



SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

WORKING AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

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OUR AMBITION



100,000 customers signed up to our Priority Services Register by 2025



150,000 customers supported by our range of social tariffs by 2025



Establish **multi-utility forum** to improve priority services across **Wales, Herefordshire and Deeside**



Regular surveys of customers to gauge **satisfaction with our services**



At least **five new** resilient communities created



Establish an **annual conference** to share good practice and **help define priorities**



New scheme to help customers return from **hospital**



Help for all customers in **financial difficulty**

FOREWORD

As a company that supplies three million customers with the most essential of public services – across most of Wales, Herefordshire, and parts of Deeside and Cheshire – we already have a big responsibility to fulfil.

As a not-for-profit company, our customers are the centre of everything we do. We do everything we can to earn the trust of our customers by providing the best-possible services, at the lowest-possible cost, while protecting the environment around us.

But this isn't where our responsibility ends. We know that not all customers have the same needs – and that some need support from us above and beyond just supplying clean, safe drinking water and taking away their wastewater safely.

We know that some customers have additional or complex health and learning needs which mean we need to do more to ensure everyone has access to the services and support they need.

We also know that some of the areas we serve have some of the lowest levels of household income in the UK – and that water bills can add to the challenges some households face in making ends meet.

This strategy maps out how we intend to build on the current support we offer those customers that need help to access our services – which ranges from setting ambitious targets for assistance through our Priority Services and financial assistance schemes

to working with customers and partners to maximise the contribution we make to our most vulnerable communities where we are undertaking improvements to their water and wastewater services.

Our approach will be one that involves our customers and works in partnership with support agencies, government and regulators to put in place solutions which are right for the specific needs of those that most need our support.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C. A. Jones".

CHRIS JONES
Chief Executive
Welsh Water

INTRODUCTION

At Welsh Water, we are proud to provide essential public services to our customers – by supplying their drinking water and then carrying away and dealing with their wastewater safely.

In this way, we make a major contribution to public health and to the protection of the Welsh environment. As a not-for-profit business with no shareholders, we can focus exclusively on what is in the best interest of our customers.

Many people will experience vulnerability at some point in their lives – and while customers are in various states of vulnerability they may find it difficult to access our support services or to understand what support is available. The effect of not having access to our services is likely to be very serious.

There are a wide range of factors that contribute to vulnerability; physical or mental health problems which may be temporary or more permanent, financial circumstances or a change in life circumstances such as bereavement, loss of a job or becoming a carer.

We are aware that periods of vulnerability can be long or short-term and can also be recurring. We need our support services to reflect this and to make it easier for people to access us directly or through third parties when appropriate.



MANY PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE
VULNERABILITY AT SOME POINT
IN THEIR LIVES



Vulnerable customers are not a discrete group of people, it is important that we understand the many different factors that are likely to result in someone becoming vulnerable and adapt our services accordingly.

Certain pressures that our customers face have become more acute in recent years and this has been explored in detail by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Poverty in Wales 2018' report.

THIS HIGHLIGHTS:

- While the proportion of households in poverty has fallen over the last 20 years, poverty amongst couples with children is rising a total of 39% of disabled people are in poverty compared to 22% of non-disabled, and the poverty rate for disabled people is among the highest in the UK
- The proportion of people renting privately has increased and this has exposed more people to lower standards and greater insecurity sometimes associated with that sector
- The proportion of people living in social isolation is greatest in lower-income groups.

The report also highlights the strong correlation between affordability and vulnerability, yet they are also two distinct areas which present different challenges for our customers.

Through this strategy, we aim to clarify our understanding of both affordability and vulnerability issues and to set out how we plan to support our customers in vulnerable circumstances.

In developing this strategy we have considered the principles set out by our regulator, Ofwat, in its Vulnerability Focus Report – working to ensure good customer service for all customers; using data to understand customers and identify and support those in circumstances which make them vulnerable; partnering with other utilities and third party organisations to identify and assist customers in situations of vulnerability.

We have also engaged with the independent Customer Challenge Group (CCG) and Consumer Council for Water (CCW) to seek feedback on the likely effectiveness and ambition of our strategy.

We will continue this approach and will work with CCG, CCW and other stakeholders to define the plan to put the strategy into action and regularly review progress.

We are pleased to present this vulnerability strategy, which delivers on our vision of "earning the trust of our customers every day" and will make a significant difference to the most vulnerable households in our region.

IN BRIEF: OUR AREA

- **107,000** adults in Wales have sight loss
- **575,000** adults in Wales and **39,000** adults in Herefordshire have hearing loss
- **11%** of adults in Wales have never used the internet
- **10%** of adults in Wales have some form of dyslexia and **4%** are severely affected
- Wales has the highest proportion of older carers, carers providing over **50 hours** of care a week and the highest proportion of carers under 18 in the UK
- **20,000** people in Wales and **1,200** people in Herefordshire are newly diagnosed with cancer every year
- In 2013, there were **43,400** people with dementia in Wales of which, **41,200** people were 65 or over
- In 2008, **18%** of the population in Wales and **23%** of the population in Herefordshire was over 65. By **2033**, the proportion of the population in Wales over 65 is expected to grow to **26%**
- **13%** of the adult population in Wales reported themselves as being treated for a mental health condition in 2016
- Wales has a higher proportion of people with an 'activity limiting' health problem or disability at **12%** of the population (limited a lot) and a further **11%** (limited a little). Comparative figures for England are **8.5%** and **9.4%** (2013)



11% OF ADULTS IN WALES
HAVE NEVER USED
THE INTERNET



WHAT WE WILL DO

Supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances is an important part of what Welsh Water stands for.

As a not-for-profit company with no shareholders, we place our customers at the heart of all the decisions we make – and most importantly, we try to act in their interests in everything we do.

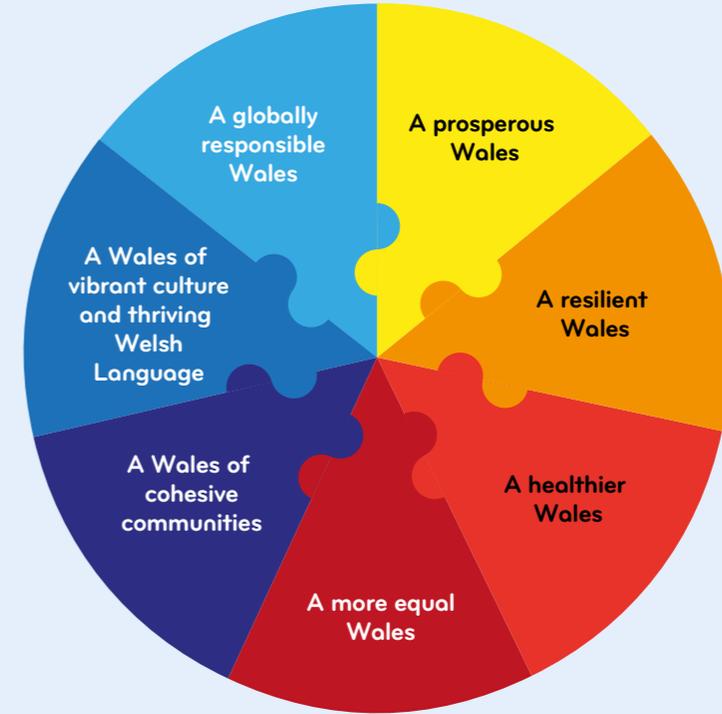
We know that no two lives are the same, and that we need to be more flexible and responsive to deliver services in a way that suits our customers' circumstances and their needs.

