-depth detail about why and how, we believe, gas networks have a full part to play in a decarbonised energy future for Britain in our ['Future of gas' policy paper](#), which we've published today.

Celebrating our own women in engineering on International Women in Engineering Day 2018

22 June 2018



Clockwise from top left: Chloe Akers, Helen Peile, Tracey McIntyre and Eddie McAuley

Our colleagues at gas network company SGN are celebrating International Women in Engineering Day 2018 by sharing stories of their engineering careers and the people – both male and female – who have championed their career development.

Records Control Assistant Chloe Akers is at the start of her engineering career journey. Initially joining us in an office-based administrative role at our St Mary Cray depot, Chloe quickly found she was more interested in our engineering activities and what goes on outside. Chloe said: “I’m involved in the digitisation of our assets, meaning I’m out on site when our old gas mains are replaced with new plastic ones. I love this position as I am in and out the office every day.”

Chloe’s ambitions haven’t stopped there and, following support from her regional managers Steve Harger and our Talent Development team, she’s signed up for training courses to help underpin the knowledge required for project management roles. It’s a direction Chloe wasn’t expecting to take: “If someone were to ask me ten years ago what career path I’d be on now, there’s little chance I’d have said I’d be working in the gas industry! Yet here I am over three years later, enjoying my job, despite the thoughts I would have had about an occupation like this in the past!”

Helen Peile joined us in 2003 working part-time following the birth of her third child. Initially working in a data input position in our Burgess Hill depot, over the last 15 years Helen has progressed through various roles in Connections Planning, Streetworks Training and as a planner for our gas main replacement programme.

In 2015, Helen was put forward for the Trainee Team Manager programme, before taking up her current role as a project manager. Helen says she's had a lot to learn, made more difficult coming from a non-engineering background, but the support from her colleagues has been a big help.

Helen says: "There are still only a few women working in operations, but hopefully this is starting to change, with positive encouragement from our company. I came to this role quite late on in my career, after having three children – if I can do it, anyone can!"

Eddie McAuley, General Manager of our Edinburgh depot, has worked in the gas industry for 39 years and has been involved in the recruitment of his fair share of people working with us. Eddie says: "I believe that when we're recruiting it should always be about the best candidate for the job, looking at their skills and achievements as well as their attitude and approach. Their gender shouldn't come into it."

Engineering is often perceived as a 'man's world', something Eddie wants to help overcome. "We need to get to a place where it's not unusual for an engineer to be female, and we think nothing of it. I firmly believe that diversity, and different ways of thinking, is a great thing - this can only bring added value throughout our company."

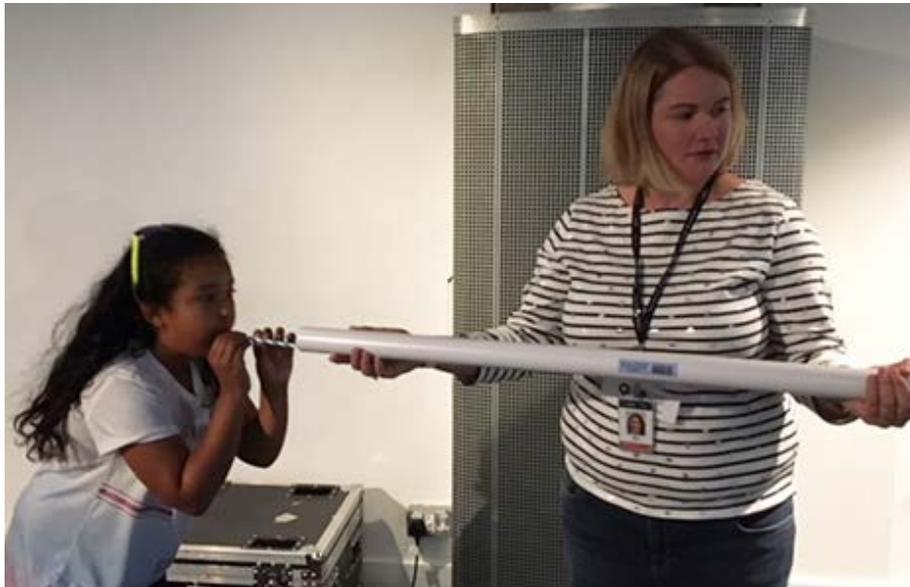
Head of Operations (South East) Tracey McIntyre has moved up the ranks from engineering apprentice to project manager through to one of our most senior operational managers. Tracey strongly believes a diverse workforce is vital within the gas industry, with research from Harvard University and the MSCI suggesting companies embracing inclusion are proven to be 25% more productive.

Tracey says: "I've always believed in the importance of women seeing women in male-dominated industries – it opens our eyes and punctures the stereotypes. We now have many more women working within Operations spread across several different roles than there were when I took the job four years ago. I've tried to create an environment where this is seen as a real career path."

More colleagues are marking International Women in Engineering Day by inspiring the next generation of engineers. A team of six female volunteers, led by our Head of Engineering Policy Annabel West, are manning a stand at the Science Museum in London tomorrow (Saturday 23 June 2018) as part of its Women in Engineering Family Festival. We've been invited to demonstrate some of the engineering activities involved in running our network in a bid to interest future engineers in gas industry careers, including having the children design and test pipeline pigs made of paper and straws.

Hundreds of children make pigs fly for International Women in Engineering Day

25 June 2018



Around 200 children learnt how we use pigs to inspect gas pipes on Saturday at the Science Museum's Women in Engineering Family Festival in celebration of International Women in Engineering Day 2018.

Led by our Head of Engineering Policy Annabel West, an all-female team from SGN invited children to make pigs fly by designing and testing pipeline pigs made of paper and straws. Ours was one of a number of activities – all hosted by female engineers – designed to showcase the exciting and unusual world of engineering.

Having assembled their paper pigs, the children had to use all their huff and puff to blow their pigs as far down the test pipeline as possible, with one child blowing their pig a mighty 2.5 metres.

In the gas industry, a pig is a mechanical device allowing us to inspect our pipelines from the inside, with the gas pressure pushing the pig down the pipe causing them to squeal and giving them their name. Our pipeline pigging supplier Baker Hughes shipped an exhibition pig over from Canada exclusively for the event, allowing the children a rare opportunity to get hands on with a pig.

Horley-based Annabel said: "Despite competition from the hot weather, we had a great turn out and it was wonderful to see so many children taking part in activities all around the Science Museum. We had a lot of really interesting questions about our exhibition pig and hopefully we've helped to inspire the next generation of young engineers."

Volunteers from our Burgess Hill depot transform gardens at mental health charity

27 June 2018



Our team of volunteers. From left to right: Susie, Nadya, Jade, Becky, Mark, Laura, Ron, Julia, Ryan, Stewart, Helen and Dave

Volunteers from our Burgess Hill depot recently spent a day gardening at Sussex Oakleaf, a charity which supports people with mental health needs, personality disorders and those at risk of homelessness.

The team of 20 colleagues offered their support as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which every employee is given one day a year on company time to offer help in their community.

In addition to a variety of services for young people and adults with mental health needs and personality disorders, Sussex Oakleaf also provides temporary accommodation for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless. The gardens of the charity's temporary housing in Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath were in urgent need of maintenance, so our team of volunteers took up the challenge.

The 20-strong group removed all the overgrown weeds, grass and bushes, bringing both gardens back to their best for their appreciative tenants. Administration Team Supervisor Julia Prosina, who organised the event, said: "I have loved ones and friends who have suffered or are still suffering from mental health disorders, so this charity has been very close to my heart. Sometimes we can feel so helpless when facing mental health problems, so it's very rewarding to be able to help these people and make a difference in their day-to-day lives."

Project Manager Stewart Carter added: "I think the most memorable part of the day was the actual transformation. It was also pleasing that before we left we could already see the residents enjoying their new-found little garden oasis. A fantastic day all round."

Helen Pryde from Sussex Oakleaf said: "Thank you SGN for caring and giving your time and effort to transform both gardens. The residents now have a lovely garden to sit in and enjoy, and this has encouraged some to start growing their own veg and herbs. The whole project from start to finish was truly amazing. It is wonderful to know that people do care and take time to give something back to the community."

Join our Customer Engagement Group to help shape the future of our gas network

27 June 2018

Are you a consumer research expert or a stakeholder specialist? We're looking for experts to join our new Customer Engagement Group and help shape the future of our gas network.

We're committed to keeping our customers safe and warm by leading the way in energy delivery. From keeping the gas flowing safely to supporting affordable energy to investing in the sustainable future of our network, our 5.9 million customers are at the heart of all we do.

