



# UK Regulators' Network Young Professionals Network

Newsletter – July 2022

## Welcome from the Young Professionals Network

### Co-chairs introduction:

*Hello all,*



*The YPN has been busy this last quarter with running several events, including a careers event and our Regulator in Focus events. See below for more details on what we've been up to!*

*We are happy to announce the expansion of the network to now include the Northern Irish Utility Regulator (UREGNI) into the YPN, and have already had speakers from URGNI at some of our events this quarter. We're also pleased to welcome several new reps from our regulators to the committee.*

*We've got even more exciting events and networking opportunities coming up in the next quarter, and are busy organising a return to in-person events coming later this year – so please keep an eye out for invites in due course!*

- Rebecca and Liam

## UKRN YPN Events Since the Last Newsletter:

### Regulators in Focus – Ofgem and Ofcom (April)

- **Victoria Tavernor (Ofcom)** presented on **Ofcom's [Plan of Work](#)**, which covers Ofcom's safety and cyber-security responsibilities, alongside their existing duties.
- **Richard Hibble and Ben Boucher-Myers (Ofgem)** spoke on their recent work on **Vehicle-to-X technologies** and the benefits and challenges this can bring to the GB energy system.

### Careers Talk – Northern Ireland's Utility Regulator and The Pensions Regulator (June)

- **Tanya Hedley, Director of Networks (UREGNI)**, spoke about how she started her career as the first female network maintenance engineer for NIE Networks and progressed her way to becoming the Director of Network Regulation in Northern Ireland.
- **Darran Burton, Director of Change (TPR)** reflected on his career, which started in pensions and life assurance and has led him to his current position.

### Regulators in Focus – UREGNI and the Payment Systems Regulator (July)

- **UREGNI** presented on their consumer research **on attitudes towards climate change** and a net zero society, as well as barriers towards a net zero transition.
- The **PSR** introduced **trends in payments in 2022**. They also presented their approach concerning injecting competition and innovation where it is needed.

## Farewell to Jonson Cox, Ofwat's Chairman

For almost a decade, Jonson Cox was the Chairman of Ofwat.

He played a key role in pushing for water companies to improve their financial resilience and holding the companies to account, as well as in making Ofwat a great place to work.

He stepped down from the role in June 2022 and has been replaced by Iain Coucher.



### Jonson's Career

After an early career with Royal Dutch/Shell Group, Jonson served as Managing Director of Yorkshire Water (1996-2000) to lead the company to restore YW's top-ranking status in the industry.

After other infrastructure roles, he returned to the water sector for over six years, 2004 – 2010, as Group CEO at AWG plc. He led the successful turnarounds of underperforming Anglian Water Services, Morrison plc and Anglian Water International, recovering the Group from the multiple business difficulties it faced.

Jonson led the restructuring of UK Coal plc as Executive Chairman, (2010 to 2012) to bring a managed 'soft close' to coalmining in the UK. He secured the value in UKC's property development business for the miners' pension funds and the PPF, leading the creation and listing of Harworth plc. He served as inaugural Chairman from 2012 to 2018.

He joined Cory Group, owner of the UK's largest waste-to-energy plant, as Chairman when lenders took control in 2015 and led the board through the recovery and successful sale to infrastructure funds in 2018.

He serves on the global policy council of I Squared Capital and is an NED at Energia, the Irish energy group, and Ovo, the UK energy retailer.

### His Role as Ofwat's Chairman

Jonson has played a strong part in the work to bring the water sector back to a core customer and public service focus, while retaining an attractive proposition for investors.

From his time at Ofwat, he is often associated with getting a real-world direction, promoting financial transparency and for creating the board leadership programme.

He was associated with promoting financial resilience in the water sector. Successes include the major restructuring of Southern Water in 2021: £1 billion of new capital and the outgoing owners losing the majority of their equity value - a good message to those who don't perform.

While believing that economic regulation is important to efficiency and service outcomes, Jonson promoted the use and development of licences to influence behaviour. A success in this area was the achievement in Ofwat of a process for changing licences that is comparable to that in energy, and this was embedded in the Environment Act 2021.

## 5 Minutes with Jonson Cox

On his last day at Ofwat, Jonson spent some time talking to us about his time at Ofwat, his role in creating the UKRN and tips for young professionals.

### How would you sum up your time at Ofwat in a couple of sentences?

*Reshaping how we hold water companies to account, and using all the tools, behavioural and economic, at our disposal to do so.*

*Getting companies back to operating to the very best for customers – they are not just financial assets, they are operating businesses that have to serve customers and the public.*

### What would you say is the most important quality as a leader?

*As Chairman, I am the leader of the Board, not of the organisation – that's the CEO. But I have been both in my time.*

- 1. Leadership comes in lots of formats - a leader isn't necessarily an extrovert. But what characterises them is that they know in their head where they want to go – that's the most important thing.*
- 2. To have a very good framework for decision-making in the organisation is important.*
- 3. And that they know how to interact with people – to organise teams and deploy people in a way that everyone feels they are making a contribution, they are giving to their best, they are listened to, but they also feel like they are part of something bigger.*

### You were involved in the creation of the UKRN. As one of the creators, have you got any advice for those in the network to make the most out of this opportunity?