This is an essential part of our Welsh Water 2050 vision, which details how we can best tackle some of the biggest challenges facing us over the next three decades – including rising customer expectations and the challenges of the digital economy.

It also reflects the aims of the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, which encourages us to act in the best interests of future generations in our decision making.

We have a good track record of supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances, something which is recognised by agencies and support organisations.

However, we have ambitions to do more to make sure that the people who need our help can access it.



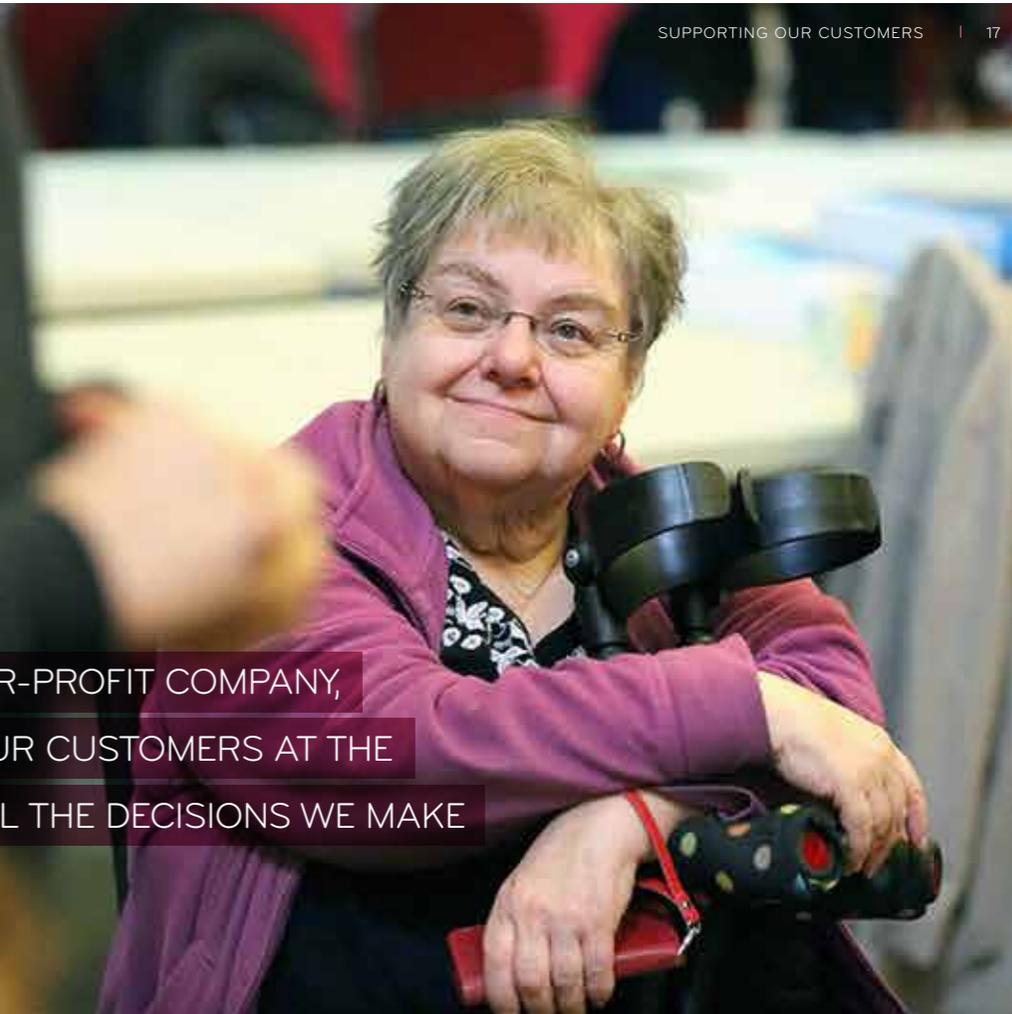
WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

WHAT WE WILL DO

- We will raise awareness of the support available to customers
- We will pro-actively target those likely to be in need of support and are harder to engage
- We will work with partners to help more people access our support
- We will involve customers and our network of over 180 partners to help us identify those needing support
- We will make better use of community hubs to raise awareness of the support available, in particular rolling our water resilient community model in other parts of Wales, Herefordshire and Deeside
- We will play a leadership role in providing employment skills and opportunities to people in some of our more challenged communities
- We will engage with people to find out better how they want to be communicated with
- We will work towards streamlining our services with others, so customers don't need to apply to several agencies for the support they need
- We will help people out of water poverty by providing money saving and benefit advice
- We will train our people to be able to identify the signs of vulnerability and empower them to take action



AS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMPANY,
WE PLACE OUR CUSTOMERS AT THE
HEART OF ALL THE DECISIONS WE MAKE



OUR HELP

There are many ways in which a customer may find themselves in vulnerable circumstances – it may be that they have a long-standing health condition or disability, or they may have experienced a short-term change in their everyday life which makes it more difficult to access services in the way they need to.

It is important that we recognise when this happens and do what we can to help.

Those customers with particular requirements due to their age, health, medical condition or disability can register with us to receive a service that is adapted to meet their needs. Additionally we will improve support to help low-income households pay their water bills.

We are passionate about extending the reach of our support, as well as improving the services we offer. Therefore, we have developed a network of over 180 partners across local authorities, charities, support organisations and other utility companies to raise awareness of our services, provide training to their teams and support debt advice.

This includes Citizens Advice, Cardiff Foodbank and StepChange.

Priority Services Register (PSR)

The register makes sure we have the information we need to help those that need it most. This includes particular needs due to age, health, medical conditions or extra communication. Also, if the water supply is interrupted for any reason, we can get in touch with those on our register as soon as possible to make sure they have access to water until it's fixed.

We currently have around 27,000 registered, which is one of the highest in the sector. But we have set ourselves the challenging target of increasing this to 100,000 by 2025. We rely on customers and support organisations to register details of customers who need our help with us.

We need to raise awareness of this service so that the customers who need to be registered know about it; we also need to make the process accessible and easy. These are areas we are constantly trying to improve.

Social Tariffs

We now support more than 100,000 customers with our social tariffs and debt-relief plans, which support our lowest-earning customers. We serve more low-income customers than any other water company in Wales and England.

Our support plans include:

- Our flagship tariff HelpU, which caps the bills of around 55,000 customers at less than £200 a year, and WaterSure Wales, which provides support to households in receipt of benefits with large families

or someone with a medical condition that requires a significant amount of water

- Our Customer Assistance Fund – which helps reduce the arrears of customers in financial difficulty

But we are aware we are not reaching all of those who need our help, especially those most in need, which is why we are piloting as part of the Water Resilient Community a project in the Rhondda Fach to better understand how we can better reach those who really need our help.

We work with a range of organisations to identify customers who could benefit from our social tariffs and other support – as part of our commitment to help those who genuinely struggle to pay.

Phyllis Collins, from Port Talbot, was helped to sign up to our flagship tariff, HelpU, by Katrina Bradley from Warm Wales, which works with public and private partners to help provide homes with affordable warmth and to alleviate fuel poverty.

