RESP Forums Write-up

March - April 2025







Welcome to the write-up of our first round of RESP (Regional Energy Strategic Planning) Forums.

Within this document, we're pleased to share details about the Forums across all 11 RESP regions and nations, and give you an opportunity to see the outputs, and the views, that were shared with us during these events.

As I reflect, it sometimes seems strange to think of RESP as being new, but it is only 18 months since NESO (the National Energy System Operator) was asked to deliver RESP by Ofgem, in November 2023. Since then, the RESP team has been recruited, and the details of what we're delivering has become clearer, but the core purpose is unchanged; to put stakeholders and local areas at the heart of energy planning, with a whole energy system approach.

We can't deliver RESP without talking to local stakeholders. I am therefore delighted by the number of attendees we have had at the Forums, and the breadth of sectors represented. Our first round of RESP Forums was an opportunity to explain who we are, detail the work we are doing, and to hear your feedback, as we start to set up our regional teams and deliver our first outputs to support the next electricity distribution networks' business plan cycle.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all those who attended a Forum and contributed to the polls, surveys and the Q&A. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the RESP regional teams, who ran their Forums as well as those who worked behind the scenes. It's been a considerable team effort.

This is the start of our implementation of RESP. Our approach is to put local stakeholder voices at the centre of our plans. Our next round of RESP Forums will be in Summer 2025, when we will share information on the progress we are making on our tRESP outputs, and how regional insights are informing those outputs. I hope that you will be able to join our next round of Forums, and continue to contribute to developing the plans in your area.

Thank you,

Bridget Hartley

Head of Regional Energy Strategic Planning





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1. Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to provide a written record of round 1 of the RESP Forums, held during March-April 2025. It captures the details of the meetings, what participants and NESO said, and what we (NESO) will do next.

2. Insights and Actions Summary

This section provides a summary of the insights that we gathered from Forum 1 and the actions that we'll take as a result. Further details are provided in Section 4.

	Insight	NESO Action	Timescale	How to get involved
	(you said)	(we will)		
1.	Forum 1 attendees were from across a range of sectors (local government, energy industry, and consultancy being the most represented), with a broad range of experiences in energy planning, and with 31% new to NESO	Continue to promote Forums through a range of channels to maximise the opportunities for stakeholders to sign up	Promotion for Forums 2 will start in June 2025	Sign up for Forum 2 Sign up for the NESO newsletter and select 'Strategic Energy Planning' at neso.createsend.com/h/ d/918820CF9659BD06
2.	91% of Forum 1 attendees felt the purpose of tRESP was clear, 9% felt it wasn't	At future Forums, continue to ask attendees if the content is clear and ask for suggestions to further improve clarity	June/July 2025 (Forum 2)	Participate in Forum 2 (See point 1, above)
3.	55% of attendees felt the Forum purpose was clear, 39% somewhat,	Make the purpose of the Forums publicly available and provide recaps in meetings	June 2025 – include as part of Forum 1 write-up	See Section 3 of this document





	Insight	NESO Action	Timescale	How to get involved
	(you said)	(we will)		
	and 6% felt it was not clear	where relevant, with a view to maintaining high levels of stakeholder understanding		
4.	Forum 1 attendees outlined a number of areas that they would like tRESP Strategic Investment, to contribute to	Provide an open opportunity for any stakeholder to submit further details of energy needs to inform NESO's assessment for areas of Strategic Investment need	May-June 2025	Respond to the tRESP strategic investment request for information – available from Regional Energy Strategic Planning (RESP) National Energy System Operator
5.	Forum 1 attendees suggested a number of additions for inclusion in the tRESP plan	tRESP will look at how to incorporate additional bottom-up data into its pathways, as well as give greater clarity on investment need. Further suggestions will also be considered as part of the design of enduring RESP	April 2025+	Further details on pathways at Forum 2
6.	43% of attendees feel their comments will be taken on board, 51% feel they may be, and 6% feel their comments will not be taken on board	Provide 'you said, we did' updates at all Forums, with a view to increasing attendee confidence that their comments will be taken on board	From Forum 2 (June/July 2025) onwards	Continue to attend and participate in Forums
7.	78% of attendees are planning to attend the next Forum, 20% are	Forums to include a draft (subject to change) agenda for the	From Forum 2 (June/July	Continue to attend and participate in Forums





	Insight	NESO Action	Timescale	How to get involved
	(you said)	(we will)		
8.	undecided, and 2% are not planning to attend Attendees scored Forum 1 7.5 out of 10 for relevance to their organisation / group / community	upcoming Forum, with a view to providing attendees planning to attend the next meeting with details on topics to be covered Provide a range of opportunities for stakeholders to engage in RESP, including but not limited to, Forums	2025) onwards From Forum 2 (June/July 2025) onwards	Continue to attend and participate in Forums
9.	68% of attendees (854 of 1,263) used the interactive Menti tool to respond to poll questions, and to ask questions for the Q&A sections of the agenda	Share details of Menti in advance of the Forums to enable attendees to prepare to use it during the meetings.	From Forum 2 (June/July 2025) onwards	Continually review the tools we use to engage stakeholders to ensure we are being as inclusive as possible
10.	N/A	Publish Forum 1 slides	April 2025	NESO Forums March-April 2025 slides
11.	We were asked to publish the slides from Forum 1 and publish answers to the questions raised during Forum 1	Publish a RESP FAQ document, including questions asked at Forum 1	June 2025	This will be published on our website: Regional Energy Strategic Planning (RESP) National Energy System Operator





