



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Water company: Yorkshire Water
Friday 22nd May

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

Version: Update with Yorkshire Water Action plan response –
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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 Yorkshire 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 Yorkshire Water at the Accountability Session.

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

	Topic	Community member question
Q1	Communication: Transparency and customer contact	<p><i>"Too often, the information customers need is buried on the website and only available to people who know where to look..</i></p> <p><i>How will Yorkshire Water enhance the way it communicates with customers so important information is clear, timely and easy to access, especially for those who are most affected or may struggle to find it?"</i></p>
Q2	Bills and value for money	<p><i>"We understand that investment is needed, but we feel bill rises are not being explained clearly enough..</i></p> <p><i>How will Yorkshire Water:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Clearly explain rising bills and show customers what their money is paying for?</i> <i>2. Make support easier to access for households who are struggling?"</i>
Q3	Pollution and environmental performance	<p><i>"We are deeply concerned about sewage spills and pollution in rivers and coastal areas..</i></p> <p><i>What will Yorkshire Water do now and in the future to reduce pollution and sewage discharges, make rivers and coastal waters safer and show customers clear evidence of progress?"</i></p>

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

Executive summary - insights by question



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The Accountability Session for Yorkshire Water highlighted customers' calls for clearer, more proactive communication, better explanation of bill rises and support and more transparent evidence on pollution reduction and water safety; Yorkshire Water acknowledged these concerns, outlined ongoing improvements and broadly accepted the actions raised.

Q1.

Communication: Transparency and customer contact

Yorkshire Water acknowledged that its website is not easy to navigate and outlined a broader communication approach including website improvements, testing channels such as WhatsApp, work with Councils and resilience forums, community outreach, school engagement, site banners and postal communication.

Community members welcomed the range of activity but felt parts of the response were still too vague, particularly around how vulnerable and offline customers would be identified, contacted and supported and initially challenged the apparent timescale for website improvement.

Discussion focused on the need for clearer visibility of website improvements prioritisation and communication, alongside a stronger and more joined-up approach to reach vulnerable and hard-to-reach customers through local partnerships, postal routes and tailored contact preferences.

Customers welcomed broader communication activity, but wanted clearer progress on website improvements and a stronger, more joined-up approach to reaching vulnerable and offline customers.

Q2.

Bills and value for money

Yorkshire Water said current bill increases reflect a long period in which bills did not keep pace with inflation, alongside higher expectations of the network, climate pressures and major investment needs and pointed to annual bill communications, specific infrastructure examples and existing financial support schemes.

Community members welcomed the fact that support exists and valued the examples given, but many still wanted clearer explanations of rising bills. Others were concerned about limited visibility of what support people may qualify for, insufficient local specificity on where money is going and a reliance on customers finding information themselves.

Discussion focused on the need for clearer, more direct explanations of bill rises and investment, more proactive and targeted communication about eligibility for support and easier access to person-to-person help through channels that work for a wider range of customers.

Customers felt bill rises and support options were still not explained clearly enough, with a need for more direct, proactive and accessible communication.

Q3.

Pollution and environmental performance

Yorkshire Water outlined a substantial programme of work on combined sewer overflows, bathing waters and wider pollution reduction, including past investment, a larger programme through to 2030, published pollution reporting and partnership work with councils, regulators and other bodies.

Community members recognised that action was underway, but many still felt there was a disconnect between the scale of investment described and the clarity of evidence available to customers, particularly on when places would become safer, how priority areas are chosen and how progress should be measured in ways that reflect real-world impact rather than headline numbers alone.

Discussion focused on the need for clearer, more local and more transparent communication on safety, timelines, prioritisation and progress, alongside simpler explanations of storm overflows and more accessible tools to help customers understand what is happening in their area.

Customers felt investment alone was not enough; they wanted clearer local evidence, clearer safety information and more transparent reporting on where progress is being made.

Actions agreed during the Accountability Session



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Q1.

