



SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

OUR STRATEGY FOR SERVING CUSTOMERS WHO NEED EXTRA HELP

FOREWORD

As the Managing Director of Customer Service, I am proud to introduce Welsh Water's updated Vulnerability Strategy, a testament to our unwavering commitment to ensuring our services meet the needs of everyone in Wales. Recognising the diverse backgrounds and unique needs of our customers, our strategy is designed to be inclusive, responsive, and reflective of the communities we serve.

Our approach is founded on extensive engagement with our customers, communities, partner agencies, and regulators. Their invaluable feedback has shaped the development of this strategy, ensuring it is grounded in insights, data and real-life experiences. We have actively listened to the voices of those we serve, and their perspectives have guided us every step of the way.

Data and insights are the cornerstone of our strategy. By leveraging data analysis, we have identified key areas where we can make the most significant impact. Our strategy includes clear, measurable objectives that will allow us to track our progress and ensure we are delivering on our promises. These metrics will be regularly monitored and reported, providing transparency and accountability to our stakeholders.

At Welsh Water, our aim is to create a service that is not only reliable and efficient but also empathetic and supportive. We are dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of our customers, and our Vulnerability Strategy is a crucial component of that commitment. Together, we will continue to build a service that is accessible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all.

We look forward to working collaboratively with our partners and the community to implement and continually improve this strategy. Thank you for your support and engagement as we strive to meet the diverse needs of everyone in Wales.

Kit Wilson

Managing Director Household Customer and Developer Services



INTRODUCTION

We are very proud of the work that we do to support those customers that need extra help. We have a good track record of ensuring that our services are accessible to all and collaborating with customers, the organisations that represent them, government and regulators to deliver services that address the challenges that some customers can face.

We are pleased to present this new iteration of our 'Supporting Our Customers'. It has been developed through consultation and discussion with customers, the organisations that represent them, our teams that are working with customers every day, our Independent Challenge Group and the Consumer Council for Water. These discussions have shown that our current approach to providing extra help has worked well, and that we maintain our focus on data, making our services as accessible as possible, developing our partnerships and training our people to recognise and respond to the individual needs of our customers.

As the last few years have shown, we have responded quickly to a rapidly changing world. This experience will serve us well in delivering this next phase of our strategy for supporting customers who need extra help.



ABOUT US

We provide water to keep our customers healthy and clean wastewater to protect our environment. We are a not-for-profit company that serves 3 million domestic customers and 110,000 business customers across Wales and Herefordshire.

We are keen to deliver against our long-term objectives to improve performance, adapt our networks to the climate crisis to better cope with high volumes of rainwater in sewers, and do more to protect our rivers and seas.

Ensuring a continuous water supply and dependable wastewater services to our customers requires extensive work behind the scenes.

36,000 KM

We maintain 36,000 km of sewer networks

834

We have 834 wastewater treatment works

828 MILLION

We provide 828 million litres of fresh water a day

11

We're one of eleven water companies in England and Wales

4,000

Almost 4,000 colleagues are highly skilled in what they do

1.4 MILLION

We have 1.4 million household customers

110,000

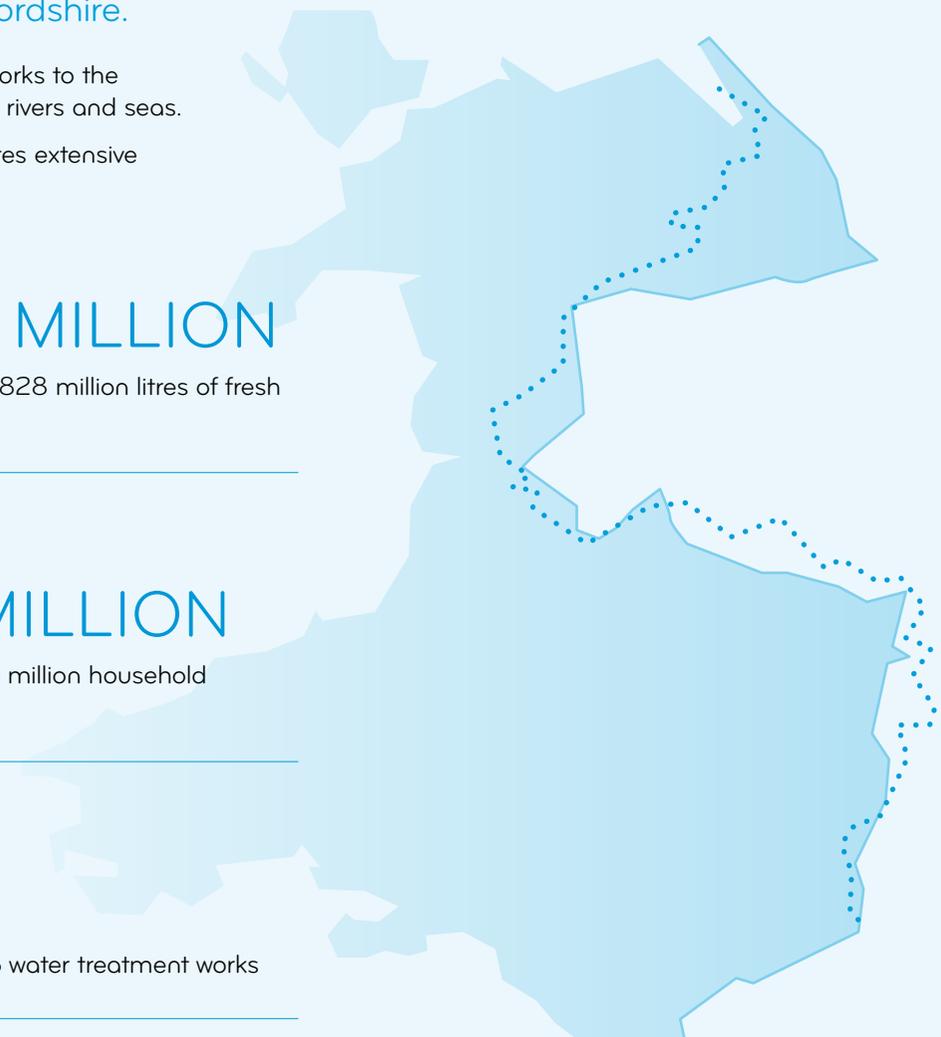
We have 110,000 business customers

92

We manage 92 reservoirs

66

We have 66 water treatment works



OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

Much has been achieved since we launched our first strategy for supporting customers that need extra help – *Supporting our customers – working at the heart of our community – in 2018.*

Non-financial vulnerability - The number of customers registered for our priority services has increased from 80,000 in 2021 to 183,000².

Financial vulnerability - we have increased financial schemes for low-income households and those struggling with debt from 101,000³ to 145,000⁴.

We have built capacity into our schemes for them to expand with the anticipated growth in unemployment in the coming years and further challenges with cost of living.



Our Performance to date is demonstrated below and tracked monthly through several meetings within our governance structure.

Target	Our performance so far	Target by 2030
Increase the number of customers registered for extra help as part of our PSR scheme to 7% by 2025	As of September 2024, 12.5% of our customers are registered	Increase the number of customers registered for extra help as part of our PSR scheme to 25% by 2030
To achieve ISO 22458:2022 Accreditation	Achieved January 2024	Maintain annually to 2030 to remain focussed on emerging trends
Contact our customers every two years to make sure their needs and contact details are up to date in our records. We will aim to: – Try to contact - 90% – Successfully contact - 33%	Our end of year reporting 2023-2024 showed: – 93.44% attempted – 42.10% successfully contacted	Contact our customers every two years to make sure their needs and contact details are up to date in our records We will aim to: – Try to contact 90% – Successfully contact 35%
Increase financial support to those customers: – Low income – Use more water due to medical conditions and/or large family – Relief for working households in a negative budget – Support transient vulnerability	Our year end reporting for 2023/24 showed: – 130,226 customers supported with a social tariff – 145,000 customers supported with financial assistance – £30,000 relief provided to those working households not eligible for social tariffs	Increase financial support to 180,000 customers by 2030 Deliver a 5% uplift of financial assistance schemes in high deprivation areas

1. Older people in Wales: facts and figures – Age Cymru and Swansea University (September 2021) 2. March 2024 3. March 2018

We also monitor and track a number of key performance indicators so that we understand the service we are delivering, the needs of our customers and our customers levels of satisfaction:

- Voice of our Customers is a platform that enables us to gain real time feedback directly from our customers. Our dedicated specialist support teams and business customers service teams, deliver high levels of customer satisfaction, with an average score of 9.6 and 9.4 out of 10.
- Independent research following operational incidents helps us understand the views, experience and expectations of our affected customers and those that need additional support.
- Complaints root cause analysis is completed monthly to identify trends and training needs

Monitoring our work allows us to change and improve our services and meet our customers changing needs some examples of this are seen through:

- Achieving the new international **ISO accreditation**
- Development of our **Cymuned Scheme**
- Delivering a dedicated **Specialist Support Teams**
- Recognising the importance of being accessible with our **Community Hub**
- Delivering a **Business Customer Service** area dedicated solely for our business customers.

ISO ACCREDITATION

To support the development of our strategy, development of our thinking and the needs of our customers we looked to achieve the British Standard ISO 220458. In 2022 this standard developed into an international standard promoting how companies work with vulnerable customers. This standard covers organisational culture and strategy. This is how companies design their services to be accessible for all customers.

In January 2024 we applied for accreditation against the new standard and we achieved the Accreditation in January 2025. We had demonstrated a focus on current and future needs of our vulnerable customers along with the understanding of emerging trends. A key example was the development of our Community (Cymuned) Support Scheme.

HERE'S WHAT SOME OF OUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING:

“

Both team members who helped me listened to my situation, were very kind and tried to improve things. It's been a huge help and reduced my bill drastically. When you live on such a small, fixed income with health conditions this has a massive impact on stress levels and budget. Thanks to both.

Agent Name: **Andrew Billen**
Team Name: SST Team 02

“

Knew her job, went through my options in my predicament and with the minimum of fuss and stress to myself, politely resolved my situation. A credit to yourselves.

Agent Name: **Gemma Patel**
Team Name: SST Team 02

“

The lady who dealt with me was extremely helpful, she not only sorted out my problem she asked if there was anything you could do to help me with my mental illness. She didn't judge me at all, she was kind, compassionate and just extremely helpful. I'm glad I was able to talk to an advisor like her. She deserves a promotion or a raise, she did you proud.

Agent Name: **Kerry Davies**
Team Name: SST Team 02

“

Due to unforeseen circumstances and a change of business at my premises I'd been served with a disconnection notice. This was most disconcerting but as soon as I spoke with Nasima, she put me at ease, was compassionate and empathetic without being overly sincere. She dealt with my payment and transfer with utter professionalism and is a credit to your company. Thank you Nasima

Agent Name: **Nasima**
Team Name: Business Customer Support

CYMUNED

Few could've foreseen the events of the early years of this decade and the profound impact they would have on our customers' lives. The Covid-19 pandemic, disruption to energy supplies and trade due to the Ukraine war, rising inflation, and increasing interest rates have significantly challenged traditional methods of identifying and supporting customers in need. Notably, a growing group of customers experiencing transient vulnerability began to emerge.

