

A large, stylized teal wave graphic that spans across the middle of the page. It consists of three main peaks, with the first and third being smaller than the second. The wave has a thick, rounded stroke and a slight shadow effect, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

# CCW

The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

## Draft Strategy

INCLUDING FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2024 - 25

# What does CCW do?

CCW is the voice for water consumers. One of our main priorities is to help consumers resolve complaints against their water company or retailer, and to provide free advice and support. Because household customers in England and Wales cannot change their supplier, it is absolutely crucial that their voice is heard in how the sector delivers their water services and protects their environment.

## Consumer relations: resolving tough complaints

CCW helps individual customers resolve complaints and enquiries about their water providers. Last year, CCW handled over 40,000 phone calls from people needing support, advice and complaint escalation.

Since CCW was established in 2005, we have helped return over £36 million to households and businesses. Last year alone, we secured a million pounds in compensation and financial redress for customers.

## Saving money for consumers

CCW helps people find out whether they can save money on their water bill with the helpful online tools on its website.

Last year, the [water meter calculator](#) attracted over 264,000 visitors to see if they could save water and money by switching to a meter. The calculator identified potential savings for households totalling £22 million.

In 2022-23, 6,392 people used the [Benefits Calculator](#) to work out that they may be eligible for support totalling more than £50 million. This was an extraordinary increase on the previous year's figure of £7 million.

## Working with water companies to better serve customers

CCW works hard behind the scenes to ensure that issues that affect customers are caught early and don't keep happening over and over again. We use our data and research to identify and deal with problems as they emerge, rather than waiting until they have become a full-blown crisis. Then we share good practice across all the other water companies in England and Wales.

# How we work

The Water Industry Act 1991 gives CCW a wide remit to act on behalf of customers. And as an evidence-led organisation, CCW uses our deep and wide-ranging research to provide a detailed and robust evidence base for our work.

Our values define what we stand for as an organisation. They guide us in our day-to-day work and decisions.

## 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.

People are at the heart of everything we do, whether that's influencing policy change or handling each complaint with respect.



# CCW's overarching strategy

Nobody can now ignore the impact the water sector has on the environment. We are facing an unprecedented climate crisis which will impact us all, as well as generations to come. In addition, one in four people in England and Wales are struggling to pay their water bill. And satisfaction levels for business customers are still lower than when that market opened in 2017.

Against this background, CCW believe that the three things that most urgently need fixing for the water consumers of England and Wales – which CCW can proactively help with – are:



**Trust in the water sector**



**Fair and affordable bills**



**Resilient water services**





## Our mission

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



## 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.

## Strategic priorities



### A trusted water sector

- Value for customers
- Transparency of performance
- Customer-focused culture
- Improved customer service
- Getting basics right for business customers



### Fair and affordable bills

- Value from the Price Review
- Improved overall offer of support
- Customers using the support available
- End water poverty
- Tariffs that work for customers



### Resilient water services

- Consumer behaviour change
- Better incident management
- Acting on customer priorities

# Our Forward Work Programme 2024-25

To meet our overall strategic objectives, CCW's Forward Work Programme contains the deliverables that we will focus on achieving in 2024-25. These are over and above our business-as-usual activities – dealing with complaints, challenging companies, generating insights and communicating with customers. We chose these based on the substantial evidence we gather from consumers about what they think is important, as well as what CCW can influence given our remit and unique position in the water industry.

Our day-to-day work helping customers resolve disputes and save money is regularly measured and scrutinised by our Board. Our primary target for 2024-25 is that all complaints to CCW will be acknowledged and allocated for review to a Case Advisor within two working days.