"Katrina from Warm Wales signed me up to the scheme and helped me fill in the forms. I was paying £45 a month but now paying £17 per month which is a great saving for me. I am very grateful for this"

HelpU customer Phyllis Collins, aged 85



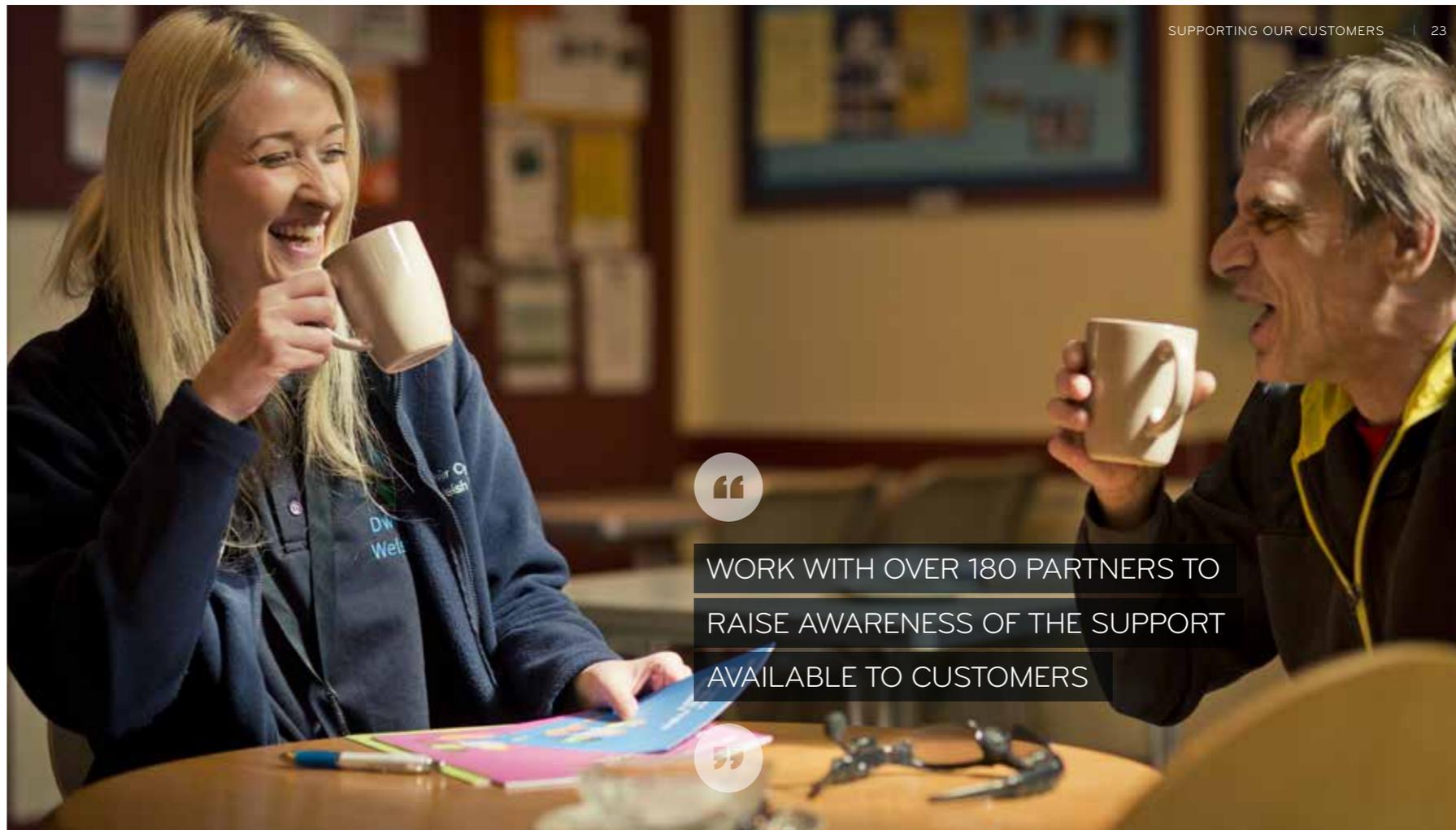
OUR WORK

To help fulfil our ambitions to help all customers who need extra support, we work with a range of organisations to raise awareness of the support available to customers, and to maximise the support offered to customers.

This joint work allows us to not only support great work going on in other organisations, but also helps us identify customers who could be eligible for support from us but aren't aware of it.

As part of this approach, we work with debt advice charities and organisations to signpost customers who use their services to available support.

This includes working with organisations including Citizens Advice, debt advice charity StepChange, Cardiff Foodbank, and fuel poverty charity Warm Wales.



WORK WITH OVER 180 PARTNERS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO CUSTOMERS



As part of our commitment to supporting our most vulnerable customers, we launched an important pilot scheme, in partnership with Cardiff Foodbank, designed to raise awareness of the range of support schemes available for low-income customers, including our HelpU social tariff.

Colleagues from our Affordability team have regularly attended Foodbank drop-in sessions across the capital, where they talk to Foodbank users about how our schemes can help reduce their bills and support them to pay them more sustainably.

This helps customers address any existing arrears they may have, as well as reducing bills to sustainable levels for those who struggle to pay their bills.

This not only supports them to make sustainable payments, but also seeks to reduce levels of stress and the effect on mental health of those who find it difficult to pay their bills.

Ulf Dahlström, a Foodbank service user from Llanedeyrn in Cardiff who signed up to HelpU last year, said: *"I signed up to the scheme when I went into my local Foodbank. One of the women there was from Welsh Water and she told me Welsh Water could help me with my bills.*

"I was thousands of pounds in arrears. I am on benefits. There was no way I had that type of money. I signed up to this scheme – and within six months half the debt would be cleared. Within 12 months, the whole debt will be cleared.

It was a great weight off my shoulders, because I won't owe this money that I haven't got – I don't have to find this money I haven't got."



IT WAS A GREAT WEIGHT
OFF MY SHOULDERS



OUR HELP: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Welsh Water isn't just a water and wastewater company – we see ourselves at the heart of the communities we serve.

And as part of the community, we work to make sure we can make a difference to those who may find themselves in challenging circumstances.

Part of that work is playing an active part in helping young people develop, as a major employer in Wales and Herefordshire, we provide employment and training to more than 3,000 people across our business; we also provide information about

the work we do to the next generation of customers through our education work.

In addition to the work we do with more than 180 organisations to support customers in vulnerable circumstances, we work with the Prince's Trust in Wales, which provides education and training to young people who are not in education, employment or training.