These were working households, ineligible for means-tested benefits, who found themselves experiencing financial strain for the first time. As the cost of housing, fuel, energy, and food rose faster than their incomes, they were left with negative budgets, unable to meet essential living costs despite being traditionally financially stable. This group represented a growing cohort of customers experiencing targeted transient vulnerability—temporary but acute financial distress triggered by external economic pressures rather than long-term low income.

Recognising this emerging need, and in collaboration with the debt advice sector, we launched our Cymuned (Community) Support Scheme. This initiative was specifically designed to provide timely intervention for those facing short-term hardship, offering a crucial financial breathing space. Through the scheme, eligible customers were granted a three-month charge-free period on their water and sewerage bills, helping to stabilize their immediate financial situation while they sought longer-term solutions. By addressing targeted transient vulnerability, the scheme aimed to prevent problem debt, reduce financial stress, and support customers in regaining financial resilience before temporary hardship turned into a more entrenched crisis.

Cymuned

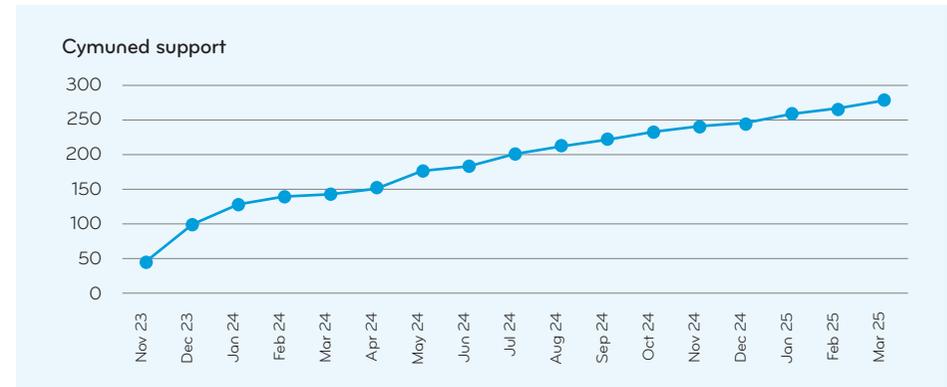
Ydych chi'n gweithio ac ond dan bwysau ariannol yn sgil y cynnydd mewn costau byw?
Mae Dŵr Cymru yma i helpu! Os ydych chi, neu rywun rydych chi'n byw gyda yn gweithio ond yn dal i gael trafferth talu'r biliâu, yna fe allch fod yn gymwys i gael cymorth gyda'ch biliâu dŵr trwy ein cynllun **Cymuned**.

Are you working but still struggling with household bills?
Welsh Water is here to help! If you, or someone you live with is working but still struggling to pay the bills, then you may be eligible for help with your water bills through our **Cymuned** scheme.



dwr.cymru.com/cymuned





SPECIALIST SUPPORT TEAM

One of our commitments in 2018 was to make it easier for our customers to access the help that we provide, and to that end, we established our Specialist Support team. This was with the aim of providing a single, case-managed service for customers who need extra help.



This team of expert colleagues has been specifically trained to identify and support customers experiencing financial hardship, health challenges, or other vulnerabilities. They possess a diverse skill set, including financial resilience coaching, empathetic communication, and problem-solving techniques to navigate complex situations. Their expertise enables them to provide tailored advice on both financial and non-financial support, ensuring customers receive the right help at the right time. Additionally, they work closely with external agencies and trusted organisations, signposting customers to specialist services for issues beyond their water and wastewater needs, such as debt advice, mental health support, and housing assistance.

These colleagues make a real difference in our customers' lives—helping them to keep the lights on, heat their homes, and even put food on the table. By equipping our Specialist Support team with the skills to recognize and respond to different types of vulnerability—including targeted transient vulnerability—we ensure that customers receive proactive, compassionate, and effective assistance that goes beyond traditional customer service.

Here are some of the ways available to communicate with us as we recognise the accessibility needs will differ for our business and household customers and as a Welsh company, we know the importance of the Welsh Language and all our services below are bilingual.

<p>Webchat</p> <p>Our webchat service is available six days a week for our household customers.</p> <p>8:00-6:00 Monday to Friday 9:00-1:00 on Saturday</p>	<p>Telephone</p> <p>Our dedicated telephony teams are here to help six days a week.</p> <p>0800 052 0130</p> <p>Dedicated line for business customers.</p> <p>0800 052 ????</p> <p>8:00-6:00 Monday to Friday 9:00-1:00 on Saturday</p>	<p>Website</p> <p>We have dedicated page on our web site dwrcymru.com/support</p> <p>We have a dedicated business page https://business.dwrcymru.com/en/business-services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BSL Video to support our deaf community – Recite to support our accessibility for different languages
<p>Face to face</p> <p>We have a customer friendly room for our business and household customers in our offices in Cardiff, no appointment required a member of team will always be available</p>	<p>Community support</p> <p>Presence in the community across Wales through local community events, charity events and pop up events</p>	<p>REACH Portal</p> <p>Trusted partners can support applications on behalf of customers</p>

We recognise we can support our business community more and will be enhancing over services to businesses in the community over the next five years.

1. Live chat to our online support team

Follow the questions below to chat with one of our friendly Online Support Team.

Are you in receipt of any means tested benefits?

Yes

No



Our dedicated specialist support team have seen a 50% increase in demand from our customer over the last five years. They are committed to continuing to provide the vital service.

COMMUNITY HUB

Whilst we have a number of different ways to engage with us, we do recognise it's important that we make ourselves accessible in our communities.

We have created our mobile Community Hub which visits towns across our operating area with our community advisors, often working with representatives from advice charities, promoting the support we offer and providing advice to individual customers about their bills.



This team also trains representatives from our partner organisations to make applications on behalf of their clients via our online portal REACH.

An overview of the community activities undertaken

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Apr-Sept 24
Events attended	72	129	456	441	190
Customer Supported	154	373	927	1,165	390

JOB CENTRE PLUS ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

Aimed at engaging with customers on Means Tested Benefits in 2024 we hosted an event in Ammanford. This event not only helped to amplify the awareness of our support provision but also allowed us to build on and create new partnerships with local Job Centre Plus offices.

Over the last 5 years, we have built up our network of partners and are now working with over 300 organisations, which include Welsh Government, local authorities, regional job centre offices, debt advise charities and community groups. The strength of this network is the diversity of skills, knowledge and experience of the people involved, underpinned by a common mission to deliver better outcomes for the communities we serve.

Training on our support provided:

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Apr-Sept 24
Third sector agents trained	318	580	568	454	570
Organisations trained	27	70	77	61	39

The principle of our Water Resilient Communities is to understand the challenges of the communities we are working in, particularly in areas where we are carrying work on our water or wastewater network and where there are high levels of deprivation and low levels of social tariff uptake. In these projects, we work with customers, community leaders, business and other stakeholders to see how we can address some of those challenges. As well as being able to improve awareness and take up of our support schemes, we involve teams across our business to target water efficiency and private leaks, employment support, education and waste network improvements. These projects are vitally important in building our relationships, and therefore trust, with communities.

We have made good progress against our 2018 priorities, however the time is right to reflect on the changes that have happened since then and how they impact on the needs and expectations of our customers, as well as the expectations of government, regulators and other stakeholders.



Just a few of our partner organisations



[Go to Appendix 2 for full list of partner organisations](#)

DEDICATED BUSINESS CUSTOMER TEAM

We have identified through insight and the work we have completed reviewing the end to end customer journeys that our business customers needed to be able to access easily the relevant support available, for this reason we introduced a dedicated Business Customer Team.

This team are at the beginning of their journey and our aim is that they make a real difference to our non-household customers. Here are some examples of how we have helped our non-household customers

1,500



Access to water efficiency products for 1,500 businesses

650



Small business water efficiency visits

An active business-focused communication strategy



Bettering our knowledge on greywater and rainwater systems



350

Medium sized business and community site water efficiency visits



THE NEEDS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

There are many factors which will make it difficult for some of our customers to access our services, particularly during incidents. The needs that our customers have are not mutually exclusive and someone with a long-term health condition likely to experience financial hardship and possibly social exclusion. At the same time, it is important to recognise that customer circumstances are not static and will change over time.

As these statistics show, our customers are more likely to find it difficult to access our services. It is important that we continue to build our understanding of individual customer circumstances, and communities at large, and ensure that the services we provide meet the extra needs they may have.



24%

24% of people in Wales live in poverty, more than the other UK nations and second only to London when looking at the regions¹



13%

More than 1 in 10 people in Wales are in arrears on a bill⁵



670,000

670,000 people in Wales are classified as disabled⁶



1 in 6

1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem such as depression or anxiety⁷



7%

The level of digital exclusion in Wales is higher than in the UK, with as many as 7% of the population, or 170,000 people, not using the internet⁸



22.4%

22.4% of pupils at primary, middle, secondary and special schools have some form of special educational need⁹



21%

21% of the total population are over 65, and by 2030 this is expected to increase to 33% of the population¹⁰

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VULNERABILITY FOR OUR HOUSEHOLD AND NON-HOUSEHOLD CUSTOMERS

Our aim is help our household or non household customers wherever possible.

Some examples:

Non household customer

A local hairdresser who has a bereavement may need to temporarily close their business and would look to us for financial support.

Household customer

A customer of pensionable age but with mobility issues would require financial and non financial support.



Young family



Mental health



Pensionable age



Mobility



Hearing and visual impairment

TRANSIENT VULNERABILITIES

LIFELONG VULNERABILITIES



Temporary health changes



Digital inaccessibility



Language barriers



Chronic illness



Cognitive impairments

Within our region overall disability rates are around 28% of people, whereas the UK average is at 22%. Musculoskeletal conditions and long term mobility impairments, like arthritis and back pain are more prevalent within our region against UK average. To ensure that we are reaching those most in need of our support, we use the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and ONS census data to develop targeted campaigns through our community teams and networks. Wales has a consistently higher rate of disability across multiple categories compared to the UK average.

Here are just a few examples of where we can provide extra help and support:



We know that 1 in 6 report a common mental health problem such as depression or anxiety; by knowing this information we can have a better conversation and we promise:

- To signpost our customers to our financial and non-financial schemes and our trusted partners or charities that can help further
- Case manage customers over the short term to help them through a difficult period, we will provide a dedicated point of contact
- Ensure all our customer facing teams have dedicated mental health training and awareness and they themselves have access to our wellbeing champions and Mental Health First Aiders
- Offer a nominee scheme to allow someone else to speak to us on their behalf



We know that 21% of our population is over 65 and by 2030 this is likely to increase to 33%. We want to support our customers of pensionable age by promising to:

- Continue to work with our trusted partners within our communities to build awareness of what support is available
- Auto enrol all customers over the age of 80 onto our Priority Services Register and provide them with a letter confirming what to expect from this service
- Enable a password scheme to protect against bogus callers password
- Inform our customers about our nominee service
- Dedicated training for all our colleagues to recognise, act or escalate to our Specialist Support to recognise those over 65 may require extra support
- Home visits available for those digitally excluded and specific needs



We know that 670,000 within Wales are classified as disabled – we recognise that disability can take many forms such as partially sighted, hearing impairment and poor mobility, for these customers we promise:

- Provide customers with sight issues the ability to use our nominee scheme
- Ensure our website is accessible and offers Recite Me tool
- Give our customers the option to use our doorstep password scheme
- Ensure our field teams use the 'knock and wait' scheme, allowing our customers more time to answer the door
- Include subtitles on our customer help and educational videos
- Use of life ledger
- Offer to relocate meter to make more accessible
- Sign video service for our deaf community

CUSTOMER AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

In developing this updated strategy, we have carried out customer research with Blue Marble to show how the work we've done so far addresses the priorities of customers and to identify areas for improvement.



