

# The Power Skills Summit Powering Productivity Through Innovation Conference 2019

## NSAP SLIDO Questions



Thursday 12 September 2019  
The Mere Golf Resort & Spa, Knutsford

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# Agenda

| Timings            | Topic  | Speaker  |
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| <b>12.30-14.00</b> | <b>Lunch and registration</b>  |  |
| 14.00-14.15        | Opening remarks  | <b>Nick Ellins</b><br>Chief Executive, National Skills Academy for Power   |
| 14.15-14.40        | Innovation and increasing productivity<br>– What does this mean for the industry?      | <b>Frank Mitchell</b><br>Chief Executive of SP Energy Networks,<br>and Chair of Skills Development Scotland (SDS)  |
| 14.40-15.05        | Why people must be at the centre<br>of our business                                    | <b>Clare Robinson</b><br>Enterprise Tech and Performance People & Purpose Leader,<br>Deloitte  |
| 15.05-15.30        | Network regulation to enable a smarter,<br>cleaner energy future                       | <b>Steve McMahon</b><br>Deputy Director for Electricity Distribution<br>and Cross Sector Policy, Ofgem   |
| <b>15.30-16.00</b> | <b>Break</b>   |  |
| 16.00-16.25        | Innovation driven by a diverse workforce<br>– connecting to an inclusive skills policy | <b>Professor Binna Kandola OBE</b><br>Senior Partner at Pearn Kandola  |
| 16.25-17.10        | Panel Session – Rising Stars   | Supported and facilitated by <b>Nick Ellins</b> , Chief Executive,<br>National Skills Academy for Power, and <b>Justin Bowden</b> ,<br>GMB National Secretary<br><br>The panel will include rising stars from our future workforce |
| 17.10-17.20        | Closing remarks  | <b>Dave Newborough OBE</b><br>Independent Chair, National Skills Academy for Power   |

## Network regulation to enable smarter, cleaner energy future.

Steve McMahon, Deputy Director for Electricity Distribution and Cross Sector Policy, Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem)

- **You mentioned costs to consumers. Should these costs be paid through general taxation rather than loading energy bills further which hits the poorest hardest?**

Ofgem's focus is on ensuring we are able to prepare the energy networks for the requirements of the future, keeping the costs of doing so as low as possible, whilst also promoting sustainability. To achieve this fairly there will be an ongoing need for protections to ensure those consumers that do not make active decisions about energy are not left behind or paying more than their fair share.

- **How will the transition to DSO impact security of supply and where does this fit in Ofgem's priorities?**

The transition to Distribution System Operation (DSO) is a crucial part of ensuring the networks are ready to meet the challenges of further decarbonising our generation mix, uptake in low carbon technologies such as EV's and heat pumps and increasing decentralisation. DSO entails new and extended functionalities of energy networks. These are governed by the existing security standards and codes that ensure security of supply. Our DSO position paper published in August, alongside the engineering standards review and data services outputs are laying the policy foundations to make sure DSO is delivered with the necessary competencies to ensure security of supply.

- **How do you balance protection of cost to consumers with system reliability? i.e. how do you stop less cost resulting in less reliability for the consumer?**

Security of supply is always a priority for Ofgem. We understand that all homes, businesses and essential service need to receive a safe, reliable and affordable supply of energy and this sits at the heart of our regulatory approach. Service quality levels in the energy networks, including reliability, have improved markedly, despite the events on 9th August. The infrequency of these events is a good indication that the overall we have a very reliable energy system. But the impact of this event should remind us all how critical it is not to take this for granted. And through the design of the RIIO-2 price controls we will support the delivery of high-quality services but at lower cost, ensuring that the energy networks are fit for a smarter, cleaner energy future that is fair to all consumers.

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- **Is the SVT cap a car crash waiting to happen for retail energy suppliers that is killing competition and investment?**

Absolutely not – we remain committed to doing everything we can to empower consumers to get a better deal from their energy. The current default tariff price cap ensures that loyal consumers pay a fair price that reflects efficient costs.

- **Do you think OFGEM has a role in encouraging the SMEs in the Power supply chain to take on apprentices and upskilling their workforce?**

It's not for Ofgem to tell any companies how to plan their workforce but we can set clear expectations of the value and benefits to be derived from a modern, diverse, high quality, well-trained workforce. This is the approach we have taken to the methodology that will drive company business planning for RIIO-2

- **How would Ofgem support skills development in RIIO 2?**

RIIO-2 is a huge programme that gives all the staff involved a great opportunity to develop their skills and competencies across a range of exciting areas. The ability to attract, develop and retain staff will be a huge factor in whether the process is successful or not. Accordingly, learning and development is a key part of our approach. Skills development is actively supported both through on-the-job as well as targeted training. Each individual has their own learning and development programme tailored to their individual needs, and our approach to delivery ensures the time, space and opportunities for these programmes to be completed in full.

