

Customer Super Panel

Session 1: Responding to Acceptability Testing results and bill increases

Summary Report

October 2024



SGN

Your gas. Our network.

Event Summary

Why did SGN hold this event?

SGN recognise the importance of including customers in its planning and decision making, with regards to our business plan covering the next price control period 2026 -2031 (RIIO-GD3). As such, we have been running a successful programme of customer research and engagement throughout our business plan development period. We were supported by a third-party research partner who ran our research surveys (3000 participants) and panels (100 participants). This programme ended in September 2024 having provided invaluable input to our plan. As such, we decided to take forward a select panel of 24 highly engaged panel participants to utilise the knowledge built up through the programme and allow us to regularly 'check-in' with customers about our plans and progress. This was the first of regular quarterly sessions, run in-house, that we will hold as the business plan is submitted, approved and implemented.

What did SGN share?

SGN's Stakeholder Engagement and Research Strategy team replayed the results of the recent business plan acceptability testing, in which panel members had participated. Key figures from within SGN's Business Plan Delivery team responded to feedback on our plans received through the acceptability testing activity.

What did SGN learn?

Panel members were given the opportunity to ask further questions related to our plans and feedback responses. Smaller discussion groups provided the chance for panel members to share their thoughts on the session, our responses to feedback, and the viewpoint they have formed regarding SGN's bill share and the initiatives funded from it. A post event survey captured further sentiments. The key learnings are as follows:

Further explanation around how SGN is operated, it's activities and profits, and how it is funded would be beneficial.

Most found the materials and responses to be clear and easy to understand, although some thought we could have been clearer in our explanations. The questions asked centred on how SGN operates and how it is funded – customer bills vs. investors funding. As such, clearer information to help customers understand the business model would be beneficial.

More transparency around the use of funds from customer bills and what might affect the bills, causing increases or decreases, would be helpful.

Some questioned how SGN use the money from customer's bills versus that from investors. Others questioned if bills would be impacted from factors such as the UK Government's budget decisions that affect businesses. As such, clarity and more transparency around such factors would be useful to customers.

More detail is needed on the gas network's future within the changing UK energy sector, including the effects of developments such as the establishment of GB Energy.

Some queried the impact that developments within the energy sector, such as the Government establishing GB Energy, would have on the future of the gas network. This indicated a level of uncertainty and lack of knowledge that should be addressed by SGN to help keep customers and other stakeholders informed.

SGN should clarify why environmental performance initiatives are funded by additional customer contributions rather than profits or as part of BAU.

Some raised the fact that the nature of SGN's business means it is contributing to pollution and climate change. In this respect, it was queried why customers should pay extra for initiatives that tackle these issues. Explanations of our obligations, business model and funding will help to clarify the reasoning behind this.

Key Event Info



29 October 2024



Customer panel online event



21 participants



Scottish and Southern English interests represented



Domestic (incl. fuel poor), Future and SME customers involved

What did stakeholders think of the event?

Stakeholders were invited to share their views on the event through a Slido poll. In summary:



100% agreed that they were satisfied overall with the event.



100% agreed that the session was in line with what they were expecting.



90% agreed the format was appropriate and enabled them to have their say.



100% felt SGN were transparent throughout the session.



100% agreed the materials shared were clear and easy to understand.



90% felt the explanations were clear and easy to understand.