

A photograph of two young girls in a kitchen setting. The girl on the left, with dark curly hair, is drinking from a glass and giving a thumbs up. The girl on the right, with straight brown hair, is also giving a thumbs up and holding a glass of water. The background shows a kitchen with white cabinets and a brick wall. The CCW logo is in the top right corner.

CCW

CCW's Forward Work Programme 2023-24

About CCW

CCW is the independent voice for water consumers in England and Wales. We help thousands of people resolve complaints against their water company, while providing free advice and support.

At CCW, we stand up for what is right, championing people's best interests and making sure decisions are made with their views in mind. We're committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and think that everyone should be treated with care and respect and receive exceptional levels of service.

Using what we learn directly from consumers we're able to provide a trusted and credible source of intelligence that is rooted in people's real-life experiences. This enables us to share best practice and improve industry standards.

Our expertise helps to provide people with the clarity and support they need. Households and businesses turn to us to resolve their questions and complaints, and the information we publish about water company and retailer performance helps people to stay informed about the issues that affect them. CCW's cost for 2023/24 will remain at 26p per water bill payer.

As well as the strategic priorities outlined in this document, we'll also deliver our ongoing activity to influence changes across the sector. The approach to our work reflects our evolving culture with a strong emphasis on collaboration. We believe it's critical the industry adopts this same approach and develops a common culture that is truly motivated by serving and protecting the interests of consumers.

All of our priorities are inseparable and cannot be tackled in isolation. Unprecedented levels of investment are needed across the sector to address the widening landscape of environmental challenges - whether that's protecting the natural environment or securing water resources for future generations. These demands cannot be confronted without putting in place sustainable and fair support for people that are unable to afford their bills.

People are at the heart of everything we do, whether that's influencing policy change or handling each complaint with respect. As a team, we are committed to protecting everyone who uses water, now and in the future.



What makes us tick...



Our mission

Ensure people are well-informed, treated fairly and have confidence in their water services.



Our purpose

We are passionate about championing the best interests of everyone who uses water, now and in the future.



Our vision

A water sector that listens to people and delivers exceptional, sustainable services that are accessible to all.

Programmes that are the foundation of our work...



People and the environment

The impact the water sector has on the environment has rarely been more prevalent than over the last 2 years. We are also facing an unprecedented climate crisis, which will impact us all, as well as generations to come.

That's why we're committed to working with the sector to increase the transparency of information on water companies' environmental performance. We will also lead targeted efforts to raise awareness among people and businesses of the value of water in society and how their behaviour affects the water environment. We will work with others across the sector to increase the awareness of this link to 70% by 2030 (see research [here](#)). This improved understanding is key to changing people's behaviour so we see lower consumption of water and less sewer misuse.



A sector that works for people

The water sector has found itself at the centre of a storm of controversies that has eroded confidence and trust among communities. This has damaged the perception that water companies are there to primarily serve people and the environment. It's vital that the sector rebuilds people's confidence.

We want to see more people having a positive view of the water sector. We will track this through our Water Matters survey and want to see a 10% improvement in the areas of communication, care and overall satisfaction.



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr



Affordability and vulnerability

1 in 5 people in England and Wales struggle to pay their water bill. That's why the delivery and continual modification of the recommendations from our independent review of water affordability are so important. The recommendations encompass more than just those who cannot afford their bill and has been the catalyst for an array of changes and schemes to support customers in vulnerable circumstances.

We will work to deliver 80% of these recommendations by 2025, with the remaining – including the elimination of water poverty in England and Wales – delivered by 2030.



Price Review

This is a peak year of activity for the 2024 Price Review (PR24) and it has never been more important for people's voices to be heard. Our work on the price review has enormous implications for our other programmes, especially 'affordability and vulnerability' and 'People and the Environment'.

We want to deliver our Price Review objectives (set out [here](#)).



Business customers

Satisfaction levels for business customers remains lower than at market opening in 2017.

We want satisfaction for all business customers in England and Wales to show a rising trend, with satisfaction with retail services to exceed 85% by 2027.

What we'll do in 2023-24...



People and the environment

- Collaborate with the water sector to trial activities that are aimed at helping people to value water and use it wisely, including encouraging and supporting trials of innovative tariffs.
- We will work with water companies to ensure consumers are able to access clear and reliable near real time data on the use of storm overflows.
- We want to see the creation of Accelerated Reduction in Demand (ARID) - a hub that would act as the catalyst to improve consumer messaging and incentives to reduce demand for water

Campaign: Drought

Water resources remain in a precarious position in some parts of England and Wales following last year's extensive and prolonged drought.

