



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Water Voice - Accountability Session

Summary report

Water company: Affinity Water

Accountability Session date: 21.04.26

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

Version: Final 29.04.2026

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Questions created and asked by community members



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

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

	Topic	Community member question
Q1	Rising bills and value for money: Service standards and benchmarking	<p><i>“As customers, we are paying more, but we still do not feel clear what standard of service Affinity Water is actually meant to deliver. In practical terms, that means things like being able to submit meter readings easily, reliable water pressure, timely repairs and clear communication when something goes wrong. If you say service is improving, we want transparency about how that is being measured and how Affinity Water compares with other water companies, so we can judge whether we are getting value for money</i></p> <p><i>What standard of service should we be able to expect from Affinity Water now, who sets those standards and how do you compare with other water companies, so we can see for ourselves whether we are actually getting the service we are paying for?”</i></p>
Q2	Reliability and long-term resilience	<p><i>“As customers, we do not just want to know that water is working today — we want confidence that Affinity Water is planning properly for the future as well. We’re concerned about long-term sustainability, growing pressure on services and whether the company is really preparing for future demand, rather than waiting for problems to happen and then reacting to them.</i></p> <p><i>How is Affinity Water making sure water supplies will remain reliable in the future, with growing demand and longer-term pressure on resources and why should customers feel confident that the company is planning far enough ahead for their communities?”</i></p>
Q3	Trust and confidence in drinking water quality and hardness	<p><i>“We want to feel confident that the water coming into our homes every day is safe, high quality and something we can trust. Concerns about hard water, unpleasant taste and the need to rely on filters or bottled water can make that trust harder to maintain. This is not just about the water itself, but about having clear information that is easy to understand, so people feel reassured rather than confused by technical detail.</i></p> <p><i>How will Affinity Water build customers’ trust and confidence that the water coming from their taps is safe and good quality and explain hard water and water quality in a way people can easily understand?”</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 by **Tuesday 2nd June 2026**.

Executive summary - insights by question



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The Accountability Session for Affinity Water highlighted customers' need for clearer service standards, more visible, transparent long-term resilience planning, and stronger reassurance on water quality and hard water through proactive communication.

Q1.

Rising bills and value for money: Service standards and benchmarking

Affinity Water said service standards are mainly set through Ofwat and other regulators, with performance reported publicly and supported by newer tools like *Your Voice Matters*, smart metering and digital account improvements.

Community members welcomed the openness but still felt unclear about what standards they should expect in practice, how Affinity Water compares with other companies, and whether metering, alerts and billing communications are accurate, visible and locally meaningful.

The discussion focused on clearer standards, measurable improvement targets, stronger metering and alerts confidence and more accessible communication so customers can better judge value for money.

Customers wanted clearer standards, firmer targets and more confidence in metering, alerts and local performance.

Q2.

Reliability and long-term resilience

Affinity Water said it is planning for future demand through long-term resilience planning, demand reduction, leakage reduction and new water-source schemes.

Community members welcomed the focus on future supply but wanted clearer explanation of unusually high regional water use, more practical support to reduce demand and greater transparency on leakage, project timings, delivery stages and resilience spending.

The discussion focused on making resilience plans more visible and easier to follow, with clearer evidence of what is changing, when it will happen and how progress will be shown to customers.

Customers welcomed long-term planning, but wanted clearer timelines, spending transparency and stronger action on demand reduction and leakage.

Q3.

Water quality and hard water reassurance

Affinity Water said drinking water quality is very high, with 99.98% safety compliance and explained that hard water is largely a result of local geology rather than a safety issue.

Community members found this reassuring but wanted clearer explanation of hard water, more practical guidance and more proactive communication on water safety and support.

The discussion focused on turning strong technical performance into clearer reassurance and more proactive communication that reaches customers in ways they can easily understand and choose.

Customers wanted clearer explanation of hard water and more proactive, accessible communication on safety and support.

Actions agreed during the Accountability Session



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Q1.

Rising bills and value for money:
Service standards and benchmarking

- Clarify who sets service standards, how these compare across companies, and how Affinity Water currently performs.
- Publish clear improvement targets for weaker areas, with practical local performance and usage data.
- Improve confidence in metering, alerts and billing accuracy, with clearer accountability where things go wrong.
- Provide accessible updates on billing, digital services and local activity, so customers can see what is changing and where money is going.

Q2.

Reliability and long-term resilience

- Explain why regional water usage is high and strengthen targets, incentives and support to help customers reduce demand.
- Publish clearer detail on leakage reduction, including technologies used, current issues and measurable progress.
- Provide clear timelines, delivery stages and spending transparency for new water resilience schemes.
- Improve water literacy and company visibility through more proactive, engaging education and communications.

