



# SGN CO Expert Roundtables: Full report

November 2019 – Edinburgh and London

SGN and 3KQ



**SGN**  
Your gas. Our network.

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## 1. Introduction

SGN is consulting with stakeholders on its plan to raise awareness and reduce carbon monoxide (CO) risk for customers. This report collates the outputs of two roundtable meetings that took place in November 2019, bringing together specialist stakeholders with an interest in CO from across Scotland and southern England.

- Scotland roundtable: Tuesday 19 November 2019 at the Novotel, Edinburgh.
- Southern roundtable: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November at the Connaught Rooms in London.

Both meetings followed the same agenda and were given the same presentations. Presentations and other duplicated parts of the workshop are only shown once, with the output of the discussions marked *Southern* for the London workshop and *Scotland* for the Edinburgh workshop.

This report does not reflect the exact chronology of the meetings, instead relevant sections of content (the presentations and discussions) have been reorganised so that the reader can view all relevant information on each topic (e.g. GD1 or GD2) in one place.

The meeting was independently facilitated by 3KQ on behalf of SGN and the participants.

### Meeting objectives

1. To update stakeholders on SGN's progress towards a new business plan for GD2 (2021-2026).
2. For stakeholders to feedback on the content of this plan, and how SGN implements it.
3. For stakeholders to feedback on SGN's shorter term actions, in the current plan (before 2021).

### Agenda

- Welcome and overview: Barbara Whiting, Head of Stakeholder Engagement, SGN
- Orientation: 3KQ Facilitator (Rowena Harris in Edinburgh, Rhuari Bennett in London)
- Overview of GD2 business planning: Barbara Whiting, SGN
- GD1 initiatives and emergency response data: Grant Taylor, Area SHE Manager, SGN
- Feedback on longer term initiatives (GD2): Discussion
- Feedback on shorter term objectives (GD1): Discussion
- Way forward and engaging with SGN: Discussion

## 2. Meeting welcome

SGN’s Head of Stakeholder Engagement Barbara Whiting opened the day and welcomed panel members to the meeting. She then introduced and handed over to Rowena Harris (in Edinburgh) and Rhuari Bennett (in London), the independent facilitator from 3KQ, to facilitate the meeting.

The facilitator ran through the housekeeping points, outlined the meeting objectives, agenda, format and working arrangements. Followed by a round of introductions from delegates.

It was explained to participants that SGN’s draft Business Plan has now been submitted to Ofgem, and changes to the plan are not impossible but are getting significantly harder to make. Therefore, the agenda has been designed to focus on the areas stakeholders can have the greatest influence, namely the CO programme running during the final stages of GD1 and the implementation of the future CO plan in GD2.

## 3. Overview of business planning and progress

### Presentation

Barbara Whiting reminded delegates of SGN’s role and responsibilities and ran through the basic facts of the network. She then gave an overview of where the GD2 business plan for 2021-2026 is in its development. She ran through the key commitments and how these have been shaped through customer and stakeholder engagement.

#### A reminder of SGN

##### Upgrade

1,000km mains replaced per year



##### Connect

20,000 connections (5,000 fuel poor) per year



##### Emergency

230,000 calls  
50,000 repairs per year



#### Responding to our customers

| Our customers' priorities                  | Our commitments<br>We will...        |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Supporting vulnerable communities          | Make a positive social impact        |
| Providing excellent service                |                                      |
| Delivering energy solutions for the future | Build a shared net-zero future       |
| Minimising environmental impact            |                                      |
| Acting safely                              | Deliver a safe and efficient network |
| Keeping costs down                         |                                      |
| Keeping the gas flowing                    |                                      |



### Comments

A few initial comments were received from stakeholders at the southern meeting. One stakeholder expressed surprise that they were being consulted at this stage, “when it feels like the last minute”. They questioned the consultation process in developing the draft GD2 plan. Barbara explained that the GD2 submission has been influenced by a widespread programme of engagement including the Moving Forward Together events, specialist roundtables and extensive customer insight research. She explained how Ofgem has released information that there will be a dedicated allowance for CO which has influenced this drive for additional consultation.

## 4. GD2: longer term initiatives

### Presentation

Barbara Whiting, SGN’s Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Grant Taylor, SGN’s Area SHE Manager took it in turns to present various aspects of the following presentation, which covered:

- the approach SGN is taking in responding to Ofgem guidance for GD2.
- how feedback from stakeholders, customer research and engagement with front-line staff has underpinned the development of the draft plan.
- the engagement with FCO’s (front-line SGN engineers who respond to calls of suspected CO) and what ideas they have suggested for improving the service.

### Ofgem guidance for GD2

A use it or lose it allowance for programmes addressing consumer vulnerability and CO safety that go beyond business as usual (includes work on CO awareness for all customers)

Collaboration is key to ensuring best service – ring fenced 25% - solely for collaborative projects between GDN’s

Clear outcomes or deliverables must be attached to the funding

Initiatives relating to CO safety funded through the allowance will not have to be focussed on consumers in vulnerable situations



### Funding pot



**£1,200,000**

(solely SGN)

**£400,000**

(Collaborative)



### How we will be reporting



Annual showcase event

Annual reporting on 3 – 4 common vulnerability metrics

### Customers willingness to pay results

| Priority | How to the customer   | Key Improvement  | Domestic  | 2019 (miles per year) |        |
|----------|---|--|---|-----------------------|--------|
| 1        | Working in collaboration with other utilities like water companies to reduce overall disruption for customers, by digging up the road once. | 20 joint projects per year   | £1.66   | £14.83                |        |
| 2        | Supporting the community / Making a positive impact   | Developing life skills for young people.   | 6,000 young people reached per year   | £1.46                 | £13.46 |
| 3        | Supporting the community / Making a positive impact   | Increasing work opportunities for disadvantaged groups in society                      | Ensuring these groups are made aware of suitable vacancies by engaging with relevant charities, employers and military organisations. Working with partner organisations to provide support during the application process (e.g. temporary accommodation, CV writing, looking for transferable skills). + providing ongoing training opportunities to address minor skills gaps (e.g. customer service) | £1.74                 | £18.79 |
| 4        | Supporting the community / Making a positive impact   | Keeping our customers safe from carbon monoxide  | Awareness campaign (all customers) + arranging for a carbon monoxide alarm to be fitted for all customers + gas appliance servicing for vulnerable customers  | £1.44                 | £12.07 |
| 5        | Mitigating environmental impact   | Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from our operations. Contributing to cleaner air | By the end of 2026, 100% of all vehicles to use ultra-low emission fuels (where possible) e.g. Hybrid, Hydrogen or electric vehicles  | £4.31                 | £39.02 |
| 6        | Mitigating environmental impact   | Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from our operations                              | 80% Carbon neutral electricity (sometimes called renewable or green)  | £5.22                 | £48.02 |
| 7        | Mitigating environmental impact   | Maximising opportunities to positively enhance the natural environment                 | Ensuring disused sites meet minimum environmental regulations + Enhancing the natural environment by creating habitats for wildlife and planting wildflowers & trees for B&Bs   | £3.05                 | £28.36 |



## FCO Survey results

Number of jobs where the customers were vulnerable;

|               | Response Percent | Response Total |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1 0 to 50     | 72.46%           | 100            |
| 2 51 to 100   | 22.46%           | 31             |
| 3 101 to 300  | 4.35%            | 6              |
| 4 301 to 500  | 0.72%            | 1              |
| 5 501 or more | 0.00%            | 0              |

