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# Water Voice - Accountability Session

## Action plan response

**Water company:** Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water  
**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie  
Research & Energy Saving Trust

Version: Update with Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk  
Water Action plan response – 21.05.26

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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 Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk 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 Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water<sup>1</sup> at the Accountability Session.

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

	Topic	Community member question
Q1	Value for money, rising bills and visible investment	<p><i>“As customers, we can accept that bills may go up, but what is missing is a clear and visible explanation of what we are getting back for that money. The real frustration is being asked to pay more while still not knowing where the money is going, what it is funding, and what has actually improved as a result. It is not enough for that information to sit somewhere on a website — people want clear evidence of what is being delivered in return.</i></p> <p><i>How will you clearly show customers that rising bills are fair and justified, where our money is actually going, and what real improvements you are delivering for customers in return?”</i></p>
Q2	Pollution prevention and environmental protection	<p><i>“I live near the River South Tyne, where upstream there is great salmon fishing, but a few miles further down there are what feel like constant reports of contamination. That makes this issue feel very real and very close to home. Customers are worried that pollution is still happening at these levels, that the damage to rivers and local communities is continuing, and that there is still not enough confidence that the problem is being fixed quickly enough.</i></p> <p><i>What will you do now to reduce sewage pollution and storm overflow discharges, what stretching targets and timescales will you commit to, and how will you be held accountable if those reductions are not delivered?”</i></p>
Q3	Dividends, executive pay and accountability	<p><i>“Dividends, executive pay and bonuses are a real concern for customers at a time when bills are rising and there are still clear questions about whether enough is being invested in the service. Recent decisions not to pay a dividend may show that these choices can change, but customers still want to understand the wider standards behind them — both how these decisions are made now and how they will be approached in future.</i></p> <p><i>How can you justify dividends, executive pay and bonuses when customers are paying more but still have concerns about underinvestment, and what standards need to be met before those decisions are justified?”</i></p>

<sup>1</sup> This session covered Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water (Northumbrian Water Limited) - referred to in this report as 'Northumbrian Water Limited' for the purposes of brevity and formality.

# Executive summary - insights by question



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The Accountability Session for Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water highlighted a consistent ask for clearer, more accessible information, stronger transparency and more proactive communication that shows how money is used, how performance is improving and how decisions are being made.

## Q1.

### Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Northumbrian Water Limited said higher bills are communicated via bills inserts, website content, QR links, pie charts and local engagement, with current investment focused on water resources in Essex & Suffolk and river quality and storm overflows in the North East.

Customers accepted some positive service experiences and, in some cases, still saw water as good value, but many felt the explanation remained too generic and too reliant on customers finding information themselves.

They wanted clearer local examples, named projects, visible improvements and simpler explanations of what higher bills are funding and when customers will see the benefits.

Customers want clearer, simpler explanations of what higher bills are funding and what improvements they will deliver.

## Q2.

### Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Northumbrian Water Limited outlined a major pollution and storm overflows reducing program, including smart sewer work, added storage, pipe relining, water quality monitoring and £1bn storm overflow investment, alongside spill and pollution reduction targets.

Customers welcomed the scale of ambition, and some found it reassuring, but many felt it was too general and did not give enough accessible detail on local impacts, spill data or overall accountability.

They wanted clearer evidence that pollution is genuinely reducing, easier-to-find progress information, and more transparent reporting on targets, terminology and local outcomes.

Customers want clearer evidence, clearer language and clearer accountability that pollution is genuinely reducing.

## Q3.

### Dividends, executive pay and accountability

Northumbrian Water Limited said dividends and executive rewards are governed through a regulated framework, published policies, customer-linked targets and board oversight, and explained investors fund upfront investment.

Some customers found parts of that explanation helpful, particularly the regulator's role, but the issue still carried strong mistrust and felt too technical and inaccessible.

The discussion therefore centred on the need for simpler explanations, more transparent reporting, and clearer proof that customer outcomes, service and investment come before rewards..

Customers want clearer rules on rewards and stronger proof that customers and investment come first.

# Actions agreed during the Accountability Session



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## Q1.

### Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

- Provide clearer, plain-English explanations of what higher bills are funding and why.
- Show clearer local examples of investment, including postcode-level or area-level projects.
- Give customers direct updates through bills, newsletters or e-updates, not just website links.
- Show visible outcomes, timelines and local benefits from investment more clearly.

## Q2.

### Pollution prevention and environmental protection

- Publish clearer year-on-year data on spills, pollution incidents and progress against targets.
- Explain pollution, spill and storm overflow terminology in plain English, including what counts as serious pollution.
- Improve signposting and regular updates so customers can easily find pollution and performance information.
- Show how investment and local action are reducing incidents in practice, especially in priority areas.

## Q3.

### Dividends, executive pay and accountability

- Explain more clearly how dividends, executive pay and bonuses are governed and overseen.
- Set out the standards and customer outcomes that must be met before rewards are justified.
- Publish a simpler annual summary showing what was paid, what targets were met or missed, and why.
- Provide clearer evidence that customer outcomes and investment are prioritised before rewards.



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# Water Voice - Accountability Session

## Action plan response

# Our findings in detail

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie  
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# Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements

Question asked by Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water community member:

*“As customers, we can accept that bills may go up, but what is missing is a clear and visible explanation of what we are getting back for that money. The real frustration is being asked to pay more while still not knowing where the money is going, what it is funding, and what has actually improved as a result. It is not enough for that information to sit somewhere on a website — people want clear evidence of what is being delivered in return.*”

*How will you clearly show customers that rising bills are fair and justified, where our money is actually going, and what real improvements you are delivering for customers in return?”*

During the session, Northumbrian Water Limited said it already explains bills through bill inserts and pie charts, website content, QR links to local projects and community engagement, and said current investment is focused on future water resources in Essex and Suffolk and river quality and storm overflows in the North East.

Community members acknowledged some positive service experiences and often still saw water as good value, but many felt the explanation remained too reliant on websites, QR codes and broad assurances, without clearly showing what higher bills would fund locally or what customers would see in return.

The discussion therefore centred on the need for clearer, more direct and more local communication linking rising bills to named projects, visible improvements, clear timescales and stronger evidence of value for money.

## Actions

- **Provide postcode-specific bill updates** showing 5–6 named local projects, what each will deliver, and a QR link to fuller area-level detail.
- **Explain bill increases in plain English** by linking them to named investment priorities and outcomes, not generic references to inflation or rising costs.
- **Send regular direct updates** by bills, newsletters and other non-digital channels, communicating projects under way, projects starting within six months, and key next steps.
- **Show visible evidence of delivery** through named local schemes and positive investment stories, including clear timelines showing when customers will see change

*“It’s very hard for me to get excited about what you’re doing and thinking positively about you, if you’re not expressing that well to me.”*

*“I want to hear about the infrastructure investment... the projects which are going to make a difference to the planet and are going to secure water supplies for the future, for myself and my offspring”*



Customers felt explanations of rising bills remained too generic, with a need for clearer local evidence of what higher charges will deliver and by when.

# Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment



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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
Provide <b>postcode-level examples</b> of where customer money is being invested, with clear links to local area projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained that customers can see where money goes through pie charts, bill inserts, the website, a new QR code on bills linking to local projects, and at 'Local Action' engagement events.</li> <li>Bill inserts provide short summaries of some of the 800 investment projects in-action.</li> <li>Customers can email the team for project specifics</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will improve clarity surrounding local project investment, and expand communicating methods i.e. better utilise social media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show postcode or area-level examples of investment on bills</li> <li>Provide 5-6 named local projects or activities customers can recognise.</li> <li>State what each project is for, what it will improve, and who will benefit locally.</li> <li>Include QR codes for extra detail, not as the main explanation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most information already on bills and website but will improve and expand on current communication methods</li> <li>Will explore giving postcode-level information on local investment and projects, as feature exists for another service</li> </ul>
Explain <b>bill increases in plain English</b> , showing what they fund and why they're needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained that affordability and value for money are considered during planning, with current investment focused on water resources in Essex and Suffolk and river quality / storm overflows in the North East.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company says existing communication sets this out, but accepts more clarity is needed. has accepted the need to bring this "big picture" explanation more clearly to the forefront.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain bill rises in plain English, avoiding generic cost references or vague terms (unless linked to specific outcomes)</li> <li>Clarify how investment is prioritised, and state which priorities higher bills are funding</li> <li>Explain why these priorities matter for customers and the environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> Achievable within the short term. Timescale detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledgement of the need to bring "big picture" explanations of bill increases to the fore. Will figure out the clearest, most engaging ways to do so.</li> </ul>
Send <b>direct updates</b> through bills, newsletters and other <b>non-digital channels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company said information is already shared through bills, the website, social media and community visits, and that customers can email them for more project details.</li> <li>Company tries to reach people through multiple channels as recognises some customers don't use the website. Customer panels are run to identify how best to reach diverse customers pools, whilst partner collaborations used to reach offline customers.</li> </ul> <p><b>No future plan discussed at the session.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide direct updates across digital and non-digital channels; i.e. bill inserts, post, e-newsletters</li> <li>Regular highlights of current and upcoming work, with advanced notice before major works begin</li> <li>Make updates usable for offline or non-digitally confident customers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> Monthly or quarterly highlights suggested. No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> 6 months advanced notice of project commencement proposed. Company already provides this, so point is null and void.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liked newsletter or e-letter format; will heavily consider. Will discuss the best communication approach. Open to new or improved formats.</li> <li>Reassurance advanced notice is provided for local works</li> </ul>
Show <b>visible evidence</b> of delivery with named local schemes, with clear progress timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company said local project headlines and associated spend can be found online.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current big-scale focuses are on major water-resource work in Suffolk, past reservoir investment in Essex, and wider environmental and carbon-reduction activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show what customers should expect to see from paying more, with visible local examples of investment</li> <li>Publicise positive investment stories proactively</li> <li>Include clear milestones, dates and timelines for projects, using a dynamic bar-graph visual</li> <li>Link improvements to specific service areas, such as water infrastructure upgrades or sustainability actions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> Short term suggested for publishing positive news. No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepted the need for more visible, positive communication. Will work to deliver this quickly.</li> <li>Will work on clarifying what bill increases fund locally</li> </ul>

## Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q1. Actions A)



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Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We recognise it is important that our customers and communities understand the investments we are making, what those investments will improve for customers, and what it means for their local areas. We've already done lots of work to show these things to our customers in ways they've told us work for them, and following the useful discussion during the Water Voice Accountability Session we commit to building on this by revisiting what we do and using insights and feedback to improve how we communicate to all customers about these important points.

We already share pie charts in all of our customer bills that show where investment goes, and what money is spent on (<https://www.nwl.co.uk/your-bill> and <https://www.eswater.co.uk/your-bill>).

We work hard to explain this key information clearly and openly. On our website, we also have a dedicated page that shows investment in the five key areas of our Northumbrian Water region (Northumberland, Tyneside, Wearside, Durham and Darlington, and Teesside) as well as our Essex and Suffolk regions, and we show this alongside key information on customers' bills so they can see investment areas alongside information on bills and charges. We also provide QR codes on our customer bills that show area-level investment. Alongside this we regularly share media and social media posts that explain our investments, the reasons for them, and the value and impact we're creating. We try hard to share positive news stories, though we recognise we can always do more here, and we'll reflect on how we can reasonably share more good news stories, and stories that show our people making a difference in our communities. Investment details for each region can be found here: <https://www.nwl.co.uk/myaccount/your-bill/our-investment-plan/> / <https://www.eswater.co.uk/myaccount/your-bill/our-investment-plan/>

We also already have a dedicated Community Hub for each of our operating regions (<https://communityhub.nwl.co.uk/> and <https://communityhub.eswater.co.uk/>) where information on our work to improve water and wastewater services can be found. Our Community Hubs provide a central space that holds information on our regional investments, enabling customers to get updates and information on the projects they are interested in, to ask questions and share ideas, as well as keep up to date with progress and the benefits of projects. Each of the projects shares core key information, such as project start and end dates, investment levels, expected benefits and which of our partners is involved in project delivery. Updates are provided on a regular basis, with content tailored depending on project and customer priorities. We also share information here about upcoming events, such as our Local Action meetings and project-specific engagement opportunities, as well as a link to our customer websites for broader information on what customers can expect from us. Active projects are displayed on a map so that it is easy to see where investment is happening, and we are currently working on ideas to enhance our mapping tools.

Following our Water Voice Accountability Session, we commit to revisiting how and where we share positive stories and information about our investment, and to looking at further ways to promote our Local Action and investment events, as well as where we're out and about in our local communities. We would also like to take the opportunity to ask Water Voice Panellists, and customers more broadly, to share their feedback on our Community Hubs and how we could improve too.

Billing programme 2026/27 - planning work takes place from September 2026 and is completed by March 2027

## Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q1. Actions B)



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Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

This is an important area for customers and we welcomed the opportunity to talk with the Water Voice panel about this at our recent Accountability Session.

Our business plan research always has work on affordability and acceptability as its anchor, and this is really useful in helping us to understand what our customers value and prioritise when it comes to investment and spending money.

In the past, some customers told us they can find it hard to understand certain areas of our finances. We know it is really important to provide customers with a simple and easy way to understand how our company is financed and where their water and/or sewerage bill payment goes. When this was first brought up we held a co-creation workshop with customers to understand what the document that shared that information could look like, and we created our bill breakdown explanation, and a new section on our website that shares more information.

We always try to be open and transparent about our finances and the important work we are doing for our customers, so we show how we're performing: [www.nwg.co.uk/finances](http://www.nwg.co.uk/finances)

We also, as stated above, show where our investment schemes are and what we're aiming to improve for customers through completing them, this can be seen on our Community Hub pages, and also on our main websites: <https://www.nwg.co.uk/globalassets/business-plan-2025-30/aug25/delivery-plan-summary--august-2025.pdf>

As a result of the Water Voice Accountability Session, following publication of this year's Financial Statements and Annual Performance Report in July, we commit to revisiting Our Finances Explained, and to explore with customers how we could further enhance the information that we provide for them and ensure that this is written in plain, easy to understand, English. This could include things like how investment is prioritised and why we think they are the right priorities. We will also use this as an opportunity to review how we explain where customers money is spent and how bill increases are calculated.

We will aim to conclude this by the end of 2026 so we can build-in recommendations to our annual billing preparation for 2027 and beyond.

End of Dec 26

## Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q1. Actions C)



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Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We recognise that our Water Voice panel customers are passionate about communication and we're keen to harness their feedback and use it to make changes where we can. As we shared on the night – and in the answers above - we already have in place multiple methods for communicating with our customers on the things that matter most to them, and the things that we think customers will be interested in. We do this through a variety of channels and at a number of touchpoints, be that through billing, metering or moving home journeys, or through when we communicate about operational matters. We believe these channels and communication points work well for a lot of customers, though we also recognise the feedback shared at our recent Accountability Session, and we commit to trying new ways to engage, in respect of the feedback received there, from the Water Voice panel.

In particular, we have listened to what Water Voice customers said about a newsletter and we commit to curating and sharing a quarterly newsletter update that we will share with customers across all three of our operating regions.

To be cost-effective when using customers' money, we will primarily send this newsletter electronically to our customers who have agreed for us to send them marketing. We will also print a small batch of the newsletters and make these available at events and engagement sessions such as with our Customer Heroes and at our Local Action and wider stakeholder events. Details on our Local Action events can be found here <https://www.nwl.co.uk/localaction> and <https://www.eswater.co.uk/our-region/local-action/>

We will use the launch of our new newsletter as an opportunity to encourage more customers to share their email and mobile details with us so they receive future editions and so we can share information in the case of emergencies and/or in relation to other service updates.

To give a flavour of how we will attract attention and engagement, we will use existing channels and activities, including:

- Northumbrian Water/Essex & Suffolk Water channels (customer bills, websites, social media, and colleagues)
- Community engagement events and through stakeholders and partners
- Marketing (advertising, leaflets, campaign emails)
- Local investment and service updates bespoke to target areas
- Innovation Festival
- Environmental, leisure and community activities

We will also incorporate any appropriate learning from the points noted above and ensure we leverage the value of any insights and/or improvement opportunities realised in our reviews.

Short term suggested for publishing positive news. First newsletter due for publication by end of July 2026.

## Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q1. Actions D)



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Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below (Page 1 of 2)

Timescale

As noted above, we are committed to providing rich and useful information to our customers on the things that matter most to them and we realise that this includes investment information at a local area level, information about the types of improvements we expect to see from the investment and a clearer read across of what the money customers are spending on bills is helping to achieve.

We recognise it is important that our customers and communities understand the investments we are making, what those investments will improve for customers, and what it means for their local areas. We've already done lots of work to show these things to our customers in ways they've told us work for them, and following the useful discussion during the Water Voice Accountability Session we commit to building on this by revisiting what we do later this year and using the insights and feedback we receive to improve how we communicate to all customers about these important points.

For example, we already share pie charts in all of our customer bills (see Annex) that show where investment goes, and what money is spent on. We work hard to explain this key information clearly and openly. On our website, we have a dedicated page that shows investment in the five key areas of our Northumbrian Water region (Northumberland, Tyneside, Wearside, Durham and Darlington, and Teesside), as well as our Essex and Suffolk regions, and we show this alongside key information about customers' bills so they can see investment areas alongside information on bills and charges. We also provide QR codes on our customer bills that show area-level investment, and we commit to continuing to do this, and sharing more widely where we can.

We also regularly share media and social media posts that explain our investments, the reasons for them, and the value and impact we're creating. We try hard to share positive news stories, though we recognise we can always do more here, and we'll reflect on how we can reasonably share more good news stories, and stories that show our people making a difference in our communities.

Short term suggested for publishing positive news. First newsletter due for publication by end of July 2026

Action Plan Water Company response, following the accountability session.

## Q1. Value for money, rising bills and visible investment

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q1. Actions D)



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Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below (Page 2 of 2)

Timescale

Alongside this we already have a dedicated Community Hub for each of our operating regions (<https://communityhub.nwl.co.uk/> and <https://communityhub.eswater.co.uk/>) where information on our work to improve water and wastewater services can be found.