Q3.

Water quality and hard water
reassurance

- Explain hard water and regional variation in plain English, including what can and cannot be changed.
- Provide clear water safety guidance, including what customers should do if something seems wrong and what support is available.
- Share water quality information proactively across channels customers can choose, without making them chase it.



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Water Voice - Accountability Session

Summary report

Our findings in detail

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Q1. Rising bills and value for money: Service standards and benchmarking

Calls for clearer service standards and value-for-money transparency



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Question asked by an Affinity Water Community member:

“As customers, we are paying more, but we still do not feel clear what standard of service Affinity Water is actually meant to deliver. In practical terms, that means things like being able to submit meter readings easily, reliable water pressure, timely repairs and clear communication when something goes wrong. If you say service is improving, we want transparency about how that is being measured and how Affinity Water compares with other water companies, so we can judge whether we are getting value for money

“What standard of service should we be able to expect from Affinity Water now, who sets those standards and how do you compare with other water companies, so we can see for ourselves whether we are actually getting the service we are paying for?”

During the session, Affinity Water said service standards are set primarily through Ofwat, with performance reported publicly in the Annual Performance Report and industry comparisons. It highlighted strong performance in leakage and supply interruptions and planned improvements to digital services, metering and customer experience.

Community members still felt unclear about what standards they should expect in practice and how Affinity Water compares on a like-for-like basis with other companies.

The discussion therefore focused on making service standards, performance data, improvement targets and communication more transparent, practical and accessible so customers can better judge whether they are receiving value for money.

Actions

- **Clarify service standards, company comparisons** and Affinity Water's current performance.
- **Publish clear improvement targets for C-MeX¹ and water usage**, providing practical usage and performance data.
- **Careful checks of billing and meter data before alerts**, with clear accountability for inaccurate readings and meter handling.
- **Provide regular, accessible updates** on billing and meter changes, and local investment activity.

¹ C-MeX - Ofwat's measure of customer experience

“Who sets your standards that you're allowed to try and adhere to? And are you allowed to set different standards to different utility providers, so are we getting a better or a worse standard from our neighbours who may have agreed different standards with OFWAT?”

“Just updates on any changes really because I think sometimes..as a customer, we're not actually notified, just various things really, I think particularly when you have a meter, the changes in terms of bill ”



Community members wanted clearer service standards, firmer improvement targets and more confidence in metering accuracy and local performance.

Q1. Rising bills and value for money: Service standards and benchmarking



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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>Clarify who sets service standards, company comparisons and Affinity Waters current performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said service standards are set by multiple regulators, mainly Ofwat, under a five-year plan. Their performance is then published in the Annual Performance Report and Ofwat comparisons. Affinity Water was the 2025 joint top water-only performer, with strengths in leakage and supply interruptions and weaknesses in C-MeX¹ and household water consumption. <p>No future plans discussed in session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain who sets service standards and whether those standards are consistent across companies. Show clearly how Affinity Water compares with other providers on a like-for-like basis. Make performance information easier to find and understand. 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most information already exists but is not clearly communicated. Company will improve readability and communication information across platforms. Signposted customer-friendly reporting including <i>Discover Water</i> and the user version of the Annual Performance Report
<p>Publish clear improvement targets and practical, localised water usage data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledged weaker areas on C-MeX¹ and household consumption <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Releasing a new digital platform in 12 weeks [from 21/04/2026], where customers submit their own meter reading, view graphs and get better leak support and detection New mobile app being developed to show accurate water usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish clear improvement targets for C-MeX¹ and household consumption. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report actual progress against those targets in percentage terms. Provide practical dashboard information on water usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have ‘high usage’ alerts and pinpoint responsible appliances Have county/ regional breakdowns so customers can see local performance over overall performance 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company said it would address these points further and improve communication

¹ C-MeX - Ofwat’s measure of customer experience

Note: This table is an excerpt from the full Action Plan. Affinity 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. Rising bills and value for money: Service standards and benchmarking