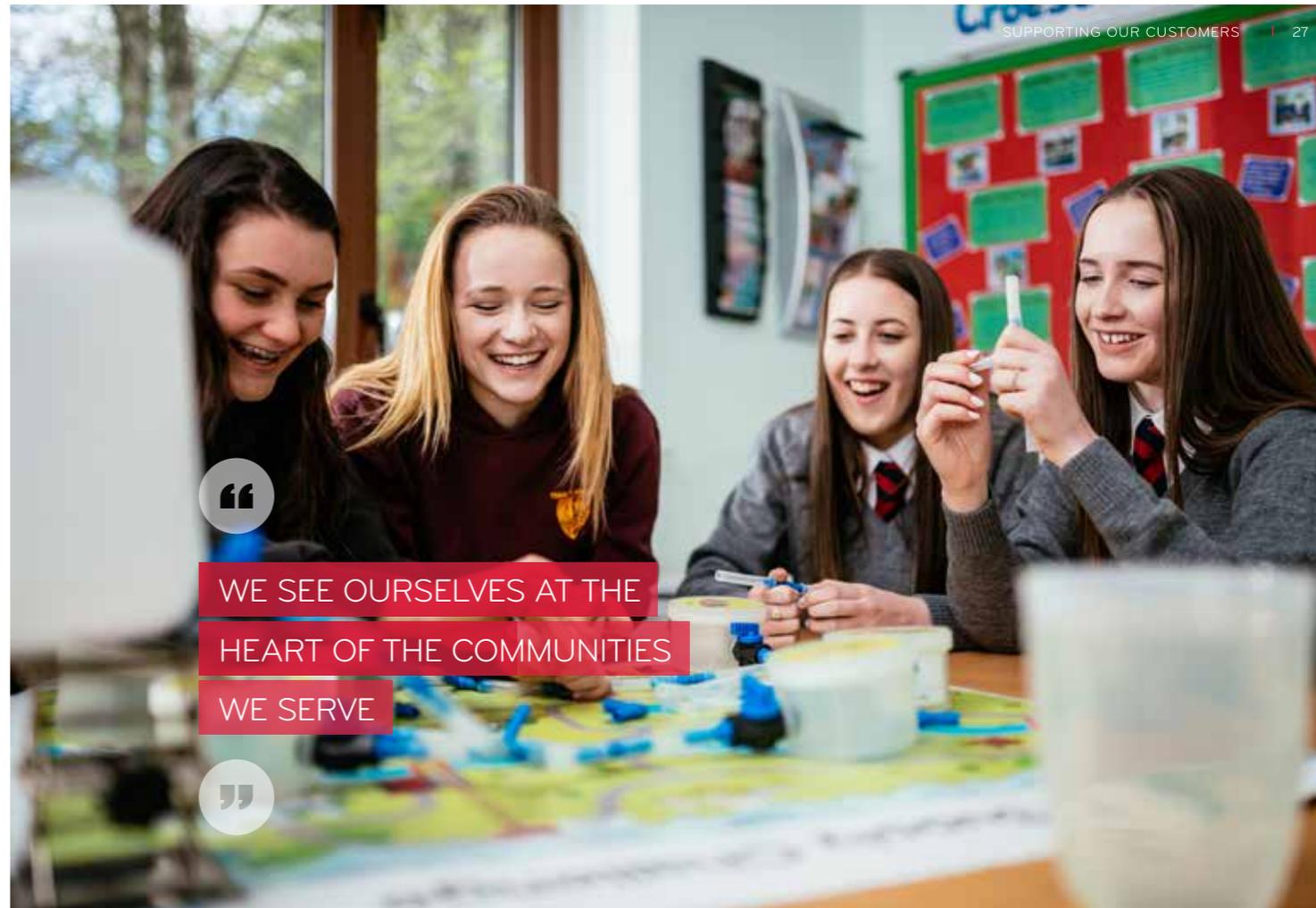
As well as fundraising, where our graduates are set a challenge to raise at least £10,000 each year, we participate in the Get Into Programme, which provides young people between 16-30 help to develop skills and direct experience to improve their employment opportunities.

We firmly believe that our company benefits from diversity within our workforce and our work has been recognised by organisations such as Chwarae Teg and CBI as examples of best practice. We have committed to the WISE 10 step programme

and are a Stonewall Diversity Champion.

Finally, we work with schools across our operating area to educate young people on the opportunities available in STEM subjects, particularly for hard-to-reach groups who are under-represented in the water industry.

In the past two years, our education team has reached more than 125,000 pupils across our four education centres and in our school outreach programme.



“

WE SEE OURSELVES AT THE
HEART OF THE COMMUNITIES

WE SERVE

”

PRINCE'S TRUST CYMRU JOBSEEKERS

A group of 12 young people came into Welsh Water's St Mellons contact centre in Cardiff, to learn customer service skills and to receive training from the company's employees and training providers.

This initiative is delivered in partnership with youth charity The Prince's Trust Cymru, which works to empower young people to get into jobs, education and training through a variety of programmes, including the Get into Customer Services programme.

Young people were hosted by our Customer Services business, which houses all of our customer contact services. Throughout the programme, the group were given training on employability skills, including activities such as CV writing and taking part in job interviews with our managers.

Following their time with us, all participants in the programme gained valuable skills and experience to improve their employability, while 10 of the 12 were offered a permanent position within the business. We have also expanded our work with this Prince's Trust Cymru programme and are now also participating in the Get Into Engineering scheme.



“
EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE
TO GET INTO JOBS
”

OUR STRATEGY



DATA

We will work with other utility companies, government and government agencies to pro-actively identify customers likely to need our help.

We will also provide our customers with online tools that will help them to understand the benefits that they are entitled to.



PRIORITY SERVICES

We will improve the support we provide to customers in vulnerable circumstances, based on what those customers tell us would help them, and we will increase the number registered for Priority Services. We will also improve our understanding of the temporary factors that may impact on customers and look to how we need to adapt our services as a result.

We will also keep the Priority Services Register under

regular review to make sure support is reaching people who need it – and if customers no longer need that support, we can update the register to reflect their circumstances. We know that it is important that we safeguard the information that we hold on our Priority Services Register and therefore we will work to the highest security standards expected under the General Data Protection Regulation.



FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY

We will make sure that we have schemes to identify and help low-income households, when they need it, as well as providing advice on how to reduce charges in other ways (such as having a meter and water efficiency). We will also support people moving out of poverty by providing benefit advice.



PARTNERSHIPS

We will build on our existing network of partners, ensuring that we are working with the representatives of customers with specific needs to raise awareness of our services, as well as improving what we do. We will work closely with our partners to ensure they understand our support services, so they to better work with our clients.



TRAINING

We will train our people (and partners) to recognise and understand the factors that will make customers vulnerable, and empower them to take the decisions needed to ensure that every vulnerable customer gets the help they need.

OUR PLAN



“

LLANDEGFEDD RESERVOIR VISITOR CENTRE, WHICH IS FORMALLY RECOGNISED AS A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY SITE

”

OUR PLAN: PRIORITY SERVICES

We currently have around 27,000 of our customers on our Priority Services Register, approximately 2% of our customers. The Register ensures we are able to provide a service that meets the needs of the customers that are registered, and allows customers to nominate a representative to speak on their behalf if needed.

The register keeps a record of each customer's preferred communication method, this ensures we can efficiently contact that customer and are able to meet their specific needs. It also ensures they are given priority and assistance when their water or wastewater

services are interrupted. For example, in the event of an interrupted supply of water, we deliver bottled water to customers we know need it because of a medical condition, like at-home dialysis or for nursing mothers.

However we want to do more for our vulnerable customers and have set ourselves the challenge to grow the numbers on our Priority Services Register to 100,000 by 2025. There are opportunities to work with other utility companies that also have their own Priority Services Registers to ensure we are sharing information that will best serve those who most need it.

