



Welcome to the Autumn 2023 newsletter



In this newsletter, our summer interns George, Eleanor, and John have taken the pen to lead this special edition focused on early careers and undertaking new opportunities in the workplace. We hope you enjoy!

Attricia Archer, UKRN Director

UKRN Summer Interns “In June, we joined the UKRN as the first cohort of summer interns. Over the past 10 weeks we have had the opportunity to support the team in their many different roles, and the chance to attend a variety of events as a group. We've also led on our own individual projects on topics covering international regulation, vulnerability, and artificial intelligence. Read more about our experiences at the UKRN below.”

John: UKRN and WIG Workshop



On 28th June, we were lucky enough to be invited to an event with the Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG) with the agenda being centred around how sectors can implement the recommendations around specific risks and collaborate on a ‘whole of society approach’ to building a strong resilience system.

Throughout the day various members of the panel talked about pressing issues such as climate change, cyber attacks and geopolitical tensions. The importance of the work being done behind the scenes had never really occurred to me, so to be able to see first hand how much work goes in before making decisions on new policies was a real eye opener.

The event featured many esteemed speakers, whose passion and knowledge for the subjects presented was infectious and we as a collective thoroughly benefited from the day. Luckily for us all after all the hard work during the day we were treated to a buffet, which I personally very much enjoyed.

George: Introductory day at Ofgem

We were kindly invited to attend Ofgem’s offices for an introductory day about their core responsibilities, how they are operating, and what projects they are undertaking.

The day was organised by a highly respected member of Ofgem’s graduate program, Raz Anghel. Raz gave us a brief introduction about Ofgem and the day ahead before we were given in depth presentations including: cost of capital, regulatory finance, RIIO price controls and the wholesale markets.

The presentation which stood out for me was Chris Connor’s about cost of capital. As I am on a Business Management degree, I found this piece beneficial as there were aspects explained in much greater detail than at university, and with a real link into a working environment.



Eleanor: Training days with Louise Buckley

The UKRN invited Louise Buckley, former COO of the PSR and career consultant, to conduct three training days with us.



On the first day, she provided us with important tips and tricks for preparing for interviews, as well as how to structure our CVs and cover letters. We also had the opportunity to participate in practice interviews, drawing out which answers followed the STAR structure, and also areas of improvement for each answer. This was a chance for us to see the difference between strong and weak interview answers, which is not always obvious!

The second and third days were tailored more to areas we each wanted to develop within interview and application processes. On day two we gave presentations on an area which interests us (I chose my dissertation topic!). We then had practice interviews and gave each other group feedback. On the final day we had 1-2-1 sessions with Louise developing our confidence for future applications.

These days have aided us with our professional development in ways specific to each of us. The advice from Louise has given us a solid grounding for the next stages in our career journeys and we are incredibly thankful for all the time she spent with us!

Our individual experiences at UKRN: Eleanor

About me: I recently graduated from the University of York with a degree in Politics with International Relations, and in September I will be starting a master's course at SOAS studying Politics of Conflict, Rights and Justice.

Why did I apply for the internship? I applied to this internship as although my focus throughout my studies has been more internationally focused, I have an ever-growing passion for conducting research in the political sphere. Consequently, I was interested in the diverse portfolio of work and research undertaken by the UKRN and their interactions with the UK government. I knew it would be an invaluable opportunity to support on a host of projects, whilst getting a well-rounded understanding of regulation and the behind the scenes of UK politics.

What have been the highlights? I think the highlights of this internship have been the breadth and depth of projects I have been able to contribute to. My individual project was on the future of AI and regulation, specifically looking at the recent review conducted by the CMA on foundational models. I had the opportunity to interview an individual working closely on the review to understand the scope of their research more, and how they have conducted this research. Crucially, the field of AI is ever-changing, making it a difficult area not only to research but to regulate. There is definitely substantial space for future collaboration on AI regulation, which makes it a really interesting topic to have been able to have researched so deeply this summer!

I've also had the chance to support with the analysis of UKRN's business planning survey. Within this I helped to analyse the long-form answers, drawing out key themes and objectives in the answers. From this, I helped to develop these into graphics to help showcase the core areas for UKRN's future planning. Alongside my project on AI, this was really interesting to see the different viewpoints of the regulators on what the UKRN's priorities should be, particularly seeing how often collaboration was prioritised! It highlighted once again how important the work of the UKRN is to promote this environment.