Ranked by FCO's – what they find on site

| Item   | Total Score | Overall Rank |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| CO battery/alarm failure   | 1270        | 1            |
| Faulty appliance   | 963         | 2            |
| Signs of headaches   | 863         | 3            |
| Obvious signs of unmaintained appliances                               | 797         | 4            |
| Signs of dizziness   | 770         | 5            |
| CO alarmed installed in unacceptable position (e.g. within a cupboard) | 692         | 6            |
| No CO alarm fitted   | 639         | 7            |
| Boiler not serviced in last 12 months                                  | 633         | 8            |
| Signs of nausea  | 625         | 9            |
| Flue(s) blocked  | 393         | 10           |



## FCO Survey results

What our engineers suggest would be support the community;

|  | Response Percent | Response Total |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1 Install a free CO alarm  | 45.32%           | 63             |
| 2 Referral to fire and rescue for installation of free CO alarm and offer of other available support | 36.69%           | 51             |
| 3 Provide literature with information on the most at-risk appliances                                 | 34.53%           | 48             |
| 4 Provide literature with pictures and guidance on how to identify the signs of CO                   | 44.60%           | 62             |
| 5 Offer a voucher scheme for vulnerable customer appliance servicing                                 | 35.97%           | 50             |
| 6 Video with alarm sounds to identify battery failure  | 26.62%           | 37             |
| 7 Other (please specify):  | 20.86%           | 29             |



## Ideas from our engineers

We have received additional ideas from our engineers which include:

- Education – ensure that the customer advisors that take CO related calls share awareness with customers
- CO alarms have an expiry date
- Check CO alarms and battery dates on all visits
- Videos on website
- TV Advertising, media campaigns, radio campaigns
- Innovation – CO detection equipment
- Make the Gas Emergency Number larger on UK CO Alarms – Fire and rescue get called unnecessarily



## CO strategy

We are proposing to spend **12%** of our allowance on CO awareness = **£200k**

Refining our 2018 CO strategy

Issues and potential solutions are identified in our Strategy – we need your expertise to find solutions and add Information on emerging issues



## Our themes

Following a question of clarification from a stakeholder Barbara confirmed that both the £1.2m pot of funding for SGN, and the £400,000 pot for collaborative working with other GDNs are available on a per annum basis. Barbara then gave an overview of the key initiatives currently outlined in the draft GD2 CO strategy and described how, with stakeholder feedback, it will develop and evolve over time.

## Current thoughts GD2 Initiatives



During the presentation the facilitator asked delegates to jot down questions they might have so they could come back to them in the discussion later:

- Questions of clarification?
- Has SGN got it right?
- Any gaps, other ideas or feedback?

## Discussion

### Questions of clarification

#### *Scotland*

- Are CO alarms fitted as standard?
- SGN: confirmed they are but only in Scotland, not the South of England. Regulations are changing in Scotland in 2021 to ensure all new builds have CO alarms integrated. There is currently lobbying for this to be extended to England.
- How are SGN initiatives developed? Is there discussion going on at a strategic level?
- SGN: over the course of last and previous price control periods we have looked at what stakeholders and engineers have told us. Now have built a strategy and programme we are looking at whether it is the right direction of travel. We work collaboratively with other gas distribution networks and try to cover all bases in terms of the vulnerable sectors (young, old, students, etc).
- What about direct feedback from customers?
- SGN: we have a customer panel that looks at our priorities, including what people are willing to pay for. We use the FCOs for gathering information on the ground and engage with established groups, especially for vulnerable customers. We also have a customer service questionnaire and could introduce a specific question perhaps. There may be issues around perspective that would

not get picked up. A lot of people don't feel safe, even if they live in a low crime area. The perception can make them behave in a different way. Perception is very valuable and difficult to capture through surveys. The interaction between FCO and customer is generally positive, we don't envisage something that's directed at just CO but we could tweak something. Maybe we go directly to customers and ask customer touch points to get skilled in gathering customer feedback.

### **Southern**

- What about the off-grid section – oil boilers, biomass, LPG etc. Who picks that sector up? There can be a high level of risk with those appliances.
- SGN: our network doesn't cover those customers and we don't have that responsibility (Oftec, Hetas and LPG suppliers are responsible here). Fire and Rescue has a role. But we will attend if these people call our 24/7 emergency number. SGN's Gas Safety/CO leaflet explains this.
- Is Ofgem funding available to LPG suppliers in the same way?
- SGN: they aren't regulated. So, no.

### **Data collection**

#### **Southern**

A key question relating to how data is collected on CO incidents was raised at the southern meeting, with one stakeholder describing a fault in the process for recording CO incidents. When customers report suspected CO in their homes they are advised to ventilate their properties, this means that by the time the GDN attends there is unlikely to be any traceable CO present. As appliances are not tested it cannot be ascertained whether any CO is being produced, this means that it will be recorded as a 'CO incident' without any evidence that it is. Stakeholders described how without this evidence the victim, and the GDN, are unable to take action to resolve the situation, adding that *"HSE has admitted the process is not fit for purpose"*. A detailed discussion followed on this point:

- SGN: confirmed its role as an emergency service for this issue, in that it is required to respond to incidents and *"make safe"*, but that testing appliances is an important issue which the company is hoping to pursue in partnership with other GDNs.
- Another GDN is also working on this; and bearing in mind the funding available for collaboration we would like a GDN to apply for and receive funding to not only protect from CO, but also to test appliances. This could start with a trial and proved first – evaluate the value and see whether it is worth rolling out.
- SGN staff discussed and agreed that Oxford would be a good location to run a trial, Richard Mendham General Manager of the Oxford Depot explained that this would be subject to a number of considerations in relation to funding and deliverability.
- The terminology on battery failure is the key data differentiation – is the data split between end of battery life vs battery failure.
- SGN: the list of outcome codes does not currently allow for this differentiation – if it is something that we look into adding it needs to be carefully thought through. To put a minor change in our outcomes code can take a long time and needs funding.



- Suspect the number of actual operative alarms is significantly less than data suggests. People who actually have CO alarms is much lower than smoke alarms. This data is only catching the tip of the iceberg; this is where having the equipment to test the appliance is key.
- SGN staff acknowledged this challenge but highlighted that appliance testing would mean a significant change for the industry and would need to be a joint GDN activity.

The facilitator asked whether there was agreement that appliance testing is something that SGN should progress. Most of the participants agreed, with one caveating that any testing equipment also needs the ability to detect long term and low-level emission.

**ACTION:** SGN to investigate the possibility of a pilot for appliance testing of CO during FCO attendance.

## Feedback on the list of 'Current thoughts GD2 Initiatives'

### 1. Appliance servicing for vulnerable customers – CO evidence

#### Scotland

- Do you link to the priority services register? And how do you go about raising awareness of the register. My experience is that people's level of awareness is low.
- SGN: we talk about the FCO journey and the relationship they have with customers. Around 18 months ago we did a similar survey in a general context about vulnerable customers. They have a short survey on their tablet and can refer to a range of trusted partners – energy advice, energy efficiency advice, free insulation, etc. We raise awareness with other GDNs and have a section on the website. And also supported Alzheimer's week and provide training for carers.
- **ACTION** City of Edinburgh Council produces a resource sheet for if people get cut off which we are happy to share. It gives useful contact details etc. SGN: agreed, with thanks.
- In an ideal world all the different organisations that go into people's houses would be updating each other's records.
- SGN: is working with councils and people who do maintenance.
- Gas safe could get an SGN representative in to talk to the engineers. Engaging with local authorities about it might be useful.
- **ACTION** Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) we can put you in touch with our contact in each local authority who has responsibility for gas safety. SGN: agreed, with thanks.
- Latest technology and implications: a stakeholder described how they had visited a tech house in Dundee which is researching how smart technologies (e.g. Alexa Show) can be helpful in the home. Smart devices on a boiler could auto report on CO and other safety factors.
- How far is SGN prepared to go in terms of cost? E.g. could have CO monitoring system that cuts the boiler off.
- How do you identify vulnerable people?