This would also streamline services and stop duplication of effort and resources and would stop individuals having to answer the same questions from different agencies.

We also know there are far more people in need to this service than we currently have registered – and that some people on our register may no longer need our service. We have data that shows more than half (56%) of our customers aren't aware of the additional support that's available, and that energy companies have higher numbers of customers registered (8% of customer total).

So we will raise awareness of the extra support available and work with others, including other utility companies, to ensure streamlined services to benefit all.

WE WILL:

- Carry out research regularly to understand customer satisfaction with the services we offer and to identify how we can improve
- Regularly contact everyone on the register to ask if their circumstances have changed and reconfirm their consent
- Grow the number of customers registered for Priority Services so that we have 100,000 customers registered by 2025.
- Expand the range of communication channels customers can use to contact us to tell us about their needs
- Work with partner organisations to promote the Priority Services Register to those that use their services and streamline services as and when possible
- Develop our systems so that we are able to record more transient needs which would keep our register clean, removing those that no longer need additional support
- Pro-actively contact customers at risk of repeat flooding or 'no water' events to help them plan and prepare, and update them on longer-term solutions we are working on
- Take into account customer circumstances when dealing with applications in our Developer Services department, ensuring that we recognise where changes are being made because of a disability and reducing or waiving our standard charges, ensuring relevant information is shared with any other relevant department. This will help customers with disabilities return to their homes sooner, and in doing so alleviate the pressure that is placed on hospitals for beds
- Make sure our information to customers on meters, money-saving advice, support with bills and debt, and our Priority Services Register is targeted to those that need it most
- Increase our visits to customer properties to keep customer circumstances up-to-date, and reduce debt building-up on empty
- Ensure that our communications (website, bills and correspondence) are easy to navigate and understandable for vulnerable customers

OUR PLAN: DATA

Personal information is owned by our customers and we will only hold what we need, and use it for the reasons which we collected it for.

We operate to the highest standards of information security and ensure that all customer information, including that on our Priority Services Register, is protected and only used for the purpose of providing support to those customers in vulnerable circumstances.

We will work with our network of over 180 partners to promote our Priority Services Register and, where appropriate, receive referrals from other organisations.

We will also work with other utility companies including Wales & West Utilities and Western Power Distribution to explore how we can best share data to identify vulnerable customers.

We will increase our use of internal and external data to explore opportunities to identify customers who have additional requirements, including sharing information more effectively and using technology to predict when customers may need extra help.

WE WILL:

- Work with partner organisations to explore opportunities where we can share information for the purpose of supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances
- Take part in data science initiatives to gain access to research projects and in collaborations, as well as improve the way in which we use the information we hold in our systems to identify potential vulnerability and target our communications
- Work with the energy sector to explore opportunities to share data to identify customers who could be eligible for further support
- Explore the opportunity to work with local authorities and others on the 'Tell us once' initiative
- Train our employees to capture the information
- we need to understand customer vulnerability, after having asked permission to hold this data
- Improve our systems to automatically flag up
- information which could indicate a customer may need more help

CASE STUDY

RHONDDA FACH WATER RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT

Working alongside our £23 million capital investment in the drinking water network from Maerdy to Pontypridd, the programme aims to understand and support an individual community's needs, working more locally.

Focussing on some of the poorest communities in Wales, this project is looking at ways we can better promote the support for low-income households, knowledge of our Priority Services Register, as well as raising awareness

of the range of ways that these customers can understand water efficiency and other campaigns that can make them more resilient in the longer term.

We also work with these communities to support them through the disruption caused

by the capital investment programme.

The project aligns with the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), as well as the Cwm Taf University Health Board's Well-being Plan.

It also involves extensive working with key stakeholders including the Welsh Government, Cwm Taf Public Service Board, Interlink, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council, Natural

Resources Wales, the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner and housing association Trivallis.

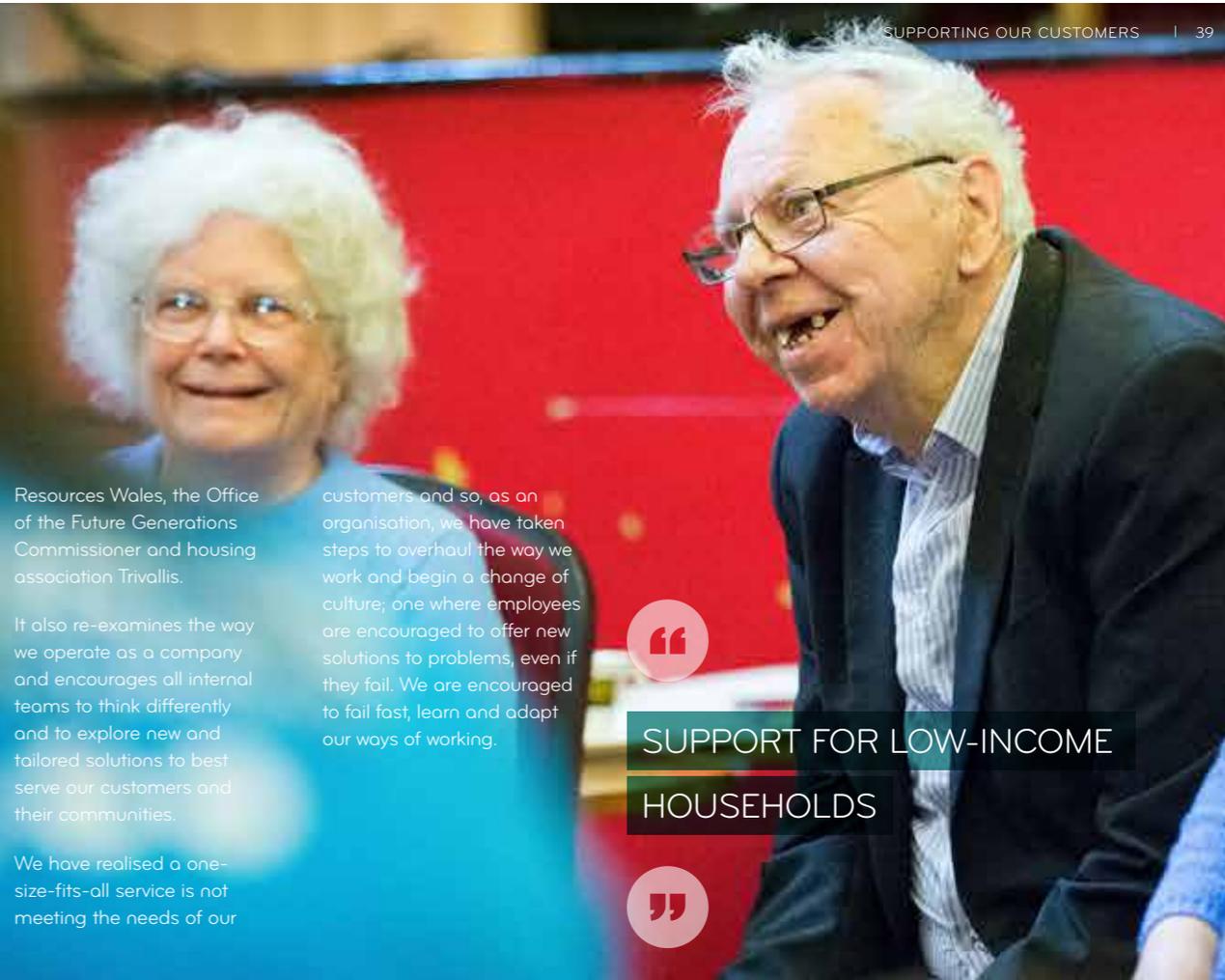
It also re-examines the way we operate as a company and encourages all internal teams to think differently and to explore new and tailored solutions to best serve our customers and their communities.

