

Press release

RWE team up with NCS (National Citizen Service) in competition for ideas to address gender balance



- **More than 1600 teenagers participated in a NCS summer innovation challenge**
- **RWE will review ideas and look to incorporate them into potential future awareness campaigns**

Swindon, 24 August 2022

North East teenagers taking part in the summer NCS programme have harnessed their

creativity to come up with innovative concepts to encourage more women to join the growing offshore wind energy sector.

RWE, a leading renewable company and owner of Sofia Offshore Wind Farm teamed up with NCS (National Citizen Service), to create a real-world enterprise challenge that asked more than 1600 participants to create campaigns to improve the gender balance in the sector which at present has only 18% women.

For RWE, it provided the perfect opportunity to seek valuable insights and advice from many of the young people who may join their workforce in years to come. While for the 16 to 17 year olds, who took part during their summer holidays, it gave them a chance to work creatively, develop their presentation skills and start to mould their future career ambitions.

Resulting concepts ranged from an offshore wind Barbie and a Love Island pastiche to a touring bus and use of historical role models. The communications team at RWE will review the young people's ideas and look to incorporate them into potential future awareness campaigns.

During the challenge, the campaign presentations were peer-reviewed and then judged by RWE experts with three finalist teams invited to a grand finale event at Ramside Hall, County Durham this week.

The winning entry came from a team of teenagers from South Tyneside who picked up the main accolade for their campaign that aimed to tackle gender stereotypes using social media trends on TikTok and education outreach. Judges praised the team for their 'finger down' TikTok campaign that demonstrated how young women might feel that they begin behind the starting line when it comes to entering sectors such as offshore wind.

The team had also developed lesson plans for an education programme to encourage more girls to consider a career within the industry.

Highly commended runners up from Gateshead and Stockton-on-Tees received praise from judges for their respective animated advertising campaign based on powerful women in history and a social media celebrity endorsement campaign combined with a multi-level education programme.

The judges felt the winning entries could really support industry ambitions to increase the number of women to 40% by 2030, by highlighting the wide number of roles available, types of skill required and raising awareness of the opportunities in general.

The NCS summer programme includes time away from home, completing adventurous activities, and picking up life skills before returning to your area and doing good in the community. During a residential phase of the programme young people completed their enterprise challenge task, forming plans and then pitching their ideas.

One member from the winning team, Keira Brown, 16 from Hebburn, said: "I feel so proud about what we've achieved as a team. We decided upon a social media campaign on TikTok as we felt this was the most effective way of reaching young women and inspiring them to overcome any

barriers.”

Tyger Emms-Hobbins, 16 from Cleadon, added: “The whole challenge has led me to take a closer look at the offshore wind sector as a potential career path. There are so many different types of roles available and women shouldn’t be put off by the stereotypical idea that jobs in engineering or construction are for men.”

“The enterprise challenge has been a real highlight of NCS,” added Cameron Price, 16 from Sunderland: “We also made a difference by raising money for a children’s hospital, so it’s been a very eventful summer.”

Kirsty Beeston, North East Community Engagement Manager at NCS Trust, commented: “It’s been a real privilege to have worked with the team at RWE’s Sofia Offshore Wind Farm to make this enterprise challenge a reality this summer.

“Young people on NCS have been able to find out about the breadth of offshore wind job opportunities available to them in the North East while they develop new skills using a real-world challenge. We received so many innovative and creative submissions and I’m looking forward to seeing how Sofia put the ideas into practice.”

Mark Gifford, CEO at NCS Trust, said: “Big thanks must go to RWE and Sofia for getting behind NCS in the North East and helping to build this innovative partnership. One of the aims of NCS is to build employability and work-readiness, and the enterprise challenge is a prime example of how we are helping young people develop skills, build their confidence, break down barriers and fulfil their potential.

“It was very inspiring to hear the young people present their ideas during the final.”

Zoë Keeton, RWE’s Head of Stakeholders & Local Markets UK & Ireland, said: “This programme has really demonstrated the power of reverse mentoring, we have learned a lot from the campaign concepts the young people put forward for the NCS enterprise challenge and would commend the effort, enthusiasm and energy of all involved.

“I particularly wanted to congratulate the winning teams for their creativity, motivation and impressive ideas around how we can better communicate with females about the great opportunities open to them in our industry. It’s a sector that not only enables young people to have fulfilling careers in more than 100 different types of roles, but also means they are playing a key role in protecting the future of the planet”.

To find out more about NCS visit www.wearencs.com, to find out more about Sofia Offshore Wind Farm visit www.sofiawindfarm.com.



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