Appliance servicing for vulnerable customers – CO evidence

1

- SGN: it is based on recognised needs codes. Frontline engineers get information from us on what to look for and if in any doubt they should refer. We have a care line that they can call to get further advice. There are ways we can make sure we're not missing anyone.
- Do engineers give advice for people to attend their GP for a blood test? SGN staff confirmed they advise customers to visit their GP if they have responded to a call and there is any indication of risk.

### **Southern**

- The highest risk factor is those over 60 who live in poverty. You need a charity to access this for replacement appliances. They are receptive.
- Playing devil's advocate and looking at the when/how/what of appliance testing. If SGN attends 200,000 visits every year, 180,000 or so have nothing to do with CO. For those 180,000 are we proposing that while we are there we do a CO test? There are 2,000 or so where there is a CO risk and the remaining 17,000 or so there is a battery problem. Therefore, CO testing becomes almost random, might as well knock on doors. What you are trying to find is not people whose batteries have failed or can smell methane; you want to find is those elderly / at risk people who have not been servicing their appliances. Test the CO for them. Just to be aware that if you advocate a system for testing using sophisticated equipment you need to think carefully about how you apply the testing.
- In the NHS is called making every contact count. Replacing battery / testing alarm is a win-win.
- Need to assess what SGN considers a vulnerable customer – could end up being the whole of society and the most at risk may not be in the PSR.
- **ACTION** SGN to circulate the definition of vulnerability and a summary.
- Recommend you avoid the rabbit hole which is targeting those who are vulnerable to CO. You need to target an intervention that isn't about an FCO visit, instead working with those who visit these types of people (living in poverty and not servicing their appliances).
- Everyone is vulnerable to CO – raising awareness is key. Even if you do service your appliances things can go wrong with appliances or engineers.
- Agreed, but there is a very strong correlation between being at risk of CO and poverty.
- Many people in the vulnerable category will struggle to engage with GP if there has been an incident. Is there an information slip that can be provided for patients to pass to GPs to clearly explain the potential concern? Agreement that this is a good idea and **ACTION** to look into this.
- From our experience all the GDNs are good at urging people to go to the doctors. Problems arise when people get to the GP, sometimes they wait for hours and then get told to come back next week when the practice nurse is in. By then any CO in their system will be non-detectable, and the person returns to a potentially deadly setting.
- Needs to be time-stamped, i.e. this happened on XX date.
- SGN: explained the current process but agreed it could be improved – potentially with a subset of information to be passed directly to the GP.
- Why do people call fire and rescue rather than gas network? They come within minutes rather than an hour and they have CO equipment. Knowing whether you have been poisoned or not is vital to get the right treatment.

- In relation to response times, SGN confirmed that SGN has a standard of service to adhere to set as part of their Safety Case and Ofgem.

## 2. Creation of CO projects in local footprints with partners

### Scotland

- Discussion at regional and local authority level? Safety partnerships for example?
- SGN: yes GD2 should do more of that.
- Have you had any contact with the NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council)? They have a National Gas Safety week, they have a 'register your appliance' day. This week is Electrical Safety Week, they have other events throughout the year.
- SGN: yes have partnered with the fire & rescue service, but not sure about the NFCC, we could certainly contact them. **ACTION**
- At a gas safety trust meeting I attended, they tackled CO awareness, through Warm Wales. Are you aware of it? SGN: no.
- What about targeting those in secondary schools? They're very vocal and can educate the family. There might be a spark of interest that they take home to the family.
- SGN: working with 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> year age group. We are taking that approach but not the later years.
- They're going on to be students soon, and a vulnerable group so need to be aware of it.
- SGN: are there any initiatives that you're aware of that we could partner with, to tackle older children? Foreign students with language issues also.
- We do family days and badgers and cubs, and young carers. But we rarely pick up college age people.
- Use infographics, rather than prose - that might be easier to understand.
- **ACTION** this week for Electrical Safety Week Scottish Business Resilience is doing an article every day that's relevant to electrical safety and fire to send to 8,000 people on the mailing list. We could raise awareness by collaborating with SGN. We're business-related but staff live in houses too. **THIS OPPORTUNITY HAS NOW PASSED.**
- Gas Safety Charity has just produced a signed and subtitled video on about CO awareness, available on YouTube which all are welcome to use and share. SGN: Yes please, with thanks. **ACTION** circulate link.

### Southern

- Educating GPs is very important, supply them with a pool of CO alarms and maybe data monitors that they can hand out?
- Make sure all local partners have a clear idea of key messages and how to promote those messages.
- There is a challenge of inconsistent safety messages coming from different individuals within the various organisations who give advice. There is an opportunity for partnership.
- SGN: agree that the Gas Safety Charity material is very good, GDNs could sign up to that.

2

Creation of CO projects in local footprints with partners

- **ACTION:** Gas Safe Register is actively seeking partnerships and will be in touch.
- NHS feedback - hospitals have loved the CO fold out card, it has been great for raising awareness for staff and patients and are seeing a real benefit.
- Can these cards be sent out to Doctors surgeries?
- It needs more than just sending the cards, without some work to ensure surgeries know what it is and use it they may get passed over. But there is a lot of traction with the hospital roll out.
- **ACTION:** CO – Gas Safety Charity has a one-minute film that could also be sent to GP surgeries.

### 3. *Advice on the correct Installation of CO Alarms*

There was little feedback on this area at either workshop, beyond an explanation that Play Fair Marketing has taken on the delivery of a project to look at this and **(ACTION)** can share a link for further information.

3  
Advice on  
the correct  
Installation  
of CO Alarms

### 4. *Referral for free CO Alarm installation – for vulnerable customers*

There were no specific comments on this area from the Scotland stakeholders.

#### *Southern*

- The lifespan of a 'free' CO alarm – at the end of the life of that CO alarm what drives the replacement? A vulnerable customer who is not servicing their appliances is not likely to replace the alarm – what's the driver? It's obviously a major positive to install alarms but when they expire who is responsible and how do we ensure they are replaced?
- Potentially check dates etc, testing of alarms?
- Wider industry also has a role; it could be considered that engineers test alarms when in people's houses as a matter of course.
- There is potentially a change in risk now that we are changing fuels – hydrogen.
- In some states in the US where there is mandatory legislation on CO alarms they have seen an increase in work for the fire service on battery faults etc. They are now looking at a peak in incidents around the expiration date following the legislation. Is there a method for predicting when these installations are likely to expire?
- Start a programme of reminders to test?
- There is a data issue – GDPR is a major problem.
- E.g. newer built estates, if one person contacts about an alarm which has expired the checks could be rolled out to the other households.
- SGN: the local authority should have a responsibility, in Scotland and housing associations in England.


4  
Referral  
for free CO Alarm  
installation – for  
vulnerable  
customers

- Getting the balance right is key – overcomplicating it could drive up the price of alarms.
- Do you have a rough estimate of referrals for GD2, a plan to set a target?
- SGN: no, we have not set a target and there is no plan to do so.
- Sometimes there is a mismatch in perceived demand. People show interest – but then is a large drop-off of follow through.
- Who is referring for a free CO alarm?
- SGN: different models - we are working with partners to test and are using front line engineers.
- From a healthcare perspective could that referral come from a midwife who has just tested the woman for CO (standard for smoking risks) – but also finds out they don't have a CO alarm? This would catch a wide range of vulnerability potential. Also, children up to five as the government is improving health and wellbeing in children. If you can join that, then Ofgem will surely look on that kindly as you are collaborating with the healthcare provider.
- Could the fire service refer? Is there money for the fire service to give out CO alarms (Sharon)?
- SGN: from 2021 we know we will have a pot of money, so we need to develop these initiatives and test them. Everything will have a finite ceiling on what can be funded, so we will need to look at where we make the biggest impact.
- The risk is you burn up your 'use it or lose it' allowance on CO alarms.
- Important to engage carers as they are looking after vulnerable people. It is difficult for FCOs/business to decide whether someone is vulnerable, especially as people don't want to be seen as vulnerable.
- The use of front-line engineers to make referrals – there are hard limits on this from research because of concerns from vulnerable people that a visit from a utility will result in their appliance being condemned. There needs to be a pool of money to service, repair and replace these appliances. **ACTION:** Policy Connect to share this research.