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## Rising Star Panel

- **Have you encountered any challenges with diversity or inclusion and how did you deal or overcome them?**

**Answered by:** [Sarra Marvi, Associate Engineer, Ofgem](#)

While I have faced overtly discriminatory situations (in a different sector), these occurrences are rare. More often, I deal with micro-aggressions and a lack of shared experiences with colleagues. I've found that building a network of peers and allies and implementing incremental change to engender a more inclusive environment together helps overcome these challenges.

- **How easy or difficult was it to find apply and secure the job you wanted?? - have you heard of Talent Source Network #TSN?**

**Answered by:** [Conor Stratton, Trainee Project Manager, Morrison Utility Services](#)

Fortunately for me my dad works in utilities so that was the route I took to find my apprenticeship. Before I started properly looking for work, I didn't really know much about this industry. The application itself was very easy but securing it was harder. I think around 500 people applied for the apprenticeship scheme (I could be wrong, it was a long time ago!). The applications were whittled down to about 100 through telephone interviews and then I went to an interview centre which lasted for a day. At the time I hadn't heard of Talent Source Network, but it is something we promote on STEM days that I attend now.

- **What are the top 3 most important factors when looking for a job / role... Money? Job Security? Progression? Environmental factors? Diversity and inclusion etc.**

**Answered by:** [Aoife Cahalane, Compliance Manager, Price Cap Implementation Team, Ofgem](#)

For me personally: Whether my job/organisation is making a positive difference in a sector I care about. The organisations stance on employee wellbeing i.e. flexible working etc. Progression – whether the organisation encourages training and development.

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- **Do you feel that coaching and mentoring is something that still needs further development in the apprenticeship world? What has been your experience?**  
**Answered by:** [Jonathan Li, Power Network Craftsperson, SP Energy Networks](#)

From my experience of the coaching and mentoring, I don't feel it needs any improvement. However, this is only from my experience. I feel my mentor on the tools is one of the best to learn from and think he deserves recognition for this. There are other craftspeople in the industry that, although they are good jointers, I might not have learnt as much off. I appreciate that this is no fault of theirs because they've joined the industry to be a jointer and not a teacher. I feel that not everyone has that level of patience and attitude required to coach a trainee. I think an improvement would be if crafts people were selected as "coaches" this would enable people who might not have as much time for trainees to not be assigned one, and the ones who are willing to train others will be recognised.

- **What's your biggest take away from today so far? (Aoife)**  
**Answered by:** [Aoife Cahalane, Compliance Manager, Price Cap Implementation Team, Ofgem](#)

It reaffirmed my pride and desire to work in the ever changing and increasingly important energy sector.

- **What is the panels view on how we can encourage diversity within the sector?**  
**Answered by:** [Daisy MacDonald, Security Analyst, National Grid \(Finalist – Rising Star Award 2019, Apprentice Category\)](#)

I am of the firm belief that the power industry and my field (cyber security) should do the utmost to encourage a diverse workforce. It is my view that the most effective way to encourage diversity is through ensure a diverse group of visible role models. It is through my own experience that I have come to realise the importance of have visible and diverse role models and how seeing someone who looks like you can have a positive influence on showing you that what you are trying to achieve is possible.

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- **If you could change one thing about your role/company to improve it what would it be?**

**Answered by:** [Conor Stratton, Trainee Project Manager, Morrison Utility Services](#)

Fortunately for me I'm very happy in my role! Having only been training as a PM for a short amount of time I'm still learning the ropes and have yet to come across things I'd like to change. Travel time can be an issue as I must travel to lots of different sites and the UKPN patch covers a large area, but unfortunately, I can't move substations closer to me!

- **Do you think spending time learning about how the business operates is important before you get into your apprenticeship or job role?**

**Answered by:** [Daisy MacDonald, Security Analyst, National Grid \(Finalist – Rising Star Award 2019, Apprentice Category\)](#)

I work in incident response, and because of that it has always been pivotal that I understand what/who/where does what at the organisation I work for. I have been lucky enough to have a huge level of insight into the business outside of my core function and believe that this has in no small part played into my success in my role.

- **Do you plan to stay in our sector long term? Would you plan to stay within your current area of specialism or move into another function?**

**Answered by:** [Sarrah Marvi, Associate Engineer, Ofgem](#)

The energy sector is fascinating because it encompasses so many different industries. Even if I leave regulation, I'm sure that my future endeavours will be linked to building a more sustainable future or ensuring the efficient implementation of new technologies. Wherever I go, I look forward to working on challenging technical issues that push the limits of engineering.

- **How satisfied are you with your work life balance and how you can manage your personal wellbeing?**

**Answered by:** [Jonathan Li, Power Network Craftsperson, SP Energy Networks](#)

As for my work life balance. As I mentioned at the conference, I'm happy with how things have worked out. I came from a mixed career before this, from the armed forces to ground work to building wind turbines, and I feel my work life balance is the best it has been. I don't know if this is down to the management support network or the fact that I enjoy my job, more than likely a bit of both.