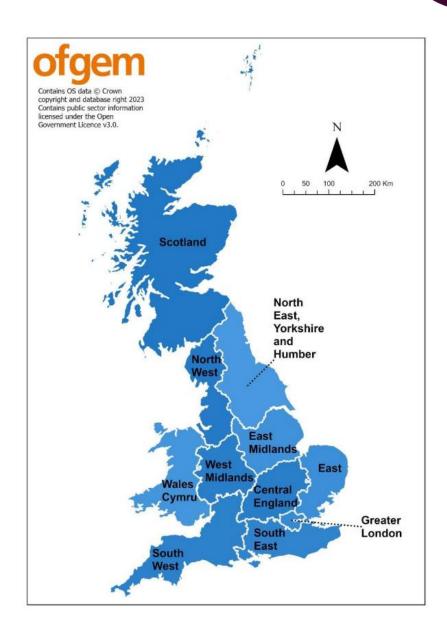
3. Forums Context, Scope and Purpose

Context

In November 2023, Ofgem asked NESO to deliver a new RESP (regional energy strategic planner) role. The purpose of RESP is to ensure that local areas get the energy distribution infrastructure they need to support the delivery of local and national ambitions for growth and net zero. To help ensure this is achieved, NESO will be producing RESPs (regional energy strategic plans) for the eleven RESP regions and nations. The below map sets out the eleven areas, as defined by Ofgem:







Ofgem and NESO share the view that the RESP role can only be successfully delivered through NESO working closely with local and regional stakeholders, ensuring their needs underpin the plans we develop. This view is embedded as part of the definition of the role, setting out that NESO's approach needs to be place-based, transparent and collaborative.

For that reason, NESO has established RESP Forums as one part of our developing programme of engagement activities. In concert with the other channels we'll be developing, the Forums provide us with an important space to build relationships

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with our stakeholders, understand their needs, and ensure their views shape and underpin our approach to the delivery of the new RESP role.

Further details on the RESP role are set out in the RESP Policy Framework, as published by Ofgem in April 2025¹.

Forums Scope and Purpose

The scope of the Forums is set out below:

What

- Channel for engaging stakeholders in RESP
- Provide an opportunity for feedback and questions
- Online meetings of up to 90 minutes
- Set format delivered in each region/devolved nation, with place-based variation

Who

- Inclusive open to all stakeholders with an interest in RESP and strategic spatial energy planning; all levels of seniority, and all levels of technical knowledge
- Transparent in approach but attendee lists not shared publicly and names not shared in Q&A

Why

Introduce the concept of regional energy strategic planning

 Introduce the RESP regional teams to their stakeholders, including contact details for further conversations

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/decision/regional-energy-strategic-plan-policy-framework-decision





- Signpost what's next, what regional energy strategic planning will mean for stakeholders, and how to get involved
- Gather feedback to help shape key aspects of RESP, including our engagement approach and the transitional RESP (tRESP) project

When

Quarterly, linked to key milestones within the RESP programme

RESP Forums 1 Delivery

Prior to the first round of Forums taking place, an 'Introduction to RESP' webinar was held, to ensure all attendees and potential attendees had the opportunity to learn about RESP and NESO. The webinar was open to anyone with an interest in RESP, and held online to maximise participation. A recording of the webinar is available on NESO's website here.

The Forums took place in all RESP regions and nations. They were promoted through a range of different channels including NESO's website, direct invites, through some of our stakeholders' networks, and on social media. Further details are set out in Annex 1.

Each Forum was delivered by the RESP team for that region / nation.

The Forums were consistent across all eleven regions and nations. Small changes to the slides were made over the course of the eleven Forums to aid with clarity; the final version of the slide-deck is available here. Each RESP team also added regional variation and local knowledge to their Forum.

Region / Nation	Date of Forum
Scotland	21st March
South West	25th March
North East, Yorkshire & Humber	31st March





Region / Nation	Date of Forum
East Midlands	1st April
North West	2nd April
South East	7th April
East	8th April
Wales	8th April
West Midlands	9th April
Central England	10th April
Greater London	11th April

RESP Forum Content

The RESP Forums were designed to ensure that both those with detailed knowledge, and those with less experience in energy planning, could take part.

There were regular breaks throughout the Forums to discuss the poll results and to allow for Q&As.