## A trusted water sector

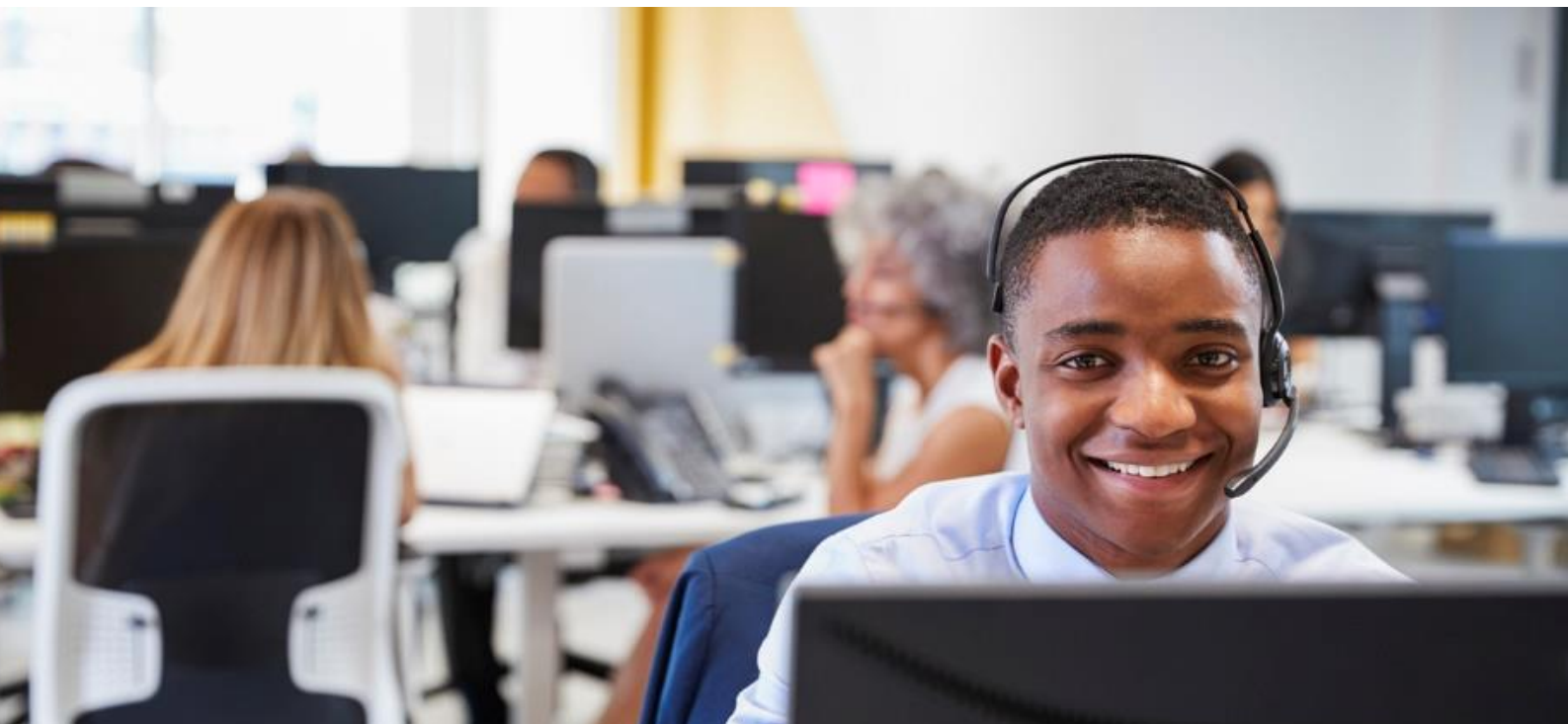
### Value for customers

- Guaranteed Standards Scheme

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme - minimum standards of service for customers on things like supply interruption and sewer flooding - has not kept pace with customers' expectations. There has been no review of payments or standards since 2008. There are also inconsistencies across England and Wales. CCW wants to see minimum GSS payments increased and new standards put in place.

CCW will feed in improvements from our “lessons learnt” work on the 2024 Price Review (PR24) to improve the next Price Review process.

We will look for opportunities to help shape the debate and regulatory framework with the long term in mind. The future of charges, customer involvement in price setting and people's expectations on environmental quality - including informed opinions on storm overflows - are all areas we are considering.



## **Transparency of performance**

- CCW will be operating the Alternative Dispute Resolution from December 2023. To ensure transparency of CCW's processes and performance, we will review the first four months and implement improvements as necessary. We will also examine the end-to-end complaints process every quarter to drive improvement. We will publish our findings.
- CCW will enhance our yearly Water Mark company performance assessment to improve accessibility and better hold companies to account.
- We will continue to work with water companies to ensure consumers are able to easily access clear and reliable near real-time data on companies' use of storm overflows.

## **Customer-focused culture**

- We will develop an incident assessment framework that includes company culture, and a process for sharing best practice – piloting from autumn 2024. We will encourage companies to publically share indicators of their culture, such as their employee experience results.
- CCW will be transparent on our own performance on people and culture, mirroring our expectations for water companies.
- We will facilitate Ofwat's Your Water Your Say session in summer 2024.

## **Improved customer service**

- CCW will reinvigorate our debt and complaint assessments – assessing 10 companies in 2024-25.
- We will use our extensive evidence base and work with water companies on root cause analysis of the issues that most affect customers – resulting in a decrease in complaints about billing and charges.

## **Getting basics right for business customers**

- CCW will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to deliver the recommendations from our [five-year review](#) of the business water market.



## Fair and affordable bills

### End water poverty

- CCW will continue to work with the water companies to ensure that their plans are in line with the Water UK commitment to end water poverty by 2030.

### Value from the Price Review

- CCW doesn't believe consumers should have to choose between affordable bills and investment in improving services. Through the Price Review process, we will test all the water companies' draft determinations for acceptability and affordability, and press for any changes we believe are necessary.

Our aim is that the water companies' final PR24 determinations – due in December 2024 - reflect our objectives overall.

### Improved overall offer of support

- We will carry out a review of the WaterSure scheme.

### Customers making full use of the support available

- We will increase the number of customers who know that financial support is available from their water company to 50% by summer 2025.

### Tariffs that work for customers

- CCW will continue to proactively support trials of innovative tariffs by water companies.







## Resilient water services

### Consumer behaviour change

- CCW will continue our campaigning work to help people, businesses and communities reduce their water use to alleviate pressure on natural resources.
- We will collaborate with the water sector to trial activities aimed at helping people value water and change their behaviour.
- CCW will push the industry to act on demand management as an essential pillar in meeting the Plan for Water's 2050 110 litre-per-day usage target for England, via our ARID proposal, in conjunction with Ofwat's Water Efficiency Fund.

### Better incident management

- CCW will pilot in-depth incident assessments in water companies.
- We will work with Ofwat to act on and share the insight gained from joint research conducted on incident management across England and Wales.

### Acting on customer priorities

- CCW will make insights from water sector environmental performance data and customer research more available and useful to government and regulators to put the customer voice more strongly into decision making.

## CCW's costs

CCW's costs for 2024-25 will increase from 26.3p to 27.2p per bill payer. This is an inflation-only increase. For staff costs, we assumed 4% inflation rate. For other costs, based on Consumer Price Index including Housing (CPIH), we used 2023 November inflation rate of 4.2%.

## We want to hear from you



To give your views on our Strategy and Forward Work Programme for 2024-25, please email Gemma Domican at [gemma.domican@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:gemma.domican@ccwater.org.uk) by Tuesday 13 February 2024.

# CCW

The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

23 Stephenson Street,  
Birmingham, B2 4BH

**Ccw.org.uk**  
Follow us: **@CCWvoice**