**Integration Group for the Safety Case (IGSC) Symposium 2024***MOVING TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SAFE DGR – GETTING REAL*

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| **Abstract Title:**  **Supporting and developing the next generation of young professionals at Nuclear Waste Services** | |
| **Abstract (300-500 words):**  The nuclear waste business lifecycle is extraordinarily long-term and inter-generational in nature due to the very long timescales associated with the waste lifecycle. The Nuclear Skills Strategy Group, forecasts through the Nuclear Workforce Assessment that there is a 48.9% estimated level of growth in the nuclear sector required (across both civil and defence) by 2030 to overcome challenges associated with the ageing workforce and retention due to competition with other sectors of the same resource pool. More recently, post-pandemic working patterns have disproportionately impacted younger professionals as social, networking and learning interactions have become more remote in nature. Therefore, it is essential that plans to address this are put in place now to attract, retain and develop high performing, highly skilled, talented and motivated young professionals in the remediation of the UK’s nuclear legacy.  Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), a subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, responded to these challenges in January 2022, and launched an employee-led Young Persons Network (YPN) through the initiative and enthusiasm of several early career individuals. The network’s aim is to support both personal and professional development in an inclusive, non-judgemental, and positive environment, developing and building strong working relationships and encouraging collaboration with other networks across the NDA Group.  Since 2022, the YPN has provided a range of opportunities via three key themes; networking and community building, learning and knowledge sharing and opportunities for career development. From seeking Executive Sponsorship, delivering the YPN strategy, holding monthly topical talks, developing a business case for attendance at European conferences, organising our first ever in-person conference, offering mentoring and reverse mentoring opportunities, running NWS’s first ever work experience programme, re-establishing a Chartership network and most proudly winning an NDA Group Employee Award for Employee Network Excellence, the network has become an important part of life at NWS.  “*The Young Person’s Network creates a framework for young people in Nuclear Waste Services to support their career development, encourage personal growth and to create opportunities for new and different experiences. It’s successful because it’s led and managed by young people in the business. It has become an essential part of NWS approach to attracting and retaining great people in the sector.”* – Simon Hughes, NWS Siting and Communities Director  This poster will explain the working of the NWS YPN and highlight opportunities available to young professionals and key successes within NWS that support personal and professional development, to support the YG session. The NWS YPN is now seeking opportunities to share best practice and lessons learned with other waste management organisations to excite the next generation and their influencers on the career opportunities within the nuclear industry. | |