What have I found challenging? I initially found it challenging to adapt back into a workplace after being at university. At university, the days and weeks are mapped out from the start of term, whereas in the workplace the schedule is far more flexible. Although I undertook a placement year at GSK between my second and final year of university it was still an adjustment back into this environment. Additionally, determining which work to prioritise when deadlines were all very similar, was also a challenge. However, to overcome this I ensured I gave each day some structure, through creating a to-do list of priorities, and aiming to reach all (or as many as I could) in that day.

Overall, despite the challenges, it has been really interesting to work in another corporate environment, and being able to see and compare how different industries work day-to-day.

How has it affected my future plans? Undertaking this internship has provided me with further confirmation that my passion lies within research. So, I endeavour to pursue a career within research in the political and policy spheres.

For my future plans, the days with Louise Buckley have been particularly invaluable. These have helped me to be more assured in my skill set and knowledge, and apply for jobs which I would not have had the confidence to apply to previously. From September, I will begin to apply for grad jobs and internships in think-tanks and political research spheres, as well as applying to the Civil Service Fast Stream.

Our individual experiences at UKRN: George

About me: In September I will be starting my final year of a Business Management degree at University of Birmingham.

Why did I apply for the internship? I applied for this internship as I believed it would broaden my understanding of the business environment, both for my Business Management degree at university and for later working life. Although regulation plays a huge role in shaping how business operates, it is fairly undertaught at an academic level and this intrigued me into applying specifically for the UKRN, as the cross-sector nature allows me to widen my knowledge of regulatory activity, not just in the financial sector.



What have been the highlights? There have been many enjoyable aspects of the internship, particularly for me was the day we had at Ofgem. To be able to go into one of the biggest regulators in the UK at a challenging time has given me valuable experience that not many interns would get, having a day of insightful presentations by highly respected Ofgem employees. I have also enjoyed being involved in team meetings at a during a period of change at the UKRN whereby the new business plan was being written, trying to solidify the UKRN's policy and direction for the future.

What have I found challenging? Although I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on my internship, recently returning home from university I did originally struggle to adapt to the working environment. I have previously completed work experience at the FCA however that was in 2019 and was my only experience of a workplace so it did take a while to settle in. Also, there was a greater sense of responsibility and freedom on my project which was not necessarily challenging but certainly meant I had to stay organised. However, I believe overcoming these will help my development and be very useful for when I am next in a working environment.

How has it affected my future plans, and what have I learnt? Throughout my time at the UKRN I have learnt as much about myself as I have about regulation. It has shown me that I have the skills to work in a cohesive team environment, as well as adapting to having my own responsibility to carry out my project. The internship has certainly affected my future, as I hope the experience gained will help me once I am looking for a job after graduating, but also expanded my own view into potentially having a career in regulation.



Our individual experiences at UKRN: John

About me: I am about to enter my final year of a Business Management degree at University of Leicester.

Why did I apply for the internship? I have always had an interest in Finances and economics, applying to be an intern at UKRN offered the chance of expanding my knowledge on the roles respective regulators play in society. Regulation is a niche area that I came into the internship knowing little about and being at UKRN has allowed for me to understand the roles each respective regulator plays. Before the internship I had never had the opportunity to work in a team environment, being able to experience this has put me in a much better position for work later on in life than previously.

What have been the highlights? All the members of the team have been very welcoming and accommodating and I have enjoyed getting to know all of them. UKRN has also given us interns invaluable experiences where I learnt a lot about various regulators and their respective roles, I particularly enjoyed the WIG event. At the event Sir Ian Andrews gave a compelling speech about the effects of climate change and the role regulators can play in combating these pressing issues, which I found very interesting and informative.

What have I found challenging? My time at UKRN has truly been a great experience, however it has shown me areas that I find challenging in a work environment. I have never been too fond of early mornings and trains and unfortunately for me both have been prominent throughout my time. As well as this before the internship I had never had the experience of working as a team and adapting to others work schedules, which includes having to be solely responsible for pieces of work and meeting my fellow colleagues deadlines. However by experiencing this now I now know where I can improve in for my future working life.