The Forum agenda was:

- 1. Introduction, Welcome and Housekeeping
- 2. An introduction to NESO and RESP an introduction that provided a brief overview of what NESO is, what SEP is, how RESP fits in and, the RESP Key Milestones over the next two years
- 3. Introduction to tRESP an overview of what tRESP is, the regulatory framework, the objectives of tRESP, the channels for engagement for tRESP
- 4. tRESP Pathways & Strategic Investment Deep-Dive a tRESP input and output overview, an overview of the tRESP Pathways and Strategic Investment, an explainer on tRESP Pathways, an overview of potential





strategic investment initiatives, a proposed high-level process for strategic investment, what's next for tRESP

5. Next Steps and Close

How we Engaged During the Forums

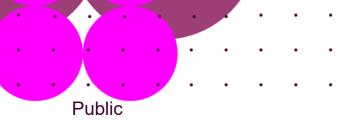
During the Forums NESO used a third-party engagement tool called Menti.

We used Menti in order to gather insights and feedback from attendees, to help guide the development and next steps for tRESP and RESP. Some of the questions put to attendees were closed / multiple choice, and some of the questions were open text.

As well as poll questions, Menti enabled attendees to submit questions for the Q&A sections throughout the Forums. Hundreds of questions were submitted throughout the Forums, many of which were answered during the sessions. In the interests of openness and transparency, and as part of our approach to maximising the opportunities for stakeholders to engage with RESP, we will be publishing an FAQ (frequently asked questions) document on our website. This will cover some of the most common questions we received at the first round of Forums, as well as the questions that presenters were not able to cover on the day due to time constraints. This document will also cover questions received through other, non-Forum engagements, with our stakeholders.

<u>Key Links</u>

- Introduction to RESP webinar 20th March 2025 recording
- NESO Forums March-April 2025 slides





4. What We Heard at Forums 1 and What We'll do Next

In total, 1,263 people attended the eleven Forums.

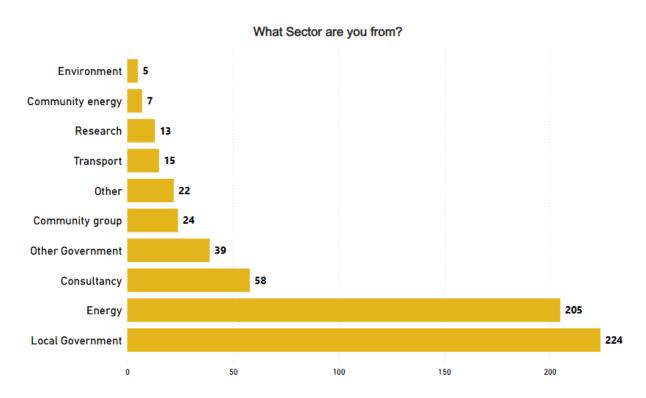
The results shown below have been aggregated across all 11 Forums. The responses to some questions are also available at region/nation level; please refer to Annex 1.

Where attendees were able to provide free text answers, we have summarised their responses into common themes/topics.

This section sets out the insights we gathered from Forum 1 and the actions that NESO will take as a result.

Insight 1 - Forum attendance

Sector



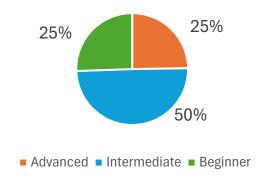
Attendees were from a wide range of sectors and industries, with the three most common responses: energy industry, local government, and consultancy.



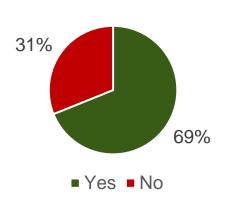


Level of energy planning knowledge

Attendees had a breadth of experience, from beginner (25%), through to intermediate (50%), and advanced (25%).



Have you engaged in other NESO activities?



Just over two-thirds of attendees (69%) had engaged with NESO prior to the Forums, and just under a third (31%) were new to NESO. This highlights that RESP, even whilst in its early stages, has begun reaching new audiences. This aligns with our commitment to be transparent and collaborative, ensuring that local and regional views are at the heart of our work.

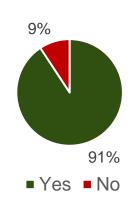
Insight summary: Forum 1 attendees were from across a range of sectors (local government, energy industry, and consultancy being the most represented), with a broad range of experiences in energy planning, and with 31% new to NESO.

NESO action: continue to promote Forums through a range of channels to maximise the opportunities for stakeholders to sign up.

<u>Insight 2 – is the purpose of tRESP clear?</u>

Attendees were asked if the purpose of tRESP was clear, to understand whether the content and messaging during the RESP Forum had been pitched correctly for the audience.

Allowing for a large section of attendees being new to NESO, and with a quarter of attendees







considering themselves having a beginner level of knowledge in energy planning, it is positive to see that the majority of attendees (91%) believed that the purpose of tRESP was clear. This suggests that the content was presented in an understandable way.

Insight summary: 91% of Forum 1 attendees felt the purpose of tRESP was clear, 9% felt it wasn't.

NESO action: at future Forums, continue to ask attendees if the content is clear and ask for suggestions to further improve clarity.

<u>Insight 3 - is the purpose of the Forums clear?</u>

This question was raised near the beginning of each meeting to understand if attendees felt the purpose of the Forums was clear.

Insight summary: 55% of attendees felt the Forum purpose was clear, 39% somewhat, and 6% felt it was not clear.