The conclusions of this research were:

Customer Needs	What we are doing....
Customers' vulnerabilities are highly complex. Many groups don't self-identify with this label, and this means there is a low likelihood that they will seek out support due to a perceived lack of need and belief that they are not eligible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue with our community events alongside key stakeholder initiatives and third sector organisations – Provision of a dedicated bereavement service to address transient vulnerability – Train all frontline colleagues to identify vulnerable cues and direct them to the right support
The economic climate is harsh. Most customers are at least 'managing' but it can be difficult and stressful to afford some of the key essentials. Many customers are already proactively balancing financial priorities to mitigate the impact of inflation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue with our Cymuned financial support scheme for those working households in a negative budget – Continue to expand to all organisation that facilitate an income and expenditure review
Many customers do not interact with Welsh Water on a regular basis. Those that do find customer service teams to be helpful and the range of ways that people can get in touch positive. There are improvements that can be made to website navigation and incident communications and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction of our Sign Language Video Service – Maintaining an AA Plus standard of accessibility – Online provision for WaterSure Wales application – Dedicated page for help and support during an incident – Implementation of the financial support scheme 'eligibility checker' online – Expanding our partnership network e.g. to include working more closely with local authorities.
There's low awareness of the extra help Welsh Water provides, and customers want us to promote more about the services and the benefit of them to customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Deployment of social media targeting 'here for you' across social media; radio; billboard; Google search – Monthly themed social media campaigns to coincide with 'awareness' days e.g. Older People Day; Stroke Awareness etc. – Continued work with local councils – Target approach through development of our insight models, with external data sources – Third sector training to create wider public reach for adequate sign-posting or direct support – Support included on customer bills

Similarly, we have engaged with our employees, stakeholders and partners to understand the impact of our work

and understand what they see as the priorities over the medium term. This included a series of workshops and bilateral discussions with Welsh Government, our Independent Challenge Group and partners that have worked with us on strategic projects.



The main findings of this engagement were:

- Overall, the consensus is that we don't need to make significant changes to our current strategy, however, there are some improvement opportunities with our existing services.
- We have a good range of financial assistance schemes, and the addition of our Cymuned scheme is particularly welcome as it is supporting an under served, but growing, group of customers.
- The work that we do through our outreach teams is vital in ensuring that we reach customers who won't engage with us directly and we should continue to invest in this area.
- We have a proactive approach to marketing, and we make good use of different media and the opportunities for aligning with other support/support agencies.
- Since we first launched our strategy in 2018, there is a better understanding of the complexity of customer needs, which often goes beyond our schemes, and needs more consideration in terms of how utility companies communicate with customers. Partner organisations can be a valuable resource in addressing this, particularly for those customers who do not declare that they need extra help.
- A strong message coming out of the review sessions was that we need to do

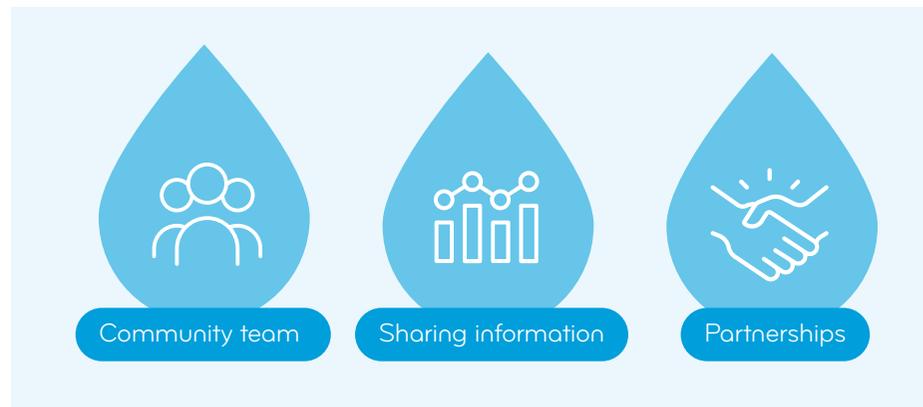
more to tailor our communications with different groups of priority service customers during incidents.

- Finally, as we look to install smart meters from 2025, we need to give careful consideration to the impact on lower income households.

We have met separately with Senedd members to understand the concerns of their constituents and where we should focus our efforts. Our learning from these meetings was that our support was helpful and beneficial, and that we need to ensure that we proactively identify those customers who may need extra help but don't think to look to their water company for support.

Overall, findings suggest that working out in the communities itself doesn't improve the awareness unless we have fully trained colleagues who recognise customer additional needs, through face to face or any other interaction with customers every day.

Growing awareness of our Priority Services is through:



THE EXPECTATION OF OUR REGULATORS

Our regulators place great importance on the work that water companies do to support customers who need extra help.

In its vulnerability guidance, Ofwat has defined five objectives for water companies:

- Provide a high standard of service and support
- Develop services that are inclusive by design
- Identify customers who need extra help
- Record their needs
- Develop vulnerability strategies

Ofwat has also defined minimum expectations of how these objectives are met. These expectations and details of how Welsh Water will deliver against them are provided in Appendix 1.

OVO COMMUNITY EVENTS PARTNERSHIP

On 24th October 2024, we attended an event in collaboration with Ovo at the Newport Yemeni Community Association. This event supported the Pillgwenny community of Newport and surrounding areas, providing help and advice on their water and energy bills together with managing debt to help customers get through the winter period.



OUR HELP

We understand that there are many reasons why customers may need extra help to access our services. It may be a long-standing health condition or a life event that creates a short-term change in their financial or personal circumstances. We aim to respond to the different circumstances and needs through our Priority Services and Financial Assistance schemes:

NON-FINANCIAL SERVICES

- ✓ **Priority contact for supply interruptions**
- ✓ **Advanced notice of water locations and storage of water with impending loss of supply**
- ✓ **Alternative water supply during interruptions**
- ✓ **Accessible bills**
Large print; coloured background; Braille; CD/MP3; read bills over the phone; send bills to a friend or relative
- ✓ **Home visits to discuss bills and payments**
- ✓ **Accessible contact**
 - British Sign Video service on our website
 - Text Relay service
 - Accessibility settings on our website to change the text, language and colour
- ✓ **Live Chat with our Specialist Support Team for Priority Services and financial assistance queries**
- ✓ **Nominee**
Appoint a friend, relative or carer to deal with account queries, payments and matters relating to our water and wastewater services
- ✓ **Password scheme**
Protect our customers from bogus callers by setting up a password that our teams will always use when visiting or contacting
- ✓ **Sign-posting/refer customers for holistic advice and support to trusted organisations**
- ✓ **Save water, save money**
 - Leaky loo
 - Get water fit
 - Cartref community
 - Cartref pack
 - Water efficiency home visit
 - Dealing with water leaks



NON-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – BUSINESS CUSTOMERS

- ✓ **Dedicated teams providing support, advice and guidance for business**
- ✓ **Priority service registration for non-household customer, care homes, retirement complexes**
- ✓ **Financial support - alternative use of grey water and rainwater to reduce bills**
- ✓ **Account management for any business with multiple sites.**

HOW OUR CUSTOMERS WILL BE SUPPORTED IN AN INCIDENT

<h3>PS1 CUSTOMER</h3> <p>Water dependent and highest category</p>	<h3>PS2 CUSTOMER</h3> <p>Second level of criticality e.g. serious chronic conditions like cancer, dementia</p>	<h3>PS3 AND PS4 CUSTOMERS</h3> <p>Young families and customers of pensionable age</p>	<h3>VULNERABLE SITES</h3> <p>Non household property that is occupied by vulnerable customers such as but not limited too, hospitals, schools, correctional facilities or care homes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delivery of bottled water to you home within 12 hours when there is a loss of supply over four hours – Advanced notice of water stations during extended periods of interruption – Advanced notice of supply interruptions to allow you to store water when possible – We will call you to understand your needs and keep you updated throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alternative water will be made available during an incident – Advanced notice of water stations to collect bottled water – Regular updates on progress and return of water supply through text messages or an automated voice message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advice and support during extended water supply interruptions and alternative water supply – Advanced notice of water stations to collect water – Regular updates of progress and return of water supply through text messages and automated voice messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proactively contact those affected sites through collaboration with local authorities and internal systems – An appropriate level of response will be agreed with the vulnerable site

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- ✓ Spread the cost of bills with payment plans
- ✓ Two-year revoke period for people that move onto a meter
- ✓ Short term payment breaks
- ✓ Social tariffs
 - HelpU for capped bills for low-income households and metered households
 - WaterSure Wales for large families or someone with a medical condition that requires the significant use of extra water
- ✓ Support schemes
 - Customer Assistance Fund for customers in severe financial hardship to clear arrears and get on top of their payments;
 - Water Direct for customers that pay their charges and outstanding arrears through their benefits;
 - Cymuned Support Fund for working households with negative budgets which provides a three month 'charge free' period
- ✓ Advice
 - Benefit Checker (Turn2Us)
 - Water efficiency audits
 - Financial scheme eligibility checker
- ✓ Accessible contact
 - Text Relay Service
 - Accessibility settings on our website to change the text, language and colour
- ✓ Home visits to discuss bills and payments

- ✓ Live Chat, voice in our Specialist Support Team for Priority Services and Financial Assistance queries
- ✓ Face to face support through our community team
- ✓ REACH portal for trusted organisations to access information and complete forms on behalf of clients
- ✓ Sign-posting/refer customers for holistic advice and support to trusted organisations

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – BUSINESS CUSTOMERS

- ✓ Spread the cost of bills with payment plans
- ✓ Water Efficiency visits and access to free water saving devices
- ✓ Leakage allowance supports small businesses and non household property for those unexpected costs
- ✓ Advice
 - StepChange (sole trader or self employed)
 - Business debt line
 - Welsh Government

ADRA/GWYNEDD COUNCIL COLLABORATION

As part of the Water Resilient Communities work to support customers across Bangor, our Vulnerable Customer support team initiated a relationship with the Housing Association, ADRA and Gwynedd Council. Throughout 2025, our teams will be involved in a number of events including an Easter event at MasesGi, where we'll have regular attendance at the local shopping centre, family information days at local primary schools, cost of living events at the library and Principality Building Society.



OUR COMMITMENTS



Host an annual event to share best practice with partners, stakeholders and other utility companies



Maintain the company contribution of £14m per annum to fund financial assistance schemes



Maintain the ISO 22458:2022 consumer vulnerability standard



Annual Water Resilient Community projects



All colleagues, through all channels, trained on how to recognise and respond to the signs of vulnerability



We are committed to ensuring that our business customers receive a service at least as good as the best available in England.



Establish a vulnerable customer panel to test satisfaction with our current services and new services that we develop



We recognise there is a gap in our insight models and we are committed to developing these through external data sources to identify the needs of those customers under represented



Grow awareness of our financial and non-financial support for our household and business customers.



Annual board review of our progress against the commitments in our Vulnerability Strategy



WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

We will make it easy for customers who are not satisfied with the provision of extra help received to contact us and seek redress. We currently comply with the GSS minimum standards. We recognise that there may be legislative changes that we will need to adopt.