Our next regulatory price control will begin in 2021 and ahead of that, we're creating our future business plans. We're recruiting an independent Customer Engagement Group to challenge us as we shape these plans. We're looking for people with consumer and stakeholder expertise to help us ensure we're best supporting our customers and stakeholders in the ways they want and need.

We're looking for a range of stakeholder specialists from across Scotland and the south of England to join the group, particularly individuals with knowledge and experience of social inclusion, non-traditional business models and community energy.

Alongside these specialists, we're looking for a consumer research expert to scrutinise our ongoing customer research, which underpins our future business plans.

The group will be meeting around once a month for two years. If you're interested in joining our Customer Engagement Group or to find out more, please contact our Head of Stakeholder Engagement Margaret Hunter at margaret.hunter@sgn.co.uk.

Budding Kent artist wins national prize for annual school CO safety campaign

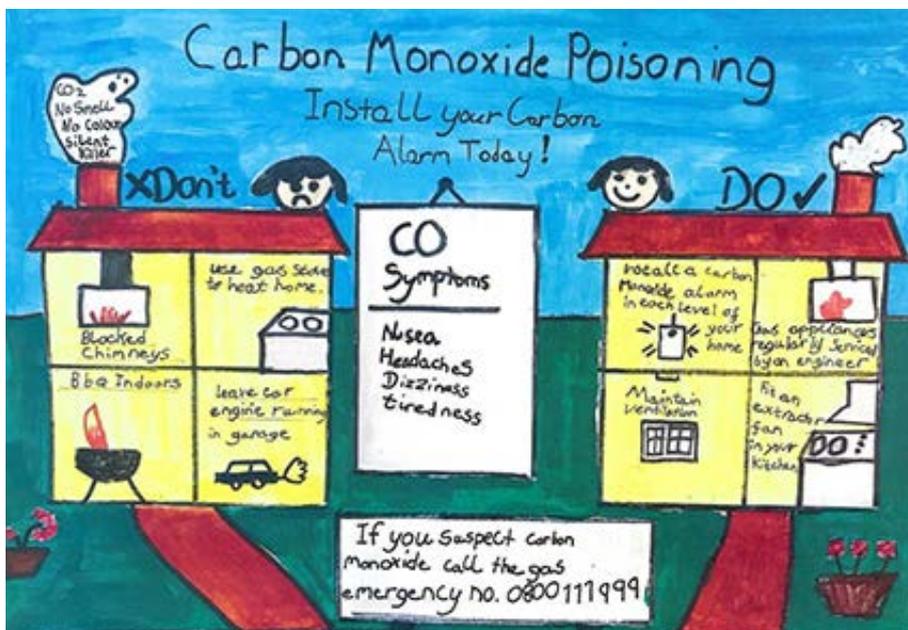
29 June 2018



Roven Fernando receives the national prize at Westminister awards ceremony

Kent schoolchild, Roven Fernando, has scooped the national prize for the annual school carbon monoxide safety competition, organised by the UK's four gas distribution companies.

The seven-year-old from Westborough Primary School in Maidstone, was awarded the prize for an artistic poster design showcasing the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) and what people should do to stay safe in their homes.

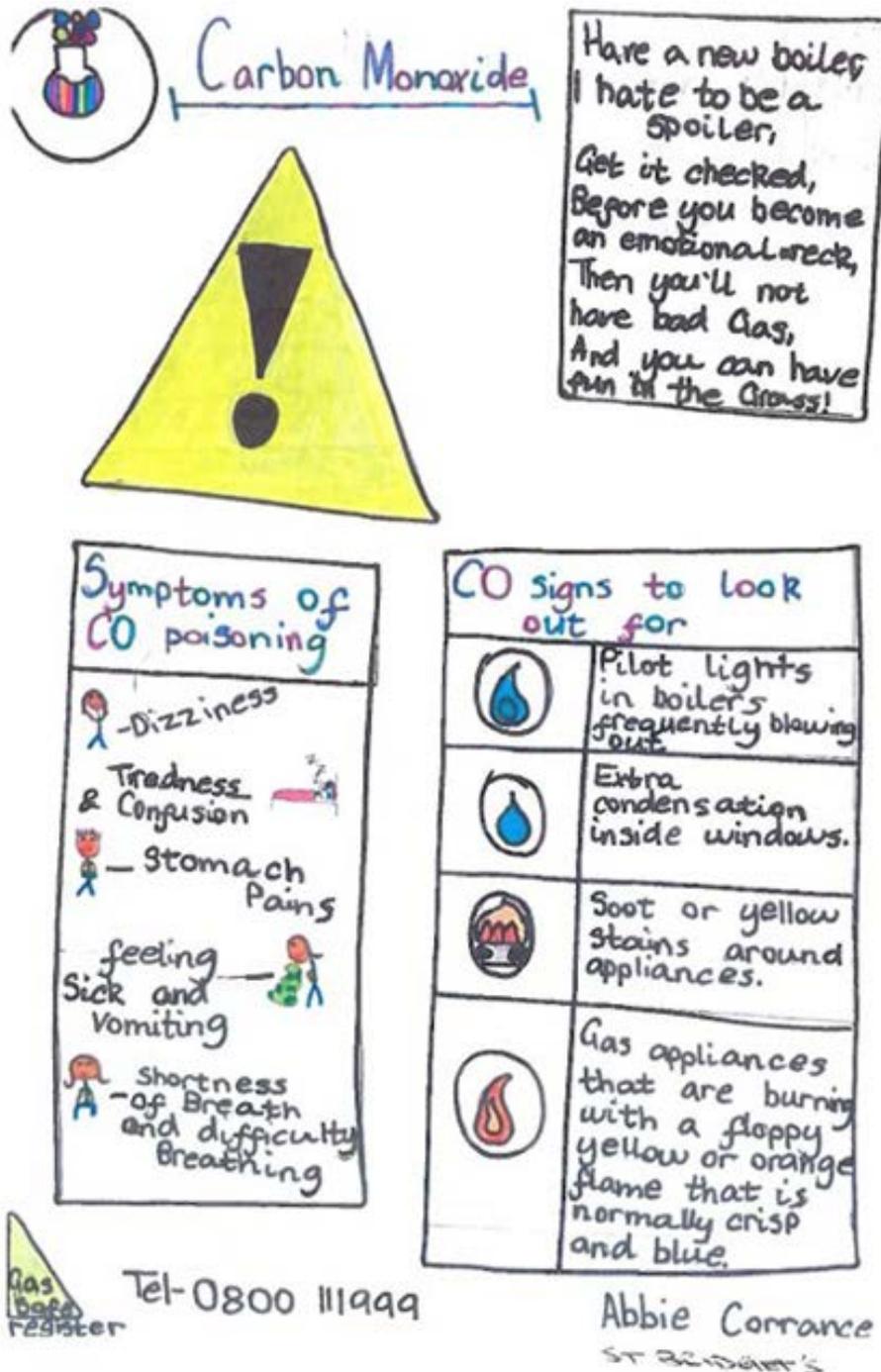


Roven's poster impressed the judging panel

The competition was open to budding artists in Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) to help us raise awareness of CO poisoning. We received nearly 1,500 entries in this year's competition from schoolchildren across our network area in the south of England and Scotland. Entries ranged from videos, posters, websites and poems, all designed to warn of the dangers of the silent killer.

Judges shortlisted ten regional winners to be in with the chance to be crowned champion of the national competition. On Thursday 28 June, the finalists and their guests attended the awards ceremony held in Portcullis House, Westminster, where it was announced that Roven had won the overall award. The event was hosted by MP Barry Sheerman, who co-chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG), and he presented Roven with his trophies.

Abbie Corrance, 11, from St Bridget's Primary School in Glasgow, won our KS2 regional prize in the competition. Abbie designed an informative and eye-catching poster, which included a poem and the symptoms of CO poisoning.



Abbie Corrance won our regional award for KS2 students with this informative poster

Our Stakeholder and Community Manager Robbie Stevenson said: "Along with the other gas network companies, we were impressed by the number of creative entries that were submitted to this year's

competition and we hope that the process involved has helped the students recognise the potential dangers of CO.

“CO has no smell, taste or colour and lives are lost every year because of CO poisoning. It’s through awareness initiatives like this competition that safety messages such as getting gas appliances safety checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer, and the need for an audible CO alarm can reach more people across Great Britain and save lives.”

Island gas man retires after 45 years' service

5 July 2018



SGN operations managers Gavin, Phil, Paul and Glenn at Phil's farewell lunch

Gas man Phil Carter recently retired from our Isle of Wight depot after 45 years' service.