## 5. *Work with holiday homes / caravan parks to raise awareness of CO*

### **Scotland**

- How many gas escapes are there from commercial properties?
- SGN: not sure, we could probably source this data.
- Thinking ahead because next year SPRC is launching an initiative looking at assessments for sleeping accommodation – from large hotels to Airbnbs, etc. That will come in in February / March. Could tie in with SGN and raise awareness.
- SGN: we focus on domestic. We also get a lot through landlords and also restaurants, because CO is being produced by restaurants and goes through block of flats.
- We get EHOs and they say there's a rise of restaurants using charcoal and a rise in people living above restaurants and reporting CO; vulnerability is also in terms of the type of accommodation people live in. SGN: confirmed it has seen this increase also.



Work with  
holiday homes /  
caravan parks to  
raise awareness  
of CO

5

- When you say caravan parks, do you mean static homes as well as where people go on holiday?
- I think it should cover these because more people are living in this type of accommodation. And people are there during the winter months.
- And Gypsy/Travellers should definitely be included.
- SGN: we have tried to engage with Gypsy/Travellers but it's difficult.
- Scottish Government has just launched a Gypsy/Traveller action plan to improve equalities. Might be worth looking at that. It's a huge topic of interest in Scotland at the moment. Huge issue because they move around. SGN: **ACTION** agreed that looking at this would be beneficial.

No comments were made by the southern stakeholders on this area.

## Anything else?

### Scotland

The facilitator reminded delegates of the themes and initiatives and asked for any more comments or questions before moving onto GD1. No more comments were made so she asked whether the SGN team had anything additional to ask stakeholders on GD2, to which they responded that *"the ideas have been really fantastic, e.g. fire and rescue, council groups, targeting groups we haven't in the past, etc."*

### Southern

- GDNs are doing a great job and so is Ofgem and that is hopefully moving things forward. With 'use it or lose it' where are the suppliers, manufacturers and HSE? Why is it that the GDNs are on their own doing this? It seems rather unfair that all the emphasis is put on the GDNs and not the manufacturers and suppliers. Can SGN do a bit of encouraging industry to contribute?
- SGN: the All Party Parliamentary CO Group is the only place where those people get together.
- This is a real problem. Wish the HSE would do more – they admitted that the RIDDOR legislation (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) is not fit for purpose.
- There is a group looking at this and includes suppliers, chaired by Cadent. **ACTION Chris Bielby to circulate** details of this group
- Suppliers are looking at this through Energy UK. The HSE has limited powers and budget, and the power to amend RIDDOR substantively sits with the Secretary of State, not the HSE.
- Understand that but if HSE makes recommendation for improvement it should follow it up. Surely the All Party group, purely from a PR point of view, could push for suppliers and manufacturers to do more. There is not even a funded body to advise the victims, this is done by charities struggling to make ends meet.
- This amount of money available is not even going to make a dent, just to put CO alarms in everyone's houses is £200m. It needs to be legislated that CO alarms are mandated at key points of intervention. It is in Scotland, and for solid fuel. But not for gas in England.

- There is an issue in that CO doesn't sit solely within one Government department. The remit falls under different departments so to each of them it looks like a smaller problem than it is. The work on indoor air quality covers this, and there is improvement, but government moves slowly.
- Is there anyone who does work directly with boiler companies?
- No – this has to be mandated.
- The boiler manufacturer will always say that an annual service is the answer, not a CO alarm.
- When there is a call for action on CO the manufacturers have responded and developed an industry solution, which is generally better than an HSE directive. They cannot afford the reputational risk – it leads to better customer satisfaction and warranties. Industry would respond quickly and would get a more workable solution.

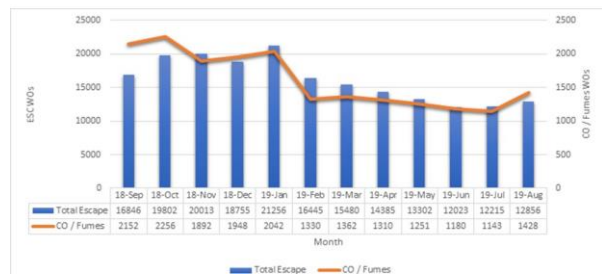
## 5. GD1: Shorter term priorities

### Presentation

Grant Taylor, Area SHE Manager for SGN gave an overview of his role and background and his experience of gas safety in his career. He talked through the factors that influence the level of CO events and introduced the *Driving awareness of CO; a data-driven strategy* document. He gave full overview of the approach taken to CO in GD1, and the progress of the various initiatives introduced.

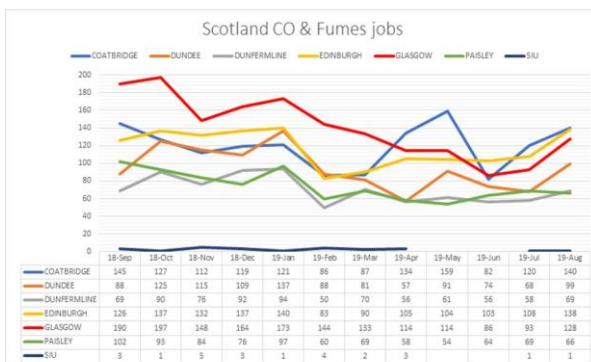
### SGN Emergency response 18/19

- Over the year around **10%** of our emergency calls were CO or Fumes related.
- There were **193,378** escapes in SGN of which **19,294** were related to CO or fumes.

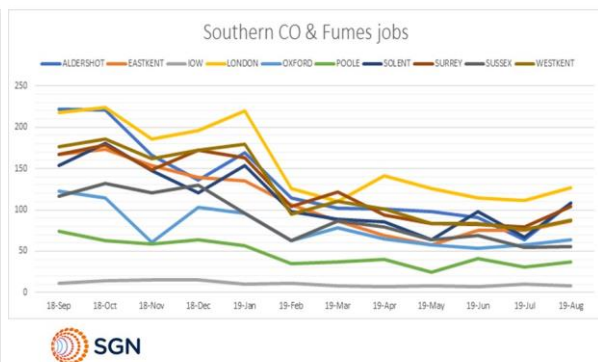


The following two slides were shown only in their respective regions.

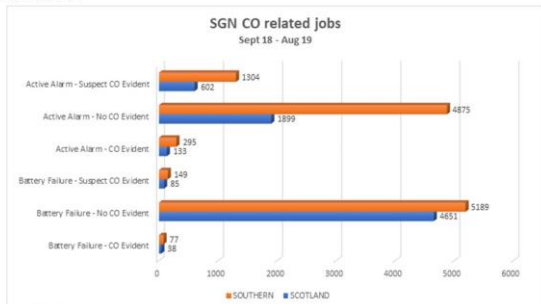
### Scotland Emergency response 18/19



### Southern Emergency response 18/19



## SGN calls - active CO alarms vs battery failure



## Driving awareness of CO

- **Goal** – further reduce the number of CO incidents
- **How** – work collaboratively to deliver a CO strategy based on solid and relevant data
- **Focus** – on 3 keys areas - Partnership working, Grassroots awareness, Driving change
- The recent Gas Quality project we carried out in several remote towns in Scotland has provided us with in depth data. The results outlined in our report, launched in 2018 which enabled us to take our CO strategy to a new level



## GD1 Initiatives- Partnership working



## GD1 Initiatives – Grassroots awareness



## GD1 Initiatives – Driving change



## GD1 Initiatives in flight

| Initiatives  |
|--|
| Winter readiness information campaign  |
| Mumsnet and Gransnet Adverts   |
| Audio of CO Alarms identifying battery failure   |
| Billboard messaging  |
| Bounty Adverts   |
| Sponsorship of 'Carbon monoxide: Safeguarding carers, supporting communities' research inquiry |



## Questions of clarification

A few questions of clarification were asked at the southern meeting, mainly in relation to the data collection issue discussed previously. Specific queries included:

- Battery failure – is it because it has not lasted as long as it should, or is end of life?
- Is anyone differentiating between CO and fumes? [Clarification: CO can be an output of fume related calls. This is terminology used in the gas industry nationwide.]
- From a communications perspective the statistics are important – NHS don't record CO events consistently – sometimes 'CO', sometimes 'fumes', sometimes 'poisoning'.