Commitment	Compensation
<p>We will register you onto our Priority Services Register within five working days of receiving the completed application form, if eligible.</p>	<p>If we don't do this, household customers can make a claim for £25 via any contact method within three months of the event.</p> <p>We recognise the need to remove customer effort and we will work toward delivering an automated approach.</p>
<p>We will send your bill in the format and style that we have agreed with you that meets your needs such as Braille, large print or on coloured paper as listed on the Priority Services application form</p>	<p>If we don't do this, household customers can make a claim for £25 via any contact method within three months of the event.</p> <p>We recognise the need to remove customer effort and we will work toward delivering an automated approach.</p>
<p>We will restore your water supply as quickly and safely as we can. If we fail to do this within 12 hours you will be compensated.</p>	<p>We will give household customers £30 within 20 working days. For every 12 hours the water supply remains interrupted, we will give household customers £30.</p> <p>We will give business customers £75 within working days for every 12 hours the water supply remains interrupted.</p>

BRON AFON OVER 50'S SCHEMES

In partnership with Riverside Advice and Groundworks, our Vulnerable Customer support and Cartref teams provided advice on a wide range of topics, including social tariffs and water efficiency.

14 sessions, conducted at Bron Afon Housing Association Sheltered Schemes for over 55's, were attended by over 150 people, who all received guidance on water efficiency visits and the support offered through the Cartref scheme, together with financial support, priority services, energy and benefit advice.



MONITORING OUR VULNERABILITY COMMITMENTS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

To ensure we are making meaningful progress to our commitments to support vulnerable customers, we will monitor the following key areas over the next five years. By tracking these key metrics and aligning our efforts with short-term and long-term goals, we will ensure continuous improvement and meaningful support for our most vulnerable customers.

CUSTOMER REACH AND ENGAGEMENT



WE WILL MONITOR

- The number of customers registered on our Priority Services Register
- The number of attempted and actual contacts made with PSR customers every two years to confirm their ongoing need for support
- The number of customers receiving financial assistance through our support schemes
- The geographical reach of our financial assistance schemes, mapped against the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and other national indices of deprivation ensuring we are supporting the most vulnerable communities



MEASURED THROUGH

Short-term goals (Years 1-2)

- Increase the number of PSR registrations through targeted outreach campaigns
- Join industry wide centralised PSR data share projects providing a 'Tell Us Once' service
- Improve contact success rates for priority customers by enhancing our communication methods
- Establish baseline data on the effectiveness of financial assistance schemes in high-deprivation areas

Longer-term goals (Years 3-5)

- Expand financial assistance schemes to ensure broader geographical coverage
- Increase the percentage of customers confirming their PSR needs every two years

AWARENESS AND ACCESSIBILITY



WE WILL MONITOR

- Levels of customer awareness of our priority services and financial assistance schemes, measured through surveys and engagement data
- The competency of our colleagues in supporting vulnerable customers, assessed through training completion rates and evaluations



MEASURED THROUGH

Short-term goals (Years 1-2)

- Launch targeted awareness campaigns to increase knowledge of available support
- Implement mandatory training for frontline colleagues on vulnerability awareness and customer support
- Maintain customer trust within the water resilient communities

Longer-term goals (Years 3-5)

- Increase public awareness of our services to drive greater uptake
- Introduce advanced training programs for colleagues, incorporating real-life case studies and evolving best practices
- Deliver tangible customer and community benefits to the resilient community project areas through reflecting on and adapting our future community support activity to maximise impact
- See an uplift on trust with those impacted communities

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION



WE WILL MONITOR

- Customer satisfaction levels among those registered for priority services
- Customer satisfaction levels among those receiving financial assistance



MEASURED THROUGH

Short-term goals (Years 1-2)

- Establish a robust customer feedback process to track satisfaction and identify pain points
- Implement initial service improvements based on early feedback
- Establish trained vulnerability champions across the customer facing groups to lead on more challenging conversations
- Set up visible support presence in an incident where the population of customers on PSR is significant to be on hand to support

Longer-term goals (Years 3-5)

- Enhance service delivery through continuous refinement based on customer insights
- Deliver a more tailored service and personalised service to customers with accessible communication channels, particularly those with additional needs – visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning and neurological disabilities
- Create an incident hub to enable effective management of all PSR customers

ACCREDITATIONS AND STANDARDS



WE WILL MONITOR

Progress forward achieving and maintaining the ISO 22458:2022 accreditation, ensuring that our services meet the highest standards for inclusive service provision



MEASURED THROUGH

Short-term goals (Years 1-2)

- Conduct gap analysis to identify areas for improvement in line with ISO 22458:2022 requirements and action any actions/recommendations in line with audit report
- Begin implementing necessary changes to align with best practices

Longer-term goals (Years 3-5)

- Achieve ISO 22458:2022 accreditation and maintain compliance through regular audits and reviews
- Continue refining processes to remain at the forefront of best practice in vulnerability support

AGEING WELL COLLABORATION

Throughout September and October 2024, in a collaboration with Cardiff Council's Age Well Team, we ran a series of events across Cardiff. The events provided targeted support to our over 50's customers offering help and support with bill payments, and provided guidance on the Vulnerable Customer and Priority Services support we offer. As an extension to this we also featured in the Age Friendly Newsletter helping to amplify the messages to a wider audience.



OUR STRATEGY IN DETAIL

We are committed to ensuring our most vulnerable customers receive the support they need, whether financial or non-financial. Our strategy focuses on data-driven insights, accessible support, training and awareness, and strong community partnerships.

To measure our impact and drive continuous improvement, we will track key metrics in each area:



1. Data



2. Accessible support



3. Training and awareness



4. Community and partnerships



1. DATA



As a water company, we hold personal data so that we can provide our customers with the services that they require. Other utilities, local authorities, health authorities and social landlords hold similar information and by working effectively with them, as well as turning our internal sources of information into meaningful insight, we can fully understand the needs of our customers and ensure that they are able to access the extra help they need quickly and with minimal effort.

We will work with our partners to identify opportunities for data sharing that allows us to proactively identify customers that need financial and non-financial extra help. We will also use internal and external data sources to monitor the impact of our vulnerability strategy, as well as understand how satisfied customers are with these services.

What we do now

- ✓ Share priority services information with the energy distribution network operators across our region (National Grid and Scottish Power), Welsh Government (through their priority services data sharing portal), Department of Work and Pensions (benefit matching to confirm social tariff eligibility), NHS Trusts and Kidney Care UK (identifying dialysis patients for priority services and social tariff eligibility)
- ✓ Use the following customer feedback and insight to monitor satisfaction with our services for our household and business customers and identify opportunities for improvement:
 - In-house and external customer surveys
 - Speech analytics software
 - Root-cause analysis of written and non-written complaints and chase contacts
 - Customer journey performance measures
- ✓ Use external data sources, such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation, to identify communities where the need for financial assistances is greatest and monitor take up of our schemes
- ✓ Undertake half yearly reviews of arrears levels to understand the impact of our financial assistance schemes on customer ability to pay
- ✓ Capture water reliant non-household premises (such as hospitals, schools and care homes) which provide services to customers that need extra help within our GIS platform to ensure that our operational teams can prioritise support during incidents. As part of this, we have partnered with Care Inspectorate Wales to receive monthly information about care homes, including the number of residents.

What we will do

- Continue with our current data sharing and data insight activities

- Explore new data sharing opportunities, including the expansion of data sharing with the energy sector and the introduction of financial data sharing

- Introduce new metrics to help to monitor effectiveness and progress of this vulnerability strategy

- Expand external data sources to improve our understanding of the extra help needs of under-represented customer groups and how we need to adapt our current services to accommodate them

- As we roll out smart meters from 2025, provide household and business customers billed on unmeasured charges information about their water usage to help them understand if it would be financially advantageous to be on a meter

Metrics we will review



Measure	By 2030
Number of customers identified and supported with financial tariffs	180,000
Increase in uptake of financial and non financial assistance schemes in high deprivation areas	5% uplift
Customer satisfaction with the identification and support process	+9.3
Impact of smart meters on affordability and water consumption for household and business customers	Meter penetration of 75%
Effectiveness of arrears reduction measures following financial assistance	20% uplift

2. ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT



We have a long-established Priority Services Register, ensuring that customers who need extra help can access our services in a way that meets their particular circumstances. This includes a range of accessibility measures, from tailored communications to bottled water deliveries during supply interruptions. Equally, we provide financial assistance through social tariffs, debt support schemes, flexible payment plans, forbearance schemes, metering, and water efficiency advice, helping to ease financial pressures for those struggling to pay their bills.

Recognising that vulnerability is not static, we place a strong emphasis on targeted transient vulnerability. Customers who, due to unexpected life events such as illness, job loss, bereavement, or relationship breakdown, experience temporary but acute financial distress. Our support is designed to respond to these situations quickly, offering short-term interventions that help customers regain stability before financial difficulties become entrenched. By providing flexible and responsive assistance, we can help customers weather sudden financial shocks without falling into long-term hardship.

We are committed to ensuring that our services are designed around our customers' evolving needs. This means adapting our communication methods and service delivery to remove barriers for those who may struggle to access support, whether due to language differences, learning disabilities, neurodiverse conditions, or sight and hearing impairments.

Additionally, we recognise the importance of non-household customers who provide critical services to vulnerable individuals. Many of these businesses and organisations, such as care homes, hospitals, and schools, rely on a stable water supply to support those in need. Our incident response teams are trained to recognise the urgency of these situations and prioritise their response accordingly, ensuring that essential services remain uninterrupted.

By continuously evolving our support offerings and ensuring accessibility for all, we are committed to helping customers through life's unexpected challenges—whether that means keeping their water running, easing financial strain, or simply ensuring they have one less worry during difficult times.

What we do now

- ✓ Support 183,000 households with our priority services
- ✓ Support 145,000 with a financial assistance scheme
- ✓ Work with our network of partners to understand how customer needs are changing over time through these discussions we identified the need for a new assistance scheme to support working households, which led to the introduction of our Cymuned Scheme (see case study)
- ✓ Provide a case managed service for customers that require extra help through our Specialist Support team, bringing together our financial and non-financial assistance
- ✓ Provide flexible payment arrangements for micro businesses
- ✓ Provide alternative formats (Braille, large print, coloured paper and audio) for bills and written communications and ensure that all bills and non-reactive communications are in Easy Read format
- ✓ Provide a language line translation service in 240 languages within our contact centre
- ✓ Introduction of a sign language video service
- ✓ Provide an accessibility service on our website, which includes options to amend the format and background of content, as well as translation services in 53 languages
- ✓ Operate to the standards of the ISO 22458:2022 consumer vulnerability standard
- ✓ Dedicated marketing campaign 'Here for you' which uses a range of media and aligns our messaging with other financial assistance (such as free school meals, pension credits etc.)
- ✓ Support individual customer needs throughout an incident – text/voice/letter amendments along with priority for +80-year-old population to remove digital inclusion barriers

What we will do

- Continue with our current range of extra help services
- Minimise the impact of future bill rises on low-income households by using our financial surpluses to finance growth of our financial assistance schemes
- Undertake periodic reviews of our range of financial and non-financial extra help to determine development of future services
- Undertake annual customer research with customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement
- Work with water reliant non-household customers to identify opportunities to improve the support we provide during incidents
- Amend our leakage code of practice to take account of the needs of micro-businesses
- Use the feedback from the newly introduced customer research into incidents across the sector to improve our communication with customers
- Introduce digital customer journey audits to improve the accessibility of our digital services and the content on our website
- Introduce online application for WaterSure Wales
- Improve and expand our third-party referral process for support for customers in debt
- Use new smart metering capability to provide more frequent and more timely consumption information to customers that require this service
- Introduce accessibility monitoring for the website
- Introduce 'plain numbers' for customer bills
- Address the key findings in relation to accessibility of services coming out of the Blue Marble customer research
- Advise all newly registered customers on PSR will receive written confirmation of the support they are registered for based on their individual needs.

