



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

# Water Voice - Accountability Session

## Summary report

**Water company:** Anglian Water

**Accountability Session date:** 14.04.26

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie  
Research & Energy Saving Trust

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[ccw.org.uk](http://ccw.org.uk)

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# Questions created and asked by community members



Community members identified **three priority questions** they wanted to put directly to Anglian Water during the Accountability Session.

The questions were developed through a structured process involving the full Water Voice community (c.50 members). In January and February 2026, members collectively identified and refined priority themes through Spotlight surveys. These priorities were then shaped into draft questions during a dedicated briefing session, before being finalised and formally put to Anglian Water at the Accountability Session.

Each question was led by a community member and explored in depth during the session. Anglian Water provided on-the-record responses, with commitments and actions discussed in real time.

	Topic	Community member question
Q1	<b>Value for money:</b> Billing, metering and how money is spent	<p><i>"Bills have increased with little explanation. It also isn't clear where the increasing amount of money we pay actually goes, as well as how bills are calculated , e.g. standing charges and metered and non metered charges.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to understand how decisions are made when it comes to bill increases and how our money is spent and where it goes. What steps will you take to ensure information like this is more proactively shared with us?"</i></p>
Q2	<b>Local works and investment:</b> Communication and transparency	<p><i>"We assume that some of the money we pay is invested in network improvements locally. However, we are largely unaware of what these improvements are and where they are happening. Your Facebook page has loads of great information, but with only 39,000 'followers' out of 7 million customers, we think more needs to be done to communicate with all customers.</i></p> <p><i>What steps will you take to ensure that communication about local investment reaches all customers more effectively, so we know what is going on where we live?"</i></p>
Q3	<b>Resilience and capacity:</b> Increasing population and drought	<p><i>"Increasing population growth, new housing developments and more frequent drought risk are putting growing pressure on both water supply and sewage infrastructure in an area described as one of the most water stressed in the country.</i></p> <p><i>What are you doing to ensure that the network can cope with the increasing load placed on it? What future steps will you commit to - beyond what is already planned - to ensure current customers are not adversely impacted by increasing demand?"</i></p>

The sections that follow set out each question in turn, alongside the actions discussed and the expectations community members have for delivery through the company's published action plan. This will be published on **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**.

# Executive summary - insights by question



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The Accountability Session for Anglian Water highlighted customers' need for clearer explanations of bills and investment, more visible local communication and stronger reassurance that future growth will not outpace water resilience.

## Q1.

### Value for money: Billing, metering and how money is spent

Anglian Water said rising bills reflect increased investment driven by regulation, resilience needs and long-term underinvestment, and used a simple "£1" breakdown to explain where money goes.

Community members accepted the need for investment, but still found bills, charges and benefits difficult to understand, particularly around fairness, borrowing and reinvestment.

The discussion focused on the need for clearer, simpler and more localised information on spending, what it funds and what improvements customers should expect to see.

Customers wanted clearer, fairer explanations of bills, spending and the outcomes investment will deliver

## Q2.

### Local works and investment: Communication and transparency

Anglian Water said local investment is increasing and becoming more visible through major works, pipelines and disruption, and that it already uses social media, email, bills and outreach to communicate with customers.

Community members felt communication still relies too heavily on channels many people miss or do not use and that broad reach figures do not show real local awareness or engagement.

There is a need for clearer, more local and more accessible updates on what is happening nearby, why it matters and what benefits it will bring.

Customers wanted more targeted and meaningful local investment communications, with less social media reliance and clearer evidence of local action

## Q3.

### Resilience and capacity: Increasing population and drought

Anglian Water said it is planning for growth through long-term demand forecasting, major infrastructure, smart metering and closer work with Developers, Local Authorities and Government.

Community members recognised the scale of the challenge, but still wanted clearer reassurance that water supply, sewage capacity and local resilience will keep pace with housing growth and drought risk.

Community members expressed the need for stronger local visibility, earlier planning and clearer proof that existing customers will remain protected as demand rises

Customers remained uneasy that growth and drought could outpace infrastructure, and wanted clearer reassurance, earlier planning and visible proof that resilience will keep pace

# Actions agreed during the Accountability Session



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## Q1.