Our Community Hubs provide a central space that holds information on our regional investments, enabling customers to get updates and information on the projects they are interested in, to ask questions and share ideas, as well as keep up to date with progress and the benefits of projects. Each of the projects shares core key information, such as project start and end dates, investment levels, expected benefits and which of our partners is involved in project delivery. Updates are provided on a regular basis, with content tailored depending on project and customer priorities. We also share information here about upcoming events, such as our Local Action meetings and project-specific engagement opportunities. Additionally, we include a link to our customer websites for broader information on what customers can expect from us.

Active projects on our Community Hubs are displayed on a map so that it is easy to say where investment is happening, and we are currently working on ideas to enhance our map tools.

Following our Water Voice Accountability Session, we commit to revisiting how and where we share positive stories and information about our investment, and to looking at further ways to promote our Local Action and investment events, as well as where we're out and about in our local communities. We would also like to take the opportunity to ask Water Voice Panellists, and customers more broadly, to share their feedback on our Community Hubs, our website pages, and how they feel we could continue to improve.

Short term suggested for publishing positive news. First newsletter due for publication by end of July 2026

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clearer evidence of pollution reduction



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Question asked by Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water community member:

*"I live near the River South Tyne, where upstream there is great salmon fishing, but a few miles further down there are what feel like constant reports of contamination. That makes this issue feel very real and very close to home. Customers are worried that pollution is still happening at these levels, that the damage to rivers and local communities is continuing, and that there is still not enough confidence that the problem is being fixed quickly enough.*

***What will you do now to reduce sewage pollution and storm overflow discharges, what stretching targets and timescales will you commit to, and how will you be held accountable if those reductions are not delivered?"***

Northumbrian Water Limited said it had already begun a major sewage pollution and storm overflows reduction program, involving smart sewer work, added storage, pipe relining and £1bn of investment. It said spills fell 31% from 2024 - 2025, that it is targeting 14.3 spills per overflow by the end of the five-year period, with progress tracked through regulator oversight and annual reporting.

Community members welcomed the ambition but felt the response was too general, with too little accessible detail on local impacts, spill numbers, contaminants, definitions and progress tracking measures.

Discussion therefore focused on the need for clearer local evidence, easier-to-find data and more visible accountability of whether pollution is reducing.

### Actions

- **Publish specific, comparable data** on spills, pollution incidents, contaminants and yearly progress against reduction targets.
- **Explain storm overflow and pollution terminology in plain English**, including what counts as serious pollution.
- **Provide regular, easy-to-find updates on targets, progress and accountability**, with clearer signposting to existing information.
- **Show how prevention investment is reducing incidents in priority local areas**, with clear links to monitoring and outcomes.

*"I think absolute clarity to build confidence for us is really important, in relation to pollution"*

*"If there are repeat problems in one area and prioritising that and telling us how that's going to be addressed would be really important"*



Customers welcomed the ambition and investment, but wanted clearer local evidence, plain-English explanations and more visible accountability that pollution is genuinely reducing.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection



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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>Publish <b>specific, comparable data</b> on spills, pollution incidents and yearly progress against reduction targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company said there is an active sewage spill reduction program. Achievements include a 31% spill reduction from 2024 - 2025; a 17.8 spills per overflow target achieved (against the 2025 target of 19.6 spills) and a current-year target of 18.3 spills per overflow</li> <li>No Category 1 serious pollution incidents in recent years. Had lowest national pollution levels in 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future stretching targets: 14.3 spills per overflow over next 5 years, 10 spills per overflow by 2030. Continuation of no Category 1 incidents.</li> <li>Will continue publishing information annually through its 'Pollution Incident Reduction plan' and wider reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish specific spill and pollution data in an accessible document, detailing location, size and incident cause.</li> <li>Commit to publishing all 'non-serious pollution incidents (Category 3 and 4) with customers.</li> <li>Publish year-on-year pollution data so customers can see past performance, current performance and future targets side by side. Clearly state if pollution has reduced for the current year.</li> <li>Include clearer information on major contaminants detected in waterways, and their environmental effects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This information is already published in the annual 'Pollution Incident Reduction plan'.</li> <li>Spills published within one hour of incident on the website 'spill tracker'. However, new communication forms will be discussed.</li> <li>Will try and communicate this information in a more accessible and easy to read format e.g. a visual document</li> </ul>
<p>Explain <b>storm overflow and pollution terminology in plain English</b>, including defining 'serious pollution'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained that the Environment Agency categorises pollution incidents; Category 1 and 2 are serious, Category 3 and 4 are minor. Clarified that some storm overflow events are compliant spills rather than pollution events, and that not all river pollution sources (contaminants) fall within company responsibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spending £1bn reducing storm overflows across their waste treatment sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define serious pollution, minor pollution, compliant spill and related terms in plain English.</li> <li>Clarify the difference between storm overflow operation and pollution incidents.</li> <li>Explain what Northumbrian Water is and is not responsible for, including around contaminants</li> <li>Publish water treatment test results in everyday language – including contaminants found and what is tested for.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will share Environmental Agency's 'Serious pollution' criteria with customers.</li> <li>Accepted giving clearer pollution explanations.</li> <li>Installing continuous water quality monitors over next 10 years</li> <li>Further detail expected in company action plan</li> </ul>
<p>Provide <b>regular, easy-to-find updates</b> on targets, progress and accountability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained that spills are shown on an online 'spill tracker' map within one hour, that the company self-reports over 90% of incidents (the highest out of any company, and performance is reported through the business plan and annual publications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will maintain yearly publication of progress with the Annual Report and 'Pollution Incident Reduction Plan'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular plain-English updates on storm overflows, pollution performance and target delivery.</li> <li>Make the spill tracker and pollution reduction information easier to find and understand – create a newsletter and avoid jargon inside.</li> <li>Show how often progress will be reported and what happens if targets are missed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like the newsletter idea. Will consider.</li> <li>Will try to provide clearer signposting to existing information on the topic and discuss new communication methods</li> </ul>
<p>Show how prevention investment is <b>reducing incidents in priority local areas</b>, with clear links to monitoring and outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The company said</b> early shareholder funding of £400m supported smart sewer work and wider prevention activity; highlighted Newcastle smart sewer work and extra water storage added, pipe relining and surface water removal. Said, with 239 overflows targeted to below 10 spills in this period, and continuous water quality monitors are being installed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding smart sewer system to Redcar and Marske. Installing battery power assets in North East for energy relief during power cuts.</li> <li>Of its 1,500 storm overflows, Northumbrian Water said 239 will be reduced to fewer than 10 spills per overflow in this five-year period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show how major investment is reducing incidents in practice</li> <li>Prioritise and explain action in repeat problem areas affecting rivers and communities.</li> <li>Link each major scheme to expected local impact, target reductions and timescales.</li> <li>Use monitoring and reporting to show whether prevention work is delivering measurable improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No firm timescales, other than 5 year timescales for stretching targets.</p> <p><b>Final comments from Water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed to improvement communication. Will discuss and detail best format to do this in the company action plan.</li> </ul>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q 2. Actions A)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below (Page 1 of 2)

Timescale

We appreciate that the Water Voice Consumer Panel was very passionate about our wastewater performance, as we also care passionately about our work and performance in this area. That is why we've committed to making huge investments in this area in the coming years, and why we're working hard every day to improve our performance.

It is though important that time and money are invested in the right areas, and the vast majority of the information that it was requested at our Accountability Session that we share with customers in relation to this workstream is already reported on and published by the responsible statutory body, the Environment Agency (EA).

We are committed to being transparent, and to responding to Water Voice customers' request for more information, so where information is already available and published by another body, rather than try to replicate it or provide definitions of our own, we commit to sharing it on our website(s) and to providing contextual information that will help customers understand it.

For example, Storm Overflow spill data for all companies is published by the EA annually. The latest data was published on 26 March 2026 and can be accessed by clicking on this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fewer-and-shorter-storm-overflow-spills-in-2025-new-monitoring-data-shows>. Customers can also view real time spill data using our interactive map: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/38baf2cf48d74b8196539ef315bea6b5>

Pollution data for all companies is also published by the EA annually. The latest data was published on 5 August 2025, covering all pollution events from 2016 to 2024. This report can be accessed by clicking on this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-pollution-incident-report-for-2016-to-2024/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-pollution-incident-report-for-2016-to-2024>

Review of website and content to be complete by end of 2026 as part of a wider review taking place.

Action Plan Water Company response, following the accountability session.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q 2. Actions A)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below (Page 2 of 2)

Timescale

Each year, companies must commit to publishing a Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) which outlines further detail on pollution performance and future plans. Our PIRP can be accessed by clicking on this link <https://www.nwg.co.uk/reductionplan>.

As a result of the questions posed as part of our Accountability Session, we will review whether there is opportunity for us to add more information on all pollution events on our website, and / or whether there is more we could share to help customers understand the information shared and published by the EA which we will continue to link and reference so there is a single version of information shared with customers.