Metrics we will review



Measure	By 2030
Number of customers registered for priority services	25% of customers on the register
Checking data for customers receiving non-financial support	Attempted contact – 90%
Checking data for customers receiving non-financial support	Actual contact – 35%
Take-up rates for financial assistance by different demographics	Uplift of 5% in 'hard to reach' areas
Advise all newly registered customers on PSR of expectations of service based on individual needs	100% - letter/email output
Response time and effectiveness of incident support for water-reliant premises	100% contact made to all PSR customers in an incident – specifically focused on their individual needs – voice/text/letter – All PS1 customers receive delivery of bottled water – All PS2, PS3 and PS4 customers provided with advanced notice of water stations
Improvements in digital accessibility and customer engagement	AA+ accessibility rating

3. TRAINING & AWARENESS



We have teams working across our operating area, speaking to customers daily. Along with our supply chain and the many partners that we work with, this provides us with a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the support we can offer, as well as respond to the individual circumstances facing a customer.

We will seek to maximise the impact of our people and partners through targeted training that helps them build empathy with customers, allowing them to assess what extra help is needed and ensure that this help is delivered as quickly as possible. We will ensure that our people understand the full scope of our services that we offer and the routes to accessing them. We will also provide them with the capability and confidence to understand the small changes that can be made when a different approach is needed to address the specific extra needs of a customer.

What we do now

- ✔ Monthly Teach Talks for customer facing teams from partner organisations representing specific consumer needs or circumstances (examples include Age Cymru, MIND, Samaritans, Parkinsons UK). These sessions bring to life the needs of specific customers, the challenges they face and advice on we can best support

- ✔ Training sessions on our priority services and financial assistance schemes for our partner network, allowing them to directly refer clients to us (via our online portal REACH)

- ✔ Vulnerability training modules, accredited by Communications Access UK, within our induction programme and refresher training for all frontline employees

- ✔ Prompt cards for meter readers to direct customers to our extra help services

What we will do

- Continue with current training and awareness activities for our dedicated specialist support team and our dedicated business services team.

- Introduce annual training for all employees and those in our supply chain on how to recognise the signs that a customer needs extra help and how to respond

- Incorporate lessons from research carried out by CCW and Ofwat into incidents in other companies into our incident response processes

- Develop online training for our partner network

- Expand the range of internal communications 'collateral' promoting our services across all field based and support teams

- Address the key findings relating to training and awareness coming out of the annual Blue Marble customer research

- Train and develop our business service team to recognise business who could be financially struggling and sign post appropriately.

- Develop a mechanism to measure customer levels of satisfaction with the service provided through our priority service register in accordance with CCWs vulnerability manifesto.

Metrics we will review



Measure	By 2030
Percentage of employees and partners trained in vulnerability awareness	100% of all colleague's customer facing, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Face to face training for new Retail colleagues – E-learning annual refreshers – Vulnerability elements running through all training material to deliver the cultural shift – Audit training material – approve sign off of material
Employee confidence levels in identifying and supporting vulnerable customers	+4.5/5 training questionnaire results
Effectiveness of training (measured through post-training assessments and customer feedback)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improvements within the customer journey metrics – Uplift of PSR registrations – Uplift of financial support
Impact of training on customer satisfaction and service improvements	+9.3 CSAT
Percentage of PSR customers satisfied following post incident research	>80%
Percentage of employees recognising business financial support	2.6 or greater

4. COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS



We have a long tradition of working with other organisations to deliver better outcomes for our communities. We have seen on many occasions that we can achieve far more when we collaborate with our customers and the agencies that speak on their behalf. These agencies provide valuable insight into our customers' lives and the impact that our services are having.

More importantly, they are trusted by our customers and will often be the first point of contact when they are in a difficult situation. We are now working with over 300 organisations across our operating area to raise awareness of the extra help we provide, as well as responding to individual customer needs.

We will continue to build meaningful partnerships with organisations that represent the diverse needs of our customers. We will work with them to maximise the reach of our services, as well as get insight into the impact of those services and identify opportunities for improvement. We will maximise our community presence to raise awareness of our services, provide outplacement support and address wider local needs.

What we do now

- ✓ Community based promotions team providing advice on Priority Services and Financial Assistance Schemes, often working with other advice agencies and utilities companies to ensure that customers receive a more complete package of support
- ✓ Hold debt advice clinics and 1-2-1 customer appointments in community locations
- ✓ Host an annual event to share best practice with our partners, other water companies and utility companies, and obtain feedback on our current activities and plans
- ✓ Developed our Water Resilient Community projects which aim to add social value through collaboration with members of the communities and the organisations that work within them. In forming these partnerships, we can find solutions to some of the key challenges the communities face and work together to drive long lasting change
- ✓ Actively learn from our peers within and outside of the water sector through membership of groups such as WaterUK Customer Service Network, The Collaboration Network, Welsh Government's Income Maximisation Task and Finish Group and Responsible Lending Forum, Resource West (regional partnership involving Wessex Water, Pennon Water, Wales and West Utilities, National Grid)
- ✓ Annual 'Here for you' media campaigns across a variety of channels to include; social media; radio; web
- ✓ Refer household and business customers to trusted organisations for additional support where it has been identified that further help is needed e.g. debt management
- ✓ Continue with our partnership with StepChange debt charity to refer customers for debt advice and whereby StepChange advise customers of our affordability schemes
- ✓ Provide grants up to £5,000 to community run projects which promote health, wellbeing and environmental objectives. We commit £100,000 each year to funding these community projects



What we will do

- Continue with our current community and partnership activities in those areas that we have identified high proportion of customers claiming disability benefit such as Blaenau Gwent
- Develop community partnership clusters to help target local areas of high deprivation, working with local authorities and new partnerships
- Create more Water Resilient Community projects
- Run annual 'Here for you' campaigns ensuring that we tailor our communication to recognise that there are 170,000 people in Wales digitally excluded using radio, community events and third sector organisations
- Establish a framework for collating feedback from partners to help drive improvements in our priority services and financial assistance schemes
- Address the key findings relating communities and partnerships coming out of Blue Marble customer research
- Increase reach and awareness of our support through targeted campaigns and events
- Monitor and track financial and non financial support across our targeted areas



Metrics we will review

Measure	By 2030
Maintain an active network of trusted partners	Minimum of 150 partners
Reach of community-based promotions across targeted areas	5% uptake on social tariffs
Increase the reach and frequency of website traffic through a broad reach of channels e.g. press/radio/digital audio/social media	Review reach and frequency/website traffic and learn lessons
Gather partner feedback to help drive improvements in our priority services and financial assistance schemes	Host an annual event to share best practice with our partners and obtain feedback on our current activities and plans for improving our services
Funding allocated and impact of community grant projects	£100K per annum and £5K community run projects

