



Promoting support to customers

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's response
to the CCW Affordability Review



Purpose



Recommendations from CC Water's Affordability Review stated that communications to customers regarding financial support should be both clear and accessible. One of the key actions towards achieving this was to ensure that messaging around financial support was visible and prominent on bills, including on the envelope.

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is leading on a pilot project, testing this approach and investigating how all water companies can better promote the support available for customers in vulnerable circumstances. This document explains the actions taken so far, the results, and next steps.



Action

In our approach, we undertook the following activities:

- ◆ **Developed** new envelope designs
- ◆ **Considered** “easy read” requirements
- ◆ **Listened** to partnership feedback from JCP, Learning Disability Wales, and Citizens Advice
- ◆ **Finalised** designs
- ◆ **Launched** the pilot in August 2021
- ◆ **Tested** messaging over 3 days to roughly 10,000 customers
- ◆ **Monitored** whether there was an increase in requests for support

Results



In terms of immediate results from the pilot, we found that;

- There was no statistical difference in the uptake of free priority services like accessible bills or delivery of water in case of supply interruption
- There was no statistical difference in the uptake of financial support services like our HelpU tariff
- There was no increase in inbound contact rates

However, we recognise that often these messages take time to bed into customer consciousness and repeated, consistent messaging is key, along with making it easy for customers to ask for and find the right support.

Next steps

While there was not an instant, measurable response to the updated envelope messaging, we believe in the power of repeated messages and are undertaking the following actions to increase the likelihood of support messages reaching customers and encouraging action:

- We have implemented envelope messaging for all outgoing mail and not limited to bills only
- We have reviewed bill messaging itself in line with the Annual Billing period; messages on the bills themselves will now reflect messages on the envelopes
- We have sought further partnership feedback on the design and wording of our support message
- We have introduced an annual review of the financial support messages contained within bills and on envelopes