Phil joined SGN in 1973 as a draughtsman at our depot in Portsmouth after successfully completing his heating and ventilation apprenticeship at Portsmouth Dockyard. At that time, the maps of the underground network of gas mains – now fully digital – were hand drawn by Phil and his team.

His next big move came in 1999 when he became Network Operations Manager and moved to the Isle of Wight. Phil said: It's difficult to describe the island. There's a quaintness about it and beautiful views. Once you come here, it's difficult to leave."

"My move was the best thing that happened to me in my career. I was able to build my own team and see them become successful in SGN. They've all made me so proud."

In 2012, Phil became Business Performance Manager covering the Isle of Wight. His new role meant regular commutes to our Poole depot. "Since then, I use the ferry quite a lot. I was responsible for teams on both sides of the channel, and we always felt like one team despite the distance. It shows that you're not limited by living on an island," he said.

Phil retired in June following a farewell lunch with Director of Operations Glenn Norman.

Glenn said: "This is the end of an era on the Isle of Wight. Phil has retired from the gas industry following 45 years loyal service. He has been a loyal employee of SGN and his professionalism and dedication within operations has been second to none. He has been a key part of the senior team and has mentored a number of employees both on the island and on the mainland. I wish him a long and healthy retirement."

Phil intends to spend his retirement exploring the island with his wife and doing more gardening. He said: "I've also taken up bowls at the Totland Bay Bowling Club, so we'll see how that goes.

"I want to thank all my friends and colleagues in the Isle of Wight and Poole depots. The best thing I ever did was to join SGN in 1973."

Volunteers return to Sidcup armed with litter pickers

5 July 2018



Volunteers from our Operations, Stakeholder Engagement and Communications teams removed litter from community areas in Sidcup

Volunteers from our Operations, Stakeholder Engagement and Communications teams returned to Sidcup to help clean community areas to thank residents for their patience when a burst water main flooded our network affecting gas supplies to local homes and businesses.

Over 20 colleagues combined to pick up litter and clean graffiti off walls around the town as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP).

Our CAP scheme gives all our employees one day off each year to spend volunteering for a cause close to their hearts, and the team decided they wanted to give something back to the Sidcup community.

Sharon Dorrington, our Stakeholder and Community Manger who organised the event, said: "The CAP project was arranged to recognise and thank the people of Sidcup for their patience and kindness demonstrated while we were working to restore gas supplies to around 2,000 Sidcup properties earlier this year.

"We were overwhelmed by the support of Sidcup residents in May during the gas emergency. We knew then that we wanted to come back to Sidcup and give something back to the community.

"Bexley Council helped us plan a route through the previously affected areas and we got the chance to meet lots of residents in person along the way to explain what we were doing and thank them again."

Bexley Council and residents were all very appreciative of the hard work and effort put in by the army of litter pickers. Peter Craske, Councillor for Blackfen and Lamorbey ward, tweeted: "This is really tremendous and generous of SGN to do all this for our community. I know councillors and council staff who joined you really appreciate it."

Our Legal team volunteers give Copthorne care home a makeover

6 July 2018



Our green-fingered Legal team cut back overgrown areas and spruced up the gardens at Heatherley Care Home in Copthorne

Volunteers from our Legal and Compliance team gave up their time to provide a Copthorne care home with some appearance improvements through our Community Action Programme (CAP).

On Wednesday 13 June, the 17-strong team helped rejuvenate a Leonard Cheshire care home by rubbing down and painting benches as well as removing weeds and excess foliage around the property.

Leonard Cheshire is a charity which supports disabled people in the UK and around the world to live, learn and work as well as providing a safe and inclusive community for all. Our Legal and Compliance team's efforts helped to improve the Heatherley Care Home in Copthorne in preparation for its Open Day on Saturday 30 June.

Our CAP scheme gives all our employees one day off each year to spend volunteering for a cause close to their hearts. Our Legal Assistant Mani Sabaretnam has a close relationship with Leonard Cheshire and convinced her colleagues to help refresh the Heatherley grounds by organising the day.

Mani said: "It's a pleasure to give something back to the local community and humbling to see the residents enjoying the beautiful gardens after our hard work.

"This was also an excellent opportunity to participate in some teambuilding with members of our Legal team as we don't get to see those based in Glasgow, Reading and St Mary Cray very often."

Paul Lomas, our Senior Legal Manager, said: "The most rewarding part of the day was to take a step back and think about the daily lives of the residents and how small improvements to their environment could make such a great impact to their experience in the Home."

Tess Ashton, Volunteer Coordinator at Leonard Cheshire, said: "The difference the team have made to the appearance of Heatherley grounds is fantastic and the residents are really pleased."

East Kent depot volunteers help endangered big cats at animal sanctuary

12 July 2018



Our volunteers pose for a group photo on one of the newly built platforms in the puma enclosure

Tigers and pumas at The Big Cat Sanctuary in Smarden can relax peacefully in their newly transformed enclosures thanks to volunteers from our East Kent depot.

The team of 18 colleagues visited the sanctuary offering their support as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which every employee is given one day a year on company time to offer help in their community.

Recently featured in the BBC documentary 'Big Cats About The House', The Big Cat Sanctuary provides peace and tranquillity for endangered cats both large and small. The sanctuary focusses on conserving endangered species, breeding and, if possible, the eventual return of the cats to the wild.

The 18-strong group ventured into three enclosures – two housing a pair of pumas while the other was home to a tigress – to cut the tall grass and weed the paths. They also built platforms for our feline friends to play on. Emergency Team Manager Stuart Lavender, who organised the event, said: "The tigress was moved into the enclosure adjoining ours to get a good view of us renovating her new home. After a few apprehensive looks to make sure she was safely locked away, we began to tackle what can only be described as a jungle. We also built two new platforms for the pumas to play on and erected a tree trunk to hang meat on for the tiger."

Engineer Danny Ellis added: "The sanctuary employees need help to maintain these homes, so it was nice to be able to relieve their stress and to see the animals enjoying going back into their tidy enclosures."

Engineer Tim Beames saw the sanctuary on the television only weeks before. "It was brilliant to be able to see rare black Jaguar Maya in real life! The sanctuary is generally closed to the public so I felt lucky to experience part of what it's like to work there. They rescue the cats from cruel fates like poaching or circus life, so it's a really great cause," said Tim.

Big cat expert Giles Clark, who featured in the BBC documentary, said: "Our pumas, Viktoria and Valentina, have certainly been making the most of the new installations during this warm weather lately. We'd like to say a big 'thank you' to the SGN team for helping to enrich the lives of our resident cats."

Our mentors support students' Big Ideas all the way to innovation competition final

19 July 2018



The Cap Beast team finished second in this year's Big Ideas competition

Our colleagues have mentored teams of budding entrepreneurs through to the final of a national sustainability competition, which called for young people to develop innovative ideas to solve key challenges affecting our planet.

Solutions for the Planet (S4TP) is a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) programme focused on sustainability and entrepreneurship. The programme is delivered in partnership with companies in the energy, utilities and construction industries, who support student teams to develop 'Big Ideas' to solve sustainability issues. We've been working in partnership with S4TP to support KS3 students for three years now.

After submitting their Big Ideas to the competition, and reaching regional finals held at universities, the winning teams showcased presentations and business plans to the judging panel at the national final held at Westminster Palace in London on Wednesday 11 July.

While Sea Savers from Hodge Hill Academy in Birmingham scooped first prize with their environmental solution to remove plastic from all their school's catering options, two teams mentored by SGN volunteers also performed very well to finish in second and third place.

Cap Beast from Biggar High School in Lanarkshire finished second with their vision to develop a revolutionary cap for slurry tanks. The young team of farmers designed the cap to collect harmful methane gas which can then be transferred to a generator where it can be used to power the farm or sold back to the National Grid for profit.

Robyn Pender, our Stakeholder and Community Officer who mentored the Cap Beast team, said: "S4TP is a great community project which promotes and educates STEM while providing students the opportunity to take their Big Ideas forward and make a real difference to our planet.

"This is the first time I've been involved in S4TP and the first year the programme has been run in Scotland, and I've been impressed by the students' knowledge, enthusiasm and ideas. As a mentor, I supported group learning activities relating to STEM, sustainability and the environment and the impact we can have on these. Over six months, the Cap Beast team developed an innovative idea which deservedly won the Scottish Regional Final in Glasgow before finishing second in the national competition."