APPENDIX 1: COMPLIANCE WITH OFWAT'S MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
1.1	Companies should adapt their services to customers in line with any known extra help needs. This is especially important during times where there is increased risk of harm; for example, during incidents.	Compliant	<p>At Welsh Water, we have adapted our approach to communicating with customers, by offering the following choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Braille, Large print, coloured paper (for neuro-diverse customers), audio (CS/MP3), Easy Read format bills and bills read over the telephone. – Website accessibility service (Recite), which includes translation services for 53 languages. This has recently been enhanced by the introduction of the British Sign Language video service. – Language line within our contact centre which includes translation services in 240 languages (this is in addition to our in-house Welsh language team). <p>Through our priority services register, we offer customers priority contact during incidents and the provision of alternative water supplies, which we will deliver to those customers who are unable to get to distribution points. We have implemented a 4 tier approach based on individual customers needs from highest priority so that customers expectations are met. Alongside this we send PSR customers notifications through various channels on progress and where possible provide advanced notification to store water and water station locations.</p> <p>Following post incident research we have amended our auto-enrolment age from aged 90+ to 80+ throughout the last year, this ensures we have visibility of those customers that may be digitally excluded, unaware of the register and impacted based on their geographic locations (rural).</p> <p>Additionally, we provide the option of third-party billing (friend, family member or carer), nominee services for all account matters, password and knock and wait services. We have established a specialist support team to manage our financial assistance and priority services and they are trained to recognise and respond to the signs of vulnerability, adopting their approach to the requirements of the person that they are dealing with.</p> <p>We also recognise that some of our non-household customers (such as schools, hospitals and care homes) provide services to people that need extra help. We hold details of these sites within our operational and GIS systems to ensure that our operational teams can prioritise support to these sites during incidents.</p>	<p>Feedback from customers receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, C-MeX raw data) and insight from our quality framework.</p> <p>Monthly monitoring sessions of customer complaints and quarterly C, D and B-MeX results.</p> <p>Monitoring of website activity and requests for extra help.</p> <p>Customer and stakeholder research of our management of incidents (company research, ICG review and Ofwat/CCW research).</p>	<p>Ability to meet the needs and expectations of all PSR customers during large scale incidents as the number of customers registered increases.</p>	<p>Satisfaction of customers registered for extra help services in line with CCW manifesto of 95% satisfied</p> <p>Increase the number of customers who are registered for help with a PSR reach target of 25%.</p> <p>Attempt contact with 90% of priority service customers every 2 years to confirm their ongoing requirement for extra help.</p> <p>Actual contact with 35% of priority service customers every 2 years to confirm their ongoing requirement for extra help.</p> <p>100% new registration letters sent to all PSR customers in line with the new PSR Standard.</p> <p>Maintain ISO 22458:2022 accreditation.</p> <p>Post incident customer satisfaction of 80% satisfied.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
1.2	Companies should ensure that the level and nature of support available to customers is presented in a way customers can understand.	Compliant	<p>We make the information about our extra help available in many ways and focus on making sure that it is clear, concise and easy to understand and, as such, all written communications are subject to 'Tone of Voice' checks, ensuring that we strike the right balance in our message, signpost accordingly and guard against the use of jargon. We use feedback gained from our customer insight processes to ensure our bill design and contents are reviewed regularly.</p> <p>This information is presented on our website and publications. Additionally, we have recently updated our website to include a dedicated area about what can be expected during incidents including how we provide alternative supplies. CCW has confirmed that this information is accessible and comprehensive. Alongside this, we have a dedicated page 'help with your bills' on our website that holds all the support available to customers financial and non-financial.</p> <p>Our webpage is rated AA+ for accessibility and is monitored and audited on an annual basis through our ISO accreditation to ensure we support our customers.</p> <p>All customer facing colleagues have received training on identifying, supporting and escalating vulnerability and this is maintained through an annual refresher process ensuring that content is appropriate based on any new trends/observations.</p> <p>Information on our priority services and financial assistance schemes is provided to our network of partners. We provide training to the employees of these organisations, allowing them to refer customers to us via our online portal (REACH). Our community outreach team also promote the extra help that is available through work that they do in towns and communities across Wales. They use a world language map to identify the language needs of non-English/Welsh speakers and use translation tools to discuss the additional services that we provide.</p> <p>Customers can seek redress if they are not satisfied with the level of service they receive.</p>	<p>Feedback from customers receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, C-MeX raw data) and insight from our quality framework.</p> <p>Undertake periodic reviews of our range of financial and non-financial extra help to determine development of future services.</p> <p>Annual customer research of customers receiving extra help to understand satisfaction of our services and identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Digital customer journey audits to understand the accessibility of our digital services and the content on our website.</p>		<p>Maintain ISO22458 Inclusive Service accreditation.</p> <p>Satisfaction of customers registered for extra help services in line with the CCW manifesto goal of 95%.</p> <p>CSAT performance of 9.3 out of 10.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
1.3	Companies should seek to continuously improve the service they provide to customers who need extra help. This may include finding innovative ways to design or implement services.	Compliant	<p>We are continuously looking to improve all of our services, including those to customers that need extra help. We do this in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Feedback through our customer insight processes. – Testing new services or changes to services with different groups of customers, including those customers who need extra help. Our most recent example of this was changes that we made to our unmeasured bills ahead of annual billing 2024 and 2025. – We hold an annual event with partner organisations to share good practice and get feedback on the work we have done over the previous 12 months, as well as identify areas where we can make improvements or address an under served group of customers. – Benchmarking and sharing of best practice with other companies within and outside of the sector, including the Customer Service Network (water sector), Collaboration Network (cross sector), Welsh Government's Income Maximisation Task and Finish group. An example of the benefits that this brings is the work that Cardiff and Vale Credit Union does to support our range of support to their customers, following a discussion we led at the Income Maximisation Task and Finish group. – Regular updates on performance and services to our Independent Challenge Group. An example of how this has influenced our thinking is that we are looking at how we will support low-income households as we roll out smart metering in AMP8. – Monthly Teach Talks with consumer representative bodies. An example of how this has influenced our services is the recent introduction of our SignVideo service following a talk from British Sign Language. – External and internal post incident reports, particularly any learning as to how we have managed our priority services customers. Following the December 2022 freeze thaw incident, we commissioned our Independent Challenge Group to carry out a review of our customer response to the incident, including those customers that need extra help. The findings from this review are now built into our incident management process. 	<p>Feedback from customers receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, CMEX etc.) and insight from our quality framework. We will build in the feedback from the newly established framework for customer research of how incidents are handled.</p> <p>Monthly monitoring sessions of customer complaints and quarterly C, D and B-MeX results.</p> <p>Usage of extra help services.</p> <p>Annual research of customers receiving extra help services to understand satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Regular external stakeholder reviews of our extra help services and vulnerability strategies (such as CCW and ICG).</p> <p>Quarterly review of customer journeys and digital customer journeys</p>		<p>Awareness of our priority services and financial assistance schemes (as reported through CCW's Water Matters report).</p> <p>Colleague competency and confidence following training with a score of 4.5/5 in identifying and responding to vulnerability.</p> <p>Satisfaction of customers registered for extra help services in line with the CCW manifesto goal of 95%.</p> <p>ISO 22458:2022 accreditation</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
1.4	Companies should use a range of data to monitor the effectiveness of their extra help services, and the satisfaction levels of customers who have made such needs known.	Compliant	<p>We use a range of customer feedback tools and insights to monitor customer satisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Our daily customer insight tool which asks all customers who have interacted with us for feedback on their experience. – Root cause analysis of written and non-written complaints and chase contacts. – Performance measures across our customer journeys, which have been designed to recognise customers that need extra help. – C-MeX survey call data. <p>Our Customer Engagement Action Group reviews the themes/ trends arising from this insight and will develop the improvement plans required in response. We also compare how insight from customers that need extra help compares to the generality of our customers to ensure that they are no less satisfied (our results show that customers that need extra help have higher satisfaction levels). In recent months we have implemented Speech Analytics software which will enhance this data set.</p> <p>As noted above, we meet regularly with our Independent Challenge Group to update on the work we do to support customers that need extra help, and to get feedback on our service. Further feedback is gained through our community engagement team, who are working daily with our network of partners.</p> <p>Finally, we hold the ISO 22458:2022 Consumer Vulnerability Standard, which involves external assessment of our approach to supporting customers who need extra help.</p>	<p>Insight from our quality framework of contacts with customers through our Specialist Support and Contact Centre teams is used to identify improvements and training needs. This feeds into our performance management processes (feedback, coaching, 121s).</p> <p>Monthly review of customer journey insight by Customer Engagement Action Group against process improvement plans or to define new improvement opportunities.</p> <p>Regular external stakeholder reviews of our extra help services and vulnerability strategies (such as CCW and ICG).</p> <p>Comparison of geographic take up of financial and non-financial services against external data sources, such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (for customers living in England)</p>		<p>Satisfaction of customers registered for extra help services in line with the CCW manifesto goal of 95%.</p> <p>Post incident customer satisfaction of 80% satisfied.</p> <p>CSAT performance of 9.3 out of 10.</p> <p>Maintain ISO 22458:2022 accreditation.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
2.1	Companies should interact with customers in a way that is inclusive for a diverse range of audiences. This should be underpinned by relevant insights, which may include research, engagement and accreditation.	Compliant	<p>We recognise the diversity of needs and preferences across our customer base and have built this into the options that we have for communicating with customers, offering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Braille, Large print, coloured paper (for neuro-diverse customers), audio and Easy Read format bills and bills read over the phone. – Website accessibility service (Recite), which includes translation services for 53 languages. This has recently been enhanced by the introduction of the British Sign Language video service. AA+ rating for accessibility. – Language line within our contact centre which includes translation services in 240 languages (this is in addition to our in-house Welsh language team). – Dedicated Welsh language service for all communications and all publications are bilingual. <p>Our vulnerability training for front line teams has been accredited by Communication Access UK and we hold the ISO 22458:2022 Consumer Vulnerability Standard.</p> <p>Additionally, all of our written communications are subject to 'Tone of Voice' checks, ensuring that our messages are easily understood, have the right tone, signpost effectively and avoid the use of jargon. We use feedback from customer insight to inform the design of and messaging in our bills and a recent third-party review confirmed that the prominence and acceptability of the key messages met some of the highest standards for accessibility.</p>	<p>Feedback from customers receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, CMEX etc.) and insight from our quality framework. We will build in the feedback from the newly established framework for customer research of how incidents are handled.</p> <p>Monthly monitoring sessions of customer complaints and quarterly C, D and B-MeX results.</p> <p>Annual customer research of customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Accessibility monitoring for the website.</p> <p>Regular reviews with partnership network and benchmarking with other utilities to identify good practice and opportunities for improvement.</p>	Customer research into customers who need extra help is not always representative, especially as qualitative research is often best practice in this area. We therefore would use this alongside other methods to understand our vulnerable customer base.	<p>Maintenance ISO22458 Inclusive Service accreditation.</p> <p>Establish a vulnerable customer panel to test satisfaction with our current services and new services that we develop.</p> <p>Use the feedback from the newly introduced customer research into incidents across the sector to improve our communication with customers and achieve >80% satisfaction.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction for customers who are on PSR through survey responses in line with the CCW manifesto of 95% satisfaction.</p> <p>Maintain the AA+ accessibility rating for our digital services</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
2.2	Companies should offer their customers a range of ways to interact and communicate. This includes allowing customers to opt for third party billing where appropriate.	Compliant	<p>We offer a range of contact channels for all customers including telephone, face to face (either home visit or appointment at one of our offices), letter, webform, email, webchat and social media and have recently introduced a dedicated webchat service for customers contacting our specialist support team (which deals with priority services and financial assistance schemes).</p> <p>Whilst our systems do not allow us to hold customer contact preferences, we will consider how customers have chosen to contact us in the past when we are managing specific incidents to share important information about alternative water supplies. We will also work closely with partners located in the areas impacted by an incident to ensure that messages about an incident, and the provision of alternative water, in particular, are received quickly.</p> <p>We offer third party billing and nominee services as part of our priority services schemes.</p> <p>We have a dedicated account management team for non-household customers who aren't in the contestable retail market who act as a dedicated point of contact for customers. This team will liaise with water reliant non-household sites during incidents.</p>	<p>Feedback from customers receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, CMEX etc.) and insight from our quality framework. We will build in the feedback from the newly established framework for customer research of how incidents are handled.</p> <p>Undertake annual customer research with customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Accessibility monitoring for the website.</p> <p>Comparison of geographic take up of financial and non-financial services against external data sources, such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (for customers living in England)</p>	<p>Our systems do not allow us to store customer preferences and therefore use their preferred contact channel during incidents. This will require the introduction of CRM capabilities, which we will look to develop our plans following the final determination of our PR24 plans</p>	<p>Awareness of our priority services and financial assistance scheme (as reported by CCW's Water Matters report).</p> <p>Uplift of 5% on take up for financial support in hard to reach areas.</p> <p>Satisfaction of customers registered for priority services in line with CCW manifesto of 95% satisfaction.</p> <p>Maintain ISO 22458:2022 accreditation.</p>
2.3	Companies should consult with CCW, and engage with stakeholders and other customer representatives, when making significant changes to their proposed service offering around vulnerability.	Compliant	<p>We place a great deal of importance on the feedback from CCW and other external stakeholders about our vulnerability services and opportunities for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We meet CCW every three months, with vulnerability being a standing item on the agenda. This includes quarterly reports of priority services take up and key trends. – We provide regular updates to our Independent Challenge Group on the progress of our vulnerability strategy and plans – We meet members of Welsh Government frequently to discuss vulnerability and financial inclusion and attend their Income Maximisation Task and Finish Group and affordable lenders group to share the work we are doing and learn from others. – We hold an annual partner event, attended by Welsh Government, CCW, debt advice sector, local authorities/social landlords and consumer representative groups/charities. – Each month, our customer facing teams attend Teach Talks with consumer representative groups (examples being Age Cymru, MIND, RNIB) who will bring to life the challenges that some customers face and how we can best meet their needs. 	<p>Quarterly reviews of progress against vulnerability strategy, and presenting proposed changes to services/schemes with CCW.</p> <p>Half yearly reviews of progress against vulnerability strategy, and presenting proposed changes to services/schemes with ICG.</p>		<p>All significant changes to service offering around vulnerability to be discussed with CCW and ICG.</p> <p>Incorporate lessons from research carried out by CCW and Ofwat into incidents in other companies into our incident response processes.</p> <p>Establish a framework for collating feedback from partners to help drive improvements in our priority services and financial assistance schemes.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
3.1	Companies should take active steps to identify customers who require extra help who have not yet been identified.	Compliant	<p>Through our community engagement activities, we have built up a network of over 300 partner organisations that we work with on a daily basis to raise awareness of the support that we provide. We have a daily programme of events where our community support team join up with these organisations to provide advice clinics and awareness sessions, as well as training their employees about the support we provide, so that they can refer customers to us or apply on their behalf. This includes doing things such as holding general and individual advice sessions at Job Centre Plus offices, holding multi-partner events (such as our family day at Riverside, Newport in November 2023) to promote our combined support for households that need extra help.</p> <p>We also aim to make it easy for our partners to refer, or apply on behalf of, customers. We developed an online portal (REACH) specifically for our partners to provide us with this information.</p> <p>Our targeted media (social/radio) campaigns highlight the support available for customers and this focuses on where we know there is low uptake but high deprivation.</p> <p>Whilst our customers may not yet have presented their vulnerability to us, it is likely that another organisation has this information. Therefore, we place a great deal of importance on sharing information about vulnerability with those organisations. We share information with energy distribution network operators (DNO) across our supply area, health trust renal units, Kidney Care UK and Wales and West Utilities. We also support Welsh Government's JIGSO priority services data sharing platform, being the first utility company to do so.</p> <p>Collaboration with local authorities to reach those customers that are in need of support.</p> <p>As a utility company, we have to hold a lot of information about our customers in order to fulfil our licence obligations. We use this information, together with externally available data sources, to understand where there may be an unfulfilled need for the services we offer to customers that need extra help.</p>	<p>Comparison of geographic take up of financial and non-financial services against external data sources, such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (for customers living in England).</p> <p>Awareness of our priority services and financial assistance scheme.</p> <p>Uptake of financial support in targeted areas.</p> <p>Satisfaction of customers registered for priority services.</p> <p>Number of customers signed up to our Priority Service Register.</p>		<p>Awareness of our priority services and financial assistance schemes (as reported through CCW's Water Matters report).</p> <p>Annual Water Resilient Community projects.</p> <p>Increased uptake of financial support to support 180,000 customers.</p> <p>Colleague competency and confidence following training with a score of 4.5/5 in identifying and responding to vulnerability.</p> <p>Expand external data sources to improve our understanding of the extra help needs of under-represented customer groups and how we need to adapt our current services to accommodate them.</p> <p>Explore new data sharing opportunities, including the expansion of data sharing with the energy sector and the introduction of financial data sharing.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
3.2	Companies should take steps to proactively increase customer awareness of the extra help available to those who need it.	Compliant	<p>We run dedicated campaigns throughout the year to promote the additional help that we offer to customers that need it. These campaigns, which run under the brand 'Here for you', involve team members and customers in real life case studies of how we have helped out. Our campaigns run across a range of media (social media, bills, radio, partner newsletters, bus hoardings) and target those communities which our data tells us have greatest need for this support. In running these campaigns, we work closely with other organisations that provide extra help to jointly promote our services, making it easier for people to get what they are entitled to more quickly - for example we work closely with Warm Wales, the energy advice charity, to jointly promote our services.</p> <p>Our bills clearly highlight the support available to customers who are facing financial hardship through our assistance schemes.</p> <p>We use our website to promote our extra help services, using banners on the home page to raise awareness and signpost customers to pages where more detailed information is provided.</p> <p>As an employer of some 3,500 people across Wales, Herefordshire and Deeside, we have a unique opportunity to promote our services through our operational and capital activities. We have developed information for teams across the company to be able to sign post customers to our support. This includes online materials for office teams, but also cards for field-based teams such as our meter readers.</p> <p>We also use the presence that we have in communities through our investment programme to increase awareness of the help that we provide. In 2017 we launched our first Water Resilient Community project in the Rhondda Fach area, where we were undertaking mains replacement investment. This is a place-based project lasting a minimum of 12 months where we work with residents, businesses, local authorities, health professionals and others to look at how we can support challenges in the area, particularly the impact on customers that need extra help. Since that first project we have run similar schemes in Rhymney/Bargoed, Rhyl and Newport and we are in the process of starting work in Cardigan and Bangor.</p>	<p>Comparison of geographic take up of financial and non-financial services against external data sources, such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (for customers living in England).</p> <p>Undertake annual customer research with customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Monthly review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services by senior leadership team.</p> <p>Quarterly review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services with CCW.</p> <p>Annual board review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services.</p>		<p>Awareness of our priority services and financial assistance schemes (as reported through CCW's Water Matters report).</p> <p>Annual Water Resilient Community projects.</p> <p>Develop new insight models, with external data sources, to identify the needs of customers and develop strategies to target our marketing and promotion activities in under served areas.</p> <p>Expand external data sources to improve our understanding of the extra help needs of under-represented customer groups and how we need to adapt our current services to accommodate them.</p> <p>100% new registration letters sent to all PSR customers in line with the new PSR Standard.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
3.3	Companies should train their staff to spot potential requirements for extra help, even when a customer has not previously declared it.	Compliant	<p>All of our customer facing teams are trained to identify the signs of vulnerability and given the skills to respond appropriately in different circumstances. This starts with our induction programme when people join the business and is supplemented with refresher training and updates afterwards.</p> <p>We hold monthly Teach Talks for all customer facing teams delivered by partners that represent different customer groups (examples being Age Cymru, MIND, Samaritans, Parkinsons UK). The purpose of these sessions is to bring to life how we can best deliver our services from a customer perspective, and to help our teams relate and adapt their approach to suit the needs of different customer groups.</p> <p>Employees across the organisation participate in our 'Customer-led Success' training which focuses on developing empathy with customers, and how to develop listening and communication skills to ensure that the extra needs of customers are identified and supported. Alongside this, supporting our vulnerable customers training has been implemented for all customer facing colleagues to identify, support and escalate appropriately.</p> <p>We recognise that customers that have needs that require extra help will often experience financial difficulties. As a result we have combined these two areas to create our Specialist Support team, who will deal with contacts where it is thought that there may be more complex needs. Customers often haven't declared a need in these situations, and therefore the advisors in this team have had further training to recognise, understand and respond appropriately, using the TEXAS model (Thank, Explain, Explicit Consent, Ask, Signpost).</p>	<p>Feedback from all customers, not only those receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, CMEX etc.) and insight from our quality framework. We will build in the feedback from the newly established framework for customer research of how incidents are handled.</p> <p>Colleague competency.</p>	<p>Maintaining the knowledge within our field teams, particularly those in our supply chain. To overcome this, we will set targets through the contract tendering process and include monitoring of supply chain competency in our future monitoring arrangements</p>	<p>Colleague competency and confidence following training with a score of 4.5/5 in identifying and responding to vulnerability.</p> <p>100% of all frontline colleagues trained on recognising, supporting and escalating vulnerability and annual refreshes in place.</p> <p>Maintain ISO 22458:2022 consumer vulnerability standard.</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
3.4	Companies should actively consider how they can reduce communication burdens on customers who need extra help; this could include establishing data sharing arrangements with partner organisations.	Compliant	<p>We believe that it is important that we make it easy for our customers to get the extra help that they need quickly and, ideally, only have to provide this information once.</p> <p>We have priority services data sharing agreements with a number of parties: National Grid and Scottish Power, ensuring that we have 100% coverage with energy distribution network operators across our supply area; University Hospital Wales and Swansea Bay renal units; Kidney Care UK. We are the first utility company to participate in Welsh Government's priority services data sharing platform, JIGSO and during the Covid pandemic we worked with Welsh Government to establish a temporary priority services register for customers who were instructed to shield.</p> <p>Our operational and GIS systems have been designed to capture water reliant non-household premises (such as schools, hospitals and care homes) that provide services to customers that need extra help to ensure that our operational teams can prioritise support during incidents. As part of this we have partnered with Care Inspectorate Wales to receive monthly information about care homes, including the number of residents.</p>	<p>Undertake annual customer research with customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Monthly review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services by senior leadership team.</p> <p>Quarterly review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services with CCW.</p> <p>Annual board review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services.</p>		<p>Increase the number of data sharing arrangements for priority services.</p> <p>Introduce financial data sharing to support social tariff applications to support a 5% uplift on hard to reach areas.</p>
4.1	Companies should take appropriate steps to record customers' extra help needs. These records should be held securely and in line with wider data protection requirements.	Compliant	We hold customers' extra help needs and the services they receive on our Priority Services Register within our customer management system. These records are maintained in accordance with our protocols on information security and data protection and we use role-based access controls to manage who is able to view the information. All of our teams must complete annual refresher training on our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation.	<p>Audit of affordability and priority services processes.</p> <p>6 monthly review of data protection compliance (including data breaches).</p>		Maintain ISO 22458:2022 consumer vulnerability standard.