Communication: Transparency and customer contact

- Clearly communicate how website improvements will be prioritised, delivered and updated over time.
- Strengthen identification and support for vulnerable customers through joined-up records, preferences and partner links.
- Use proactive offline and local communication routes alongside digital channels to reach hard-to-reach customers.
- Improve frontline and targeted communication so vulnerable customers receive timely, appropriate and accessible support.

Q2.

Bills and value for money

- Provide clear, direct and regular explanations of bill rises, spending and local investment outcomes for customers.
- Proactively tell customers what support is available, who may qualify and how to access it through clear communications.
- Capture customer circumstances early and use them to guide eligibility checks, tailored support and communication routes.
- Offer accessible person-to-person contact options beyond the phone, especially for vulnerable customers needing support.

Q3.

Pollution and environmental performance

- Communicate local improvements, timelines and outcomes so customers can see what investment is changing and when.
- Explain storm overflows, pollution and bathing water safety in plain English, including what customers should expect locally.
- Strengthen information on spills, pollution and improvement plans through online tools and on-location signposting.
- Be transparent about how areas are prioritised and use the clearest available measures of progress and safety.



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Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Our findings in detail

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
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Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact



Question asked by Yorkshire Water Community member:

“Too often, the information customers need is buried on the website and only available to people who know where to look..

How will Yorkshire Water enhance the way it communicates with customers so important information is clear, timely and easy to access, especially for those who are most affected or may struggle to find it?”

Yorkshire Water acknowledged that its website is not easy to navigate and outlined a broader communication approach including website improvements, testing channels such as WhatsApp, work with councils and resilience forums, community outreach, school engagement, site banners and postal communication.

Community members welcomed the range of activity but felt parts of the response were still too vague, particularly around how vulnerable and offline customers would be identified, contacted and supported, and initially challenged the apparent timescale for website improvement.

Discussion focused on the need for clearer visibility of website improvements prioritisation and communication, alongside a stronger and more joined-up approach to reach vulnerable and hard-to-reach customers through local partnerships, postal routes and tailored contact preferences.

Actions

- Clearly communicate how website improvements will be prioritised, delivered and updated over time.
- Strengthen identification and support for vulnerable customers through joined-up records, preferences and partner links.
- Use proactive offline and local communication routes alongside digital channels to reach hard-to-reach customers.
- Improve frontline and targeted communication so vulnerable customers receive timely, appropriate and accessible support.

“with regards to the website... how long has that been an acknowledgement... and where are they at with it at the moment?”

“There needs to be some sort of system where we can actually identify vulnerable people and then [know] how they would actually like to be notified.”

“They’ve mentioned the WhatsApp and comms channels but there’s not enough emphasis on offline or hard to reach customers.”



Customers welcomed broader communication activity, but wanted clearer progress on website improvements and a stronger, more joined-up approach to reaching vulnerable and offline customers.