Value for money: Billing, metering and how money is spent

- Provide clear explanations of bill increases, including what is driving them and where customer money goes.
- Clearly explain charges and tariffs, including standing charges, metered and non-metered billing and how pricing decisions are made.
- Show the visible, local impact of customer money, including funded projects, expected benefits and timelines for improvement.
- Share this information proactively across bills, website and other channels, using simple accessible formats

## Q2.

Local works and investment: Communication and transparency

- Make local investment visible where it happens, with clearer local updates, signage, timelines and expected benefits.
- Communicate beyond social media, using bills, letters, emails and offline local channels as well as digital routes.
- Bring information directly to customers through simple local updates and clearer signposting to what is happening in their area.
- Show clear local value for money by linking spending in each area to visible works and improvements.

## Q3.

Resilience and capacity: Increasing population and drought

- Publish clear local capacity and growth plans, showing how infrastructure will keep pace with housing growth and demand.
- Take an infrastructure-first approach, with upgrades in place before major new development is connected where needed.
- Set out a credible long-term resilience plan that distinguishes short-term catch-up work from future-proofing investment.
- Report progress clearly and publicly, including local updates on delivery, risks, customer protections and resilience outcomes.



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# Water Voice - Accountability Session

## Summary report

# Our findings in detail

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# Q1. Value for money: Billing, metering and how money is spent

Calls for clearer, fairer billing information



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Question asked Anglian Water Community member:

*"Bills have increased with little explanation. It also isn't clear where the increasing amount of money we pay actually goes, as well as how bills are calculated, e.g. standing charges and metered and non metered charges.*

*We would like to understand how decisions are made when it comes to bill increases and how our money is spent and where it goes. What steps will you take to ensure information like this is more proactively shared with us?"*

During the session, Anglian Water said bill increases reflect a step change in investment, shaped by regulatory requirements, resilience needs and smart metering.

Customers welcomed the simple "£1" breakdown, but still wanted clearer explanations of standing charges, metered versus non-metered billing, borrowing, tariff decisions and what reinvestment means in practice, especially for different households and local areas.

The discussion therefore centred on the need for clearer, more accessible and more localised information on how charges are set, where money goes and what improvements customers should expect to see.

## Actions

- Provide clear, simple breakdowns of bill increases, showing what drives them and where each £1 of customer money goes.
- Clearly explain standing charges, metered and non-metered billing, and how tariff and pricing decisions are made.
- Show how customer money is being invested locally, including funded projects, purpose of spend and expected benefits.
- Share this information proactively across bills, website and other channels, using simple visuals with optional extra detail.

*"It would be good to have... 'you've got the £1 and this is what's for that', and then maybe something that just explains a little more about each thing and what's actually being done with that money on a separate page, just so that it's there if someone wants more detail."*

*"Going back to where they said.. a certain percentage of the £1 is reinvested I'd like to see ... what has been reinvested in the local area, what the upgrades have been"*



Customers accepted the need for investment, but wanted clearer explanations of bills, tariffs and where their money goes.

# Q1. Value for money: Billing, metering and how money is spent



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Water company response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' water company response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
<p>Provide <b>simple bill breakdowns</b>, explaining drivers and where each £1 goes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anglian Water said bill rises reflect a major step-up in investment after long-term underinvestment, alongside regulatory and environmental pressures. They gave a simple £1 breakdown: 47p day-to-day running costs, 40p maintaining and improving services and the network, 13p interest on borrowing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current water asset investment will raise future bills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explain bill drivers, separating regulatory requirements, company choices and long-term investment needs.</li> <li>Create an accessible "Where does your £ go" document               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Break down % spending in each service, using visuals like a pie-chart</li> <li>Give simple explanations, but with options for more details via links and QR codes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Explain borrowing in practical terms: the size and scale of company borrowing, what it funds, what role it plays in the current and next 5-year investment cycles, and what that means for future bills.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> Short term for "Where does your £1 goes" document; will provide in next bill cycle.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pie-chart already on website and in next bill cycle. Will break spending via county and service type.</li> <li>The company will provide clearer bill breakdowns in the next bill cycle clarifying spending allocations</li> <li>Most information already exists, but company will improve access and readability</li> </ul>
<p>Clearly explain <b>charges and tariff decisions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anglian Water said smart metering is the fairest basis for charging customers, as it reduces bills due to better leak detection and usage data. There are 1.3 million smart meters installed and rollout continuing.</li> <li>They have a detailed metering programme, but information can be hard to find.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More future discussion to be had on smart tariffs, tariff trials and how the sector may evolve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain clearly how standing charges, metered charges and non-metered charges are calculated, in plain English.</li> <li>Address common fairness concern: explain how current charging structures affect small vs large households, low-usage households and customers with higher essential use.</li> <li>Clarify how tariff decisions are made, including fixed areas and where company has discretion.</li> <li>Consider removing non-metered charges and adding more tariffs to support vulnerable customers.</li> <li>Explain what to expect from the smart meter rollout, including prioritisation, timescales and implications for unmetered customers or those on older meters.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company said it would address these points further and improve communication</li> </ul>