NESO action: make the purpose of the Forums publicly available, and provide recaps in meetings where relevant, with a view to maintaining high levels of stakeholder understanding.

<u>Insight 4 – tRESP and tRESP strategic investment</u>

Which of your organisation / group / community goals and plans should tRESP contribute to?

Attendees offered a broad range of views in response to this question, reflecting the diverse range of sectors and backgrounds present at the Forums. The common themes were:

- Net zero pathways
- Industrial decarbonisation
- Infrastructure upgrades



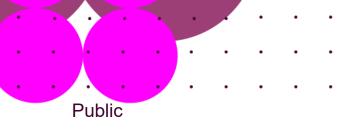


- Heat decarbonisation
- Heat network planning
- Grid infrastructure and reinforcement
- Economic growth
- Fleet electrification
- Local decarbonisation plans
- Community energy projects
- Promotion of green energy projects
- Align with local development plans
- · Promoting sustainable growth
- Support with community engagement

Do you have suggestions on where strategic investment is needed?

Again, there were a wide range of views and suggestions on strategic investment from attendees, with some of the most common themes/suggestions including:

- Grid supply points
- Grid capacity upgrades
- Heat networks
- Activities to reduce energy prices
- Heat pump installation
- Connection investment
- Actions to improve housing insulation
- Local energy systems and heat stores
- Investment in industrial clusters
- Reduction in fuel poverty
- Community and local energy generation facilities to achieve economy of scale
- Tidal power
- Hydrogen planning and activity





- Offshore energy
- Local energy security
- Biomethane
- Removing grid bottlenecks
- Focus on rural areas
- New towns
- Regeneration schemes
- Public transport (in particular, rail)
- Ports
- EV charging points

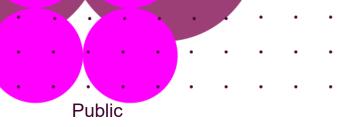
Insight summary: Forum 1 attendees outlined a number of areas that they would like tRESP and tRESP strategic investment to contribute to.

NESO action: provide an open opportunity for any stakeholder to submit further details of energy needs, to inform NESO's assessment for areas of Strategic Investment Need.

Insight 5 - is there anything else you'd like to see in the tRESP plan?

We were keen to understand what further topics attendees would like to see within the tRESP plan. Attendees provided a large and varied list of suggestions, with the most popular areas summarised below:

- A focus on low carbon technologies
- Infrastructure enhancements
- Greater emphasis on green energies and innovation
- Community energy
- Local infrastructure coordination
- Community education
- Increased engagement and communication





- Further clarity and granularity of tRESP plans
- Clarity over investment
- Energy system integration planning
- Environmental and societal considerations
- Scope for flexibility and adaptability to changing needs and requirements / awareness of pace of change
- Realistic approaches to certain technologies
- The journey from tRESP to RESP
- Bottom-up versus top-down planning
- Input from environment organisations
- Importance of water
- Spatial identification for expected investment
- Hydro energy
- New town planning
- Decommissioning plans

Insight summary: Forum 1 attendees suggested some additions for inclusion in the tRESP plan.

NESO action: tRESP will look at how to incorporate greater bottom-up data into its pathways, as well as give greater clarity on investment need. Both activities fit well with the scope and timescales of tRESP, as defined by Ofgem. Further suggestions will also be considered as part of the design of enduring RESP.

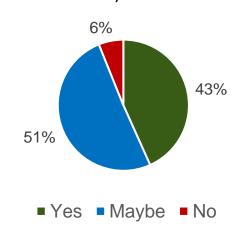
<u>Insight 6 – do you feel your comments will be taken onboard?</u>





Towards the end of the Forums, attendees were asked whether they believed

NESO would take their comments on board. As RESP is underpinned by the views of our stakeholders, this question served as an important check on credibility, and whether NESO needed to do more work to ensure stakeholders felt they would be listened to as part of RESP.



Only 43% felt confident that NESO will take action as a result of their comments. The largest segment

(51%) feels their comments may be taken on board. A minority of attendees (6%) felt that their views will not be taken on board as part of the process to deliver RESP and tRESP.

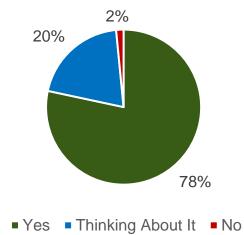
Insight summary: 43% of attendees feel their comments will be taken on board, 51% feel they may be, and 6% feel their comments will not be taken on board.

NESO action: provide 'you said, we did' updates at all Forums, with a view to increasing stakeholder confidence that their comments will be taken on board.

<u>Insight 7 - are you planning to join the next Forum?</u>

This question was put to attendees at the end of the Forums, asking if they intend

to attend the next Forum in June/July 2025.



Most attendees (78%) are planning to attend the next Forum, with one-fifth (20%) undecided and a small number (2%) not planning to attend. A future agenda was not shared, which may have had an impact on the way some attendees voted.





Insight summary: 78% of attendees are planning to attend the next Forum, 20% are undecided, and 2% are not planning to attend.

NESO action: Forums to include a draft (subject to change) agenda for the upcoming Forum, with a view to maximising the number of attendees planning to attend the next meeting.