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
4.2	Companies' records should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date.	Compliant	<p>We proactively contact customers on our Priority Services Register at least every two years to ensure that the extra help they are receiving is still required. For any contacts we receive from these customers within that two-year period, our advisors will check that the information that we hold is accurate and that the customer still requires extra help. We will also carry out these checks through the annual reapplication process for our social tariff HelpU.</p> <p>Our operational and GIS systems have been designed to capture water reliant non-household premises (such as schools, hospitals and care homes) that provide services to customers that need extra help to ensure that our operational teams can prioritise support during incidents. As part of this we have partnered with Care Inspectorate Wales to receive monthly information about care homes, including the number of residents.</p>	Monthly review of Priority Service attempted and actual contacts (Senior management, Executive and Board).		<p>Attempt contact with 90% of priority service customers every 2 years to confirm their ongoing requirement for extra help.</p> <p>Actual contact with 35% of priority service customers every 2 years to confirm their ongoing requirement for extra help.</p>
4.3	Companies should consider how their records of customers' needs can be designed in a way that can help deliver wider benefits to their customers; for example, reducing communication burdens for customers through data sharing.	Compliant	<p>The Water and Energy sectors agreed common needs codes to support data sharing between companies and we have adopted these codes within our Priority Services Register.</p> <p>We use role-based access controls to ensure that teams that need to be able to know when customers are registered for extra help. This will vary according to the circumstances. To provide additional protections for customers, we record the needs code at a property level and do not identify who in the property needs the extra help.</p>	<p>Annual customer research of customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Monthly review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services by senior leadership team.</p> <p>Quarterly review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services with CCW.</p> <p>Annual board review of vulnerability strategy progress and take up of extra help services.</p>		<p>Increase the number of data sharing arrangements for priority services.</p> <p>Introduce financial data sharing to support social tariff applications by expanding partners (local authority etc.).</p>

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
4.4	In designing their approach to recording and, where relevant, sharing customer vulnerability data, companies should clearly explain to customers how their data will be used, including any choices available to them. Companies should take steps to understand how their customers who need extra help feel about the use of their data.	Compliant	<p>In our Privacy Notice, located on our website, we explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Our legal basis for processing personal data, including sharing data. – What personal data we will collect and what we will use it for. – Personal data we will collect from others and what we will use it for. – Information we will share with others about you and why. – Where we store personal data and how we keep it safe. – The choices that people have and how to contact us if they have concerns. <p>We explain this to customers when they are applying for our priority services.</p> <p>In May 2024 we carried out customer research with customers who need extra help to find out how they feel about the use of their data. This found that most customers are happy for their personal information being used to improve the support they receive.</p>	<p>Feedback from all customers, not only those receiving extra help services (Rant and Rave, Speech Analytics, CMEX etc.) and insight from our quality framework.</p> <p>Undertake annual customer research with customers receiving extra help to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>Annual review of Privacy Notice and training material as part of Annual Billing project.</p> <p>Comply with the PSR standard by sending letters to all new registrants outlining the service they should expect and how we share data.</p>		Establish a vulnerable customer panel to test satisfaction with our current services and new services that we develop.
5.1	Companies should develop and maintain a vulnerability strategy setting out how they plan to support the extra help needs of their customer base.	Compliant	<p>In 2018, we launched our vulnerability strategy for AMP7, entitled 'Supporting our customers - working at the heart of our community'. We have achieved a great deal in that time: 183,000 (12.5%) of households registered for priority services; 145,000 households receiving financial assistance; priority services data sharing in place with energy DNOs, public health bodies and Welsh Government; established a specialist support and community outreach team to maximise the reach of these services; expanded our network to include over 300 groups and organisations which represent customers needing extra help. However, we have recognised that it is time to take stock and define the priorities for the next 5 years and over the last 12 months, we have worked with partners, regulators, Welsh Government, customers and customer representative groups to do this.</p> <p>Today we are publishing our final strategy which includes the findings of that review and our high-level priorities through to 2030, how we meet Ofwat's minimum expectations and what we will measure to ensure that our strategy is on track.</p>	Annual board review of our progress against the commitments in our Vulnerability Strategy.		Annual board review of our progress against the commitments in our Vulnerability Strategy.