Third place was awarded to the Skills4Change team from King Richards School in Portsmouth, who were also mentored by our volunteers. The students generated a community vegetable growing scheme designed to educate homeless people living in shelters to grow their own produce.

A Skills4Change team member said: "S4TP has supplied us with the knowledge on how to develop simplistic ideas which have the potential to become a reality."



Andrew Quail formed part of this year's competition judging panel

Our Director of IT and Innovation, Andrew Quail, formed part of the 'Big Ideas' final judging panel and said: "Every single one of the ideas, business plans and presentations at this year's final were excellent and it's astonishing when you consider the ages of the young people producing them.

"I believe that our attempts to help young people and local schools in developing their business skills through S4TP benefit us as much as the young people involved. It creates a connection between our business and the local community we serve, whilst of course helping to shape and develop the skills base of potential employees of the future."

Jen Baughan, CEO at S4TP, said: "This year's programme has given the young people amazing opportunities to explore STEM subjects through independent learning and their own creative thinking. The students demonstrated outstanding entrepreneurship, teamwork and presentation skills which they will carry with them in their future careers.

"The confidence that the young people have developed and the belief in their ideas is fantastic, and it's largely down to their dedication and commitment, and that of their teachers and our partner organisations."

SGN engineers create dementia friendly garden for Clydebank care home

23 July 2018



SGN's Maintenance team next to the new dementia friendly garden at Hill View care home

A team of gas engineers from SGN's Provan depot swapped gas pipes for gardening gloves as they kickstarted renovations of a local dementia care home's residential garden.

The garden at Hill View Care Home in Clydebank has always been very popular with residents but after a period of neglect it had become overgrown and was no longer considered dementia friendly.

When they arrived, our Maintenance team found the garden was bare apart from a large overgrown bush and it lacked any features for the residents to interact with. The nine volunteers quickly got to work painting garden furniture, replacing weeds with new donated plants, and completely removing the bush. They also created a brand-new beach area complete with sand and deckchairs.

It was all part of our Community Action Programme allowing our employees to take one day a year to volunteer in their local communities. The revamp comes following our work with the Alzheimer's Society on its Dementia Friends initiative, which has seen all our people encouraged to use Dementia Friends awareness raising tools to learn about what it's like to live with dementia and turn that understanding into action.

Ryan Higgins, Team Manager at our Provan depot, said: "The staff and residents were very happy with the final result and our Maintenance team took pride in our day's work. It was great to be able to put the team's Dementia Friends awareness into practice and we hope residents will enjoy the garden's new interactive features for years to come."

We're backing Crimestoppers' 'stayenergysafe' campaign

26 July 2018

We've joined with energy companies and regulator Ofgem to support Crimestoppers' 'stayenergysafe' campaign.

The campaign, led by the national charity, aims to highlight the dangers of energy theft and help people identify the signs of this illegal activity.

Energy theft occurs when people steal energy to avoid paying for their usage. Tampering with or bypassing a gas meter is extremely dangerous. In addition, the cost of energy theft affects us all as it increases the cost of our energy bills by an extra £20 each year. Find out more in [stayenergysafe's infographic](#).

It's important to report signs of energy theft to keep you, and those around you, safe. Click [here](#) to find more information about how to spot the signs of energy theft.

To anonymously report energy theft, call Crimestoppers on 0800 023 2777 or report it online at stayenergysafe.co.uk.

If you smell gas or have urgent concerns about gas safety, please call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999.

Our volunteers help stop spread of killer weed alongside the River Meon

31 July 2018



Our green-fingered volunteers ready and raring to start work

Green-fingered volunteers from gas company SGN have helped stop an invasive weed in its tracks alongside the River Meon at Titchfield, near Fareham.

Colleagues from across our Stakeholder Relations and IT directorates joined forces with Groundwork South to tackle the spread of Himalayan Balsam along the river bank.

The plant was first introduced to the UK in 1839 for gardeners wanting a cheap alternative to orchids. Since then, the fast-growing plant has become a problem weed across the country. The pink-flowering plant towers over our native floral species, starving them of light and causing them to die away. Come the winter when the balsam also dies off, this leaves bare river banks without vegetation cover, which leads to increased erosion.

The 11-strong group gave up their time to volunteer with Groundwork South through our Community Action Programme, which gives each employee one day on company time each year to volunteer in our local communities.

Our Head of Community Pamela Goe said: “We removed around 1,000 plants over the course of the day. With each balsam plant containing up to 800 seeds, our team has helped prevent the spread of up to 800,000 future weeds in this section of the River Meon. We’re all really proud that we’ve made such an incredible difference in stopping the spread of this weed in just one day.”

Groundwork South’s Communities and Open Spaces Team Manager Chris Smith added: “We are working with the East Hampshire Catchment Partnership to coordinate a catchment-wide approach to controlling and containing the spread of Himalayan Balsam. This catchment consists of the Rivers Meon, Hamble, Lavant and Hermitage. Himalayan Balsam is a prolific growing plant and we rely on the hard work of volunteers such as this fantastic team from SGN, to help with removal of this invasive species. In a couple of years, we hope to see the catchment return to the species rich habitats that are so beneficial to all forms of life.”

Gas network upgrade for Haymarket Terrace postponed until after the Edinburgh Festival

7 August 2018

Our essential work to upgrade the gas network in Haymarket Terrace has been postponed until September, to relieve local businesses and residents of roadworks over the Edinburgh Festival period.

Our work area in Haymarket Terrace has been reinstated with a temporary road surface, which allowed the road to re-open to two-way traffic this morning. Rosebury Crescent will remain closed for another few days while we work with Scottish Water to remove equipment which was being stored in the road.

SGN Project Manager Matt Ferguson said: "After taking into consideration the concerns of local business owners and residents, we've made the decision to postpone our essential upgrade project until after the busy festival period. We've worked closely with the local authorities and are now planning to begin our work in early September, but you'll be notified in advance."

Our planned drop-in session at the Apex Haymarket Hotel, EH12 5LQ on Tuesday 14 August will still go ahead, so we can answer any questions residents and business owners have. You can come and speak with us between 4.30pm and 8pm.

We've partnered with UK Power Networks to raise awareness of our free locking cooker valve

23 August 2018



We've teamed up with electricity distribution company UK Power Networks to raise awareness of our locking cooker valve in the south east of England.

UK Power Networks regularly writes to its customers to raise awareness of the benefits of being part of the Priority Service Register. By opting into this free service, registered households will receive extra support from UK Power Networks in a power cut or SGN in a gas supply emergency.

This week, UK Power Networks has this week written to over 6,000 residents across south east England who are on its Priority Service Register to check their contact details are up to date in case of a gas or electricity supply emergency. For the first time, we've joined forces to also include information about our free locking cooker valve which could also benefit some households receiving the letter who require extra support at home.

Our simple safety device is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework keeping people, such as those with Alzheimer's, gas safe at home. When the valve is locked, it stops the gas supply to the cooker and eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on. Our engineers will fit the locking cooker valve for free regardless of a customer's energy supplier. To find out more about the locking cooker valve or to make a referral, residents can call 0800 975 1818 or [visit sgn.co.uk/LCV](http://visit.sgn.co.uk/LCV)

Households can join or update their information on UK Power Networks' Priority Service Register by visiting ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority or calling UK Power Networks on 0800 169 9970.

Announcing our Customer Engagement Group Chair and Deputy Chairs

30 August 2018

We're pleased to announce the appointment of our new Customer Engagement Group Chair and Deputy Chairs, who will help us shape the future of our gas network.

We're committed to keeping our customers safe and warm by leading the way in energy delivery. From keeping the gas flowing safely to supporting affordable energy to investing in the sustainable future of our network, our 5.9 million customers are at the heart of all we do.

Our next regulatory price control will begin in 2021 and ahead of that, we're creating our future business plans. Our newly-established Customer Engagement Group has been set up to challenge us as we shape these plans. The group will be chaired by Maxine Frerk, who brings with her a wealth of experience from her 15 years at Ofgem. Most recently, Maxine was a member of Ofgem's executive board, responsible for all aspects of regulation of the gas and electricity distribution networks.

To reflect the different needs and perspectives of local stakeholders in both our network areas, we have appointed a deputy chair for each region. Professional researcher and policy analyst Claire Whyley will be our Deputy Chair in the south of England, with former Acting Chief Executive of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) Lucy McTernan becoming our Deputy Chair in Scotland.

Our chairs will be joined by a range of stakeholder experts from across Scotland and the south of England, reflecting specialisms such as customer research, business users, future consumers and vulnerable customers. Together, the group will ensure that we capture and act on the views of a range of customer and stakeholder groups in developing our future business plans.