We have realised a one-size-fits-all service is not meeting the needs of our

customers and so, as an organisation, we have taken steps to overhaul the way we work and begin a change of culture; one where employees are encouraged to offer new solutions to problems, even if they fail. We are encouraged to fail fast, learn and adapt our ways of working.



SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS



IN BRIEF

What we want to achieve

- Involve our customers and community groups to help us better tailor communication after listening to what our customers tell us, learn what works and what doesn't work in the different water-resilient communities.
- An uptake in our social tariffs for the lowest earning households
- Aim to provide water efficiency home audits
- Development of our social tariffs and Priority Services Register
- Creation of tailored education programmes to increase customer involvement, particularly in terms of water efficiency and 'Stop the Block'
- Alignment of investment plans to cause minimum disruption in areas we're doing work
- Increased awareness of our apprenticeship and graduate programmes including tailored support for local students and encourage more applications from women and minority groups
- Raise awareness of the employment opportunities we provide
- Overall we want to work with the communities to play our part in making this area more resilient.
- Run a minimum of five more resilient community projects by 2025.



OUR PLAN: FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY

At present, our support schemes for customers at risk of water poverty are the best in the water industry in Wales and England.

We currently support more than 100,000 customers across our range of social tariffs and support funds, however we know that we need to do more to reach the most vulnerable communities in our area and to ensure we are not giving support to those that no longer need it when it could better serve other customers.

To do this, we will expand our work with support agencies and with stakeholders who

can raise awareness of our social tariffs and support. At the moment, we work with more than 180 organisations to promote the schemes, and we are running pilot projects to trial ways of paying more flexibly, such as flexible direct debit. We also fund the provision of debt advice in Citizens Advice and StepChange.

But we know you don't have to be in water poverty to be at risk of financial vulnerability. Everyday changes in people's lives – like divorce, job loss, or having children – can mean our customers are not able to keep up with payments and are at risk of getting into debt.

We will explore ways in which we can limit the impact of these circumstances – including flexible payment options and payment "holidays" where appropriate.

We will also follow up with every customer on these tariffs to ensure they are on the best support package

for them and that they still require financial support. By cleaning up our database, we will free capacity to support those in most need and can regularly update our systems in case peoples' circumstances change for the better or worse.

Through the Rhondda Fach Water Resilient Community project we are trying to identify how to reach the seldom heard voices in a community, those often in most need but harder to reach. This work will feed into our national programme.

WE WILL:

- Increase the number of customers on one of our financial assistance schemes to 150,000 by 2025
- Ensure that all customers facing financial hardship have received some form of help or financial assistance by 2030
- Contact every customer on our database to ensure they still need support or if they need more tailored support
- Use internal and external data to identify the most financially vulnerable households and work with partner organisations to target our support offerings to them
- Work towards data sharing so that different companies are not inundating households with the same questions
- Train staff to make sure they can identify the signs of financial vulnerability and understand the options for payment flexibility
- Develop our use of data to help identify customers who may be struggling and improve flexibility in how they can pay
- Promote water efficiency advice to customers, in particular encouraging the use of meters where appropriate
- Do research to understand why customers in Wales are less likely to opt for a meter which can save them money
- Take on best practice from other organisations where this has led to a rise in meter installations
- Maintain our commitment to a free phone telephone service
- Trial money-saving surgeries across different areas, such as water resilient communities, to show how customers can lower their bills
- Support financial literacy education within schools

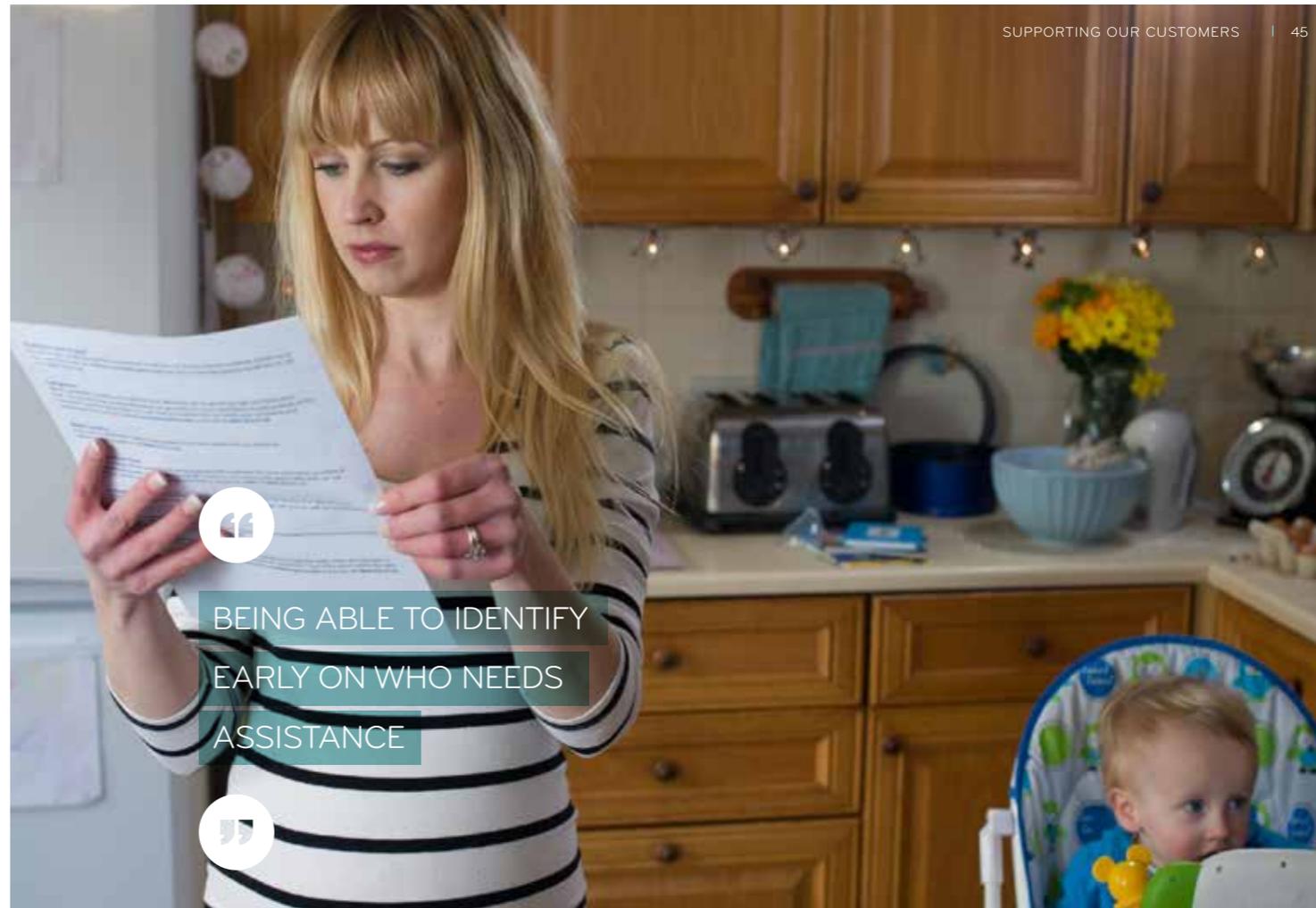
PROPENSITY TO PAY

Understanding who is likely to be eligible for one of our financial support schemes is really important. Our teams have developed predictive models which can identify the likelihood that a customer will go into debt.