Information about the status of contaminants in UK waterways is not the responsibility of water and sewerage companies, it is the responsibility of the EA and is rightly shared by them. The details of this for the waterways in the North East can be found by clicking on this link <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict/3>

Again, as a result of the questions posed as part of our Accountability Session, we will review whether there is opportunity for us to add more information on all pollution events on our website, and / or whether there is more we could share to help customers understand the information shared and published by the EA which we will continue to link and reference so there is a single version of information shared with customers. As part of the research work we will do on our finances and annual reporting, we will look to provide a glossary for customers in our annual reporting so they have a point of reference and review annually.

Review of website and content to be complete by end of 2026 as part of a wider review taking place.

Action Plan Water Company response, following the accountability session.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q 2. Actions B)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below (Page 1 of 2)

Timescale

We appreciate that the Water Voice Consumer Panel was very passionate about our wastewater performance, as we also care passionately about our work and performance in this area. That is why we've committed to making huge investments in this area in the coming years, and why we're working hard every day to improve our performance.

It is though important that time and money are invested in the right areas, and the vast majority of the information it was requested at our Accountability Session that we share with customers in relation to this workstream is already reported on and published by the responsible statutory body, the Environment Agency (EA).

We are committed to being transparent, and to responding to Water Voice customers' request for more information, so where information is already available and published by another body, rather than try to replicate it or provide definitions of our own, we commit to sharing it on our websites and to providing contextual information that will help customers understand it.

For example, in relation to points raised regarding the categorisation of pollution events, this is defined by the EA using the Common Incident Classification scheme (CICS) document. Page 47 of this document covers the impact on water. A link to this document is found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/688c746564845fffe80890e0/Appendix\\_4.18\\_LIT\\_11227\\_-\\_Incidents\\_and\\_their\\_classification\\_common\\_incident\\_classification\\_scheme\\_CICS\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/688c746564845fffe80890e0/Appendix_4.18_LIT_11227_-_Incidents_and_their_classification_common_incident_classification_scheme_CICS_.pdf)

We believe the most appropriate way forward in relation to this point is for all incidents to continue to be classified by the EA and for them, rather than a water company, to control descriptions of each classification and as such, whilst we are comfortable to consider signposting the EAs classification on our website, we would not seek to break down descriptions or share our interpretation of classifications for customers. Perhaps though, this is something which CCW could discuss with the EA and future regulatory bodies directly if customers on Water Voice Panels feel strongly about it.

Review of website and content to be complete by end of 2026 as part of a wider review taking place.

Action Plan Water Company response, following the accountability session.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q 2. Actions B)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below (Page 2 of 2)

Timescale

In relation to the points shared in respect of Storm Overflows and their operation, we are pleased to share some further breakdown to Water Voice Panel customers of what this means.

Simply put, Storm Overflow operation means permitted, controlled release during heavy rain; whereas a Pollution event is an unplanned/unauthorised discharge causing environmental harm.

We are responsible for:

- Operating and maintaining its wastewater network and treatment assets
- Preventing and minimising pollution from those assets
- Compliance with environmental permits and statutory duties
- Responding to and mitigating pollution incidents from its operations

We are not responsible for:

- Third party misuse of the sewer (e.g. fats, oils, wet wipes, misconnections)
- Pollution from assets or activities outside its ownership/control
- Extreme events beyond design standards (subject to regulatory framework)
- Upstream environmental conditions not influenced by its operations

As a direct response to the questions posed in our Water Voice Accountability Session, we commit to reviewing where and how we could best share more of this type of plain English information on our website, and we commit to doing this in 2026. This may include adding explanations on our storm overflow map (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/38baf2cf48d74b8196539ef315bea6b5>) or other relevant pages on our website.

In relation to the desired action in respect of publishing wastewater treatment test results in plain English, we are happy to confirm that Water and Sewerage companies test wastewater to check it has been properly treated before discharge. This includes levels of solids, oxygen demand, nutrients (like ammonia), and any harmful substances.

We already publish results to show what's removed, what remains, and that we are meeting environmental standards and the requirements of our discharge permits that have been agreed with the EA.

Review of website and content to be complete by end of 2026 as part of a wider review taking place.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q 2. Actions C)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We appreciate that the Water Voice Consumer Panel was very passionate about our wastewater performance, as we also care passionately about our work and performance in this area. That is why we've committed to making huge investments in this area in the coming years, and why we're working hard every day to improve our performance. Where we can take direct action in relation to the points raised in our first Accountability Session, we are keen to do this and share more information with our customers.

In relation to the actions sought from the Water Voice Consumer Panel, we are pleased to share that information in relation to Storm Overflows is already clearly shared on our website, here: <https://www.nwl.co.uk/our-region/coasts-and-rivers/about-storm-overflows/>

The storm overflow map is also published on our website and can be accessed through the following link <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/38baf2cf48d74b8196539ef315bea6b5>

In relation to performance against spill and pollution targets, this information is published by the Environment Agency (EA), and we would encourage customers to seek the information they may wish to see through utilising the links to this information (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fewer-and-shorter-storm-overflow-spills-in-2025-new-monitoring-data-shows/> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-pollution-incident-report-for-2016-to-2024/water-and-sewerage-companies-in-england-pollution-incident-report-for-2016-to-2024> and which we will also look to include on our website going forward. We commit to doing this in the coming months, and ahead of the Autumn Accountability Session.

In respect of the point raised in the session about putting information about wastewater performance into a newsletter, we commit to having appropriate coverage of wastewater issues in the quarterly company newsletter we have committed to above where we undertake curating and sharing a quarterly newsletter update that we will share with customers across all three of our operating regions.

To be cost-effective when using customers' money, we will primarily send this newsletter electronically to our customers who have agreed for us to send them marketing. We will also print a small batch of the newsletters and make these available at events and engagement sessions such as with our Customer Heroes and at our Local Action and wider stakeholder events.

We will also use the launch of our new newsletter as an opportunity to encourage more customers to share their email and mobile details with us so they receive future editions and so we can share information in the case of emergencies and/or in relation to other service updates.

Review of website and content to be complete by end of 2026 as part of a wider review taking place.

## Q2. Pollution prevention and environmental protection

Clear evidence that higher bills are delivering tangible local improvements (Q 2. Actions D)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We are committed to reducing the number of spills due to heavy rain and have plans and are looking at several options to help us meet our targets. For example, approximately 20% of the storm overflow spills in 2025 occurred in the Tyneside catchment that is subject to the £400m investment on the Smart Sewers project. We have already delivered a £20m programme that has seen hundreds of sensors installed across the catchment, supporting more proactive, network-wide control during wet weather. Early operational data indicates at least a 30% reduction in spills at Howdon Sewage Treatment Works, with further benefits expected as the system is expanded and refined. The programme continues to expand, with further phases underway including work at Marske in Teesside and looking at opportunities in our AMP8 storm overflow investment programme.

We are investing £1 billion in the 239 storm overflows that are subject to improvement in AMP8 (this business plan period which runs between 2025 and 2030) have been prioritised because of their potential harm on the receiving watercourse. All schemes will be listed in our Community Hub so customers can review progression of the scheme when it starts. (<https://communityhub.nwl.co.uk>)

Another key investment is across our sites to minimise the risk of power loss and preventing spills. When electricity is lost, pumping stations can go offline, and while teams mobilise straight away, restoring power can be complicated by access, fault type, or the time it takes to get generators to site. To reduce this risk, we're assessing an innovative battery resilience system across some of our highest-risk wastewater sites. This backup power would keep pumping stations and treatment works running and avoid spills to the environment. More details can be found here <https://www.nwg.co.uk/reductionplan>.

We have a plan across AMP 8 and 9 (from 2025 to 2035) to install monitors in watercourses to provide Continuous Water Quality monitoring upstream and downstream of our discharging assets. This will allow assessment of the impact of discharges of these assets on the watercourse and we can track for any repeat issues and prioritise those areas.

All live storm overflow spill data can be viewed on our interactive map <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/38baf2cf48d74b8196539ef315bea6b5> and our annual figures can also be found on the Event Duration Monitoring that the EA publish annually <https://www.nwg.co.uk/responsibility/environment/event-duration-monitoring/>. We can and our customers can monitor live data as well as see annual data to see how we are performing. We also report our annual performance in our Annual Performance Report <https://www.nwg.co.uk/about-us/nwl/how-we-are-performing/annual-performance-report>.

No timescale committed, other than 5 year timescales for stretching targets.



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

## Q3. Dividends, executive pay and accountability

Transparency on company dividends and exec pay

Question asked by Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water community member:

*“Dividends, executive pay and bonuses are a real concern for customers at a time when bills are rising and there are still clear questions about whether enough is being invested in the service. Recent decisions not to pay a dividend may show that these choices can change, but customers still want to understand the wider standards behind them — both how these decisions are made now and how they will be approached in future.*

*How can you justify dividends, executive pay and bonuses when customers are paying more but still have concerns about underinvestment, and what standards need to be met before those decisions are justified?”*

Northumbrian Water Limited said dividends, executive pay and bonuses are governed by a regulated framework, with investor returns set through a published dividend policy and executive rewards linked to stretching targets. It also said investors help fund upfront investment, that planned spending has been delivered, and that bonus measures reflect customer priorities.