- How can you say whether it is CO or not CO when you have not tested the appliances?
- SGN: accept the point and it is something to think about as a business, should we be doing more, talking more to Ofgem? However, it should be noted that SGN operate an emergency service and not a repair/maintenance service for gas suppliers' customers.
- If you don't test – how do you know? We would love the data but what does it mean – how can you tell by looking when the whole point about CO is you can't see it. Even clean looking appliances can emit CO.
- SGN: we look for signs of the appliance failing, e.g. dirty/sooted. But we agree and take your point, this is what today is all about. What more can we do as a business? We've heard that we need better data for stakeholders.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has now taken this data which is influencing private landlords and legislation.

## Discussion

### Feedback on the list of GD1 'Inflight initiatives'

#### *Scotland*

- Posters in doctor's surgeries. Chief medical officer has sent out information to GPs. But GPs see it so rarely so won't necessarily diagnose it.
- SGN: we did handout leaflets within doc surgeries and hospitals.
- Posters - the GP might become aware enough to ask their patients whether they've got a gas engineer to check their boiler, etc.
- It's not very common and the symptoms come on very quickly. We just call fire and rescue, because it might not be coming from that house. Because of what is causing it – it might not be gas. Fire and rescue can identify whether it is CO. We do not know what's causing it so we just call them.
- Do you check fingertips, etc?
- We've got to look at timescales. It happens very quickly.
- I've been in family houses and they say they can't afford CO detectors. When you look at the prices they're not cheap, so I understand why people don't have them. Those people are vulnerable.
- Maybe when they come to service the boiler they should give them a CO detector if they don't have one already.
- SGN: Local authority's households will have a CO alarm?
- Yes, we do hardwired ones. It is a different alarm depending on whether it is smoke or CO. You (SGN) could go into the public sector with gas engineers and reimburse costs for them to fit CO detectors. Rather than having to find vulnerable people, there's a claim form that comes back to you from the engineer or private company.
- Vulnerability is a difficult thing to detect. Everyone without a CO alarm is vulnerable person.
- It's sometimes not helpful to go down the vulnerability route because so many people are vulnerable. Why doesn't everyone just have a CO alarm?

- Do you get funding from government for CO alarms?
- Discussions at the moment with government about new repair standard and the requirement for hardwiring of CO alarms.
- We're developing a new public health body to look at taking a public health approach. Looking at it that way everyone would have one, and it takes away some of the barriers about how to get them into the right house, etc.
- SGN: Don't think it would be realistic in terms of budget. Also, a CO alarm is the last resort, so we should focus resources on prevention and tackling the root cause of appliance servicing.
- Taking a public health approach would mean making sure boilers and appliances are maintained.
- SGN: 32 local authorities in Scotland. Every council tenant gets their property serviced. Then private landlords – an area we need to reach is privately owned houses?
- They are the most vulnerable ones because there is no legislation covering CO for private tenants/owner occupiers.
- There are organisations lobbying for that.
- The government puts conditions in so that when people sell their house they have to put an alarm in, but they won't make people put one in while they are living there.
- We will not walk away from someone who is living in a big house that they have lived in for decades but is cash poor.
- Do you take for granted that people have Wi-Fi and it is reliable?
- There are back-up systems.
- Battery operated ones are easier and cheaper. You don't need Wi-Fi and hard-wired alarms. When you put cost into it people decide not to use it. So keep cost down. Safety high, cost low. Keep it simple and people will do it.
- The Wi-Fi fire detectors that we fit are not physically connected to the home Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi is the frequency between two detectors. Also, there's only a requirement for a hardwired CO detector is if it's a combined fire detector.
- People forget that hardwired alarm will have to be replaced too – it only has a 10-year life. And someone has to go in and change it, so it is an ongoing cost.
- SGN: back to the question of servicing being the root of it; should be targeting privately owned but is difficult because they're quite disparate. A local authority can more easily target its tenants. Any ideas?
- Insurance companies. It could be made a requirement to have CO detectors.
- If you've got a mortgage you're supposed to have insurance but not everyone does. You can't assume you'd reach everyone that way.
- Energy suppliers.
- Council tax will identify who the owner is.
- SGN: when they send out council tax bill we could ask them to send out information on CO too.
- The council identifies single people and families getting some kind of rebate.
- Local authority housing officers – dealing with HMO inspections and private landlords etc. and will be aware of vulnerable individuals.
- Airbnbs – do you have to register? They're technically private houses that are rented out.

- It's a wide spectrum, so very challenging. Is fairly unregulated at the moment but is being addressed to a degree, e.g. I was recently at Association of Self-Caterers conference.
- The new legislation just came in to bring some regulation to that sector. In terms of fire safety, if they are taking paying guests they are subject to the Fire Scotland Act. Many Airbnbs do not realise that they are subject to the same law.
- I believe prosecutions are minimal, so people don't bother.
- It's in the homeowner's interest to comply because they rely on good feedback.
- Airbnb tells you whether it has CO or smoke detector. So that gives a loophole – the customer has been told.
- SGN: Post-Grenfell, talking about vulnerable properties, someone could have a faulty appliance downstairs, and it could affect someone upstairs. So how do we manage that? Need to think that through. We are content with local authority properties in general, but there are situations where there is a local authority owned flat downstairs and a privately-owned flat upstairs.
- This is about signing off the works. A gas safe engineer and running the pipe would be expected to complete the works in line with current building standards, with sealants etc. When people die in fires from smoke travels, is often because there have been failings from doing retrospective. The fire spreads between flats because it travels through voids where they've been running pipework or cabling.

### ***Southern***

- Stress the need for quantifiable data, feedback and data on winter readiness – would like to see proper evaluation of the effectiveness of campaigns, i.e. not just total number of opportunities to view.
- Bounty: really vulnerable women look for free things, vouchers, free nappies, free creams, the rest goes in the bin. If you want to make an impact you have to give something away.
- Work with foodbanks?
- SGN: Yes, we work with them on PSR – we could look at working that information in there also.
- Do you also communicate with churches? And community centres? They are dealing a lot with vulnerable people.
- SGN: agree we could engage more with these groups.
- Agility Eco: we do c150k visits to vulnerable people, in terms of money I don't think it would take too much extra to include CO awareness in this visit.

## 6. SGN and its CO Stakeholders

The facilitator led a short discussion session to gather feedback on how well SGN engages with its stakeholders on the issue of CO.

*Three questions were asked to determine how panel members felt SGN engages, and how stakeholders can help.*

### 1. How well do you think SGN engages on CO?

Responses were given via hands up / 'hi-fives' where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good.