No.	Minimum expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
5.2	Companies should take steps to understand the likely underlying requirements for extra help in their areas.	Compliant	<p>In developing this strategy, we have consulted with customers and our partners to understand how impactful our priority services (including our communications and incident support) and financial assistance schemes are, where improvements are needed and whether there are new services that we can offer.</p> <p>Alongside this, we have also considered a range of external studies and data sources, which include Welsh Government research into digital inclusion, mental health provision and disabilities, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Bevan Foundation and Age Cymru.</p> <p>The key messages from these sources for this strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Customers and their representatives rate our priority services and financial assistance schemes highly. – Our outreach and community activities are vital in supporting customer that won't engage with us directly. – We need to do more to raise awareness of our support, particularly making use of our partners to act as intermediaries. – Looking out to AMP8, we need to give careful consideration to the impact of smart meters on lower income households. <p>This has been built into our four strategy themes – data, accessible services, training and awareness and communities and partnership – and delivery plans through to 2030. We will review these sources annually to ensure that we identify any new trends that we need to incorporate.</p> <p>It was through this approach that we identified the need to provide assistance for working households and worked with two Citizens Advice offices to pilot our new Cymuned scheme to support those with negative budgets.</p> <p>We have incorporated external regional data sources such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation, state benefits and Universal Credit into our operational dashboards and match against our priority services and financial assistance scheme data. This helps us understand where we may have customers that are not receiving the support that they need and therefore target our community and marketing activities appropriately.</p>	<p>Undertake annual customer research with customers to understand extra help needs and any unfilled requirement.</p> <p>Annual formal review of external data sources and research (including but not limited to Welsh Government, Ofwat, CCW, Joseph Roundtree Foundation, Bevan Foundation, Citizens Advice) against internal data sets (priority services, social tariffs, debt levels) to assess the impact of our services and consider any needs we aren't addressing.</p> <p>Regular external stakeholder reviews of our extra help services and vulnerability strategies (such as CCW and ICG).</p> <p>Comparison of geographic take up of financial and non-financial services against external data sources, such as Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (for customers living in England)</p>		<p>Host an annual event to share best practice with partners, stakeholders and other utility companies.</p> <p>Expand external data sources to improve our understanding of the extra help needs of under-represented customer groups and how we need to adapt our current services to accommodate them.</p> <p>Develop community partnership 'clusters' to help target support in areas</p>

APPENDIX 2: OUR PARTNERS

Action in Caerau and Ely • Action for Children • Action for Elders • Action on Hearing Loss • Adferiad Mental Health • Adra Housing Association • Advice Mid Wales • Advocacy Support Cymru • Age Cymru Dyfed • Age Cymru Gwent • Age Cymru West Glamorgan • Age Cymru Powys • Age Cymru Gwynedd a Mon • Age Connect Wales • Age Connect Cardiff • Age Connect Morgannwg • Age Connect Torfaen • Age Connect Barry • Age Connect Aberdare • Age Connect Newport • Age Connect Rhondda Cynnon Taf • Age Connect Merthyr Tydfil • Age Connect Flintshire • All Wales People First • Alzheimer's Society • Arc Communities • Arbed • ASD Rainbow Charity • Advocacy Services North East Wales • Auriga Services • Autism Directory • Barcud • Bargoed Community Hub • Barnardos • Barod • Basecamp • Blaenau Gwent Council • Blind Veterans • Bridgend County Council • British Legion • Bro Myrddin Housing Association • Bron Afon Housing Association • British Deaf Association • British Lunch Foundation • British Red Cross • Business in the Community • Citizens Advice Bureau • Citizens Advice Bureau Gwent • Citizens Advice Bureau Caerphilly • Citizens Advice Bureau Rhondda Cynon Taf • Citizens Advice Bureau Flintshire • Citizens Advice Bureau Bridgend • Citizens Advice Bureau Cardiff • Citizens Advice Bureau Ceredigion • Citizens Advice Bureau Conwy • Citizens Advice Bureau Carmarthenshire • Citizens Advice Bureau Denbighshire • Citizens Advice Bureau Gwynedd • Citizens Advice Bureau Monmouthshire • Citizens Advice Bureau Neath Port Talbot • Citizens Advice Bureau Pembrokeshire • Citizens Advice Bureau Powys • Citizens Advice Bureau Torfaen • Citizens Advice Bureau Vale of Glamorgan • Citizens Advice Bureau Wrexham • Cadwyn Housing Association • Caerphilly Council • CAIS Mental Health • Cancer UK • Canolfan Felinfach • Cardiff Council • Cardiff Community Housing Association • Care and Repair Wales • Carers Trust • Carers Wales • Carmarthen Council • Cartefi Housing • Celtic Linc • Ceredigion Council • Charis Grants • Chinese Elderly Association • Christians Against Poverty • Church Army • Clean Slate • Clwyd Alyn Housing • Coal Industry Social Welfare • Coastal Housing • Communities First Cardiff • Communities First Carmarthenshire • Communities First • Denbighshire • Communities First Neath Port Talbot • Communities First Newport • Communities First Powys • Communities First Rhondda Cynon Taf • Communities First Swansea • Communities First Ynys Mon • Communities for Work • Community Money Advice • Community Support • Community Transport • Community and Voluntary Support • Conwy Council • Corner Stone Opportunities • Credit Union Vale of Glamorgan • Credit Union Cardiff • Cynon Taf Housing • Deaf Blind Society • Dementia • Denbigh Community Navigators • Denbigh Youth People Positive Pathway • Derwen Cymru • Dewis Wales • Diabetes UK • Digatref • Disability Can Do • Disabled Living • Diverse Cymru • Dref Werdd • Department of Working Pensions • Dyfed Powys Police • Energy Saving Trust • Families First • Fire Service • Flintshire Council • Flying Start • Ammanford Foodbank • Anglesey Foodbank • Arfon Foodbank • Bargoed Foodbank • Barmouth Foodbank • Blaenau Gwent Foodbank • Brecon Foodbank • Caerphilly Foodbank • Flintshire Foodbank • Hay on Wye Foodbank • Llanelli Foodbank • Merthyr Cynon Foodbank • Pontardawe Foodbank • Pontypridd Foodbank • Taff Ely Foodbank • Rhondda Foodbank • Rhyl Foodbank • Rhymney Valley Foodbank • Swansea Foodbank • Ystradgynlais Foodbank • First Choice Housing • Gwent Association Of Voluntary Organisations • Gellideg Foundation • GISDA • Gorwel • Groundworks Green Doctor • Grow Cymru • Grŵp Cynefin • Gwalia Housing • Gwynedd Council • Gwynedd Housing • Hafal Housing • Hafan Cymru • Hafod Housing • Headway Charity • Hijinx • Heat and Save • HSBC • Home Start • Hope for Justice • Hope4U • Institute for the Blind • Abergavenny Job Centre • Abertillery Job Centre • Ammanford Job Centre • Aberdare Job Centre • Aberystwyth Job Centre • Ammanford Job Centre • Bargoed Job Centre • Blackwood Job Centre • Blaenau Gwent Job Centre • Barry Job Centre • Brecon Job Centre • Bridgend Job Centre • Caerphilly Job Centre • Cardigan Job Centre • Carmarthen Job Centre • Chepstow Job Centre • Ebbw Vale Job Centre • Gorseinon Job Centre • Flintshire Job Centre • Haverfordwest Job Centre • Hereford Job Centre • Lampeter Job Centre • Llandrindod Wells Job Centre • Llandysul Job Centre • Llanelli Job Centre • Llantrisant Job Centre • Machynlleth Job Centre • Maesteg Job Centre • Merthyr Tydfil Job Centre • Milford Haven Job Centre • Morryston Job Centre • Neath Job Centre • Newport Job Centre • Newtown Job Centre • Pembroke Dock Job Centre • Pontypool Job Centre • Pontypridd Job Centre • Port Talbot Job Centre • Porth Job Centre • Porthcawl Job Centre • Rhyl Job Centre • Shotton Job Centre • Swansea Job Centre • Tonypandy Job Centre • Treorchy Job Centre • Welshpool Job Centre • Ystradgynlais Job Centre • Kaleidoscope • Kim Inspire • Kidney Care • Kidney Wales • Life Ways • Linc Cymru • Llamau • Macmillan Cancer Trust • Macular Society • Mantell Gwynedd • Meadow Prospect Homes • Maesincla Eye • Melin Homes • Mental Health and Money Advice • Menter Cwm Gwendraeth • Menter Dinefwr • Merthyr Housing • Merthyr Tydfil Council • Merthyr Valleys Homes • Men's Shed • MIND • Money and Pensions • Moneyline Cymru • Moneyline Valley Homes • Monmouthshire Council • Monmouthshire Housing • Money Saviour • Mothers Matters • MS Society • Nacro • National Energy Action • Neath Port Talbot Credit Union • NEWCIS Carers • Newport Council • Newport MP Office • Newport City Homes • Newydd Housing • NHS Brynmawr Medical Practice • North Wales Housing • OASIS • Opus • Ovo • Parkinsons UK • Pembrokeshire Care Society • Pembrokeshire Council • Pembrokeshire Housing • Pennysmart • Plattform • Pobl • Powys Council • Plant a Chefnogi Teuluoedd • Principality Building Society • Reach Housing Support • Reed • Remploy • Rhondda Cynon Taff Council • Rhondda Housing • Riverside Advice • Royal National Institute of Blind • Royal Association for Deaf People • Royal Voluntary Service • Sanctuary Trust • Salad Money • Salvation Army • Scope • Serco • Severn Wye • Shelter Cymru • Speak Easy Cymru • Sight Cymru • Sight Life Wales • Sign Sight Sound • Smart Money Cymru • Smart Services SSE • St Giles Trust • Stroke Association • Stori Cymru • Supporting People Gwent • Swansea Council • StepChange • Swansea Young Families • Tai Calon Housing • Tai Clwyd • Tai Eryri • Tai Tarian • Tenovus • Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru • Torfaen Council • Trivallis Housing Association • Trussell Trust • United Welsh Housing • Vale of Glamorgan Council • Valedas • Valleys Kids • Valleys To Coast Housing • Wales Co-operative • Wales Council for Deaf People • Wales Council for Voluntary Action • Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit • Wales and West Housing • Welsh Community for Deaf People • Wallich • Warm Wales • Welsh Women's Aid • Women's Aid

1. Older people in Wales: facts and figures – Age Cymru and Swansea University (September 2021)
2. March 2024
3. March 2018
4. March 2024
5. Snapshot of poverty in winter 2024 – Bevan Foundation
6. Health, disability and provision of unpaid care in Wales (Census 2021) – Welsh Government
7. Together for mental health – Welsh Government
8. Digital inclusion in Wales – Auditor General for Wales (2023)
9. 2013 Schools Census
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