



Engineering  
our future

**Name:** Sally Nicholson

**Job Role:** Graduate engineer

### What does your job involve?

I work in energy forecasting and part of my job is to ensure there is enough electricity available to meet the country's requirements at all times of the day and night.

There is a phenomenon we call TV pick-up. This is a massive surge in demand for power when millions of people leave their television sets at the end of a programme and switch on kettles or lights. It can cause a sudden increase in demand of up to 10% and we have to be ready for it. To do that, we have to know when the popular programmes are on and what time they finish.

In this country, the electricity supply is so reliable that we just take it for granted. Most people have no idea what goes on behind the scenes and I've found they are really interested in this sort of detail.

### How long have you been working at National Grid?

One year

### What inspired you to study engineering?

Engineering was an obvious career choice for me. My father is an engineer and, as a child, I used to spend hours with him in his workshop. At school my favourite subjects were science and maths so I suppose it was inevitable that I moved into engineering.

### Detail your career path so far

I joined National Grid a year ago after graduating from Newcastle University with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Since then I've spent the last six months keeping an eye on the television; but it's all in a day's work.

### Would you encourage others to consider an engineering career?

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Definitely! I'm very proud of the job I do. It's varied and challenging and I have a real feeling that I'm doing something worthwhile.

Being a woman has made no difference to my job and that's how I like it. I don't want to be treated any differently to anyone else. I'd encourage any woman to consider a career in engineering as there's so much opportunity and you get a real sense that you're contributing something important to society.

### How would you sum up your job in three words?

Varied, challenging and worthwhile.