It was clarified that this question refers to all engagement.

| Score  | Number of votes – Scotland | Number of votes – Southern |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 or 2 | 0                          | 1                          |
| 3      | 1                          | 1                          |
| 4 or 5 | 7                          | 9                          |

#### Comments - Scotland

- The person who gave a score of 5 clarified *“I’m also part of home safety Scotland and because of that relationship we hear about a lot. The relationship directly with SGN helps.”*
- I based it on the info I heard today. There’s always room for improvement
- I never give 5s, but from today there’s clearly a willingness to have that discussion. You won’t take on everything but it was a really useful discussion
- I’m not engaged in Scottish networks. What would make it better is if you were in a room doing more stuff like this. In terms of SGN, you’re a lot better than the others.
- Lots of things that could be improved. Because I’m not involved in these Scotland-wide things, there seems to be lots of people doing similar stuff, getting lots of people in a room is a really good idea because people have a host of information about finding vulnerable customers etc.
- Lots of people discussing how best to do it. But guidance and advice has to come from SGN
- Room for improvement so can’t give top score.

#### Comments - Southern

- One stakeholder did not vote as it was their first contact with SGN.
- Today is excellent. But has not been before today.
- What doing well from 4/5s?
  - As a major stakeholder, if we aren’t on the list, there isn’t a list. As such an aligned stakeholder we are well served but wouldn’t expect anything less.
  - SGN is always striving to innovate and take on new ideas, you listen to and follow up suggestions from stakeholders. Even from fairly casual conversations you have explored

- the possibilities of an idea and created opportunities that often then develop into a collaborative approach. You have the nation's interests at heart, not just your patch.
- I don't get the same level of feedback from other GDNs and to be effective we need consistency across the patch.
  - What could SGN do that it is not currently doing?
    - Manufacturers – heating and hot water industry council should be involved, as it covers boiler manufactures and burner manufacturers. **ACTION** – Corgi to send information of how to get in touch.
    - SGN is one of the better GDNs, and GDNs are generally better players. But is so difficult when have so many different players that to me seems like we are in the 1970s. I don't know how to get more collaboration; Energy UK is like talking to a brick wall. This affects so many people, but if you can't prove CO it doesn't help the cause. This is a very cheering meeting, but we have been lobbying for this since 1995. But thank you very much for this opportunity.

## 2. How do you feel about helping to inform future SGN decisions around CO awareness?

### Scotland

- In terms of engagement there is much we can do about raising awareness – lots of scope for helping each other. I could put you in touch with Visit Scotland etc. **ACTION** – follow up with Scottish Community Safety Network.
- Have you invited the regional officer from Gas Safe? SGN confirmed that they are in the loop
- Scottish Home Safety Network is a resource you can use. We have lots of ways of communicating and are on all sorts of forums and networks. We also run a home safety section in our newsletter. Am also the chair of Home Safety Scotland and there are some members here - it feels like we are at a pivot point here. It is a practitioner-led network but there are no resources to support it. We are getting an increasing interest in home safety in Scotland. We know that home safety officers are declining but it feels like the time is now to discuss investment in home safety. Getting that right can prevent worse things happening further down the line, probably something that Home Safety Scotland could get behind and I would encourage anyone that if they want to join it then get in touch with me and we can sort that out. Meets four times/year. It's a practitioner-led networking meeting to move home safety up the agenda. **ACTION:** participants to follow up with Scottish Community Safety Network if interested.
- Working with SGN ticks two of our boxes. Firstly, the materials we produce are open source, so free to everyone. We can share materials. We've just launched an e-learning course on signs and symptoms, prevention and how to plan if you suspect a low-level CO poisoning incident. **ACTION** Gas Safety Charity is happy to share this. Another of our principles of the project is trusted intermediaries. Those people who go into the homes of vulnerable people, including your FCOs, etc. Keen to work together on this. The Royal College of Nursing is now saying that 80% of the course works for them, and 20% needs tweaking to make it appropriate for nursing. We can tweak our training resources to different groups – fire officers, midwives, carers etc.



SGN CO Roundtables: November 2019: full report

- Caroline Lawrie, SGN’s Stakeholder and Community Manager ([caroline.lawrie@sgn.co.uk](mailto:caroline.lawrie@sgn.co.uk)) is the point of contact for those who can share resources or wish to follow up with questions.

### ***Southern***

The majority of stakeholders in the room agreed that they would be keen to continue to be involved in helping SGN shape future programmes on CO. A number stated that they have an “open door” for SGN.

## **7. Way forward**

The facilitator informed delegates what would be happening next, that CO stakeholders can expect to hear from SGN soon. Barbara thanked the delegates for their time and input and closed the meeting.

## 8. Attendees

### Scotland

| First name             | Surname     | Organisation                      |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| External panel members |             |                                   |
| Daniela                | Gentile     | NHS                               |
| David                  | Murgatroyd  | Risk Factory                      |
| Gary                   | Wood        | Scottish Business Resilience      |
| George                 | Walker      | The City of Edinburgh Council     |
| Hilary                 | Bath        | Gas Safe Charity                  |
| John                   | Fairweather | Scottish Ambulance Service        |
| Kevin                  | McCusker    | Scottish Fire and Rescue          |
| Lorraine               | Gillies     | Scottish Community Safety Network |
| Lynn                   | Hill        | Safer Communities Fife Council    |
| SGN                    |             |                                   |
| Barbara                | Whiting     | Head of Stakeholder Engagement    |
| Caroline               | Lawrie      | Stakeholder and Community Manager |
| Eddie                  | McAuley     | General Manager, Edinburgh        |
| Grant                  | Taylor      | Area SHE Manager                  |
| Facilitation team      |             |                                   |
| Rowena                 | Harris      | 3KQ                               |
| Gwen                   | Harrison    | 3KQ                               |

## Southern

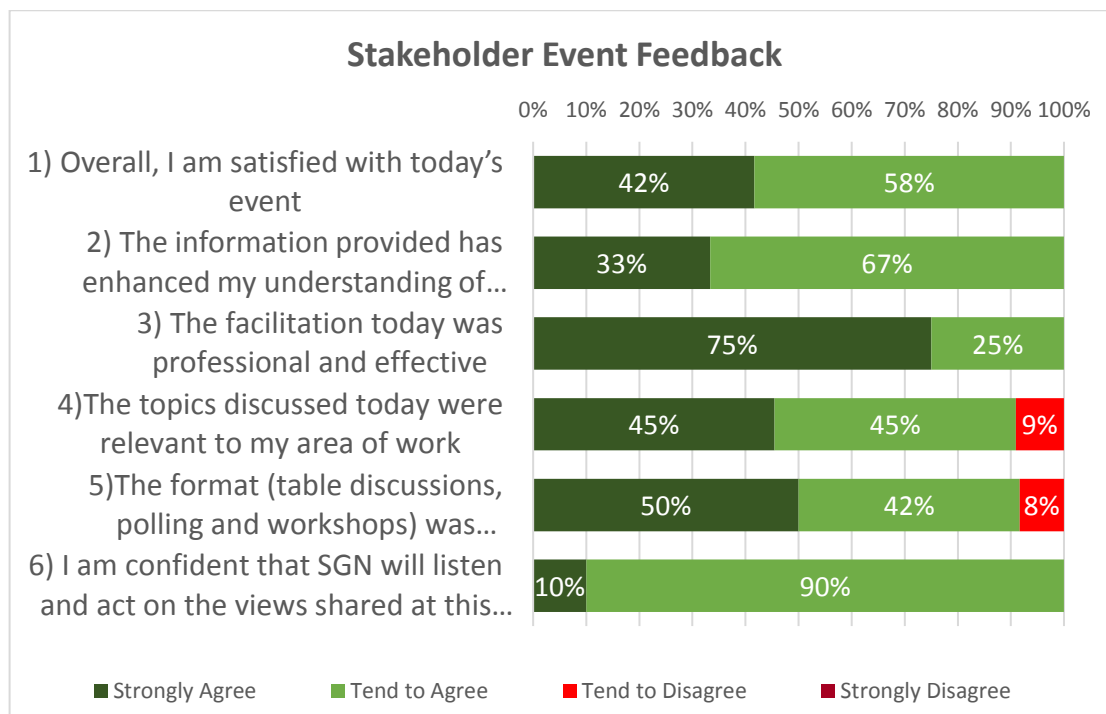
| First name             | Surname        | Organisation                        |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| External panel members |                |                                     |
| Adrian                 | McConnell      | Safety Health Environment           |
| Chris                  | Yates          | Corgi Services                      |
| Geroid                 | Lane           | Agility Eco                         |
| Gordon                 | Lishman        | Gas Safe Charity                    |
| Isabella               | Myers          | All Party Parliamentary CO Group    |
| Jonathan               | Kane           | Kane                                |
| Mark                   | Rolfe          | Gas Safe Register                   |
| Oliver                 | Buckley-Mellor | Policy Connect                      |
| Paul                   | Overton        | CO – Gas Safety                     |
| Rob                    | Lyon           | Play Fair Marketing                 |
| Scott                  | Darroch        | Gas Safe Register                   |
| Sharon                 | Biggs          | London Fire                         |
| Stephanie              | Trotter        | CO – Gas Safety                     |
| SGN                    |                |                                     |
| Barbara                | Whiting        | Head of Stakeholder Engagement      |
| Grant                  | Taylor         | Area SHE Manager                    |
| Dan                    | Edwards        | Stakeholder Engagement Manager      |
| Richard                | Mendham        | General Manager Southern Operations |
| Chris                  | Bielby         | Director of Industry Liaison        |
| Facilitation team      |                |                                     |
| Rhuari                 | Bennett        | 3KQ                                 |
| Hannah                 | Wynne          | 3KQ                                 |