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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
Reassurance over metering, alerts and billing accuracy .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said they had approx. 1.2 million meters, with 94–95% read twice yearly. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400,000 smart meters will be added over next four years. New meter appointment calendar incoming: customers will be able to submit their own meter readings and choose appointment times digitally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve proactive checks for billing and meter information accuracy before sending 'alert' communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure alerts are only issued where there is a genuine issue. Provide reassurance on smart meter accuracy. Add clear accountability for inaccurate readings or poor handling of meter issues, including refunds or equivalent redress Add accurate readings to the Guaranteed Service Scheme¹ 	<p>Timescale: Short term for clearer information on bills; deliverable by next bill cycle.</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No push back on actions Company said all actions raised were deliverable.
Provide accessible updates on billing, digital services and local activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said '<i>Your Voice Matters</i>' is published quarterly and addresses key customer questions and company responses <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said it is improving and digitalising services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use communication methods that are accessible and appropriate for all customer preference and ages. Provide regular, easy-to-follow updates on billing changes, digital services and other key company changes. Communicate visible local activity and investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sen multi-channel "What's going on in your area?" updates, showing local projects underway or planned 	<p>Timescale: No firm timeline. However, the company said clearer communication could be developed in the near term.</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company said it would improve communication across platforms Asking for customer feedback on how they would prefer to receive information, but note challenge of serving a diverse customer base

¹ Guaranteed Service Scheme cannot be set by the company – comment on separate commitment expected in company action plan

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Q2. Reliability and long-term resilience

Clearer, transparent resilience planning and future supply reassurance

Question asked by an Affinity Water Community member:

“As customers, we do not just want to know that water is working today - we want confidence that Affinity Water is planning properly for the future as well. We’re concerned about long-term sustainability, growing pressure on services and whether the company is really preparing for future demand, rather than waiting for problems to happen and then reacting to them.”

How is Affinity Water making sure water supplies will remain reliable in the future, with growing demand and longer-term pressure on resources and why should customers feel confident that the company is planning far enough ahead for their communities?”

During the session, Affinity Water outlined a long-term resilience approach centred on climate stress testing, a 25-year Water Resources Management Plan, demand reduction, leakage reduction and two major future supply schemes, alongside over £700 million of planned investment.

Community members welcomed the long-term planning and the focus on future supply, but wanted clearer explanation of high regional water use, more practical demand-reduction support, and greater transparency on leakage, project delivery, timings and spending.

The discussion therefore focused on making resilience plans clearer and more user-facing, with clarity on how both the company and customers are expected to contribute.

Actions

- **Clearly explain high regional water use and strengthen targets**, incentives and support to help customers reduce demand.
- **Publish clearer information on leakage reduction**, including technologies used, current issues and measurable progress.
- **Provide clear timelines, delivery stages and spending transparency** for the new water resilience schemes.
- **Improve water literacy and company visibility** through more proactive, engaging education and communications.

“Our region has some of the highest use per capita in terms of water usage... why do you think that is? what more can Affinity Water do to really help support customers, to reduce the amount of water that they use”

“They’re going to spend about £700m, so as a customer... the bill is going to go up ... I want to see that transparently online, where they are spending the money.”

“I think it's really important, that we begin to actually recognise them as one of our providers rather than this silent company that we don't really interact as much with”



Community members welcomed long-term resilience planning, but wanted clearer timelines, spending transparency and more practical support to reduce demand and leakage.



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Q2. Reliability and long-term resilience

"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>Explain high regional water use and strengthen demand reduction support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said they are already stress testing for climate change and focusing on lowering household demand. Water-saving information is also on their website, though accessibility could be improved. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Water Resources Management Plan sets out long-term demand and supply planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also shows short-term actions; reducing per capita consumption with water-saving measures like smart meters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain why water use is unusually high in the region. Better advertise existing water-saving support and make it easier to act on. Set a clear, measurable target for reducing household water use. Explore incentives or other behaviour-change mechanisms that encourage lower use. 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company said they deliver most of this already, but must better communicate it Currently running a tariff trial linking water usage to incentives – hoping to expand it All actions financially feasible and possible to deliver.
<p>Publish clearer details on leakage reduction, technologies and progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said leakage reduction is part of current resilience planning. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aiming to reduce leakage over the long term and place it within wider resilience planning. Positioned leakage reduction alongside demand management as a core part of future supply reliability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline more clearly what the company is doing to reduce leakage now and over time. Explain what new technologies are being used to detect and prevent leaks. Publish more specific data on leakage figures, causes and surrounding issues so customers can judge progress. 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company said it already has many of these measures in place, including fibre optics for leak detection. All actions financially feasible.

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Q2. Reliability and long-term resilience

“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
Clarify timelines and spending for new water resilience schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said they are using long-term planning to secure future supply. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Resources Management Plan looks 25 years ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term, two new supply schemes are planned: the Grand Union Canal Scheme and the South East Strategic Reservoir Option / White Horse Reservoir Over £700 million invested in resilience over next five years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish clear information on both new water source schemes. Set out when each scheme is expected to come online and communicate the key construction stages. Explain more clearly how the projects will work in practice. Show where resilience spending will go and advertise this online in an accessible way. 	<p>Timescale: 4 to 6 months.</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No pushback on actions. Company looking to actively improve communication for this.
Improve water literacy and company visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said information already exists on the website to help customers reduce usage. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said future resilience depends partly on customer behaviour change, alongside company action on supply and leakage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce more engaging educational activity to improve water literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can use interactive tools (e.g. apps) Work more visibly through school visits, with ‘water-saving’ competitions, and with partner organisations to encourage smarter water consumption More diversified and proactive communication to suit all customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication preference selection system 	<p>Timescale: Shorter-term implementation for educational school visits. No firm timeline committed.</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All actions financially feasible and liked.

