



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr



Draft Strategy

INCLUDING FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2026-27

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.

We resolve tough complaints

CCW helps individual customers resolve complaints and enquiries about their water providers. In 2024-25, CCW received 10,689 complaints - that's a 2% increase on the 10,457 we received in 2023-24. Of those complaints we received, 95% were from customers in England and 5% from Wales. Between April 2024 and March 2025, CCW recovered over £1.3 million in redress for 1,375 household customers and 167 businesses - that's an average of £850 per customer.

We save money for consumers

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

Between April 2024 and March 2025, 5,787 people used [CCW's website](#) to check what benefits and grants could be available to them. We estimate they identified unclaimed annual welfare benefits of over £22.5 million.

359,569 people used CCW's [water meter calculator](#) in 2024-25. We estimate that the combined potential saving for those people using the calculator was nearly £52 million - that's approximately £144 per user.

People from our Communications and Consumer Relations teams worked together to launch a great new feature on our website. CCW's [complaint letter tool](#) allows customers to create a letter to send to their water company simply by submitting a few details.

And our [Get Water Fit](#) page shows people where they can get hold of free water-saving products from their water company.

We work with water companies to better serve customers

The [Water Industry Act 1991](#) gives CCW a wide remit to act on behalf of customers.

Throughout 2024-25, we carried out, in person, 19 household complaints assessments, 3 business customer complaints assessments and 5 debt assessments.

These complaints assessments involve teams from CCW spending two full days with a water company's customer services team. They carry out deep-dive assessments of a random selection of customer complaints. As well as discussing them in detail while onsite, afterwards, CCW sends the companies detailed reports about what they found and gives them a list of clear action points. Then we hold follow-up sessions to make sure improvements are being made. We also shared both good practice and learning points with the whole industry at two feedback sessions. Water companies have told us they find these assessments really useful and we have seen them lead to change within companies and improvements to the way complaints are handled.

We understand consumers

CCW carries out [extensive research](#) to keep our finger on the pulse of consumers' experiences and views.

Since November 2025, CCW has been running water [consumer panels](#) across England and Wales. Known collectively as Water Voice, there are 16 panels in total – one for each water company area. Panellists take part in regular surveys and attend Accountability Sessions with water company executives to share their experiences and ideas. CCW shares insights from these across the sector, ensures companies take clear actions and tracks their progress to make sure panellists' concerns are followed up.






We shape water policy to benefit customers

We use a solid evidence base to influence specific water company policies as well as those of water regulators and we provide advice about what consumers want to Defra and Welsh government.

How we work

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

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

P	Positive energy Energy, enthusiastic, active, 'can-do'	
R	Respect for all Inclusivity, uniqueness, celebrate, valuing	
I	Innovative spirit Bravery, creative-thinking, seeking, collaborative	
D	Deliver our promises Commitment, responsibility, accountability, integrity	
E	Engaged as one Team, together, clear goals	

Strategic priorities

CCW believes that the three things that most urgently need fixing for the water consumers of England and Wales – which CCW can proactively help with, given our remit and unique position in the water industry – are:



Trust in the water sector



Fair and affordable bills



Resilient water services

CCW's research during 2025-26 – including our annual [Water Matters tracker survey](#) our research testing [customer priorities](#) and our [Essential Water Use research](#) – demonstrates that:

- Falling trust in the water sector is a greater issue than ever before.
- The affordability of water bills is a growing concern in the current context of economic uncertainty.
- Customers want to see more effective communication from companies.
- When it comes to reducing water usage, customers are motivated by a desire to be environmentally conscious as much as to save money.



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.



Our Forward Work Programme 2026-27

To meet our overall strategic objectives, CCW's Forward Work Programme contains the deliverables we will focus on achieving in 2026-27. These are over and above our business-as-usual activities – dealing with complaints, challenging companies, generating insights and communicating with customers. CCW's day-to-day work helping customers resolve disputes and save money is regularly measured and scrutinised by our Board.

CCW constantly engages at all levels with all the water companies in England and Wales. In 2026-27 we will continue to liaise with them on a regular basis to scrutinise the service they're delivering to customers – sharing data with them and comparing their performance in various areas against the other companies. We will also keep working with companies individually, in groups and across the whole sector to share good practice and drive up standards.

CCW will also participate in water sector and wider utilities events – eg conferences – to bring the consumer voice into the conversation and drive the agenda forward on billpayers' behalf. We are the customer representative on both the Strategic Panel (the most senior governance group in the business retail market) and the Code Change Committee (which makes recommendations about changes to market rules). We will continue to work with the National Drought Group and the Wales Drought Liaison Group to support water companies with their communications to customers on what everyone can do to save water.

As well as the specific items of new research detailed below, in 2026-27, CCW will continue to carry out our regular tracking research – our annual household and business customer complaints reports; Water Matters; and Water Mark.

In July 2025, the Independent Water Commission published its [final report](#). As governments in both England and Wales take forward these recommendations, CCW will represent customers throughout that process. We will also implement the recommendations that directly affect our organisation, as well as working with partners to help them implement the recommendations that relate to them.

CCW's core commitments

- CCW will use the lessons from the 2024 price review to make clear, evidence-based recommendations to Ofwat and other stakeholders on how the next price review should better reflect customers' needs and priorities.
- All customer complaints to CCW will be acknowledged and allocated for review to a case advisor within two working days.
- 80% of cases will be resolved by 20 working days.
- 95% of cases will be resolved by 40 working days.
- CCW will carry out at least one assessment with each water company in England and Wales.

- CCW will carry out at least two complaints assessments with water retailers.
- CCW will audit, via a third-party auditor, water companies' adherence to complaint-reporting guidance when recording enquiries.



To help increase trust in the water sector, in 2026-27 CCW will:

- Design guidelines for customers about incidents - what emergency help people can expect during an incident and how that changes if the incident is prolonged.
- Carry out 6 vulnerability assessments to review water companies' service to the customers on their priority service register.
- Challenge wholesaler policies on compensation for business customers for loss of earnings for fairness and consistency.
- Review the TPI (third-party intermediary) principles of behaviour in the business retail market to ensure that customers receive a fair, transparent and honest service from TPIs.
- Hold regular customer panels accountability sessions for all water companies in England and Wales.
- Commission research to see whether customers of NAVs are more satisfied with their water service than the customers of incumbent providers.



In our commitment to fair and affordable bills, CCW will:

- Publish our view on what innovative tariffs have worked best.
- Publish annual water poverty data.
- Campaign for relevant and appropriate price and non-price protections for disengaged businesses.
- Working with the whole industry, CCW will raise public awareness of affordability support – as measured by CCW's yearly Water Matters research. The score for all companies should be at least 53% by summer 2026.



To play our part in ensuring resilient water services for customers, CCW will:

- Share learnings with the industry – at least quarterly - on how the rollout of smart meters is working for customers.
- CCW will begin a multi-year longitudinal study to measure/explore consumer engagement with water use post smart metering.
- Subject to the launch of Defra's water efficiency label, CCW will commission research to assess how well it works for consumers and whether it supports water-saving behaviour.

CCW's costs

CCW's costs for 2026-27 will be 37.8p per bill payer.

We want to hear from you

To give your views on our Strategy and Forward Work Programme for 2025-26, please email Ali Bell at ali.bell@ccw.org.uk by Friday 13 February 2026.



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