**Note:** This table is an excerpt from the full Action Plan. Anglian Water will provide formal responses to each action within 28 days of the session date. The updated plan will then be shared with participating community members for review and agreement.

# Q1. Value for money: Billing, metering and how money is spent



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Water company response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' water company response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
Communicate <b>local bill-funded projects</b> and their expected benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anglian Water said a significant share of current spending goes to resilience, environmental compliance and core water assets. Customers have benefited from past investment, citing continued supply during last summer's heatwave.</li> <li>The company already know where money is spent by area and can break this down geographically.</li> </ul> <p><b>No future plans discussed in session</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly communicate what customers are funding on bills;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a "Your bills in action" section, framed as "This is what has been done, this is what will come next" "</li> <li>Link bill increases to named local projects and service upgrades</li> <li>Provide clear timelines for projects e.g. using horizontal bar charts</li> </ul> </li> <li>Explain why investment is needed, especially when driven by issue not immediately visible to customers like water scarcity, resilience or environmental obligations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> Short term for clearer information on bills; deliverable by next bill cycle.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have local and county-level information, so will communicate investment per area clearly and accessibly</li> <li>Will clarify why current investment is needed and directed into assets such as reservoirs, pipelines and mains renewal.</li> </ul>
Proactively share bill information across diverse channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anglian Water said it already communicates through multiple channels, including via email with approx. 50 million emails last year. Some bill information is already available online, including a website pie chart, but information can be more accessible.</li> </ul> <p><b>No future plans discussed in session</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the core reasons for bill increases in areas customers already engage in, especially bills and routine communications, rather than relying on web content.</li> <li>Use a layered format for communication: a simple visual summary for quick understanding, with optional deeper detail.</li> <li>Make information easier to find, revisit and compare over time.</li> <li>Ask customers for their preferred communication formats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan. The company said clearer communication could be developed in the near term.</li> </ul> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledged the need to improve accessibility and clarity of their existing information, with better signposting of where info is stored.</li> </ul>

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## Q2. Local works and investment: Communication and transparency

More proactive communication of local investment

Question asked by Anglian Water Community member:

*“We assume that some of the money we pay is invested in network improvements locally. However, we are largely unaware of what these improvements are and where they are happening. Your Facebook page has loads of great information, but with only 39,000 ‘followers’ out of 7 million customers, we think more needs to be done to communicate with all customers.*

*“What steps will you take to ensure that communication about local investment reaches all customers more effectively, so we know what is going on where we live?”*

During the session, Anglian Water said local investment is increasing and will be more visible through major works, pipelines and disruption. It said it already uses social media, email, bills and outreach to communicate, and plans to include more local investment information.

Customers felt this still relies too heavily on channels many miss or do not use, and that reach figures do not show real local awareness or engagement.

The discussion focused on clearer, more local updates on what is happening nearby and why.

### Actions

- Demonstrate that customers are meaningfully engaging with your content and identify content types with highest engagement.
- Communicate beyond social media, using bills, emails, letters, app updates and offline local channels.
- Give customers simple “what’s happening in your area” updates automatically, with clear local signposting.
- Show clear local value for money by linking spend in each area to visible works and improvements.

*“There’s a big difference between impressions and engagements... the amount of times I’ve seen something and I’ve just scrolled straight past it is countless.. it’s good to know who’s actually engaging with it..”*

*“There’s a £15 million infrastructure update going to the water treatment locally... It’s a massive investment, it’s going to benefit the people around where I live and you can’t go for a drive or go for a walk anywhere in the local area and find out anything about this”*



Customers wanted local investment communications to be more visible, targeted and meaningful, with less reliance on social media and clearer evidence of local action.