Our Director of Stakeholder Engagement Helen Bray said: "We're thrilled to have appointed Maxine, Claire and Lucy to our Customer Engagement Group. Their extensive expertise will ensure we're best supporting our customers and stakeholders in the ways they want and need as we develop our business plans for 2021 and beyond."

Maxine Frerk, our Customer Engagement Group Chair, added: "I am delighted to have been asked to take on this role. Having previously chaired SGN's Stakeholder Advisory Panel, I know how committed they are to engaging with stakeholders and supporting vulnerable consumers.

"The RIIO-2 Customer Engagement Group is a vital part of the price control process. On many issues, consumers are best placed to say what they value and are willing to pay for and our job is to ensure that SGN is really listening and reflecting those views in their business plan. With the future of gas uncertain, the need for open stakeholder engagement is all the more important. I encourage SGN's customers and stakeholders to participate in the workshops and consultations that SGN will be running to help shape their business plan and the services they will deliver for years to come."

Paisley depots shines during Ofgem visit

11 September 2018



We've welcomed visitors from our industry regulator Ofgem to our Paisley depot to share the different ways in which we're working to minimising disruption for customers and stakeholders through innovation, communication and engagement.

The team from Ofgem joined us at our Paisley depot in Linwood to learn more about the improvements we've made to how we engage with our stakeholders and customers when we're upgrading our gas network. We also explained more about the services we can offer to our customers who are in need of extra support. Finally, we demonstrated how we're leading the way in our industry through the use of innovation by showcasing some of our latest technology.

Tess Hall, Ofgem Senior Manager in the RIIO GD Cost Analysis team, said: "Ofgem is tasked with setting the cost allowances for the next price control and as part of our work for this we are visiting each gas distribution network to get a feel for the day-to-day operations. This scope includes reviewing the key challenges, risks and opportunities for innovation."

Our Engineering Manager Operations Scot Dougall explained to our visitors the recent changes to the way we manage and communicate projects to upgrade our gas network. Scot said: "We tailor every project to the local community in which we're working. All our planned upgrade projects are put through this process which determines the project's impact on the community and how we should communicate with residents, stakeholders and commuters affected by our work.

"We've already had great results, with positive feedback and no customer complaints for one of our more high-profile projects in the heart of Prestwick town. We ran drop-in sessions for residents ahead of the project starting, posted regular updates on social media and our website once work began, and shared all the info with local councillors and local press so that the community was always well-informed."

Our Stakeholder Manager Margaret Hamilton was on hand to explain more about our simple safety device that can save lives, our locking cooker valve. Margaret explained: "Our locking cooker valve helps people, such as those with Alzheimer's or autism, retain their independence at home.

“Our engineers fit the small device to existing gas cooker pipework. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on, providing reassurance to family, friends and carers.”

Our visitors completed their visit with demonstrations of some of our latest technology from Innovation Delivery Manager Ryan Smith. “There really is lots to be excited about in innovation at SGN. Among other things, we showed how we’re using robotics, camera inspection and keyhole excavations to be more efficient and lessen the impact of our work on local communities. Today was a great opportunity to show our visitors from Ofgem just how increasingly vital innovation is to our industry”, said Ryan.



Visitors from Ofgem gather around Stakeholder Manager Margaret Hamilton to learn more about our locking cooker valve.



Innovation Delivery Manager Ryan Smith demonstrates iCore which reduces the size of our excavations minimising the impact of our works.

SGN pledges support for Gas Safety Week 2018

17 September 2018

Gas distribution company SGN has pledged its support for this year's Gas Safety Week (17-23 September 2018).

This week we want to raise awareness of gas safety to help reduce the number of dangerous gas appliances in homes across the UK and keep everyone and their families gas safe – far too many people in the UK are victims of preventable gas related incidents.

Gas Safety Week is also an opportunity for us to highlight the work we do all year round to promote gas safety. This includes warning about the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO), encouraging people to invest in and test their CO alarms and teaching people, including -school children, about the symptoms of CO poisoning. And, working alongside the other gas network companies, promoting our locking cooker valve.

CEO John Morea said: "This Gas Safety Week we're working with Gas Safe Register to encourage people to have their gas appliances checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer and to learn the symptoms of CO poisoning. It's also a chance for us to talk about our award-winning locking cooker valve. This is a simple safety device that's making a massive difference to some of our most vulnerable customers, such as people with Alzheimer's or autism. What's more, we're offering this life-changing service for free.

"The valve is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on. The carer or relative can easily turn the valve on when the cooker is required using the key, enabling the gas cooker to be used safely.

"Not only does the locking cooker valve help vulnerable customers retain their independence, it also provides reassurance to family, friends and carers."

It's crucial that people have their appliances checked each year to be assured they are working safely and efficiently. People should also check that their engineer is Gas Safe registered. Anyone working on gas appliances while not being registered is working illegally.

Stay Gas Safe at home this Gas Safety Week by following these top tips:

- Sign up to a free annual gas safety check reminder service at www.staygassafe.co.uk.
- Be aware of the signs that an unsafe gas appliance may cause such as a lazy yellow flame instead of a crisp blue flame; soot or staining on or around the appliance; excess condensation in the room.
- Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO gas is known as the 'silent killer' as it has no smell, taste or colour. The symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness, which can easily be mistaken for something else.
- To refer someone who might benefit from our locking cooker valve, call 0800 975 1818 or email locking.valve@sgn.co.uk

- Always ask to see an engineer's Gas Safe ID card and check it to make sure the engineer is qualified to check or fit the appliance in question.

To find out about dangers in your area visit www.StayGasSafe.co.uk and to find a Gas Safe registered engineer call 0800 408 5500 or visit www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk

We've partnered with UK Power Networks to raise awareness of our free locking cooker valve

21 September 2018



We're marking World Alzheimer's Day 2018 by raising awareness of the range of initiatives we offer to support people living with Alzheimer's and their families.

We're committed to protecting the safety of our customers and we're aware some customers need additional safeguarding in place to stay safe at home. For many of our engineers, they're the first person on the scene if someone with Alzheimer's, or their family member, reports a smell of gas in their home.

During an interview with The Elder magazine, our Stakeholder and Community Manager Dan Edwards said: "I used to be a first call operative, which is what we call our engineers that attend emergency situations as they are the first people on site.

"I went to quite a lot of properties where vulnerable people had left the cooker on unlit and filled the property with gas. This often happened in blocks of flats, which became a risk to everyone in the building, not just the person who had left the cooker on.

"I've also been to a few properties where the electric kettle had been put onto the gas hob. The kettle was plastic so as it burned, there were fumes from the melting plastic, on top of the danger of the fire itself."

To tackle this issue, we launched our locking cooker valve in 2014, a simple free safety device fitted directly to the pipework of gas cookers. With the turn of a key the valve can be closed, stopping gas from passing through to the cooker no matter what happens with the knobs of the cooker. This prevents a home from being filled with gas and provides peace of mind to customers and their carers or relatives.

Since its launch, we've partnered with the other gas distribution networks across the UK and the locking cooker valve is now available nationwide in England, Scotland and Wales, keeping even more customers safe in their homes.

We also work with the Alzheimer's Society on their Dementia Friends initiative to encourage everyone at SGN to use Dementia Friends awareness raising tools to learn about what it's like to live with dementia and turn

that understanding into action. Over 1,100 of our people have already used the Dementia Friends awareness tools this year and we're well on our way to reaching our target of 1,500 people.

To find out more about the locking cooking valve or to make a referral, visit sgn.co.uk/LCV. If you're interested in working with us to raise awareness of our free safety device, please email sgn.press.office@sgn.co.uk.

Speaking out about inclusion for National Inclusion Week 2018

27 September 2018



This week, we're marking National Inclusion Week 2018, an annual campaign run by Inclusive Employers to raise awareness of the importance of inclusion in the workplace and the benefits to having a diverse and included workforce.

We're sharing inspiring blogs, articles and videos with our colleagues all this week to celebrate inclusion and start conversations about what inclusion means to all of us.

We kicked the week off with a blog from our CEO John Morea, who said: "Inclusion is something I'm personally passionate about, which is why I'm proud to chair our newly-formed Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. For me, inclusion means creating a more diverse SGN, with a culture where everyone is valued and respected."

Our commitment to inclusion will continue long after National Inclusion Week ends. Our Head of Employee Experience Kirsty Richardson explains: "There's lots of good work going on to become a more inclusive employer. We're making our recruitment processes more inclusive, developing our employer brand to attract diverse talent, and embedding inclusive behaviours as a people management essential.