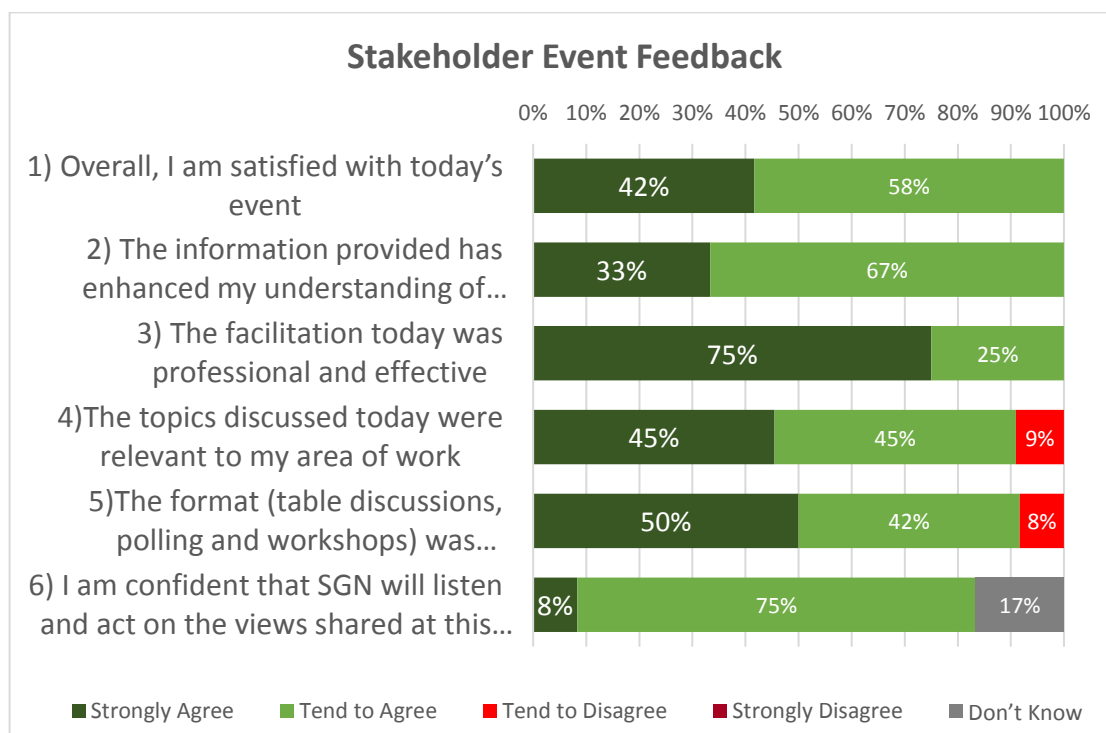
## 9. Evaluation data

Before the stakeholders left the event, we asked them to fill out a satisfaction survey on the overall experience of the event, the results of which can be found below.

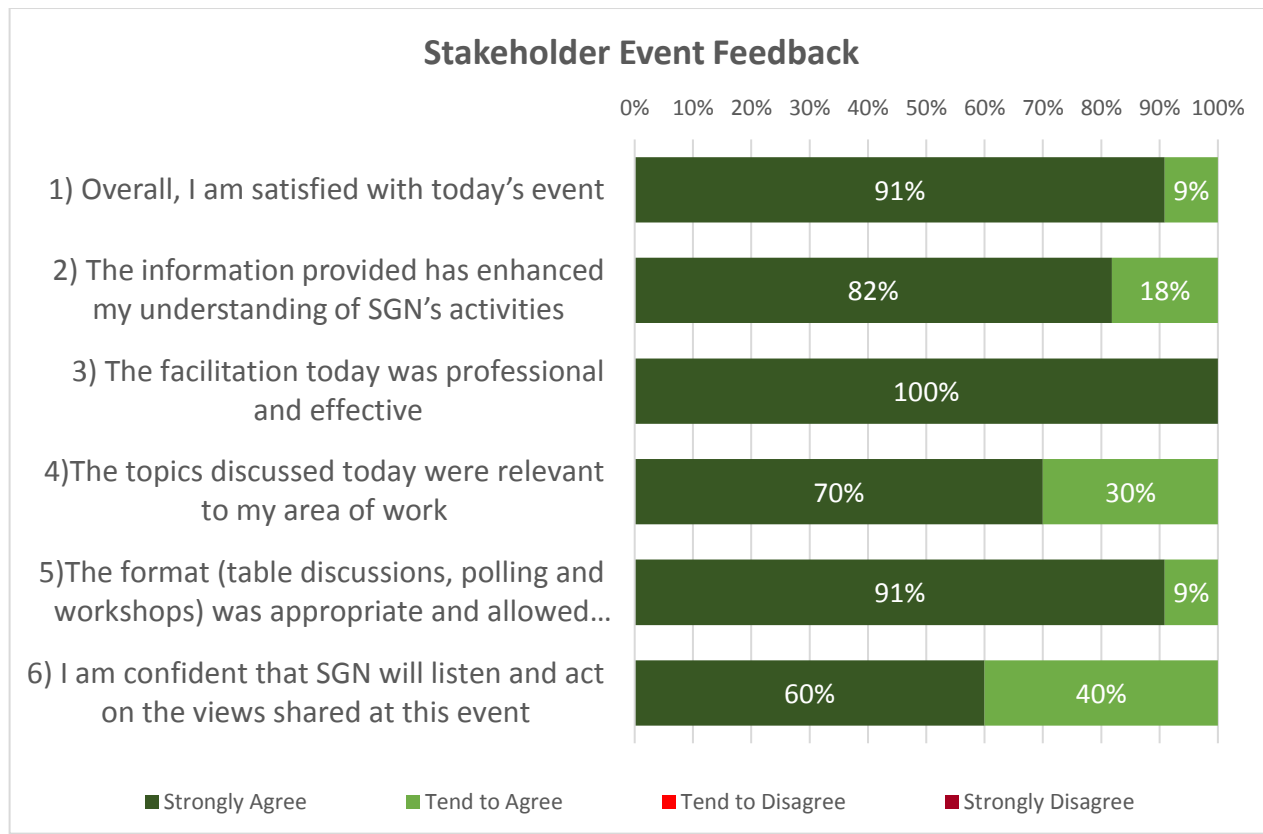
### Scotland (excluding don't knows)