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Q3. Trust and confidence in drinking water quality and hardness

Clearer reassurance on water quality and hardness

Question asked by an Affinity Water Community member:

"We want to feel confident that the water coming into our homes every day is safe, high quality and something we can trust. Concerns about hard water, unpleasant taste and the need to rely on filters or bottled water can make that trust harder to maintain. This is not just about the water itself, but about having clear information that is easy to understand, so people feel reassured rather than confused by technical detail.

"How will Affinity Water build customers' trust and confidence that the water coming from their taps is safe and good quality and explain hard water and water quality in a way people can easily understand?"

During the session, Affinity Water said they maintain very high drinking water quality, with over 31,000 water samples taken, approx. 190,000 tests and 99.98% compliance. They explained hard water was due to local geology rather than a safety issue.

Community members found the statistics reassuring but still wanted clearer, plain-English explanation of hard water and regional variation, practical advice on how to mitigate its effects, clearer guidance on what to do if water seems unusual and more proactive communication.

The discussion therefore focused on turning strong technical performance into clearer reassurance, guidance and easily accessible and readable communication.

Actions

- **Plain-English explanations of hard water and regional variation**, including what customers can and can not soften
- **Provide and clearly signpost water safety guidance**, including what to do if something seems wrong and what support is available.
- **Share water quality information proactively across customers' preferred channels**, without making them chase you

"I would still like reassurance, I know they've said that there is a very high percentage of the water that is safe, however as a consumer, what guidance are they going to provide us with so that, for example, if we did notice an odour or whatever, would we know what to do in terms of 'Do we drink it? Don't we drink it? Should we call them?'"

"There's never going to be a communication method that suits everyone, so actually how can we choose if we want that reactive or that more proactive communication? How can we as the consumers have that choice?"



Whilst reassured by statistics, community members wanted clearer explanations of hard water and more proactive, accessible communication on water safety and available support.



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Q3. Trust and confidence in drinking water quality and hardness

"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>Explain hard water, regional variation and mitigation more clearly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said they have very high water quality, with hard water mainly due to natural mineral content. Most of their supply comes from the chalk aquifer, with the rest from the Thames. Affinity Water reassured panellists that whilst the water is naturally hard, it is safe to drink. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to further communication with the panel and customers on how to build trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the causes of hard water and why it varies across the region in clear, everyday language. Be clear about what the company can and cannot do to reduce hardness. Explain the barriers to water softening and provide practical advice on what customers can do to mitigate hardness at home. 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific new commitment was made on reducing water hardness – company unable to reduce natural water hardness Company accepted the need to explain existing information more clearly and accessibly
<p>Clearer reassurance on water safety and support provided when issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said regional water is very high quality, with over 31,000 water samples, approx. 190,000 tests annually and 99.98% safety compliance. They said most failed tests linked to customer taps rather than the wider supply. <p>No future plans discussed in the session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear reassurance on water safety in plain English. Explain what customers should do if water smells, tastes or looks unusual. Set out what support is available where a household sample does not meet standards, including how issues will be investigated and followed through. 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company reassured panellist that customers whose tap samples do not meet standards are supported and followed through until the issue is resolved

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Q3. Trust and confidence in drinking water quality and hardness

"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>Communicate water quality and safety more proactively, through channels customers can choose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affinity Water said water quality metrics are already published, but acknowledged they are not always presented in an engaging format Said existing communication does not yet fully answer how trust should be built. <p>Future plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to ongoing discussion with customers about what communication works best and how trust should be built. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share water quality and safety information beyond the website, using a mix of channels such as email, social media, paper communications and digital tools Let customers choose how they receive communications, including a clear preference or opt-in system Communicate proactively, but in a measured way that informs customers without overwhelming them with constant updates 	<p>Timescale: Timescales will be provided in the company action plan</p> <p>Final comments from water company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company said a range of communication channels already exists; the remaining issue is making them clearer, more visible and easier for customers to choose between. Overall, water safety information and support are available but poorly communicated

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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 28th 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*.

Wednesday 6th May



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

Tuesday 2nd June



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

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
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



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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



The voice for water consumers
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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!



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