*We created the UKRN back in 2014, when government put us under pressure to see where we could work more effectively.*

*The most important thing about UKRN is that it's a network for people within our organisations to share their expertise – a professional network and a real chance to test our ideas with others of the same discipline.*

### What advice do you have for young professionals?

*Be brave – we are regulators in order to achieve change for society.*

*Balance evidence and judgement.*

*Always explore the full potential of every job – don't feel like you have to jump too quickly. In every job, you can push frontiers, develop in it and grow in it.*

## Spotlight interview with Andrew Lincoln Ofwat's Customer Policy Principal & Chair of the UKRN Vulnerability Network

### What does your current role at Ofwat involve?

*It involves leading work on customer policy. Customers are a key part of Ofwat's strategy, with one of our primary duties being to protect the interests of current and future consumers in England and Wales.*

*Our work has been put into sharper focus by the Covid-19 pandemic and current cost of living pressures, with affordability and vulnerability being priority areas of focus for us as a team. In particular, we are challenging water companies to think hard about how they mitigate the impacts for those customers who are most negatively affected.*

*We want to see companies make it easier for all customers to pay their water bill – and for companies to do right by customers who are struggling to pay. We've recently published [Paying Fair guidelines](#) for companies in this area.*



### What is the UKRN vulnerability network and what does your role as chair involve?

*UKRN's vulnerability network provides an important forum for member regulators to consider consumer interests, particularly the needs of the most vulnerable in society. My role as chair involves convening meetings and encouraging collaboration and closer working together. We have an agreed workplan and regularly share insights and learning to build common understanding amongst members on the challenges being faced by consumers across sectors.*

### How is the vulnerability network dealing with the cost-of-living crisis?

*Our network is focused on working across member regulators and with external partners to better understand the impacts on consumers of cost-of-living pressures. We are working to understand how regulators can best help consumers within our specific powers and remits. This has included working with BEIS to provide advice on the support available for people struggling to pay essential bills. Debt and affordability issues will remain priority areas of focus for the network.*

### How could we learn more about the cost-of-living crisis?

*Ofwat recently published some research on the cost of living, which gives an up-to-date view on customer experiences. Other consumer organisations also hold relevant seminars. For instance, Citizens Advice are running a series of briefings on the Cost of Living Crisis, with the first briefing being held on the 28<sup>th</sup> July: [Citizens Advice Cost of Living Briefing Tickets, Thu 28 Jul 2022 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#).*

### What can we, as regulators, do to have a positive impact, in the face of the crisis?

*As the regulator, we try to use all our policy tools and levers to have as positive an impact as possible for consumers. We are also trying to reach out to hear different voices – directly from customers through research, and through working with a wider range of partners – including other regulators through UKRN – learning from their experiences.*

*At Ofwat we are also thinking about new tools for our policy toolkit and are currently developing a new customer-focused licence condition as an additional tool to ensure companies do right by customers.*

## Communications – Committee Contacts

Our primary way of contacting young professionals in the network is through the committee rep(s) for their regulator. Feel free to contact your regulator's rep(s) if you have an idea for a future event or you have any questions about the network.

Regulator	Rep(s)	Contact Details	Photos
Network Co-Chairs	Liam Cullen	<a href="mailto:Liam.Cullen@ofgem.gov.uk">Liam.Cullen@ofgem.gov.uk</a>	 
	Rebecca Wells	<a href="mailto:Rebecca.Wells@ofgem.gov.uk">Rebecca.Wells@ofgem.gov.uk</a>	
Ofgem	Sofia Pritchard Serrao	<a href="mailto:Sofia.Pritchard@ofgem.gov.uk">Sofia.Pritchard@ofgem.gov.uk</a>	
	Matthias Noebels	<a href="mailto:Matthias.Noebels@ofgem.gov.uk">Matthias.Noebels@ofgem.gov.uk</a>	
Ofcom	Sophie Parker	<a href="mailto:Sophie.Parker@ofcom.org.uk">Sophie.Parker@ofcom.org.uk</a>	 
	Adwoa Owusu-Akyem	<a href="mailto:Adwoa.Owusu-Akyem@ofcom.org.uk">Adwoa.Owusu-Akyem@ofcom.org.uk</a>	
Ofwat	Sofia Isidoro	<a href="mailto:Sofia.Isidoro@ofwat.gov.uk">Sofia.Isidoro@ofwat.gov.uk</a>	 
	Jack Kingham	<a href="mailto:Jack.Kingham@ofwat.gov.uk">Jack.Kingham@ofwat.gov.uk</a>	
Civil Aviation Authority	Francesca Layton-Smith	<a href="mailto:Francesca.Layton-Smith@caa.co.uk">Francesca.Layton-Smith@caa.co.uk</a>	 
	Megan Friedli	<a href="mailto:Megan.Friedli@caa.co.uk">Megan.Friedli@caa.co.uk</a>	
Financial Conduct Authority	Joseph Pritchard	<a href="mailto:Joseph.Pritchard@fca.org.uk">Joseph.Pritchard@fca.org.uk</a>	 
	Alice De Silva	<a href="mailto:Alice.DeSilva@fca.org.uk">Alice.DeSilva@fca.org.uk</a>	
Payment Systems Regulator	Marius Bischoff	<a href="mailto:Marius.Bischoff@psr.org.uk">Marius.Bischoff@psr.org.uk</a>	
Office of Rail and Road	David Dingwall	<a href="mailto:David.dingwall@orr.gov.uk">David.dingwall@orr.gov.uk</a>	
Northern Ireland's Utility Regulator (UREGNI)	Maeve McSparron	<a href="mailto:Maeve.McSparron@uregni.gov.uk">Maeve.McSparron@uregni.gov.uk</a>	
The Pensions Regulator	Leslie Ibegbulem	<a href="mailto:Leslie.Ibegbulem@tpr.gov.uk">Leslie.Ibegbulem@tpr.gov.uk</a>	
Single Source Regulations Office	New rep being recruited!		