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Yorkshire Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Yorkshire Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / Company comments
<p>Clearly communicate how website improvements will be prioritised, delivered and updated over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledged the website is not easy to follow and needs improvement. Reviews top reasons customers contact Yorkshire Water to understand how communication should improve. Said work is underway to improve communication journeys and test different channels, including WhatsApp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear visibility of website improvement priorities and progress. Explain what is being improved, why, and in what order. Keep customers updated on how changes are being made over time. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Clarified that this is not a one-off website rebuild – improvement via ongoing sprints, addressing issues in sequence as priorities become clear.</p>
<p>Strengthen identification and support for vulnerable customers through joined-up records, preferences and partner links.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed work with Councils, resilience forums, local hubs and communities to help reach customers more quickly. Said letters are already sent annually with bills and ahead of works in local areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain clearer records of vulnerable customers and their contact preferences. Improve use of Priority Services information across all relevant communications. Work with Councils, NHS, GPs and community partners to better identify and reach vulnerable or hard-to-reach customers. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Confirmed much of this is already underway (inc. ~330k customers on Priority Services Register), accepted more can be done to link data at different contact points. Further detail expected in company action plan.</p>
<p>Use proactive offline and local communication routes alongside digital channels to reach hard-to-reach customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Described community events, school visits and site visits as existing outreach activity. Uses site banners to explain local works and disruption. Said postal communication is already used through bills and letters ahead of works. Said local hubs and councillor/community routes can help reach customers who may not use digital channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use postal, face-to-face and local community routes more deliberately for offline customers. Use pop-up stalls and extend school outreach into higher education and the workplace to improve reach, awareness and knowledge. Make sure hard-to-reach customers are not dependent on digital channels alone. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Yorkshire Water confirmed annual letters and advance works notifications are already in place. Discussion showed support for more visible use of local offline routes; further detail expected in company action plan.</p>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Yorkshire Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Yorkshire Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / Company comments
<p>Improve frontline and targeted communication so vulnerable customers receive timely, appropriate and accessible support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said communication needs differ by circumstance, including billing issues, crises and local incidents. Said more effort is needed to communicate more often and in the right format for different customers. Referred to exploring two-way channels and more tailored communication methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a more dedicated support response for vulnerable customers. Improve staff awareness of hidden vulnerabilities. Trigger early support where repeat contact, missed payments or life events may signal need. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Yorkshire Water said the overall list looked doable in principle and accepted the need to think further about some of these areas.</p> <p>No firm timeline was committed.</p>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions A)



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

Timescale

1. Provide clear visibility of website improvement priorities and progress.
2. Explain what is being improved, why, and in what order.
3. Keep customers updated on how changes are being made over time.

As mentioned in the session, website improvement is not a single step change but an ongoing evolution. We have dedicated digital teams working on this continuously, making incremental improvements to reduce customer effort, improve accessibility and enhance the overall experience. The roadmap for our website improvements is outlined below:

→What our digital squads are working on over the next 3 months:

- Improving our interactive map to better help customers understand network issues in their area - this will allow our customers to enter a postcode and get results for their location
- Making it easier for customers to log in and manage their account, including viewing usage, balance and charges - whether their balance is in credit or debit with personalised content, supporting actions such as moving to paperless billing and reviewing the home move journey to make it easier for a customer to retain online account access. We will also be exploring how to make it easier to reactivate an inactive account
- Improving accessibility across all our website experiences through the following actions:
Making sure that all of our website experiences comply with WCAG 2.2 AA – the internationally recognised standard for accessibility - this will ensure that our web experience will work with any assistive technology our customers might use like screen readers; it also means that our experiences are designed to support users with fine motor skills impairments who may struggle to use a mouse (customers will be able to use our experiences just using a keyboard)
- Expanding our WhatsApp support channel to cover more customer queries - adding to our wastewater pilot - the next intents we are expanding to include supporting customers with no water or low pressure; we are also looking at offering WhatsApp to customers who need to talk to us about paying a late bill
- We are improving content on our website about smart metering and clean water to be more customer-centric and optimisations to the experience that helps smart customers see and understand their usage data

Improvements we are working on now will be realised within 3 months
Our digital 'next' work will be delivered within 9 months

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions A)



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

Timescale

→What our digital squads are working on over the next 6 months:

- Improving website content relating to water and sewerage issues, making information clearer and easier to navigate, helping our customers understand responsibilities and how we can support them when needed.
- Enabling customers to check during an incident if their address is subject to water quality notices - the update will mean customers will be able to enter their postcode and address onto our website to get updates
- Making it easier for customers to update their details when moving home
- Improving the online "report a problem" experience

→New programmes being mobilised

- Re-designing our yorkshirewater.com website to improve the experience on a mobile making it more user friendly

Customers will be able to see these improvements through clearer journeys on our website, with updates reflected in core pages such as account management, reporting a problem and local service information.