This information is then used to target our work to promote social tariffs, as well as help us understand where we might promote different payment plans. It also helps identify customers who do have the means to pay our charges, ensuring that we can take the appropriate and timely recovery action.

The cost of unpaid charges and our collection activities adds £32 to customer bills.

Being able to identify early on who needs assistance and who can afford to pay helps keep charges down for all customers.



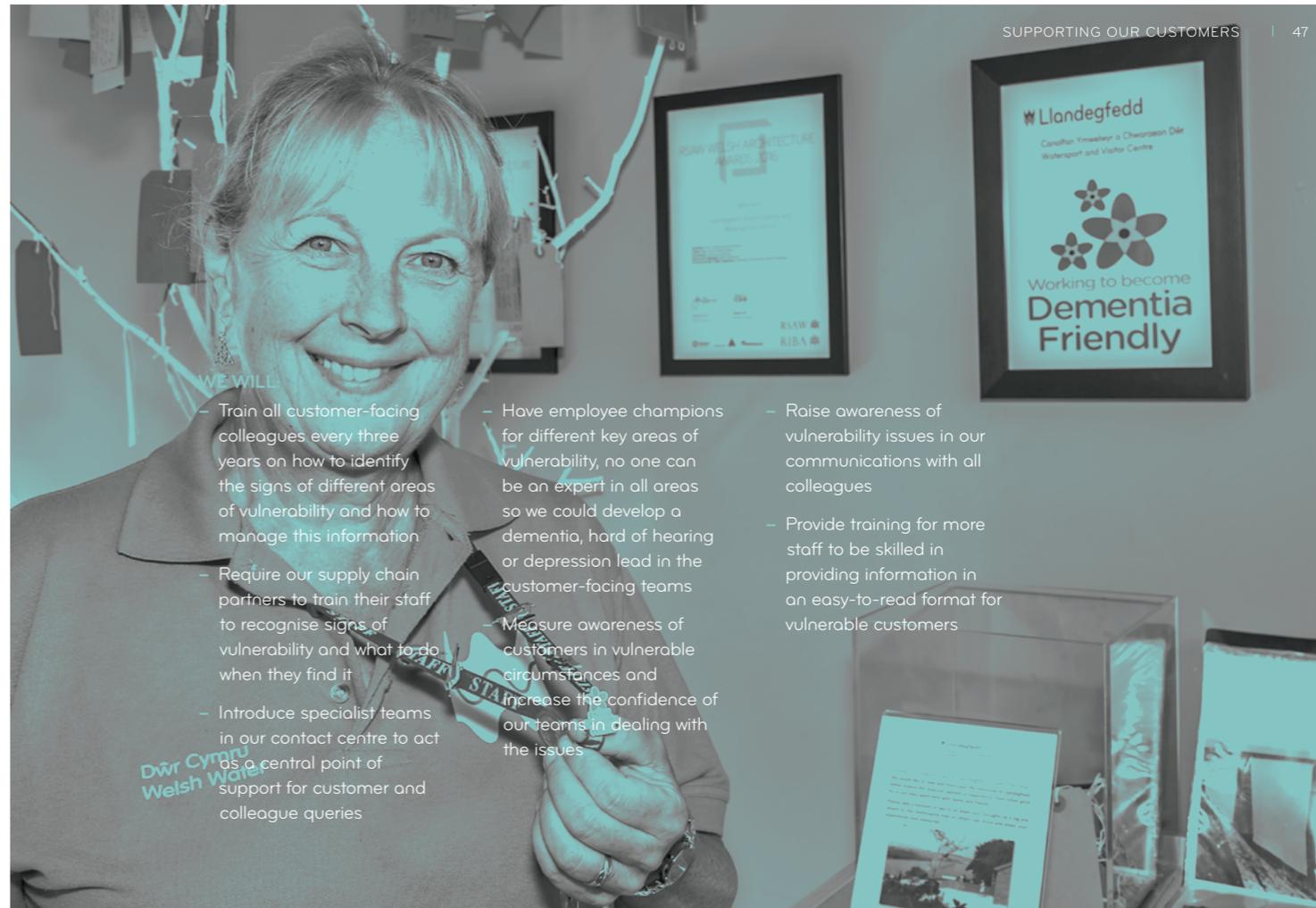
OUR PLAN: TRAINING

Our work to improve data collection and use, along with promotion of the range of support we offer customers, will increase the awareness among vulnerable customers of the support available to them. But our colleagues across Welsh Water are also vital to ensuring we have a sea change in our approach to supporting these customers.

Colleagues who work directly with customers – such as those taking calls, reading meters and repairing our network – are the ones most likely to spot signs that someone could have additional support needs, training for employees can ensure they can best recognise signs and act on them.

We have already introduced company-wide training to make sure everyone has an understanding of vulnerability and the needs of all our customers.

All managers and contact centre staff have undergone training from partner organisations, like Mind Cymru, to ensure up-to-date awareness of issues that can be barriers for our customers getting in touch. The training can also empower our colleagues to judge the right balance between complying with the rules, and making it easier for vulnerable customers to work with us.



WE WILL

- Train all customer-facing colleagues every three years on how to identify the signs of different areas of vulnerability and how to manage this information
- Require our supply chain partners to train their staff to recognise signs of vulnerability and what to do when they find it
- Introduce specialist teams in our contact centre to act as a central point of support for customer and colleague queries
- Have employee champions for different key areas of vulnerability, no one can be an expert in all areas so we could develop a dementia, hard of hearing or depression lead in the customer-facing teams
- Measure awareness of customers in vulnerable circumstances and increase the confidence of our teams in dealing with the issues
- Raise awareness of vulnerability issues in our communications with all colleagues
- Provide training for more staff to be skilled in providing information in an easy-to-read format for vulnerable customers

GUIDE DOGS CYMRU

We have worked closely with Guide Dogs Cymru in recent years to raise awareness of safety where we are carrying out work surrounding vulnerable users.

The charity has supported our Health and Safety Conferences highlighting the importance of compliant sites for all road users – and specifically those that are blind and partially-sighted.

These conferences have reached out to many colleagues, but we knew we needed to reach more of our colleagues and partners that set up sites on the public highway on a daily basis.

Guide Dogs Cymru has created "toolbox talks" highlighting possible consequences of a non-compliant site and what can be done to ensure all road users can pass through our works safely and efficiently.

The risks associated with working in the public highway are high and ensuring the safety of our colleagues and customers is paramount in all we do.

Our work with Guide Dogs Cymru helps ensure an even higher level of safety – so we can do more to ensure colleagues are continually provided with the correct information and tools to not only return home safely at the end of every working day but to support our customers even further'



OUR PLAN: PARTNERSHIP

Welsh Water has a long tradition of working with other organisations to deliver benefits for our communities. We recognise that we can achieve far more when we work together with our customers and the agencies that speak on their behalf.