Community members welcomed some of that explanation, but said mistrust remains high and the framework still feels too technical. Therefore, the discussion focused on clearer standards, clearer decisions and stronger evidence that customer outcomes and investment come before reward.

### Actions

- **Publish a plain-English guide** explaining how bills, investor funding, regulator oversight and the dividend policy shape decisions on dividends and executive reward.
- **Clearly explain the standards and customer outcomes** that must be met before dividends, bonuses and executive pay are justified, and show how those standards were applied in recent decisions.
- **Issue a simple annual summary** showing what was paid, which targets were met or missed, and how this affected dividends, bonuses and executive pay.
- **Publish year-on-year investment, dividend and performance data**, and explain how independent directors protect customer interests in these decisions.

*“It comes back to black and white communication... ‘Targets were X, achievements were Y, it’s positive/negative and therefore this is what the outcome of salaries, dividends and returns are.’ ”*

*“When people see private companies coming in on a fundamental natural resource...they have concerns... So anything they can do to increase transparency, reassure people, demonstrate they’re delivering for the people rather than for themselves, is really important,*



Customers want simpler explanations of how rewards are governed, and clearer proof that customer outcomes and investment come first.



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## Q3. Dividends, executive pay and accountability

"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
Explain how dividends and executive rewards are <b>granted in plain English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained that dividends and executive reward sit within a regulated framework, with spending plans approved by the regulator, a published 'Dividend policy', and bonus targets set out in the Annual Performance Report</li> </ul> <p><b>Future plans:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will commit to making the 'Dividend Policy' and Annual Performance report easier to read.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish a plain-English guide to how dividends, executive pay and bonuses are decided.</li> <li>Explain the role of customer bills, investor funding, regulator oversight and the dividend policy.</li> <li>Show clearly that decisions are made within a set framework, not on an arbitrary basis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepted this as a <b>communication issue</b> and will continue discussing how to make existing information easier to understand.</li> </ul>
Show the <b>standards</b> behind financial rewards and bonuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company said awarding of dividends depend on company performance, financial resilience and regulatory allowances, and that executive targets are stretching and linked to customer priorities. Bonus targets are derived from ongoing customer research.</li> </ul> <p><b>No future plans discussed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explain (in laymen terms) the standards and outcomes that must be met before dividends, bonuses and executive pay are justified.</li> <li>Show how those standards were applied in recent decisions, including non-payment of dividends. Commit to not altering standards following a non-payment of a dividend.</li> <li>Explain how customer priorities are reflected in reward decisions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reassurance that dividend policies are not altered following a non-payment, as outlined in the 'Dividend Policy'</li> <li>Further detail expected through the company action plan</li> </ul>
Prove <b>customers come before rewards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained they have delivered, and in recent years exceeded, planned spend; investor returns are adjusted up or down depending on customer performance and spending outcomes. Said the board has a majority of independent, non-water-industry directors to provide balance.</li> </ul> <p><b>No future plans discussed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show that investment, service and environmental outcomes come before reward.</li> <li>Publish comparative information on investment, performance and dividends over time.</li> <li>Explain how independent directors help safeguard customer interests.</li> <li>Provide clearer reassurance that decisions are being made for customers, not just shareholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> No timescale committed - detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company agreed to improve transparency and explanation of rewards. No change to decision-making structure however.</li> </ul>
Publish an <b>accessible annual summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The company explained that relevant information is already available through the annual report, Annual Performance Report, 'Dividend policy' and company accounts</li> </ul> <p><b>No future plans discussed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue a <b>simple annual summary</b> showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what was paid</li> <li>which targets were met or missed</li> <li>how this affected dividends, bonuses and executive pay</li> <li>how current performance compares with previous years</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Use <b>visuals and everyday language</b>, not technical reporting only.</p>	<p><b>Timescale:</b> Within the next 6 months</p> <p><b>Final comments from water company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed to make information in existing documents easier to follow and more accessible, in line with the simple annual summary.</li> </ul>



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### Q3. Dividends, executive pay and accountability

Explain how dividends and executive rewards are granted in plain English (Q 3. Actions A)

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We recognise it is important that our customers understand our finances and the investments we are making. We've already done lots of work to show these things to our customers in ways they've told us work for them, and following the useful discussion during our Water Voice Accountability Session we commit to building on this by revisiting what we do and using insights and feedback to improve how we communicate to all customers about these important points.

We will refresh and improve Our Finances Explained so it is clearer, more accessible and genuinely useful for customers. Customer feedback is critical to this work because it helps us understand whether we are explaining our finances in a way that builds trust, supports transparency and helps customers see how their money is being used to deliver services and improvements.

To inform the refresh, we will carry out additional research with customers to test what is clear, what is confusing, and where more explanation or context is needed. We will also consult with the Water Forum, drawing on their independent challenge and insight into the issues that matter most to customers.

Once this year's Annual Performance Report (APR) is published on 15 July, we will ask customers for their views on how well we have explained our performance and finances. This feedback will help us understand whether we have got it right and will directly inform further improvements, ensuring future communications reflect what customers value, expect and need to know. We expect to have the research complete this year.

End of the year for review and then further work required to make changes to current website and annual reports published in July 2027.

### Q3. Dividends, executive pay and accountability

Show the standards behind financial rewards and bonuses, prove customers come before rewards, publish an accessible annual summary (Q 3. Actions B, C & D combined)



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Please find the response from Northumbrian Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We recognise it is important that our customers understand our finances and the investments we are making. We've already done lots of work to show these things to our customers in ways they've told us work for them, and following the useful discussion during the Water Voice Accountability Session we commit to building on this by revisiting what we do and using insights and feedback to improve how we communicate to all customers about these important points. We will also review the CCW research into finances explained and its findings.

We will refresh and improve Our Finances Explained so it is clearer, more accessible and genuinely useful for customers. Customer feedback is critical to this work because it helps us understand whether we are explaining our finances in a way that builds trust, supports transparency and helps customers see how their money is being used to deliver services and improvements.

To inform the refresh, we will carry out additional research with customers to test what is clear, what is confusing, and where more explanation or context is needed. We will also consult with the Water Forum, drawing on their independent challenge and insight into the issues that matter most to customers.

Once this year's Annual Performance Report (APR) is published on 15 July, we will ask customers for their views on how well we have explained our performance and finances. This feedback will help us understand whether we have got it right and will directly inform further improvements, ensuring future communications reflect what customers value, expect and need to know - this could include the points noted in our Water Voice customers' preferred response. We expect to have the research complete this year.

End of the year for review and then further work required to make changes to current website and annual reports published in July 2027.

Action Plan Water Company response, following the accountability session.

# What happens after the Accountability Session?

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



The voice for water consumers  
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## Publication and transparency

### Within 5 working days

A full (anonymised) transcript of the session was [published](#) on **Monday 20<sup>th</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*.

**Monday 27<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 Thursday 21<sup>st</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

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie  
Research & Energy Saving Trust

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

# 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



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:

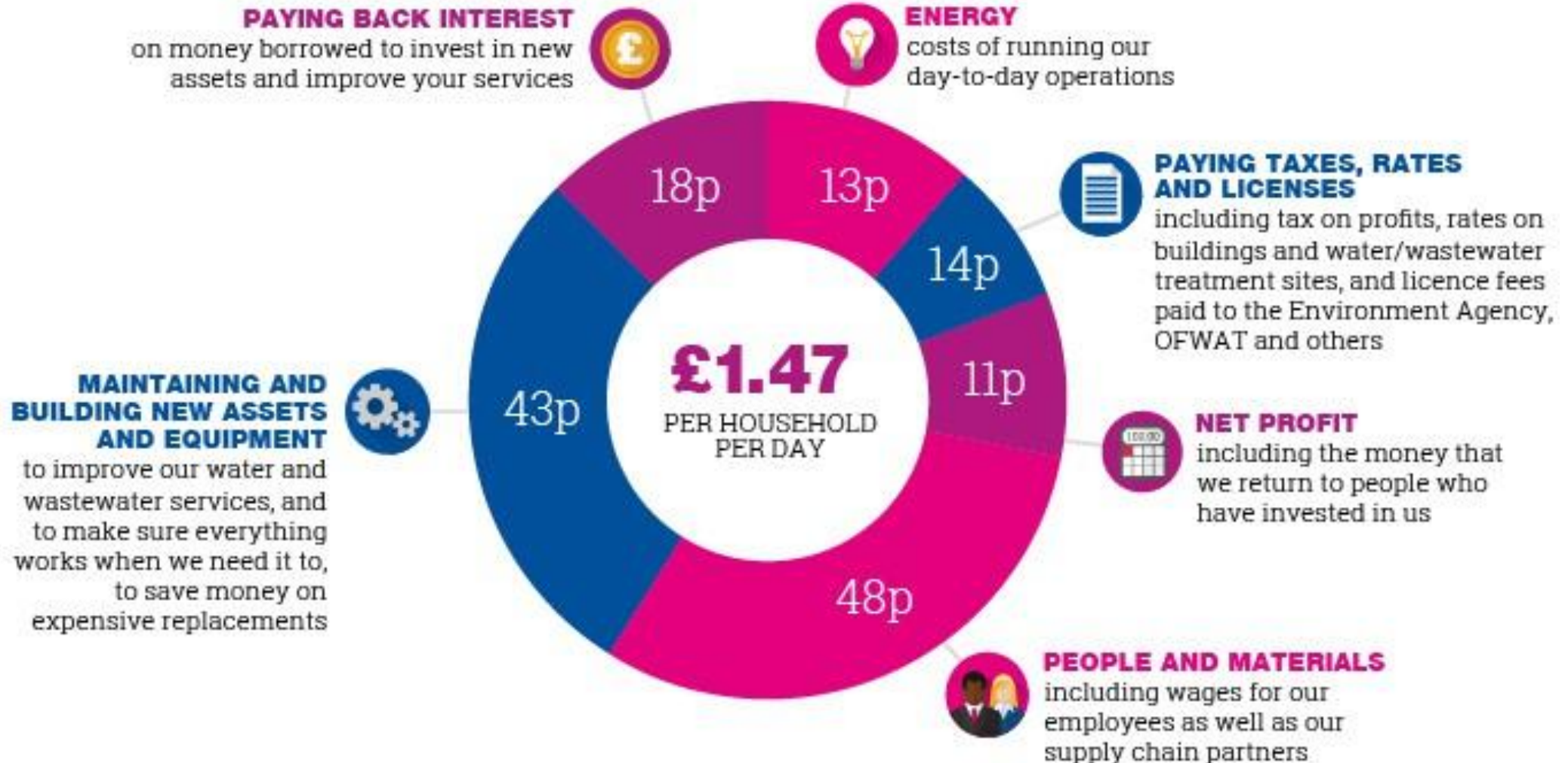
- **Age** - younger adults, middle-aged adults and older customers (2 per age bracket)
- **Gender** - a balanced mix (at least 5 males & 5 females)
- **Income levels** - including low-income households (3 financially vulnerable, 3 x 20-40k, 3 x £40k-60k & 2 x £60k+)
- **Location** - Rural and Urban water 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.*

## NORTHUMBRIAN WATER WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO



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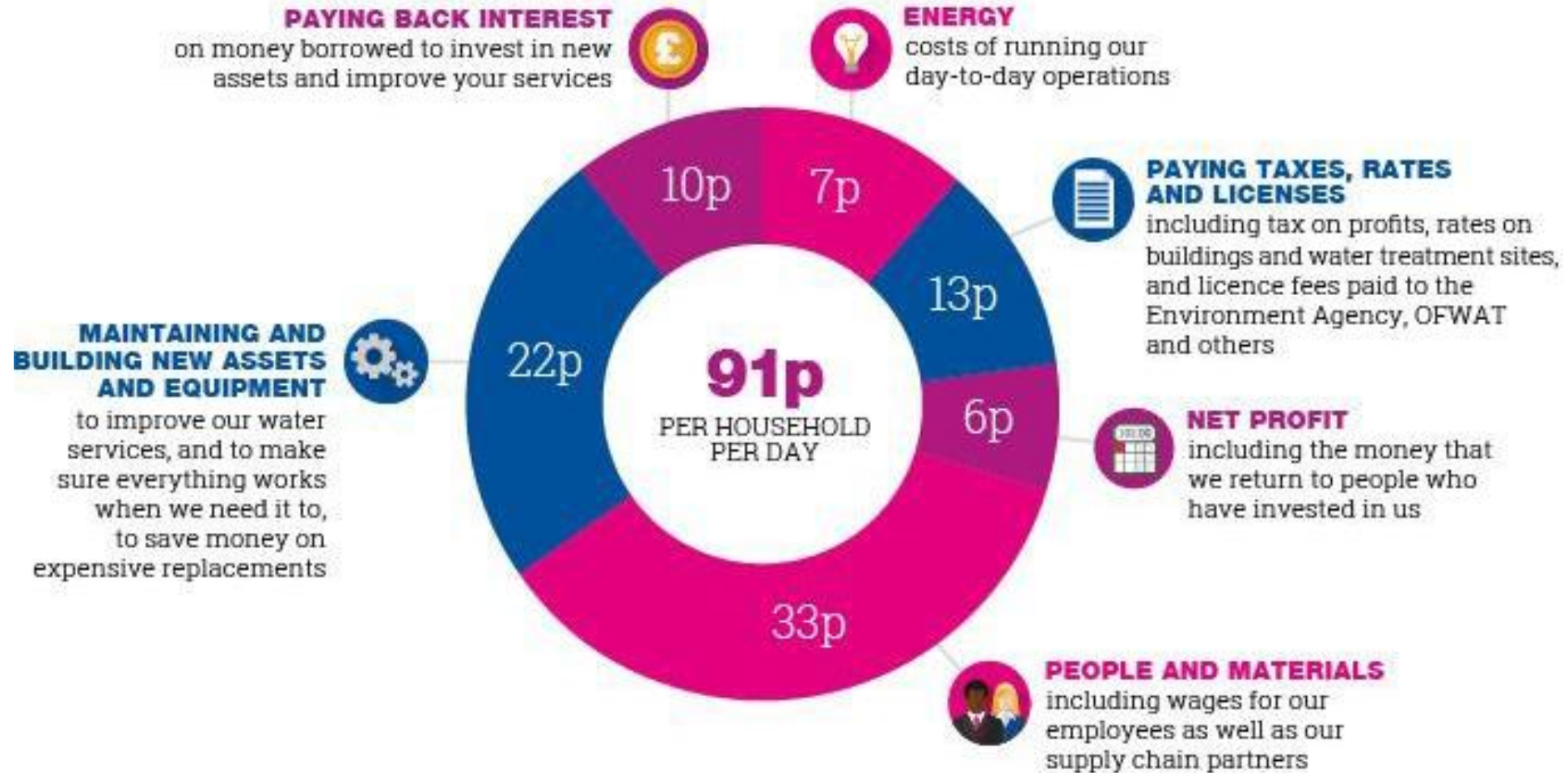


## ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER

### WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO



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# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER ONLINE SERVICES



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The screenshot displays the Northumbrian Water website interface. At the top, a dark blue navigation bar contains links for 'Household', 'Business', 'Building and developing', and 'Group', along with an 'Accessibility' icon. Below this, the 'NORTHUMBRIAN WATER living water' logo is on the left, and a secondary navigation bar includes 'Account', 'Help and support', 'Emergencies', 'Our region', a search bar, and a 'Log in / Register' button. The main content area features a large banner with the text 'Hello, how can we help you?' and four blue buttons: 'Log in or create an account', 'Make a payment', 'Moving home', and 'Report a problem'. To the right, a large section titled 'Your 2026 bill explained' is visible, with the subtext 'Everything you need to know about your new bill.' A vertical 'Feedback' button is located on the right edge of the page.



# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER ONLINE SERVICES

**CCW**

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17:00 📶 🔋 79%

**NW**  
Living water 🔔

**Good afternoon,** [REDACTED]


Your next payment will be taken on  
01/06/2026:  
**£65.08**


You pay: **Monthly by Direct Debit**


Account  
balance: **-£585.72**

[Why is my account in debit?](#)

**Explain my bill**

 Change bank details →

 Change Direct Debit date →

 Make an additional payment →

**Dashboard** Bills & payments My meter My profile

**Download the Northumbrian Water app**

Managing your account is now even easier with our app. Download today from the App Store or Google Play.

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER ONLINE SERVICES



The voice for water consumers  
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Business Building and developing Group Accessibility

Account Help and support Emergencies Our region Search

## Need help? We're here for you

When things don't go along as planned there is no need to worry. You can count on a professional support team you can rely on.

Pick a topic for support, advice and more

Feedback

Emergencies Bills and Payments Moving Home Struggling to Pay

Your water Your account Your priority

Sign Language

You can find below a list of pages which have BSL translation.

Play Stop

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER ONLINE SERVICES



The voice for water consumers  
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Household Business Building and developing Group Accessibility

NORTHUMBRIAN WATER *living water* Account Help and support Emergencies Our region Search Log in / Register

**Water**  
If you have no water, find a leak, have water pressure problems, or want to learn about your water quality and ways to save water.

**Wastewater**  
If you have a blocked drain, experiencing sewer flooding, or want to know which pipes you're responsible for with tips on keeping them clear.

**Financial support**  
If you need help paying your bill, we can help you. Use our eligibility checker to see which financial support schemes you may be eligible for.

**Bereavement support**  
There are several ways you can get in touch to let us know about a bereavement.

**Frequently asked questions**  
Got a question? Visit our FAQs page for support, advice and more.

**Priority Services**  
If you need extra support due to age, disability, mobility, illness or have children under five, we're here to help.

**Water meters**  
Find out if switching to a water meter could save money and apply online.

**Contact us**  
We're here to help whenever you need us. Find out how to get in touch with us here.

Household Business Building and developing Group Accessibility

NORTHUMBRIAN WATER *living water* Account Help and support Emergencies Our region Search Log in / Register

## Need help? We're here for you

When things don't go along as planned there is no need to worry. You can count on a professional support team you can rely on.