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## Q2. Local works and investment: Communication and transparency

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Water company response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' water company response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
Show if communication is being <b>meaningfully engaged with</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglian Water said Facebook followers understate overall reach, as they reach customers more via paid social media content, emails and wider digital activity. Examples included the "Don't put your wipes down the toilet" campaign (23 millions views) and "Building for better campaign" (43 million views since January 2026).</li> <li>• Reported large campaign reach and 50% email open rated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly distinguish between customer impressions and meaningful engagement with content.</li> <li>• Consider more effective communication tactics to boost engagement e.g. prize draws.</li> <li>• Identify how your customers want to talk to you.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company said they are actively working on better communication streams with customers.</li> </ul>
Advertise local investment <b>through multiple channels</b> , including offline routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The company stated it uses paid social media, annual emails and currently the 'Building for Better' campaign to communicate investment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They said more local information can be brought through bills and customer communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertise local investment information and updates on a wider mix of channels – not just social media. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the company app</li> <li>• Via "What's in your area?" emails, detailing 2-year plans</li> <li>• Via letters, separate from bill letters</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Place visible signage of local investment within the community e.g. at hotpot locations like local billboards and roundabouts.</li> <li>• Make it easier for customers to understand what is happening nearby, why and what benefit it will bring.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company said it understands the need for a broader channel mix, but must do this proportionately and cost-effectively.</li> <li>• They will try to better communicate on non-social media based platforms.</li> </ul>

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## Q2. Local works and investment: Communication and transparency

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Water company response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' water company response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale/ final comments
<p>Push local updates <b>directly to customers</b> in accessible formats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company said they already send large volumes of emails and use digital channels for updates.</li> <li>They are planning to include more local information in annual bills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community outreach is expanding through supermarket visits, roadshows and community vans.</li> <li>They are planning to include more local information in annual bills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide simple "what's happening in your area" updates through email, app content and other direct communications.</li> <li>Provide clear local information in accessible, signposted locations.</li> <li>Make local works, disruption and expected outcomes easier to follow over time.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company said this reflects work already being developed through bills, digital updates and local engagement activity.</li> </ul>
<p>Make communication s feel more <b>local, personal and community-focused</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anglian Water have already undertaken community engagement through local teams, vans, roadshows and stakeholder work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They said they will keep building local engagement activity, including working with planning authorities and hosting local outreach events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use tailored, more customer-focused language so updates feel informative rather than promotional.</li> <li>Use simple key phrases so communications feel familiar.</li> <li>Provide more direct local engagement events, including a yearly 'customer fair' events where community members get to talk to staff members.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company said they have facilities to do more customer engagement events and will figure out how to realistically hold more.</li> </ul>

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## Q3. Resilience and capacity: Increasing population and drought

Transparency and reassurance growth will not outpace water resilience

Question asked by Anglian Water Community member:

*“Increasing population growth, new housing developments and more frequent drought risk are putting growing pressure on both water supply and sewage infrastructure in an area described as one of the most water stressed in the country.*

*“What are you doing to ensure that the network can cope with the increasing load placed on it? What future steps will you commit to - beyond what is already planned - to ensure current customers are not adversely impacted by increasing demand?”*

Anglian Water said it is planning for long-term growth through demand management, smart metering, major infrastructure such as the Strategic Pipeline Alliance and new reservoirs, and closer work with developers, local authorities and government.

Customers recognised the scale of the challenge but still felt unclear and unconvinced about what this means in practice for their own area, particularly in places facing rapid housing growth, drought risk and pressure on sewage infrastructure.

The discussion therefore focused on reassurance, local visibility and clearer proof that infrastructure will expand fast enough to protect existing customers as demand increases.

### Actions

- Publish clear local capacity and growth plans for high-growth areas, showing how existing customers will remain protected.
- Show how resilience plans expand and improve infrastructure, not just manage aging assets under rising demand.
- Provide regular local updates on risks, delivery and developer responsibilities, including safeguards on sewage and pollution.