Improvements we are working on now will be realised within 3 months

Our digital 'next' work will be delivered within 9 months

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions B)



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

Timescale

4. Maintain clearer records of vulnerable customers and their contact preferences
5. Improve use of Priority Services information across all relevant communications
6. Work with Councils, NHS, GPs and community partners to better identify and reach vulnerable or hard-to-reach customers

We have trusted relationships with external organisations across the region to help customers access the extra care support they need. We continue to review and strengthen these partnerships so we can reach more customers, particularly those who may not realise support is available to them.

As discussed in the session, improving outcomes for vulnerable customers is about making sure we recognise their needs early, understand how best to support them, and respond in a way that feels appropriate and accessible. The approach we are taking is outlined below:

→ Building a clearer picture of customer needs through improving the quality and visibility of vulnerability information so we have a more complete and reliable understanding of individual customer circumstances by:

- Making sure our systems talk to each other so this information is available to colleagues across all customer touchpoints, from contact centres through to field teams
- Using this information consistently across key journeys such as billing, incident response and support interactions
- This improvement is being delivered through the roll out of our new Dynamics system to the remainder of our operation due to commence in October 2026. From here, our clean water agents will have access, alongside all other colleagues, to the same functionality relating to customer vulnerability and will not be reliant on legacy systems. This will allow not only better visibility of vulnerability and therefore a tailored service to customers with additional needs, but the ability to sign people up directly to the PSR.

Work to address clarity and reliability of the records across the operation, including contact information for vulnerable customers, will be delivered by the end of this financial year (April 2027). This will enable clearer communications with vulnerable customers during incidents and enable more tailored support and communications in day to day interactions.

Over the next 6 months we will work to review and extend partnerships with Councils, NHS & GP's and leverage these to reach more vulnerable customers - increasing awareness of the additional support available.

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions B)



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

Timescale

→ Delivering more personalised and accessible support

- Using better insight to tailor how we communicate and support customers based on their individual needs and preferences - supporting colleagues to adapt conversations and interactions (for example, simplifying information, offering alternative channels or allowing more time where needed)
- Ensuring customers who rely on water for health or other critical needs receive timely and appropriate support when it matters most
 - Reaching customers earlier and more effectively
- To reach customers who may not engage directly with us, we already work with trusted partners (such as councils, housing associations and charities) across the region who provide increased awareness of the support we have available and also sign our customers up to our extra care support. This engagement activity includes - but is not limited to - providing awareness and upskilling to these partners about the support we have available and putting secure data sharing arrangements to auto-enrol customers where possible e.g. we have embedded a PSR data sharing agreement with energy providers across our region to auto-enrol or invite customers to access additional priority services should they require them. Once customers are auto-enrolled we send a letter to inform them of the agreement and that they are signed up to our priority services and the additional care they can expect.
- We work with GPs and community partners to help identify and reach customers who may benefit from additional support by providing leaflets and promotional materials to NHS spaces, community centres etc.

Customers will experience this through more tailored communications and support across interactions, including consistent use of Priority Services information and improved support during incidents and service interactions.

Work to address clarity and reliability of the records across the operation, including contact information for vulnerable customers, will be delivered by the end of this financial year (April 2027). This will enable clearer communications with vulnerable customers during incidents and enable more tailored support and communications in day to day interactions.

Over the next 6 months we will work to review and extend partnerships with Councils, NHS & GP's and leverage these to reach more vulnerable customers - increasing awareness of the additional support available.

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions C)



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

Timescale

7. Use postal, face-to-face and local community routes more deliberately for offline customers
8. Use pop-up stalls and extend school outreach into higher education and the workplace to improve reach, awareness and knowledge
9. Make sure hard-to-reach customers are not dependent on digital channels alone

We recognise that not all customers engage digitally, and it is important everyone can access support in ways that work for them.