These agencies provide valuable expertise and feedback on our services. Most importantly they are often the first port of call when customers are in difficult circumstances.

We have built a network of over 180 partners across our region, working with government, government

agencies, charities and social enterprises to raise awareness of our Priority Services and financial support schemes. We will build on this network and, where appropriate, establish strategic partnerships with organisations where we can deliver even greater benefits to customers.

WE WILL:

- Establish an annual event, working with those organisations recognised as leaders in this field, to share best practice and share ideas with representatives of customers in vulnerable circumstances
- Play a leading role with other utility companies to explore better ways of identifying and supporting vulnerable customers
- Target new partnerships with organisations that represent all vulnerable groups
- Explore the opportunity to broaden our relationship with Citizens Advice to all parts of supply area
- Set two-way targets for the outcomes of our partnerships
- Work with our partners to involve vulnerable customers in the development of new services and channels
- Maximise the opportunity for our employees to volunteer and fundraise for voluntary groups
- Encourage a culture change within Welsh Water to ensure we are continually challenging ourselves and putting customers first

OUR PARTNERS

WE WORK WITH NEARLY 200 PARTNERS TO SERVE AND SUPPORT OUR VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS.

CAERPHILLY COUNCIL • FLINTSHIRE COUNCIL • CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNCIL • NEWPORT CITY HOMES • SALVATION ARMY CARDIFF • VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL • GWALIA HOUSING SWANSEA • SIGHT CYMRU • RHONDDA CYNON TAFF HA • BRO MYRDDIN HA CARMAR • CONWY COUNCIL • CARE & REPAIR NE WALES • TAI CEREDIGION HA • CYNON TAFF HA MERTHYR • CAB - MERTHYR TYDFIL • GWYNEDD COUNCIL • NORTH WALES HA • AGE CYMRU GWYNEDD & MŌN NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL • CARDIFF HUB • UNITED WELSH HA • CAB - RHONDDA CYNON TAFF • HAFOD HA CARDIFF • ENERGY SAVING TRUST CARDIFF TAI CALON, GWENT • DERWEN HOMES NEWPORT • GROUNDWORK GREENDOCKTOR • NEWCIS • CEREDIGION COUNCIL • CLWYD ALYN • CONWY COUNCIL NPT HOMES PORT TALBOT • CARMARTHEN COUNCIL • TAI CALON • CARE AND REPAIR FLINT • CYNGOR GWYNEDD COUNCIL • SHELTER CYMRU CANOLFAN FELINFACH (PENRHYNDEUDRAETH) • CARTREFI CYMUNEDOL GWYNEDD • GISDA • KIM-INPIR • CLWYD ALYN • POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL • NCH GRWP CYNEFIN • NORTH WALES HOUSING • GRWP CYNEFIN • CONWY COUNCIL COMMUNITIES FOR WORK • DWP LLANGEFNI • THE WALLICH • WELSH WOMEN'S AID PENNSMART • AGE CYMRU - CARMARTHENSHIRE • GISDA • CARDIFF COMMUNITY HA • CAIS • GRWP CYNEFIN • COMMUNITY SUPPORT - ANGELSEY • CONWY CAB ANGELSEY COUNTY COUNCIL • ANGELSEY CAB • HAFAN CYMRU • DIGARTREF • PEMBROKESHIRE COUNCIL • NACRO • WALES AND WEST HA • WARM WALES BARNARDOS • GISDA - CARNARFON • CCG - PORTHMADOG • CCG - CAERNARFON • HAFOD HA • AGE CONNECT - MORGANNWG • FLYING START - CEREDIGION MONMOUTHSHIRE HA • ASNEW • BRIDGEND CAB • CAB CONWY • BRITISH RED CROSS • ENERGY SAVING TRUST CARDIFF • DERWEN HOMES NEWPORT • CARE AND REPAIR NEWPORT • CHARTER HOUSING • PEMBROKESHIRE COUNCIL • PEMBROKESHIRE HOUSING • FLINTSHIRE WARM HOMES • SHELTER CYMRU • JCP MOLD CAIS CONWY • SIGHT SIGN SOUND • CARE & REPAIR CARDIFF • POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL • MERTHYR CAB • ACE • WALES AND WEST HA • DENBIGH CAB DWP RCT • PEMBROKESHIRE CARE SOCIETY • MERTHYR & VALLEYS MIND • RHONDDA CYNON TAFF CBC • COMMUNITIES FOR WORK RCT CBC ABERCONWY DOMESTIC ABUSE • VALE OF GLARMORGAN COUNCIL • STROKE ASSOCIATION • CARE AND REPAIR, DENBIGH • ARC COMMUNITIES AQUALOGIC (INTERNAL) SIGN SIGHT SOUND • SHELTER CYMRU - WREXHAM • CAB RHYL • DREF WERDD • ANGLESEY CAB • CAIS • NORTH WALES ADVICE AND ADVOCACY FLINTSHIRE COUNCIL • DREF WERDD • CARDIFF COUNCIL • OPUS - ANGLESEY • FLINTSHIRE CAB • AGE CONNECT - FLINT • INDEPENDENT LIVING, CARDIFF COUNCIL NCH JCP CAERNARFON • SANCTUARY TRUST • PEMBROKESHIRE CARE SOCIETY • MIND PEMBROKESHIRE • CAIS PEMBROKESHIRE CARTREFI HA, AB ADVICE MID WALES • BLAENAU GWENT COUNCIL • BRON AFON • CANTREF HOUSING (MERGED WITH WALES AND WEST HA) CARDIFF CITY COUNCIL • CARDIFF COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION • CARE & REPAIR (SOUTH, EAST & WEST) • CARE & REPAIR CYMRU CHARTER HOUSING (PART OF POBL GROUP) • CLWYD ALYN HOUSING ASSOCIATION • COASTAL HOUSING • COMMUNITIES FIRST NEWPORT • CYNON TAF HOUSING GROUP DERWEN CYMRU • GELLIDEG FOUNDATION • GRWP CYNEFIN (MERGER OF TAI ERYI & TAI CLWYD) • GWALIA HOUSING ASSOCIATION • GWYNEDD HOUSING LINC CYMRU • MELIN HOMES • MERTHYR TYDFIL CBC • MERTHYR VALLEY HOMES • NEATH PORT TALBOT CREDIT UNION • NEWPORT CREDIT UNION • RNIB SIGN SIGHT SOUND • SMART SERVICES (SSE) • SPEAKEASY ADVICE CENTRE • STROKE ASSOCIATION • SWANSEA CITY COUNCIL STEPCHANGE SWANSEA YOUNG FAMILIES • TAI CALON HOUSING ASSOCIATION • TAI CEREDIGION HOUSING ASSOCIATION • TAI CLYWD • TAI ERYRI TAI TARIAN (WAS NEATH PORT TALBOT HOMES) • TRIVALLIS HOUSING ASSOCIATION (WAS RCT HOMES) • UNITED WELSH HOUSING ASSOCIATION • VALE OF GLAMORGAN WALES & WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION • WARM WALES • YNYS MON CITIZEN ADVICE BUREAU



Dŵr Cymru

Welsh Water