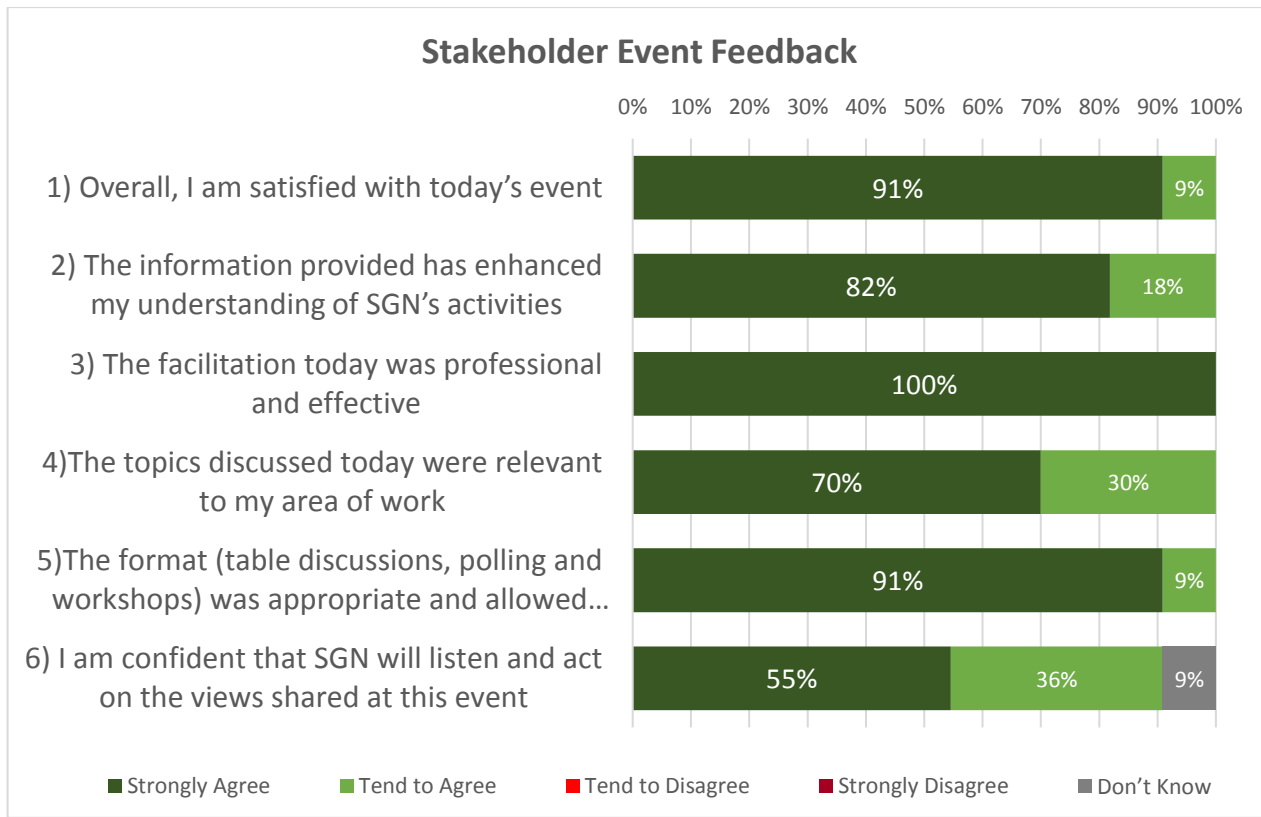
### Scotland (Including don't knows)



**London (excluding don't know)**

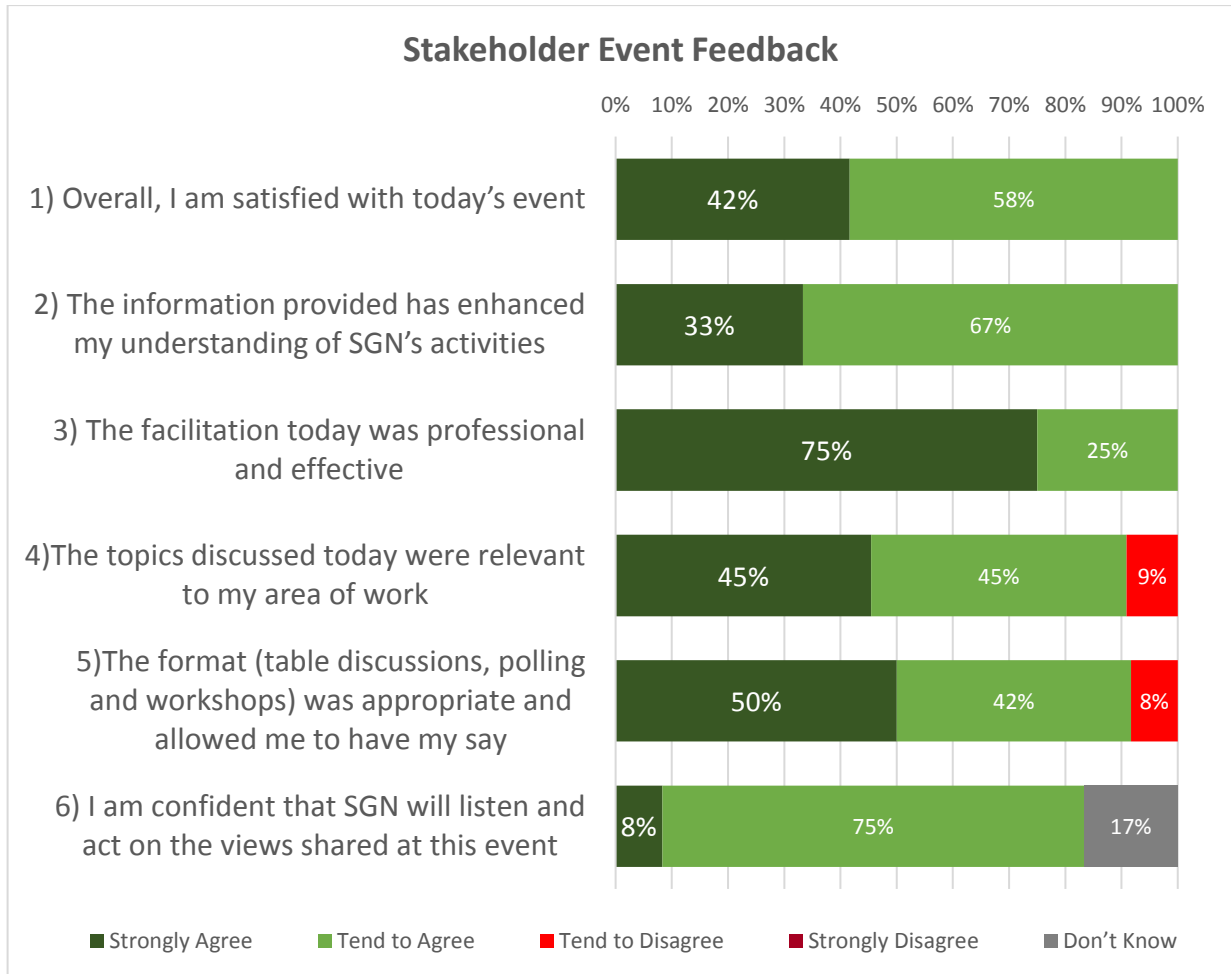


**London (Including don't knows)**



Before the stakeholders left the event, we asked them to fill out a satisfaction survey on the overall experience of the event, the results of which can be found below.

Scotland



London