We will be ready to launch an awareness-raising campaign in 2023. This will be primarily focused on helping people, businesses and communities reduce their water use to alleviate some of the pressure on resources.



Affordability and vulnerability

- Raise people's awareness of the financial support offered by their water company to 50% by summer 2024.
- We will continue to highlight the link between water and energy saving and the cost-of-living crisis and help the sector to develop unified messages.

Campaign: End water poverty

Millions of households are unable to afford their water bill but many of these do not receive the help they need. We will continue to work with water companies towards their commitment to make bills affordable as a minimum for all households and develop a strategy to end water poverty. We will seek to end the postcode lottery of existing financial support by working with all stakeholders to provide greater certainty around existing financial help through the creation of a comprehensive fair and consistent support scheme across England and Wales.

We also want a price review that doesn't present a choice between affordable bills and investment. We will be requiring companies to take account of affordability in their business plans and, if they fail to, we will be writing to company Boards.



A sector that works for people

- Host an event which explores how companies can develop a culture which puts customers at the centre and builds legitimacy and trust.
- A better customer complaints journey
 - Work with all parties to establish a one stop shop for mediation and adjudication for customer complaints by December 2023.
 - We will increase our own satisfaction with service to over 80%, continuing that upward trend in subsequent years.
- We will develop clear and consistent, customer-facing, messages to be used by the whole sector across all of our key programmes to increase clarity of message and consumer trust.
- A customer focused licence condition is produced by Ofwat for water companies, that includes our key asks stated [here](#).

Campaign: Guaranteed Standards Scheme

GSS has not kept pace with customers' expectations, with no review of payments or standards since 2008. There are also inconsistencies across England and Wales.

We want to see minimum GSS payments increased with consistent standards across England and Wales.

What we'll do in 2023-24...



Business customers

- Reduce the number of complaints received by CCW from business customers by 10% by March 2024.
- Ensure that the code change required for the credit where its due campaign is progressed and implemented in a timely manner.
- A Market Performance Framework (MPF) is produced that delivers our objectives for reform set out in our five-year review of the market [here](#).
- Engage with and support business customers in Wales who will be affected by eligibility changes, to ensure a smooth transition.
- Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to deliver the recommendations set out in our five-year review of the market.



Price Review

- Work with Ofwat to develop open challenge sessions that successfully engage people in a way that captures a broad spectrum of their views on company business plans.
- Work with the Challenge Coordination Group (COG) to improve our understanding of how the Independent Challenge Groups operate. We will use this insight to support these groups in speaking up for customers throughout the price review process.
- For this year on objectives;
 - We want all companies' business plans to clearly set out the actions they will take to deliver comprehensive affordability and vulnerability support.
 - Companies to demonstrate they have changed their plans in areas where research shows customers have found their proposals unacceptable.
 - CCW will influence Ofwat's ongoing cost of capital evaluation to ensure it reflects our independent assessment.

How we deliver our work...

Positive Energy

We are energetic and enthusiastic, with a strong 'can-do' attitude. We actively focus on using research and evidence to understand people's views and find solutions to the problems they face.

Respect for all

Inclusivity is at the heart of life at CCW. We respect people's individual differences. We constructively challenge our industry partners and decision-makers to do what's best for people and the environment.

Innovative spirit

We encourage bravery and creative thinking, always seeking to improve. We share knowledge and celebrate success while striving for continuous improvement across the sector.

Deliver Our Promises

We show commitment: to the people we help, to our goals, and to each other. We behave with integrity and always seek to do what we say we are going to do, putting the best interests of people first.

Engaged as one

We drive collaboration within the water sector, encouraging the industry to take action together towards clear goals that have tangible consumer benefits.



Collaboration

Our closer collaboration with partners over the past year has reaped considerable benefits for consumers, including insightful new research, sharing of best practice and more consistent and impactful advice and messaging for people and communities. This will remain the bedrock of our approach in 2023 and our programmes of work will each embrace the knowledge, insight and support of regulators including Ofwat and the Environment Agency, water companies, Drinking Water Inspector and Water UK - as well as the wider consumer landscape ranging from bodies such as Consumer Scotland and Consumer Council Northern Ireland to National Energy Action (NEA) and Citizens Advice.