As discussed in the session, we currently provide a mix of phone, written and digital channels, alongside support through trusted external organisations. Already mentioned in a response above, our partnership work with councils, housing associations and charities across the region support with breaking down digital barriers - these partnerships support with signing up customers to our extra care support, as well as providing increased awareness of the support we have available. We also already use data sharing agreements to help identify customers who may benefit from additional support, allowing us to auto enrol them for support and making access easier. To increase awareness of our PSR offering offline - we also advertise our PSR through the bills we send out to every customer annually. In order to keep customer information up to date regarding PSR service needs, we get in touch with customers who are signed up to check their circumstances and if they continue to need the service - this is done routinely every 2 years via direct letters to all PSR customers, SMS and emails.

We deliver face-to-face engagement in local communities, particularly where major investment schemes are taking place. This includes attending venues such as town halls and hosting drop-in sessions, giving customers the opportunity to speak directly with us and understand what is happening locally. Our affordability 'brew bus' is another example of this approach, visiting more deprived areas to talk to customers about available support and help them access it. Over the last year we delivered 94 face to face events across the Yorkshire region with attendance at large shows like the Great Yorkshire Show, smaller events like the Ilkley gala and local community events like Bridlington - Hing Centres Easter Fayer, Bridlington MASH. Our Brew bus visited city and town centres like Hull, Rotherham, Scarborough, Wakefield; we went to foodbanks like Keighley Foodbank, and we held pop up events at some of our local reservoirs like Scammondon. An event at Gallows Close in Scarborough was also filled with a high need group with many conversations around debt repayment and many mothers with young babies who we were able to sign up to the PSR. This demonstrates the breadth of community engagement activity delivered across the region.

We already deliver this activity. Our engagement strategy for Non-Household Customers will be available by September

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions C)



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Please find the response from Yorkshire Water’s Action Plan below (Page 2 of 2)	Timescale
<p>We also deliver a wide programme of education and outreach. This includes working with partners such as Hey Girls to run sessions in schools, colleges and universities, alongside providing practical support such as reusable period products. In addition, we engage with further education providers through site visits and learning opportunities linked to students’ studies and future careers.</p> <p>For business customers, we work through retail partners to promote water efficiency and deliver audits, recognising that relationships are often held outside Yorkshire Water. To strengthen this further, we have recruited a dedicated Non-Household and Retail Engagement Manager to build closer relationships with retailers, improve coordination and expand our reach. This will support a more joined-up approach to water efficiency and demand reduction, with a more structured communications approach being developed over the coming months.</p> <p>Building on all of this, we will continue to take a more deliberate approach to using offline and community-based routes, ensuring customers are not reliant on digital channels alone and that hard-to-reach customers can access support more easily.</p>	<p>We already deliver this activity. Our engagement strategy for Non-Household Customers will be available by September</p>

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions D)



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

Timescale

- 10. Provide a more dedicated support response for vulnerable customers.
- 11. Improve staff awareness of hidden vulnerabilities.
- 12. Trigger early support where repeat contact, missed payments or life events may signal need.

We recognise that identifying when a customer may need additional support early, and responding in the right way, is critical to improving their overall experience.

We already use customer data and partnerships to identify signs that a customer may be struggling, thus triggering early support where possible. For example, we have started automatically enrolling some customers onto extra-care support when trusted data sources indicate they need additional assistance. This enables us to take early action, including triggering digital wellbeing assessments where there are changes in payment behaviour; auto-enrolling customers onto support schemes where appropriate (such as Priority Services and financial support); and offering flexible payment arrangements in response to short-term life events. We are currently reviewing our bottled water delivery service response to vulnerable customers during incidents to ensure it is giving exactly what our customers need - any changes made to the bottled water delivery service as a result of the review, will be communicated by Yorkshire Water directly to customers in the form of a letter. Any findings and changes will be discussed with the Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers for independent review.

10- A review of our bottled water delivery service and response as part of support during incidents is will be completed and findings delivered by December 2027.

11- Our new vulnerability training for contact centre colleagues has been rolled out with delivery of the first quarterly vulnerability module due to be completed by July 2026

Our new quarterly vulnerability e-learning for field colleagues is currently in development and roll out will be delivered in September 2026.