<u>Insight 8 – how relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community?</u>

Participants were asked to score the RESP Forum out of 10 for its relevance to their organisation, group, or community; with 0 being not at all relevant, and 10 being very relevant. The average score from all Forums was **7.5**, suggesting the majority of attendees found the Forum useful.

Insight summary: attendees scored Forum one 7.5 out of 10 for relevance to their organisation / group / community.

NESO actions:

Ask attendees for suggestions to make the upcoming Forums as relevant as possible to their organisation / group / community.

Provide a range of opportunities for stakeholders to engage in RESP, including but not limited to, Forums.

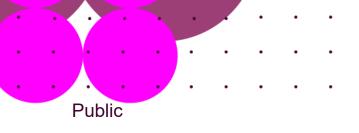
Insight 9 - use of Menti

Insight summary: 68% of attendees (854 of 1,263) used the interactive Menti tool to respond to poll questions and to ask questions for the Q&A sections of the meetings.





NESO action: share details of Menti in advance of the Forums to enable attendees to prepare to use it during the meetings.





Annexes

Annex 1 - Channels used for Forums Promotion

The following external methods / channels were used to promote the Forums:

- 1. Email invitations (from RESP regional teams)
- 2. NESO website article
- 3. NESO events calendar
- **4.** NESO external newsletter 'Energising Progress'
- 5. NESO social media posts LinkedIn
- 6. NESO Strategic Energy Planning Industry Group
- 7. NESO Strategic Energy Planning Societal Forums

RESP also ran an 'Introduction to RESP' webinar, which outlined what RESP is, and its purpose. It was delivered in the lead-up to the Forums, so that stakeholders had the opportunity to have a similar level of knowledge on RESP before joining a Forum.

Additionally, details of the Forums were also shared with stakeholders that operate their own newsletters, networks, events and other channels. They included:

- Ofgem
- Local Authority Networks
- Local Government Association
- Energy Networks Association
- Future Energy Networks
- National Infrastructure Committee
- Energy Systems Catapult

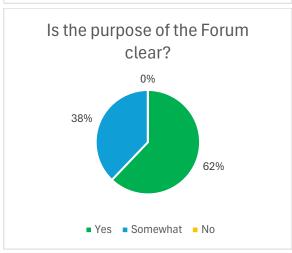


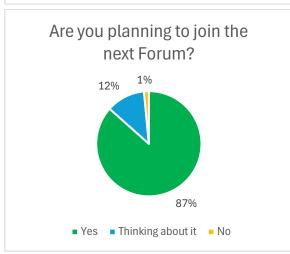


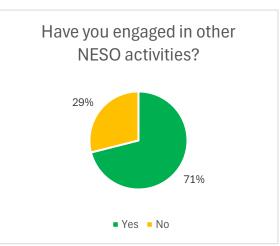
Annex 2 - What Participants Said - Regional / National Breakdowns

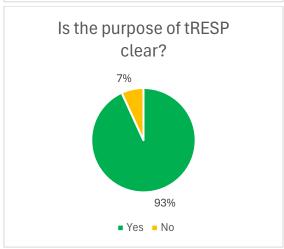
8. Scotland

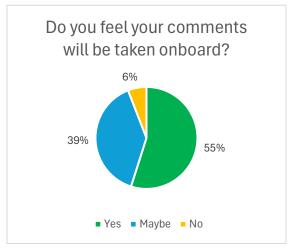










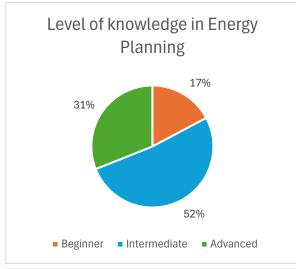


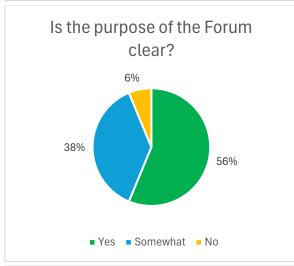
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 7.7



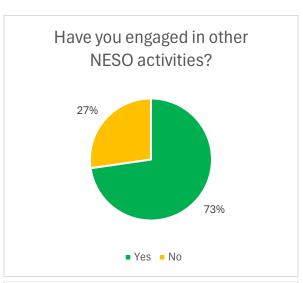


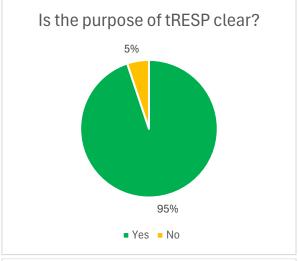
9. South West

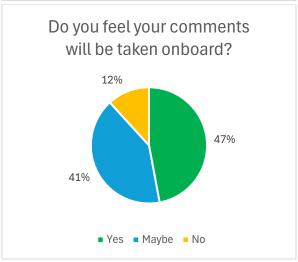










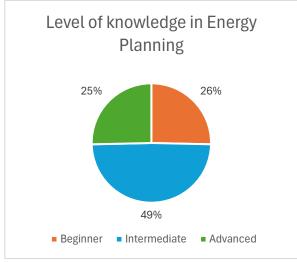


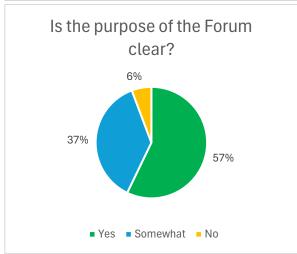
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 7.0