### Pick a topic for support, advice and more

Emergencies	Bills and Payments	Moving Home	Struggling to Pay
Leaks	Your Water	Your Sewerage	Priority Services
Your Account	Water Meters	Saving Water	Contact Us

## NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER ONLINE SERVICES

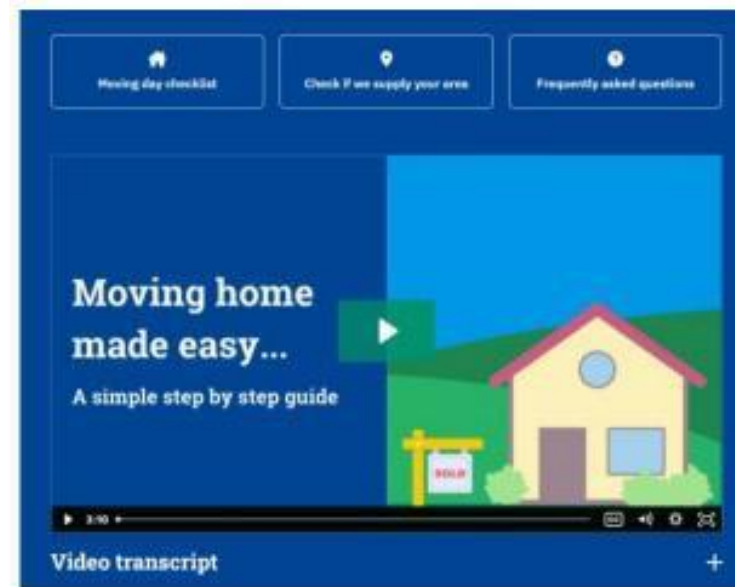


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Many customers prefer short, easy-to-follow videos when seeking help.

Videos now are available for key topics;

- Moving Home,
- Emergencies,
- Bills and Payments,
- Water Meters,
- Water,
- Wastewater,
- Priority Services,
- Building and Development.



# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS



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ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER *living water*

## BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

If you're finding it hard to pay your bill right now, talk to us. We're here to help you when you need us.

Get in touch  
eswater.co.uk/bill-help #WaterWithoutTheWorry

BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

are struggling to pay your bill, we could help. We can offer a payment break or a bill discount scheme that can reduce your bills by up to 50%.

BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

If you are on a low income or are on pension credit, we may be able to reduce your bills by up to 40%.

BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

We want to make sure your bills are as low as possible. Here are a few ways we've already helped others:

- Reducing future water bills by up to 40%.
- Paying direct from your benefits.
- Affordable payment plans.

BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

You can take a payment break if you have had a sudden loss of income due to a life event such as illness, giving birth or losing your job.

BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

If you use extra water (like to a large family or a swimming pool) and are on certain benefits, we could cap your bill.

BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

You can set up a flexible payment plan with payments you can afford and choose when you want to pay.

ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER *living water*

## NEED A LITTLE EXTRA HELP?

We all need a bit of extra support at some point in our lives, so we offer a range of FREE Priority Services to help make things a bit easier whatever the circumstances.

Register now  
eswater.co.uk/priorityservices #WaterWithoutTheWorry

ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER *living water*

## BECAUSE EVERY PENNY COUNTS

If you're finding it hard to pay your bill right now, talk to us. We're here to help you when you need us.

Get in touch  
eswater.co.uk/bill-help

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS - BILLING



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# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS - BILLING



The voice for water consumers  
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Mr Test Customer  
24 Test Street  
North City  
NE1 1NN

Hello Mr Customer  
**Your water bill**  
1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

**Need help paying?**  
If you're struggling with your bill, we're here to help. You can quickly check what support you may be eligible for by using our financial eligibility checker at [nwl.co.uk/checker](http://nwl.co.uk/checker)

We can offer:

- reduced future water bills of up to 50%
- affordable payment plans, and more.

Go to page four to see all the ways we can support you. We're here to make sure you get the support that's right for you.

**Need help understanding your bill?**  
We know your bill can include a lot of information, and you may have questions, such as why your payments may have changed, how your bill is calculated, what our charges cover, or the different ways you can pay. To make things easier, we've put all the answers in one place: [nwl.co.uk/your-bill](http://nwl.co.uk/your-bill)

Make payments, tell us about a change of address and manage your account at any time of the day or night.

[nwl.co.uk](http://nwl.co.uk)

Your account number **0123 4567 89** Bill number **0000001**

Bill date **22 January 2026**

Your next payment of

**£46.57**

will be taken on

15 April 2026.

**Your payment plan schedule**

You don't need to do anything, we'll take your payments by Direct Debit.

Due Date	Payment
15 April 2026	£46.57
15 May 2026	£46.61
15 June 2026	£46.61
15 July 2026	£46.61
15 August 2026	£46.61
15 September 2026	£46.61
15 October 2026	£46.61
15 November 2026	£46.61
15 December 2026	£46.61
15 January 2027	£46.61

**Balance on** 24 January 2025 £444.30

**What you paid** £444.30

**New charges** £466.06

**Account balance** £466.06

## About your charges

### Water charges (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027)

This is the charge for treating the water and getting it to you.

Fixed charge	365 days	at	£154.68 per year	=	£154.68
Rateable value charge	£63	at	£0.8905 in the £	=	£56.10

### Sewerage charges (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027)

This is the charge for taking used water and rainwater away through the sewer.

Fixed charge	365 days	at	£180.64 per year	=	£180.64
Rateable value charge	£63	at	£1.1848 in the £	=	£74.64

**New charges this bill £466.06**

You don't pay VAT on your water charges.

### Payments since last time

15 January 2026	£44.43	15 August 2025	£44.43
15 December 2025	£44.43	15 July 2025	£44.43
17 November 2025	£44.43	16 June 2025	£44.43
15 October 2025	£44.43	15 May 2025	£44.43
15 September 2025	£44.43	15 April 2025	£44.43

**Total payments £444.30**

## Your supply details

Address Test Building, 1 Test Street, North supplied: Town, North City, NE1 1NN

## What is rateable value?

Rateable values are used to work out how much to charge properties that do not have water meters. They were decided by the Valuation Office and can be different for every property. Rateable values were then frozen in 1990 when council tax was introduced, and they have stayed the same since. If you would prefer to be charged for the amount of water you actually use, you can apply to have a water meter fitted for free.

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS - BILLING



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## Stay in control

Could you save water and money by choosing a water meter?



### Did you know?

- The less water we use, the more stays in rivers and streams, protecting our local wildlife and environment.
- Around 20% of the water we use in our homes requires heating. Cutting your water usage could help lower your energy bills.



### More say in what you pay?

- With a water meter, you're in the driving seat.
- Customers with a water meter use up to 20% less water - great for your pocket and local environment.



### Still not sure?

- Check for free if you'd be better off on a meter by trying our calculator at [nwl.co.uk/calculator](http://nwl.co.uk/calculator)
- If you go ahead with a meter, you'll be covered by our two-year switchback guarantee - not saving money, switch back!

## LESS FAFF, MORE FLOW...

Manage your account anywhere, anytime. You can:

- Check your bill balance
- Tell us you are moving
- Make a payment or set up a payment plan
- Apply for a meter or track your water use
- Update your contact details.



Visit [nwl.co.uk/myaccount](http://nwl.co.uk/myaccount) or scan the QR code.

## Leaks? Bursts? Blockages?

Call **0345 717 1100** for 24/7 emergency support.



## Bills? Moving? Paying?

Visit [nwl.co.uk](http://nwl.co.uk) or call **0345 733 5566**.

We're open 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday, and from 8am till 1pm on Saturdays.



## Struggling to pay your water bills?



**Low income discount:** Get a discount of up to 50% if your bill takes up 4% or more of your household income after paying rent/mortgage and

- Your household income is less than £30,000 or,
- Someone you live with receives Pension Credit.



**Reduced bill:** If you don't have enough money coming in to cover your most important bills, we may be able to lower your bill by up to 50%.



**Flexible payment plan:** Make things more affordable by changing how often you pay.



**Bill cap scheme - WaterSure:** Caps your bills if you have a meter, receive certain benefits, and either have a large family or someone has a medical condition and uses lots of water.



**WaterDirect:** Pay your bills direct from benefits.

We're here to help! Visit [nwl.co.uk/bill-help](http://nwl.co.uk/bill-help) to apply online or call us on **0345 733 5566** if you have any questions.

## How we use your information

We share information with credit reference agencies when you open an account with us and also on an ongoing basis; this includes information about your paid accounts and any debts not paid on time. Failure to keep up with payments may impact your credit score and could affect your ability to obtain credit in the future.

You can read our privacy statement to find out more about how Northumbrian Water protects your data at [nwl.co.uk/privacy](http://nwl.co.uk/privacy)

## Priority services - help when you need it most

Our free Priority Services can help if you need support due to age, disability, mobility issues, illness, mental health, communication needs or have children under five years old. There's lots of support we can give such as:

- A password for us to use if we visit your home to protect you against anyone pretending to work for us.
- Support during any interruptions to your water supply.
- Bills in large print, Braille, audio or on CD.
- Nominate a family member, carer, or friend to discuss your account on your behalf.
- Text Relay interpreters on a telephone call dial 18001 before you call.
- Language translators if English isn't your first language.