*“What can Anglian Water say for each of these regions, where they have massive housing increase, what is different this year to guarantee the water, than last year...?”*

*“How are you going to keep the water taps flowing, because I’m sure one SPA pipe isn’t going to solve all?”*



Customers remained uneasy that growth and drought could outpace infrastructure, and wanted clearer local reassurance, earlier planning and visible proof that resilience will keep pace

## Q3. Resilience and capacity: Increasing population and drought

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Water company response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' water company response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
Publish <b>clear local capacity and growth plans</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglian Water said it uses a 25-year planning cycle to understand future demand and system needs. They also work with local authorities to understand housing pressure and future local plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New reservoirs are planned for Lincolnshire and the Fens.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish clear local plans showing where capacity is under pressure and how supply and sewage infrastructure will keep pace with growth.</li> <li>• Explain clearly how existing customers will continue to be protected, including what is being done locally to keep taps running.</li> <li>• Show what infrastructure upgrades have taken place since last year, and what reassurance customers in high-growth areas should take from this.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing water delivery is a core responsibility and that growth would not compromise supply for existing customers.</li> <li>• The company said it could be more active in keeping customers updated on growth hotspots and what they mean locally.</li> </ul>
Set out a <b>credible long-term resilience plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglian Water said resilience work already includes smart metering, demand management, the SPA pipeline, mains modernisation and work on new reservoirs. It also said it is developing water smart communities and exploring water reuse approaches in new developments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The company said it will continue investing in long-term resilience and modernising older assets so the network can support future growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly separate short-term catch-up work from longer-term resilience and future-proofing.</li> <li>• Show how infrastructure is being expanded and improved, not just maintained.</li> <li>• Explain what investment is buying in practice, including what is different now compared with previous drought risk or growth pressure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The company said it is capable, and that protecting supply remains its core duty.</li> </ul>

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## Q3. Resilience and capacity: Increasing population and drought

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Water company response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' water company response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
<p>Report <b>progress, customer protections and environmental safeguards</b> clearly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglian Water said it is already heavily involved in schemes such as Universal, with dedicated teams working on water needs and customer protections. It said Ofwat is involved to ensure customers are not unduly charged for infrastructure that major developments should fund.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The company said it can improve how it communicates this activity and make more of this work visible to customers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give regular local updates on delivery, risks, delays and customer protections.</li> <li>• Be clearer about whether major developments affect customer prices, what Developers pay and what local benefits follow.</li> <li>• Release a statement about pollution in the River Nene and commit to not increasing pollution.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> To be shared in the action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The company said it already does some of this but needs to improve communications. There is heavy activity with Universal and Ofwat working on sustainability and customer cost protection.</li> </ul>

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# What happens after the Accountability Session?

After the Accountability Session, there is a clear and structured follow-up process.



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## Publication and transparency

### Within 5 working days

A full (anonymised) transcript of the session was [published](#) on

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April**

### Within 10 working days

A plain-English summary is published, setting out:

The questions asked.

The key points raised by

Community members.

The actions agreed for inclusion in the action plan.

Anything recorded as *not yet agreed*.

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April**



## Action plan

### Within 28 days

The water company must share its **action plan**, setting out how it will deliver the agreed actions.

The action plan will be shared with the Water Voice community on

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**



## Customer feedback

Participants will be asked, via a short survey, whether they feel the action plan:

- ✓ Reflects what was agreed in the session
- ✓ Goes far enough to address customer concerns

This feedback forms part of CCW's ongoing monitoring and follow-up with the company and helps inform future accountability work.



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# Water Voice - Accountability Session

## Summary report

### Annex: Research approach

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Research & Energy Saving Trust

# Background



## What is an Accountability Session?

An Accountability Session is a formal, facilitated meeting where **water consumers directly question senior executives from their water company** about performance, service failures and issues of concern – and **agree the actions they want the company to take**.

They sit at the heart of CCW's statutory role to strengthen consumer voice and ensure companies respond transparently and meaningfully.

## Why do they exist?

Accountability Sessions exist because customers deserve a real say in how their water company performs. They give people a direct line to the people in charge – not through a survey, not through a complaint form, but face-to-face.

For years, customers have felt that water companies weren't listening closely enough. *Water (Special Measures) Act 2025\** requiring a relevant undertaker to have arrangements in place for involving consumers in decisions of the undertaker that are likely to have a material impact on consumer matters.

These sessions make that happen. They create a space where customers can:

- Ask honest questions
- Raise the issues that really affect them
- Agree the actions they expect the company to take next.

It's all about making the process fair, open, and focused on what matters most to the people who actually use and pay for the service.

\*<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/5/enacted>

# Objectives

What the session aims to achieve



## 1. Give customers a real voice

These sessions make sure customers aren't just "heard" – their views actually guide the conversation and shape what happens next.

## 2. Make companies answer directly to the people they serve

Senior water company leaders must respond openly, honestly, and in real time. No hiding behind reports or press statements.