"Change won't happen overnight, it's an ongoing journey, and we're learning from others every day, which is why we've established a Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, chaired by our CEO John Morea. The group will work to encourage and embed inclusion in our company from the big-ticket items like attracting and retaining new talent to the smaller everyday actions that can make a real difference when everyone is involved, such as talking about it by having inclusion moments at the start of team meetings."

SGN couple row to raise over £3,500 for charity in dragon boat race

8 October 2018



The Framfield Flyers push through the pain to get their dragon boat ahead of the competition.

A married couple working for gas network company SGN have helped to raise over £3,500 for a local primary school by rowing to success in a dragon boat race last month.

Mark and Stephanie Skerritt were part of a 17-strong team competing in the 21st annual Dragon Boat Festival at Bewl Water in Kent to raise money for a new playground for Framfield C of E Primary School. A very small rural school in Uckfield, their children Jasmine and Thomas have both been pupils since leaving nursery, with many of their friends' children also attending the school.

The festival consisted of 50 teams competing across a 250-metre course in three heats for a place in the grand final. The Skerritts' team, the Framfield Flyers, won their first heat in a fast 1 minute and 24 seconds, their second in a quicker 1 minute 20 seconds, and their third and final heat in a speedy 1 minute and 16 seconds. The team came fifth overall and took their place amongst the top 11 fastest teams in the epic final race.

Stephanie, a Technical Clerk in the Network team at SGN, said: "Once the 11 boats were lined up, we started the race and were in the lead but started to lose our rhythm a little, ending up 4th overall – a fantastic effort by everyone! Mark and I would like to thank everybody for their support and we can't wait for everyone to see the playground once it's complete – it will make such a big difference to the whole school."

Emma Ayles, Chair of the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association at Framfield C of E Primary School and Captain of the Framfield Flyers dragon boat, said: "On behalf of all the Framfield Flyers and our wonderful support team, we would like to say thank you so much to SGN for your support, we couldn't have done it without you. Our children's playground is going to be such a vibrant and fun environment for them to learn and play in."

Our Into Action scheme allows colleagues who raise money for UK-based registered charities to apply through the company for matched funds. Last year, we donated over £50,000 through our Into Action scheme and we're proud to support the Framfield Flyers with a £500 donation.

Lisa Pestell, Headteacher of Framfield C of E Primary School, added: "On behalf of the whole school I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who participated in the dragon boat festival. This was a wonderful event that brought members of our community together and demonstrated to our children important attitudes like sportsmanship and citizenship. We rely on the generosity of fundraisers and the tremendous sum of money raised will be used to redevelop our playground for the children to enjoy and benefit from for many years to come."

Launching a new Code to help deliver bumper levels of biomethane

16 October 2018

We've joined forces with Britain's other gas distribution companies to today launch a new Code to help speed up biomethane connections to our networks.

The ENA Biomethane Connections Code will make it easier for biomethane producers to get green gas into our networks, ahead of the January 2020 Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) deadline. Up to £400 million is expected to be invested in biomethane plants across Britain over the next 16 months, with 50 more plants to be commissioned by January alone.

Biomethane is produced by taking food waste, sewage and energy crops to produce gas that heats our homes and businesses. The organic material is broken down through anaerobic digestion, a natural process that produces biogas. The plants clean up the biogas, turning it into biomethane, which is then fit to enter our gas network alongside natural gas.

Across our network area, the amount of biomethane currently entering our distribution pipes meets demand for heating 170,000 homes – the equivalent demand from a city the size of Edinburgh or Reading. We are committed to having 250,000 homes connected to green gas by 2021 and are on course to exceed that target.

Alan Midwinter, our biomethane lead, said: "We have led the way in biomethane production and are looking forward to seeing further growth in plants creating green gas which can be injected into the gas network. They are providing the nation with safe, sustainable gas supplies to homes and businesses for decades to come, and helping to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions."

Tina Hawke, Chair of ENA's Biomethane Group, added: "This Code puts us in a good shape to manage and enable the predicted fast growth in the biomethane sector. We could have 50% more plants introducing this green gas to grid across the UK by January 2020. The Code is a simplified, consistent process to help make this happen, without compromising on what is our absolute priority, safety."

Laura Sandys joins us as our new Senior Independent Director

16 October 2018



John Lobban (Managing Director, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and Laura Sandys (Senior Independent Director) at our Edinburgh office

We're thrilled to announce the appointment of Laura Sandys to our board of directors as a senior independent director.

Our Chairman, Gregor Alexander commented: "On behalf of all the shareholders I'd like to welcome Laura to our board of directors. She joins us at a pivotal time in the energy sector and her strong experience, especially across our industry, will be extremely valuable as we look to ensure there's a secure place for gas in the UK's energy future." He added: "I'd also like to thank Graham for his contribution to SGN which over the years has been very significant."

Laura's energy experience includes running the Reshaping Regulation Programme with Imperial College and the Energy Systems Catapult, and was a member of the Government's Cost of Energy Review chaired by Prof Dieter Helm. She was a member of the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee as well as Parliamentary Private Secretary to The Rt Hon Greg Barker MP, Minister of State. She is co-founder of [POWERful Women](#), which promotes women's role in the energy sector and has been appointed a member of the Government's CCUS Council and is a Member of Imperial College's Centre for Carbon Capture and Storage Advisory Group.

Away from energy, Laura is also Chair of the Food Foundation and Deputy Chair of the Food Standards Agency.

Commenting on her appointment, Laura said: "I've admired SGN as a company for many years and I'm very honoured to be asked to join the SGN board. I very much look forward to working closely with all the board members at this most exciting time for the business."

Showcasing the future of our network at LCNI 2018

18 October 2018



Mark Wheeldon, Innovation Project Manager, addresses delegates at the 2018 LCNI conference

This week, as well as supporting the first ever [Green GB Week](#), we've been proud to be a part of the 2018 Low Carbon Networks & Innovation Conference (LCNI), which took place in Telford. Here we showcased our ground-breaking [innovation projects](#), which are all helping transition the UK's gas infrastructure into efficient, low carbon and affordable networks of the future.

Among our speakers at the LCNI conference was our Innovation Project Manager Mark Wheeldon, who addressed delegates on how our [Hydrogen 100](#) project has been designed to demonstrate the safe, secure and reliable distribution of hydrogen.

Speaking from the conference, SGN's Innovation Delivery Manager Ryan Smith said: "It's more important than ever to get over the message we, in the gas industry, are totally committed to working together to fundamentally change the nature of our gas networks through collaborative innovation. We're working on several initiatives to ensure they develop into viable, low cost and low-carbon networks, providing heat and wellbeing for the whole nation for decades to come."

Ryan added: "The innovative ideas and projects both we in SGN and other gas network companies are developing today, are enabling the whole industry to lead the charge to decarbonise gas networks across the energy system for tomorrow. At the conference we were able to showcase some of the incredible projects being developed, all looking to help to deliver a secure, affordable gas network, using a range of low carbon technologies."

In our recent 'Future of gas' policy paper, we discuss in detail about why and how, we believe, gas networks have a full part to play in a decarbonised energy future for Britain. The full 'Future of gas' policy paper can be found [here](#).

Gas network company helps to light up Tayport this Christmas

19 October 2018



Our Project Manager Chris presenting the cheque to Tayport Community Council

Tayport's annual Christmas lights display will be shining bright again this year, helped by a donation from gas network company SGN.

The £200 donation, which will go towards the transport and setting up of the Christmas lights, was presented to Tayport Community Council to as a thank you for their continued help and understanding throughout our recent gas network upgrade in the area.

Our Project Manager Chris Skivington said: "The support we received from the Community Council during our essential work was great. They helped us to communicate with all local businesses and residents to make sure they were kept updated and received a 10/10 service both on and off site."

Maggie Taylor at Tayport Community Council commented: "We're so grateful to SGN for their kind donation to our Christmas Lights Scheme – it's very much appreciated.

"The citizens of Tayport did not suffer at all during the upgrade of the gas network in the town, in fact, SGN went out of their way to help in any way which they could. There was always someone ready with a smile to answer any questions, from the chap digging the hole in the road to the chap in charge.

"We'd like to say a big thank you to all who made this major work go so smoothly."

Gas company colleagues go back to school in Epsom

19 October 2018



Joe Daniels with some of the pupils at The Vale Primary School

It's back to school for four colleagues from the gas network company SGN, who've been giving pupils at The Vale Primary School a lesson in gas safety before burying the pupils' time capsule in their excavation.