Sign up online at [nwl.co.uk/priorityservices](http://nwl.co.uk/priorityservices).

## Give us your feedback

We pride ourselves on getting things right first time, so if you have any feedback or compliments about how we're doing please let us know!

If things don't go right first time, let us know that too and we'll work with you to put them right. We can often do this in real time, but where it's more complex we'll let you know as soon as we can. We're allowed 10 working days to investigate and respond to a complaint, but we normally come back much more quickly. Details on how to contact us are at the top of this page.

If you've followed our complaints process and you are still unhappy, or your issue is over 8 weeks old, you can contact CCW. CCW offers free independent advice. You can visit their website at [ccw.org.uk](http://ccw.org.uk), call them on **0300 034 2222**, or write to them at: CCW, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH.

# 2026-27 ANNUAL BILLING CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS



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## Turn over for our Guaranteed Standards of Service

➔

### MAKING YOUR WATER CHARGES AS CLEAR AS OUR TAP WATER

Our charges change on 1 April each year. This guide explains how we charge you. For a personalised breakdown of how your own bill is made up, create an online account at [eswater.co.uk](http://eswater.co.uk) or download our easy to use on-the-go app. Go to the app store and search Essex & Suffolk Water.

## WHY YOUR WATER BILL HAS CHANGED

We're working hard to continue to keep your tap water clean, clear and great tasting, and to protect the environment through ongoing improvements to our water networks. Bills have gone up this year to support some of this investment.

Throughout 2026, we're upgrading pipelines, treatment works and pumping stations across Essex and Suffolk. These improvements are part of our five-year plan to protect local rivers and the environment, improve climate resilience, and continue providing customers with a reliable, high-quality water supply for years to come.



Scan the QR code or visit [eswater.co.uk/your-bill](http://eswater.co.uk/your-bill) to find out more about your bill and to see investment in your local area.

### Need help with your bill?

If you're having trouble paying, we have support available including affordable payment plans, discounted bills, and payment breaks. You can also check to see what you qualify for using our eligibility checker. Find out more at [eswater.co.uk/bill-help](http://eswater.co.uk/bill-help).

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If you're having trouble paying, we have support available including affordable payment plans, discounted bills, and payment breaks. You can also check to see what you qualify for using our eligibility checker. Find out more at [eswater.co.uk/bill-help](http://eswater.co.uk/bill-help).

#### Water charges

Cover the cost of supplying you with clean, clear, great tasting tap water.

**I don't have a water meter**  
You pay a fixed charge and also a charge based on the rateable value (RV) of your property. See our website for a full explanation  
[eswater.co.uk/help/rateable-value](http://eswater.co.uk/help/rateable-value).

FIXED

£108.28

Per year

+

£1,4225

Per £ of RV

#### % VAT

Household customers aren't charged VAT on their water services.

**I have a water meter**  
You pay a fixed charge which covers maintaining and reading your meter. You also pay a usage charge for the water you've used.

FIXED

£33.22

Per year

+

USAGE

£2,0670

Per m<sup>3</sup>

#### Sewerage charges

Cover the cost of removing, treating and disposing of waste and rainwater from your home safely. Essex & Suffolk Water only provides clean water services in your region. Your sewerage services are provided by Thames Water and these charges are included on our bill.

If you've got a query or need help to pay your bill, please contact us. For help with your sewerage services please call Thames Water on **0800 316 9800**.

To find out more about your sewerage charges visit Thames Water's website at [thameswater.co.uk/understandyourbill](http://thameswater.co.uk/understandyourbill).

#### Thames Water customers with a water meter

FIXED

£128.13

Per year

+

USAGE

£1,4721

Per m<sup>3</sup>

#### Thames Water customers without a water meter

FIXED

£126.69

Per year

+

A charge

per £ of Rateable Value

#### Surface water drainage

If you pay full sewerage charges and no surface water from your property drains into Thames Water sewers, find out how to claim for an allowance at [eswater.co.uk/tariffsandcharges](http://eswater.co.uk/tariffsandcharges).

Area	Charge per £ of rateable value
Brentwood	£0.9692
Havering, Barking, Dagenham and Redbridge	£0.9056

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS - INVESTMENT

## Explaining where customers money is being spent

Information on the investment and work that we're doing right across the region as part of our 2025-30 plan.

Find out more below about the projects happening in your area



### Northumberland

North, South East and West Northumberland



### Tyneside

Newcastle and North Tyneside



### Wearside

Sunderland and South Tyneside



### Durham and Darlington

Durham, County Durham, Darlington



### Teesside

Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, East Cleveland, North Yorkshire



Next Phase of Water Supply Investment Begins in Essex



Working together to keep Essex Waterways clear of 'alien' plant species



Creating safe passage for fish and eels in Essex



Celebrating ten years of Abberton Reservoir



Water supply investment moves into next stage



£30m investment will boost water supply to 300,000 in Essex



Essex & Suffolk Water set to deliver its most ambitious investment programme to date



Investment in Essex water supply

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER

## CURRENT SUPPORT



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**Ways we can help**

**Flexible payment plan**

Set up a payment plan with payments you can afford. You can also choose when to pay

[Set up a payment plan](#)

**Low income discount**

If your household income is less than £26,000 or you receive Pension Credit, we may be able to reduce your bill by up to 40%

[Apply online](#)

**Reduced bill**

If you don't have enough money coming in to cover your most important bills, we may be able to lower your payments by up to 50%

[Find out more about reduced bills](#)

**Bill cap scheme - WaterSure**

If you have a water meter and receive income-related benefits, we may be able to cap your water bill

[Apply for WaterSure](#)

**Water Direct - using benefit payments**

Water Direct can help you pay your bill direct from your benefits

[Apply for Water Direct](#)

**Payment break**

A payment break can help if you've lost your job or had an unexpected change in income

[Contact us about a payment break](#)

**Benefit calculator**

Find out which benefits you're entitled to claim from the government

[Try benefits calculator](#)

**Debt advice**

We can refer you to our free debt advice and support organisations to help you manage your debt

[Find out about our debt advice](#)

**Money and mental health advice**

We can offer advice and support, especially if you're feeling stressed and anxious about money

[Find out more about our support](#)

- Bill reduction schemes
- Flexible plans
- Payment breaks
- Water Efficiency
- Benefit maximisation
- Debt advice
- Broader support (mental health)

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER

## WASTEWATER



The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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[Business](#)
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**Wastewater**

If you have a blocked drain, experiencing sewer flooding, or want to know which pipes you're responsible for with tips on keeping them clear.

- Sewer flooding
- Blocked drain
- Sewer pipe responsibility
- Bin the wipe
- Fats, oil and grease
- Storm overflows
- Rodents
- Managing rainwater
- Misconnections →
- Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan

**Contact us**

We're here to help whenever you need us. Find out how to get in touch with us here.

→

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER WASTEWATER



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## About storm overflows

[Home](#) > [Our region](#) > [Coasts and rivers](#) > [About storm overflows](#)

### What are storm overflows?

Storm overflows are an important part of our wastewater network because they protect customers' homes and the environment.

### Learn more

Discover how storm overflows operate and find answers to frequently asked questions in the sections below.

Feedback

### Storm overflow FAQs

What is wastewater? +

What are storm overflows? +

What are outfalls? +

What is the map showing me? +

Is every outfall pipe shown on the map? +

What is EDM equipment and how often is the map updated? +

Why are you spilling wastewater into our rivers and seas? +

Feedback

3

# NORTHUMBRIAN WATER AND ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER WASTEWATER



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**NORTHUMBRIAN WATER** *living water*

Search

Find Bathing Water, ...

**Symbols**

- Bathing Water
- Outfall
- Storm Overflow

**Spill Status**

- No Recent Spill
- Recent Spill
- Spilling
- Unavailable

**Outfall Filter**

- No Recent Spill
- Recent Spill
- Spilling
- Unavailable

## Storm Overflows Map

Map Last Updated: 5/18/26, 5:39 PM

Esri, USGS | Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS

Powered by Esri

**Information**

This map shows you near real-time storm overflow activity, as indicated by our Event Duration Monitors (EDM), for the previous 24 hours or the most recent recorded spill if this is more than 24 hours ago.

You can use the map to see if our monitors indicate:

- That overflows are currently operating and where a discharge from an outfall pipe is entering the watercourse
- The date, time, duration and location of the last recorded discharge

Storm Overflow - Part of the sewer network that can operate as relief system during heavy rain or storm conditions releasing storm water into a pipe that leads to a waterway or the sea. When first opening the map the pins that you will see are outfalls. By using the zoom function you can see the outfalls and storm overflows that are connected to them.

Outfall - The location where that pipe physically enters the waterway or the sea. This can be some distance away from the storm overflow.

[About storm overflows](#)

[Video of storm overflows](#)

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Thank you!



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