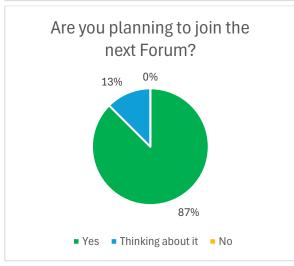


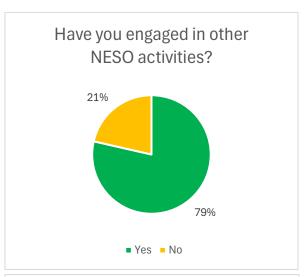


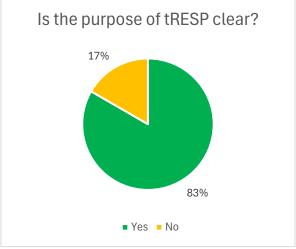
10. North East, Yorkshire & Humber

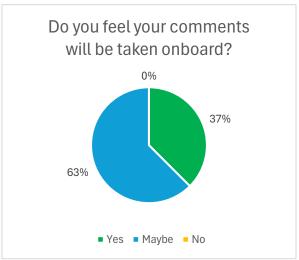










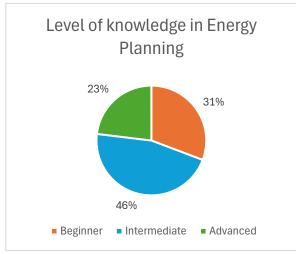


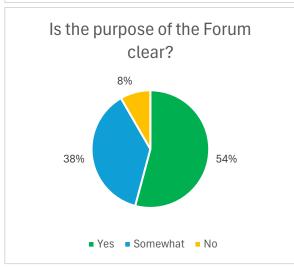
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 8.0

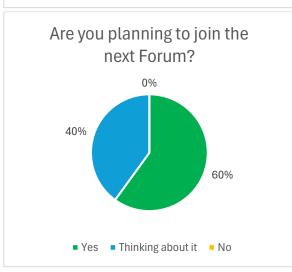


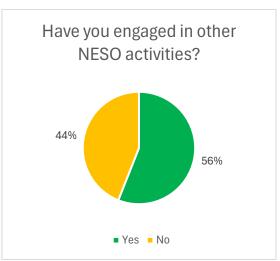


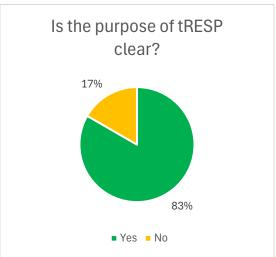
11. East Midlands

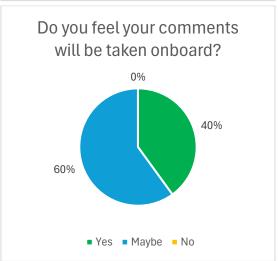










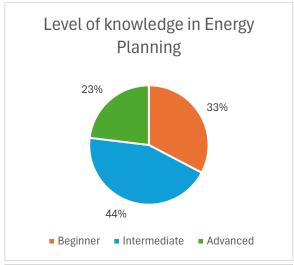


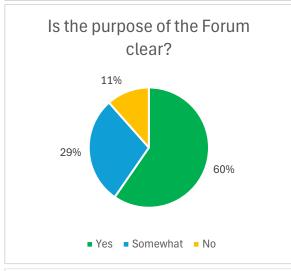
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 5.8