How has it affected my future plans, and what have I learnt? Whilst being at UKRN I have learnt about the importance of many regulators as well as giving me the invaluable experiences of learning how to adapt to a work environment. During my individual project I learnt how each respective regulator caters to vulnerable citizens in the UK and the processes behind it which I found to be an engrossing topic. My time here has certainly evoked an interest in regulation for me and I now see a potential of me possibly pursuing working in a regulation or work in a similar area.



Filling Big Shoes & Embracing the Role of Chair in the UKRN Cyber Security Network: Neil Connett



In January of this year an email went out to the Cyber Security Network saying that Peter Drissell, after several years as the Chair of Network, would be stepping down and asking if anyone would like to take on this role.

Peter has spent 4 years as the Chair of this Network and in his time has been pivotal in taking the network forward and supporting members with the challenges of how to conduct Cyber Security oversight amongst the newly introduced Network and Information Systems (NIS) Directive, Peter wrote about his time as Chair in the [Summer Newsletter](#). These would be big shoes to fill.



UK Regulators Network

I decided to put myself forward as Chair of the Cyber Security Network out of a deep passion for cyber security and firm belief in the power of collaboration.

I see this role as a unique opportunity to lead, innovate and inspire collaboration to strengthen our collective defence against ever-evolving cyber threats. I feel a strong sense of responsibility to contribute to a safer future for all.

The challenges facing are undoubtedly significant, but the opportunity to make a real difference, and to work with such dedicated fellow network members, excites me and fuels my commitment to this important task.

The UKRN places focus on the **value of collaboration**, serving as a location for members, who vary widely in size, scope and resources. This diversity should not act as a barrier when it comes to safeguarding our critical infrastructure. In fact, it must enhance our collective ability to do so.

So, if you are thinking about standing as a Chair, or even looking to get more involved in your network, I would say **"go for it"**! It is highly rewarding, and because of the tremendous support of the UKRN Work Leads, such as Carey-Ann Jacques, it is not nearly as scary as you might think.

If you have any question or thoughts on this topic, or simply would like to have a chat, please reach out to me at neil.connett@ofwat.gov.uk or find me on LinkedIn.

Neil Connett

Deputy Director of IT & Digital at Ofwat and newly appointed Chair of the UKRN Cyber Security Network

The Next Gen NED Scheme: Fiona Lennox



The Next Gen NEDs initiative aims to build a diverse pipeline of people who, in future, will be interested in applying to become non-executive directors (NEDs), bringing a rich mix of thinking styles, perspectives and innovative ideas.

We aim to build long-term relationships and an enduring talent pipeline by offering a number of shadowing and mentoring opportunities across participant organisations' committees and panels and providing advice to a wider group of Next Gen NEDs via a Community of Interest.

How does the scheme work?

The Next Gen NEDs initiative is run by a working group with members from the ICO, Ofcom, CCP/ACOD, Ofgem, Ofwat, ORR and TPR - facilitated by UKRN. It began with a pilot in 2021/22 and now, each Autumn, we offer UKRN colleagues in participating organisations the opportunity to apply for an observer place on the scheme. Successful applicants are offered a one-year placement with mentoring from a NED on the relevant Board, Panel or Committee. Following growing interest from other regulators and more committees that wanted to participate, we are about to open our application window for a third time on Monday 11 September 2023.

We've been delighted by the number of people interested in joining the Next Gen NEDs initiative. Recognising that only a limited number of placement opportunities are available, we also provide wider support and networking opportunities to a broader cohort of colleagues through an informal Community of Interest which is open to any UKRN colleague and an opportunity for like-minded people to network and learn together.



UK Regulators Network

We now have over 300 members of the Community, which provides inspiration, networking opportunities and regular online events featuring advice from a range of experienced speakers including a wide range of NEDs, HR specialists and recruitment consultants. If you would like to join the Community please sign up [here](#).

Two years in – reviews

In the UKRN Annual Report, Bill Emery commented on the initiative's success and how involvement in the scheme will help individuals in their future careers and build a wider and deeper pool for NED recruitment, vital to our sectors and the economy. Participants in the scheme have commented on the increased awareness and confidence it's helped them acquire, and a number from our initial cohort have now been successful in gaining Trustee, NED or Advisory posts.