Jason Emanus, Joe Daniels, Lee Allison and Kirsty Kingsbury, who are all based in our Epsom depot, first met with the schoolchildren last week. The group explained to them about different aspects of gas safety, including the dangers of the poisonous gas carbon monoxide. Our team showed the pupils examples of the plastic pipe that we put in the ground when we're upgrading our network, as well as roadworks signs and the protective clothing and equipment we use to make sure our people, and general public, stay safe at all times.

Joe, who is one of our project managers, said: "We had such a great morning speaking to the kids. We told them all about gas safety and how they can keep themselves and their families safe.

"At the end of the presentation, they all had so many cracking questions. Some of my favourites were:

- How long do the pipes last in the ground?
- Do you use diggers to dig your holes and how big are they?

"We also managed to get child versions of our hi-vis jackets made up for all the kids to keep – which they loved."

The team of four returned to the school this week to help the excited pupils – all aged between 4 and 11 – bury a time capsule which was made out of the same plastic pipe we use to upgrade our gas network.

Our operations planner Kirsty commented: "We're working to upgrade our gas pipes in the road right outside the school, so we thought it was a great opportunity to get the local school kids involved. We came up with the idea of burying a time capsule within one of our excavations.

“Some of the things that went in there include: SGN road safety leaflets, what the pupils want to do as a job when they’re older, and memorable things they’ve done this year.

“They all put in a lot of effort and hopefully their knowledge on gas and CO safety has also improved as a result.”

We also encouraged the pupils to enter our CO safety competition. It’s open all year round for budding artists to enter and help raise awareness of the poisonous gas. There’s also cash prizes up for grabs for the winning entries.

Any child aged 5 to 11 can take part. For more information on the competition and how to enter, visit our [CO competition page](#).



The kids with their time capsule ready to be put into our excavation



Burying the time capsule in our excavation

Our Inverness colleagues donate their prize for best community project to local care home

25 October 2018



Residents and staff at Balcarres Care Home in Broughty Ferry, Dundee, pictured with (holding the cheque from left to right) Jean's daughter Leanne, Alex Torrance and Care Home Manager Lynn McLean. Alex's colleague Paul McIntosh is holding the trophy.

A team from our Inverness depot donated their £500 prize, for coming first in the gas network company's annual competition for community projects, to a local care home which supported a former colleague.

Our colleagues can take one day off work each year for their community projects, but every June we like to do something extra special. We run a competition encouraging as many teams as possible to organise inspiring projects with great charities or local causes close to their hearts.

Our six-strong team from Inverness came out on top against 26 other amazing projects across Scotland and the south of England. They helped rejuvenate an elderly Inverness resident's property, so he could access his garden in his wheelchair after having his leg amputated.

As part of their prize, the Inverness team won £500 to donate to a good cause. Team Manager, and project organiser, Alex Torrance said: "We chose to donate the winnings to Balcarres Care Home in Broughty Ferry, Dundee. Jean, a colleague and friend who retired last year from SGN, now needs specialist dementia care and spent some time at the home. Jean's family are very grateful for the loving care she received and we thought the prize money would be a nice way of saying thank you.

"We took a tour of the home and saw that they're doing an absolutely wonderful job with very limited resources. They were over the moon with the £500 donation for their residents' welfare fund."

Balcarres Care Home Manager Lynn McLean said: "We've discussed with residents and families how to spend the money. Elderly residents, especially those with dementia, can't get out and about like they used to, so we're hoping to bring a pantomime to the care home this Christmas. We also hope to create a winter café in the grounds complete with Christmas lights and warm festive drinks.

“Funds are very difficult to raise so we were absolutely overwhelmed with the donation and would like to give huge thanks to Alex and his team.

Glasgow engineer raises over £1,000 from charity football match

2 November 2018



Katie's Stars (in blue) line up with FCwebeatanycarrs.com in Toryglen Regional Football Centre.

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As part of their prize, the Inverness team won £500 to donate to a good cause. Team Manager, and project organiser, Alex Torrance said: "We chose to donate the winnings to Balcarres Care Home in Broughty Ferry, Dundee. Jean, a colleague and friend who retired last year from SGN, now needs specialist dementia care and spent some time at the home. Jean's family are very grateful for the loving care she received and we thought the prize money would be a nice way of saying thank you.

"We took a tour of the home and saw that they're doing an absolutely wonderful job with very limited resources. They were over the moon with the £500 donation for their residents' welfare fund."

Balcarres Care Home Manager Lynn McLean said: "We've discussed with residents and families how to spend the money. Elderly residents, especially those with dementia, can't get out and about like they used to, so we're hoping to bring a pantomime to the care home this Christmas. We also hope to create a winter café in the grounds complete with Christmas lights and warm festive drinks.

"Funds are very difficult to raise so we were absolutely overwhelmed with the donation and would like to give huge thanks to Alex and his team.

Joining together at House of Commons event to help people heat their homes for less

2 November 2018



Our CEO John Morea is joined by Dr Carolyn Snell, MP Barry Sheerman and our Director of Stakeholder Relations Helen Bray who all spoke at the parliamentary event aimed at helping people heat homes for less.

We're proud to have joined with MP Barry Sheerman and the University of York in hosting a parliamentary reception at the House of Commons earlier this week, which brought together more than 50 local authority, charity, industry and project partners who work in partnership to deliver warm homes nationwide.

Office of National Statistics data states that almost 10,000 people across the UK die during the winter months from living in a cold home. We're committed to working in partnership to overcome the devastating impact of cold homes.

We launched our recently-commissioned mapping tool at the event on Tuesday 30 October, which will help us identify homes within our network areas that aren't currently connected to our gas network and who may be eligible for support through our Help to Heat scheme and other funds. The tool has been developed for us by the Energy Saving Trust and will help us reach even more households who are finding it difficult to afford to keep their home warm.

Alongside the launch of our mapping tool, Dr Carolyn Snell, from the University of York, presented research on how low-income families and people with disabilities engage with energy efficiency. The study identified a lack of trust with the sector, which highlights the importance of working collaboratively to engage with and support people these groups.

Our Fuel Poverty Manager Marie Jones explained: "Our Help to Heat scheme helps households who are finding it difficult to keep their home warm or are struggling to pay their energy bills. We can provide funding to connect these homes to our gas network and, in some instances, we may also be able to contribute to the cost of installing a new gas central heating system through one of our partners as well.

“We’re thrilled that so many industry partners, charities and local authorities joined us at the House of Commons and shared in the launch of our new mapping tool. With this tool, we’ll be able to support even more families heat their homes for less.”

Statement from SGN regarding the Whitstable case court hearing

6 November 2018

SGN deeply regrets the incident and injuries sustained by two of our employees on 27 May 2016 at our works sites at Thanet Way, Whitstable. In addition, we'd like to offer our sincere apologies to both them and their families for the distress caused.

Throughout the subsequent Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into this incident, we have fully co-operated with the HSE as well as with the court proceedings and at the first opportunity pleaded guilty to the charge.

While we fully accept the penalty imposed by the District Judge, we welcome his comments recognising that we have a good record with a demonstrable commitment to health and safety and have taken considerable actions to address the issues identified in the proceedings.

We remain fully committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our employees, our customers and the public.

Dundee-based Thomas Law wins Apprentice of the Year 2018

8 November 2018



(L-R) Marc Gasson, Thomas Law and Mike Caird

Apprentice Thomas Law, who is based at our Dundee depot, has been awarded Apprentice of the Year 2018.

Thomas received his award from Marc Gasson, our Apprenticeship Scheme Manager, and Mike Caird, Dundee General Manager.

“I was delighted when Marc told me I had won the Apprentice of the Year 2018 – it makes all of the hard work I put into this year even more worthwhile”, Thomas said. “I’m now in the final year of my apprenticeship and I’m looking forward to my future in the company.”

Marc Gasson said: “Thomas has shown exceptional commitment towards his apprenticeship and has received great feedback from his mentor, training providers and peers. After his training is complete, I can see a bright future for Thomas and would like to congratulate him on winning the award.”

Mike Caird continued: “It’s great to see a Dundee apprentice win the award this year. Thomas has great potential and I look forward to seeing him progress.”



Thomas with his award

Calling all innovators! Your tech ideas could help us make roadworks smarter, safer and more inclusive

12 November 2018



We've teamed up with Transport for London (TfL), fellow utility companies and innovation centre Plexal to launch London RoadLab. The 10-week innovation programme aims to find tech solutions to help make London's roadworks smarter, safer and more inclusive.