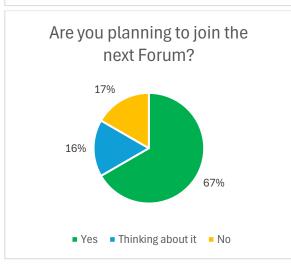


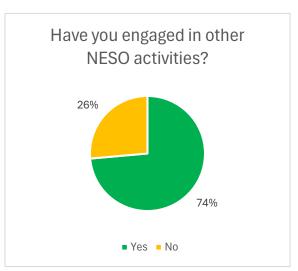


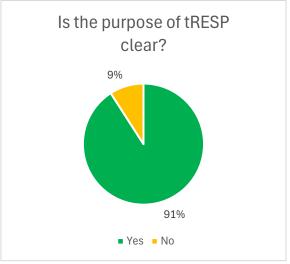
12. North West

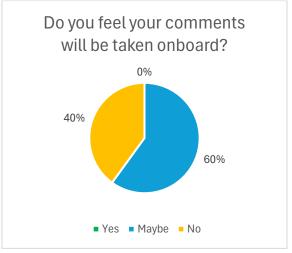










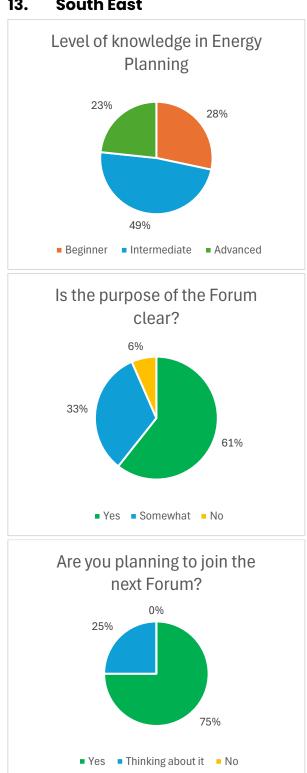


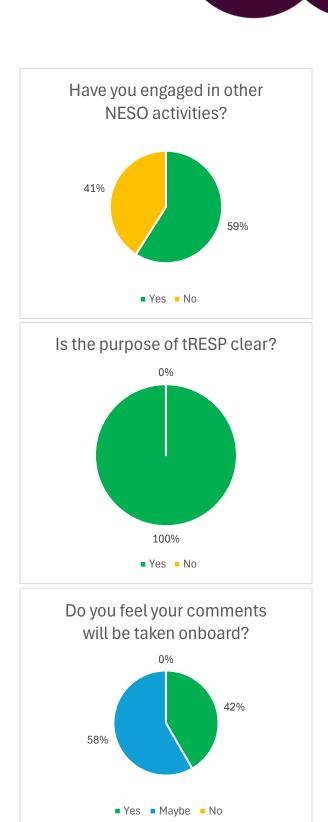
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 4.7





13. **South East**



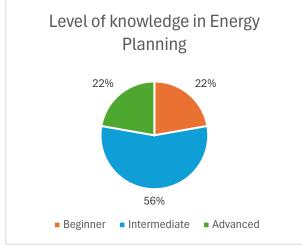


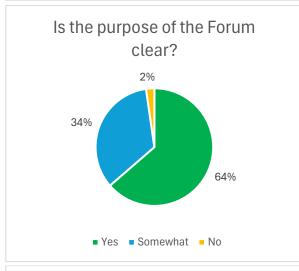
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 8.2

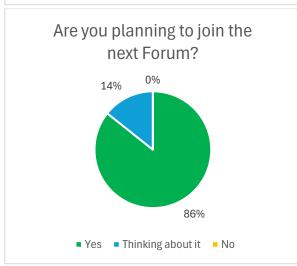


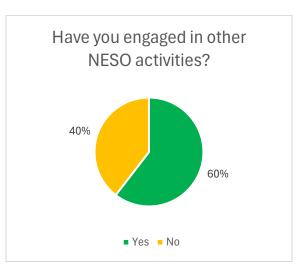


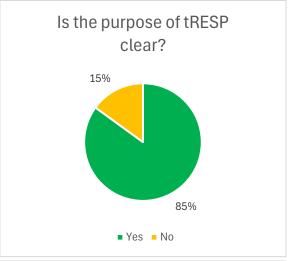
14. East

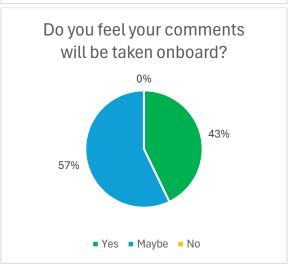










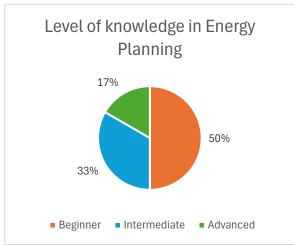


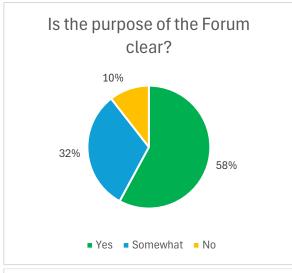
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 7.9

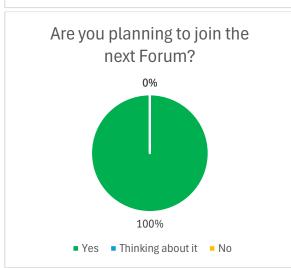


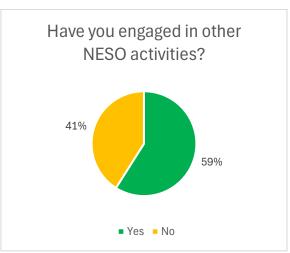


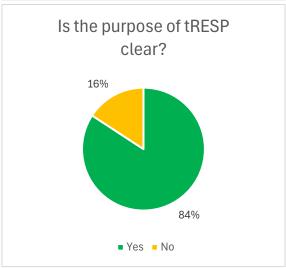
15. West Midlands

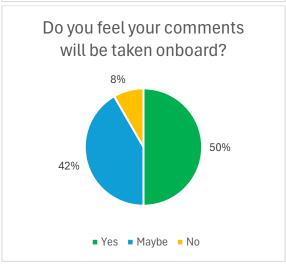










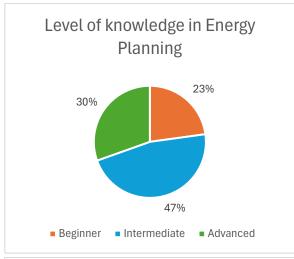


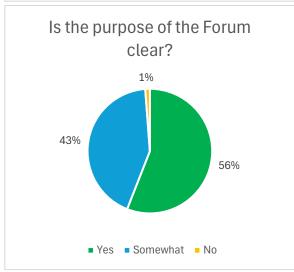
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 8.0