## 3. Agree clear actions that lead to real improvements

By the end of each session, everyone should be clear on:

- ✓ what the company will do
- ✓ how they'll do it
- ✓ how customers will know things have improved.

## 4. Build trust through transparency

Everything is published – the questions, the answers, the agreed actions – so customers can see what's happening and whether companies are following through.

## 5. Make sure all types of customers are represented

People from different backgrounds, ages, abilities and regions take part, ensuring the outcomes reflect real experiences across the community.

## Outputs

By the close of the process, this Accountability Session will have:

- Provided CCW with **robust, publishable evidence** of consumer concerns and company responses.
- Established a clear and transparent set of customer-agreed actions that the water company must reflect in its published action plan. The action plan itself is published by the company following the session, in line with the accountability process.
- Given consumers confidence that their participation leads to **real scrutiny and follow-through**, reinforcing the credibility of the accountability process.
- Informed future regulatory engagement by highlighting **systemic or recurring issues** requiring wider attention.

Together, this ensures the session delivers both **immediate accountability** and **longer-term value** for consumers and the sector.

# Methodology

How does it work?

CCW

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01



## Prioritising what matters most

### 1. We listen to what customers tell us each month

Through Barometer & Spotlight surveys and the online community

### 2. We play back what they said

In the January Spotlight survey, we show customers the issues they raised & ask them to prioritise the most important ones.

### 3. Confirm their priorities

In the February Spotlight survey, customers confirm if they agree with which points matter most.

02



## Getting ready (Briefing session)

Selected 12 customers join a 2-hour online (via Zoom) briefing before the main meeting.

Everyone gets clear, easy-to-read information beforehand so they feel confident and prepared.

The facilitator talks them through:

- How the session will work
- The issues they've prioritised
- How to shape their questions & come up with a set of questions for each priority.

**We will brief the CCW Chair separately at this point** & remind them on their role, share guide & prioritised topics / Priorities will be sent the Water Companies at this point

03



## The Accountability Session (Main meeting)

12 customers take part in an online session (via Zoom) with a senior water company representative for 2 hours.

TMcK facilitator & Chair guiding the conversation:

- Customers ask their prepared questions
- Challenge the company's answers
- Explore what needs to change.

Live polls let everyone share honest views – even those who prefer not to speak out loud.

Welsh panels will be given the option of English, Welsh or simultaneous translation .

04



## Agreeing what should happen next

During the main accountability session, after each issue is discussed, the facilitator checks whether customers feel the company's proposed actions are good enough.

Together, they work towards a clear **consensus** on what actions the company must take.

05



## Publishing the outcomes and following up

A summary is produced showing: the questions asked, how the company responded, and the actions agreed.

- CCW publishes a **transcript within 5 working days**
- CCW publishes a **summary within 10 working days**
- The company must publish its **action plan by day 28**

Panellists are asked short follow-up questions about whether the plan reflects what was agreed.

CCW then tracks progress and updates panellists before the next session.

[Priorities will be shared with the ISG]

# Sample

Who takes part in an Accountability Session



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We brought together a **small, representative group of around 12 people** for each accountability session.

This number keeps the conversation manageable and ensures everyone has the chance to speak.

Each person is selected by the panel manager from their panel of 50 participants.

Our panel managers are responsible for selecting a representative range of participants and ensure that anyone who has expressed a keen interest in taking part in an accountability session is included at this stage.

We make sure each session of 12 includes the following types of panellists:

- **Age** - younger adults, middle-aged adults and older customers (2 per age bracket)
- **Gender** - a balanced mix (at least 5 males & 5 females)
- **Income levels** - including low-income households (3 financially vulnerable, 3 x 20-40k, 3 x £40k-60k & 2 x £60k+)
- **Location** - Rural and Urban water users (different house-types represented)
- **Ethnic backgrounds** - reflecting the local population, 2-3 from an ethnic minority background
- **People with accessibility, neurodivergent or additional support needs** (at least 1)
- **Different customer types** - e.g metered/unmetered, renters/homeowners
- **Different attitudes** – including 3 x positive, 3 x neutral & 3 x negative customers
- **Bathing water users** – 3 regular users (for WaSC panels)
- **Welsh speakers** – at least 2 Welsh speakers within our two Welsh panels & options for accountability session language

*This ensures all voices are represented, not just the loudest or most confident.*



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Thank you!



[ccw.org.uk](http://ccw.org.uk)