Our Next Gen NEDs have said: *“Participating in the Next Gen NEDs programme has given me great insight into how boards operate and how they consider the performance of an organisation – sometimes the focus is very different to what I expected! It has offered the chance to interact with board members that I otherwise wouldn't had, giving the opportunity to hear their experience and discuss how meetings ran.”*

“In the last six months, I have observed how to add value to public services through questioning and understand accountability. I've learnt how to position and present issues in the most effective ways to get good engagement and high quality decision making. The importance of the out of meeting engagement and debate. The range of skills required for an effectively functioning board.”

We're also working with a number of external bodies with similar aims to learn from their experience. We're a very small team – but one that's made up of passionate advocates. We're keen to reflect on our experience, learn from others, correct our course when needed and build on our successes.

“We want to broaden awareness of this unique set of opportunities and work with new UKRN partners, reaching a broader audience and inspiring more people”

Applications for 2024 placements open on 11 September and close on 9 October – more information will be available soon on the intranet of each participating regulator. For more information please contact [Kate Mitchenall](#).

Fiona Lennox

*Head of Accountability at Ofcom & Founder and Co-Chair: Next Gen NEDs & Member of Advisory Board
Member Greengross Foundation*

My Next Gen Ned Journey: Bola Odunlami

Why did I apply for the scheme? Applying for the Next Gen NED (NGN) scheme was a game-changer for my career. I stumbled upon the role of a Non-Executive Director (NED) during my time as a Co-opted member of the Students Equality Committee at the University of East London. Observing NEDs question top executives ignited my interest.

This journey inadvertently left behind a trail of digital footprints in pursuit of NED opportunities, which subsequently attracted the attention of NED recruitment agencies asking for upfront fees for headhunting and training.

In the gaps between my tenure with UEL and my employment with Ofcom, I acquired skills and experience that ultimately contributed to my selection for the desired NGN Scheme.

What have I learned? My placement as an observer with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) was enlightening. Under the guidance of my mentor, I grasped big picture thinking in delivering public services. Accountability for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and effective communication were pivotal. Boardroom etiquette became second nature.

Networking improved, emphasising the art of listening and communicating.



What were my highlights? My Next Gen NED journey overflowed with highlights:

- Becoming a trustee with Citizens Advice, leveraging ORR insights, solidified my NED aspirations.
- The ORR experience was a brilliant start, urging me to dive into topics like biodiversity, macroeconomics, and infrastructure ahead of meetings.
- My mentor's guidance before and after board meetings fuelled deeper understanding.

What advice would you give to future applicants? Approach the scheme realistically:

- Embrace a springboard mindset; my ORR placement opened doors to skills and networks.
- Peripheral NED roles, like a Trustee, are steppingstones. Learning from experienced NEDs is key.
- The NGN scheme is a **journey of growth, discovery, and meaningful impact**.
- As an alumnus of the NGN, the community of Interest meetings continue to offer valuable on-going learning, networking, and etiquette insights.

“The Next Gen NED scheme transcends a mere program—it's a journey of discovery, empowerment, and meaningful impact on one's career”

Bola Odunlami

Project Manager at Ofcom & UKRN Next Gen NEDs Member & Member Board of Trustees at Citizens Advice

UKRN News:

Recent publications: [Cost of Capital Annual Report](#)

Upcoming Events:

- UKRN remain heavily involved in planning for events at the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood in November and at Stormont in Northern Ireland early in the new year. These events will give our members and a few key stakeholders, the opportunities to engage directly with Scottish MSP's and Irish MLA's, as well as discussing key areas of interest around regulation within the devolved nations
- UKRN are again teaming up with our colleagues at WIG in early December to deliver a virtual workshop around the '[Role of regulation in driving Net Zero](#)'. More details will follow in the next edition of the newsletter, but we expect and hope that this will be very well supported by members, as have the last two events we have offered with WIG



Thank you and goodbye from the interns!

A massive thank you to the UKRN team for hosting us this summer, it has been lovely working and collaborating with you all!

Thank you especially to Kev (pictured) and Charley for all your never-ending support and guidance this summer, we couldn't have done it without you 😊



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For questions about the UKRN, or to sign-up to our newsletter, please get in touch with:

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