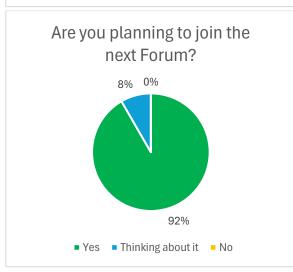


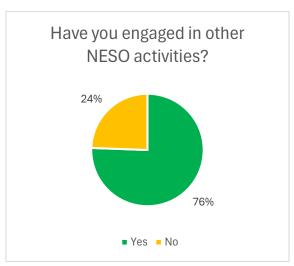


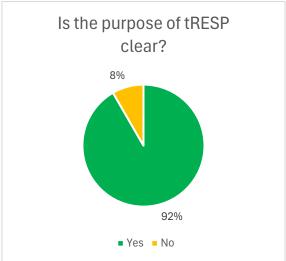
16. Wales

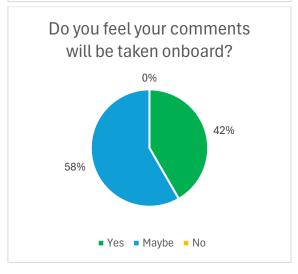










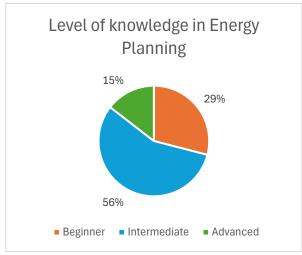


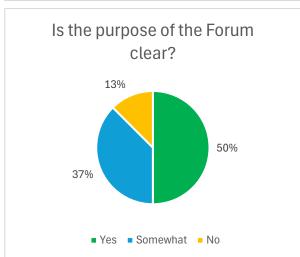
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 7.5

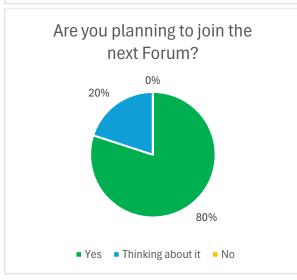


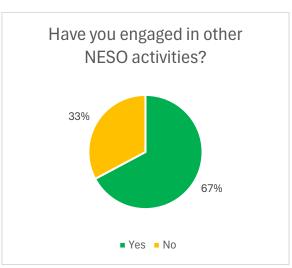


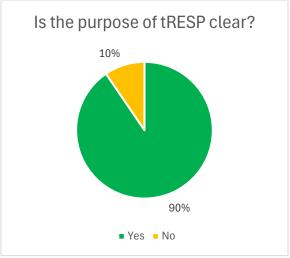
17. Central England

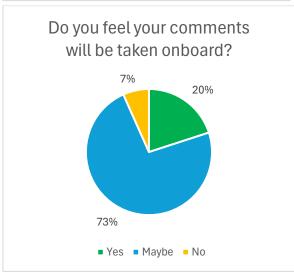










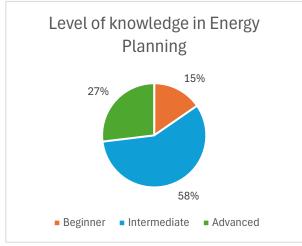


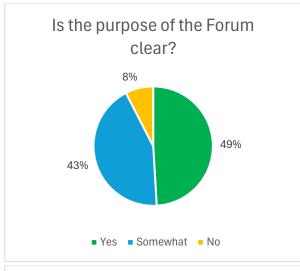
How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 8.0

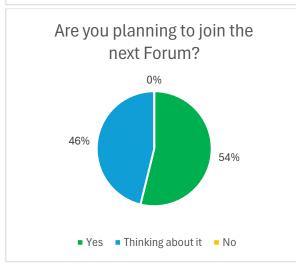


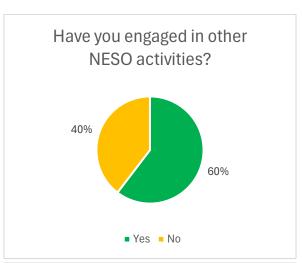


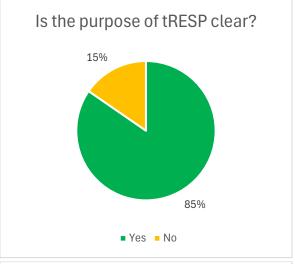
18. Greater London

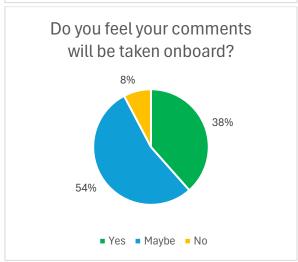












How relevant did you find today's session to your organisation / group / community? 6.9