London is one of the most popular cities in the world. By 2025, there could be as many as 9.8 million people living and working in the city. We know that although our emergency repairs and planned upgrades – as well as those carried out by other utilities and local authorities – are vital, roadworks can be disruptive.

That's why we've teamed up with TfL, Plexal and other major utility companies to launch London RoadLab. The 10-week programme will test tech-based solutions in the real world with the aim of making roadworks smarter, safer and more inclusive for everyone.

Innovators will receive funding and access to expert advice to scale solutions at live pilot sites in London. After submitting an initial proposal, successful applicants will be invited to pitch their solution to a panel of experts from TfL, Plexal and utility companies in January.

Our General Manager Steve Catling, who is part of the judging panel, said: "London RoadLab is a fantastic opportunity for innovators to test their solutions out in the real world. If you've got a technology that can help reduce the environmental impact of roadworks, make roadworks less disruptive or minimise health and safety risks, for example, we want to hear from you.

"We're proud to be part of this innovative partnership, working alongside TfL, Plexal and other utilities. We're looking forward to supporting successful applicants in putting their technologies to the test live on London's streets."

Applications close at 12 noon on Monday 26 November. For more details or to apply, visit the [London RoadLab website](#).

Gold award from Ministry of Defence for armed forces support

15 November 2018



(L-R Prince Edward, Director of Operations Southern Glenn Norman, HR Manager Trina Yarlett, Team Manager Mark Newton and Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Defence)

We're proud to become one of just 51 employers from across the UK that were presented with Gold awards by the Ministry of Defence this week for our support of our armed forces.

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support those who serve in the forces and inspires other organisations to do the same. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support for the armed forces community.

Our Gold award status means we have not only demonstrated our support for service personnel and employ people with military backgrounds, but we also show flexibility to our employees with armed forces training commitments, such as military reservists and adult volunteers involved in cadet forces.

As a company, we also signed the Armed Forces Covenant – a promise ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

Director of Operations Southern Glenn Norman collected the award on our behalf at the ceremony at Lancaster House in London. Glenn said: "We're honoured to receive our Gold Award in recognition of our support for employees who are armed forces reservists, as well as military veterans who've joined us since leaving the forces.

"The skills and experience they bring, such as working under pressure and problem solving, are a perfect match for our industry. We're committed to the ongoing support of the armed forces community."

Team Manager Mark Newton from Oxford, who previously was a Challenger 2 Tank Commander in the Royal Armoured Corps, said: "I feel very honoured to attend the event on behalf of SGN and think it's great that the company has been recognised for its contribution towards reservists and ex-military personnel.

“It’s fantastic there are companies out there supporting the armed forces. It not only lets them recruit from this unique talent pool, but it also makes those currently serving aware of what’s available to them when they leave the services.”

Raising awareness of men's issues on International Men's Day 2018

19 November 2018

Colleagues from across our company are marking International Men's Day 2018 by raising awareness of men's health and wellbeing issues and highlighting their positive male role models.

International Men's Day (IMD) is a worldwide event held annually on 19 November. The event seeks to highlight the health and wellbeing issues faced by men. For example, men in the UK are three times as likely to take their own lives according to figures from Samaritans.

Across the company, our colleagues have been demonstrating their support by blogging about the inspirational men in their lives and sharing stories about their wellbeing and mental health. Here are some quotes from the blogs we shared:

**INTERNATIONAL
MENS DAY
November 19**

"People are reluctant to share their difficulties and that's ok - we're human. But sharing is caring and it's genuinely the first step in solving or removing the difficulty you have."

Ben, St Mary Cray



**INTERNATIONAL
MENS DAY
November 19**

"Our son Stephen had cancer. We stayed strong, especially Eric with his strength and positive attitude. He fought it right alongside our son.

Today, Stephen is thriving. He's married, and Eric and I are due to be grandparents in April."

Fiona, Edinburgh



**INTERNATIONAL
MENS DAY
November 19**

"It's time to teach our fathers, brothers, sons and colleagues that it's okay to be unhappy and that someone will always be there to listen to them."

Bradley, Horley



All our employees and their families have 24-hour access to counselling services through our Employee Assistance Programme. They can call anytime for professional counselling to help with a wide range of personal problems including stress, relationship difficulties, bereavement, anxiety, alcohol or drug abuse, employment or financial concerns.

Ben Croxford, our Safety Development Manager, said: “We’re delighted to recognise International Men’s Day. This important day allows us to shine a light on issues men face that aren’t often talked about.

“It wasn’t easy or comfortable for me to blog about my personal experiences today. Typically, men are less likely to be open about their wellbeing, especially around mental health. So, men sharing their personal stories about how they’ve overcome their health battles, will hopefully encourage others to be more open and seek support.”

Our communications team wins top prize at this year's CIPR Pride Awards

3 December 2018



Left to right: Waseem Hanif (SGN), Dave Mason (Mentor – awards regional sponsor), Katie Lobban (SGN), Suzannah Streeter (awards MC - BBC), James Higgins (SGN), Hannah Brett (SGN), Denis Kerby (SGN), Bradley Barlow (SGN), Danny Sweeney (SGN)

Our Communications team scooped the award in the category for Issues and Crisis/Reputational Management at the 2018 CIPR South of England and Channel Islands PRide Awards.

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards is an annual event which celebrates PR teams from all areas of the fantastic, complex and diverse industry.

The ceremony was held in Bristol Marriott Hotel, where we won the award for our communications efforts during a loss of gas in Sidcup, during which our engineers worked tirelessly to restore supplies to over 1,700 homes and businesses after water entered our network.

Director of Corporate Communications Denis Kerby said: “We’re really thrilled to have won and be recognised for the dedication and professionalism that the team showed throughout our time in Sidcup back in May this year.

“No matter what type of incident we’re dealing with, our team always puts in maximum effort. However, Sidcup was particularly challenging, so keeping our customers and the media updated alongside supporting our team of engineers was key.

“We were up against some tough competition, so it means a lot to have won this prestigious award.”

The judges said: “This was a very strategic and well-managed crisis management campaign. Unsolicited positive feedback gives a good indication of how relationships were managed and consolidated through the crisis.

"We especially liked the idea of creating and sharing an evaluation infographic after the event as an excellent way of demonstrating achievement and accountability – a simple but effective idea which other organisational communicators could add to their crisis communication practice."

Our fundraising superhero Chris reaches £300,000 milestone

13 December 2018



We're celebrating our Resources Manager Chris Rose who has raised a whopping £300,000 for good causes in his spare time.

Over the past 30 years, he's raised over £300,000 for causes such as Macmillan Cancer Support, Help for Heroes and Breast Cancer Care – many of which have been supported by our Into Action Scheme, which supports our employees in their fundraising endeavours.

Chris's fundraising venture began when he needed to raise money for school fees for his daughter, Katy, who has a rare condition called depletion of chromosome 3, which presents itself with both physical and mental difficulties, as well as autism.

"In a bid to raise the £100,000 we needed for Katy to attend the most appropriate special needs school, I organised all sorts of fundraising events such as swimathons and pushing a hospital bed along Eastbourne seafront. When I look back at the enormity of the task, I wonder why I did it. Still, I'd do it all again in a heartbeat", Chris said.

After this, Chris thought his fundraising days were over, until a visit to the hospital with his wife where they were told the sad news that she had breast cancer. It was at this point he dyed his hair pink to raise money for Breast Cancer Care. In total, £7,000 was donated to the charity and his wife is currently doing well.

Since then, our fundraising superhero has organised charity golf days, taken part in stand-up comedy nights and sold charity pin badges, among other things.

Chris commented: "I'm not quite sure what comes next, but no doubt something will come along. I've received support from SGN's Into Action Scheme on multiple occasions and I really appreciate the help from all of my wonderful colleagues."



Chris with his pink hair

Our pipeline safety calendar catches the eye of TV celebrity

18 December 2018

One of Britain's best-loved morning TV presenters took to social media earlier this month after receiving our latest pipeline safety calendar.

Avid Instagram and Snapchat users might have spotted posts from This Morning and Dancing on Ice presenter Phillip Schofield last week, after our 2019 calendar arrived through his letterbox and caught his eye.

Our gas pipelines run under fields, roads and rivers across the south of England and Scotland. Each year, we sent a calendar to farmers and landowners to remind them how to stay safe when working near our network of pipelines. Damaging a pipe could put farmers and landowners, as well as their families and the public at risk. We're here to keep everyone, and our network, safe.

Visit our [Dig safely pages](#) for more information about how to work safely near our gas pipes.