Safeguarding training is scheduled to be delivered in December 2026

Q1. Communication:

Transparency and customer contact(Q 1. Actions D)



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Please find the response from Yorkshire Water’s Action Plan below (Page 2 of 2)	Timescale
<p>Right now, we are also strengthening how we support customers through our frontline teams. Following our ISO22458 assessment, we are enhancing vulnerability training for customer-facing colleagues. This includes a structured programme for contact centre teams, combining classroom and online learning, focused on helping and improving colleagues' ability to identify, understand and respond to both visible and hidden vulnerabilities.</p> <p>A similar approach is being developed for field-based colleagues, ensuring a consistent standard of support across all customer interactions. This will equip colleagues with the confidence and practical skills needed to adapt their approach and ensure customers receive appropriate, timely support.</p> <p>Our plan for training roll out: Our organisation wide Customer Experience Training will focus on customer centricity and understanding of our Ease, Care and Value principles with tailored training depending on role. Following a review of our customer safeguarding procedure we will be delivering new organisation wide safeguarding training. Customer Experience training- focused on behavioural change and customer mindset - will build a more customer-centric organisation (rather than technical capability) and the Safeguarding training will focus on understanding our key principles to protect acutely vulnerable customers and showcase our new reporting platform</p> <p>Customers will experience this through earlier offers of support, more informed conversations with frontline colleagues, and more consistent support regardless of how or where they contact us. Together, these approaches will help us respond earlier, provide more consistent support and improve the experience for customers who need additional help.</p>	<p>10- A review of our bottled water delivery service and response as part of support during incidents is will be completed and findings delivered by December 2027.</p> <p>11- Our new vulnerability training for contact centre colleagues has been rolled out with delivery of the first quarterly vulnerability module due to be completed by July 2026</p> <p>Our new quarterly vulnerability e-learning for field colleagues is currently in development and roll out will be delivered in September 2026.</p> <p>Safeguarding training is scheduled to be delivered in December 2026</p>



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Q2. Bills and value for money

Question asked by Yorkshire Water Community member:

"We understand that investment is needed, but we feel bill rises are not being explained clearly enough..."

How will Yorkshire Water:

- 1. Clearly explain rising bills and show customers what their money is paying for?*
- 2. Make support easier to access for households who are struggling?"*

Yorkshire Water said current bill increases reflect a long period in which bills did not keep pace with inflation, alongside higher expectations of the network, climate pressures and major investment needs, and pointed to annual bill communications, specific infrastructure examples and existing financial support schemes.

Community members welcomed the fact that support exists and valued the examples given, but many still wanted clearer explanations of rising bills. Others were concerned about limited visibility of what support people may qualify for, insufficient local specificity on where money is going, and a reliance on customers finding information themselves.

Discussion focused on the need for clearer, more direct explanations of bill rises and investment, more proactive and targeted communication about eligibility for support, and easier access to person-to-person help through channels that work for a wider range of customers.

Actions

- Provide clear, direct and regular explanations of bill rises, spending and local investment outcomes for customers.
- Proactively tell customers what support is available, who may qualify and how to access it through clear communications.
- Capture customer circumstances early and use them to guide eligibility checks, tailored support and communication routes.
- Offer accessible person-to-person contact options beyond the phone, especially for vulnerable customers needing support.

"Yeah, more specifics and why our bills are going up."

"I wouldn't know where to get that information from now."

"The once-a-year annual bill is probably not enough... we definitely want to see where that's been allocated and where it's been delivered by the business."



Customers felt bill rises and support options were still not explained clearly enough, with a need for more direct, proactive and accessible communication.

Q2. Bills and value for money



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Yorkshire Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Yorkshire Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / Company comments
<p>Provide clear, direct and regular explanations of bill rises, spending and local investment outcomes for customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bills have risen after ~10 years in which they did not keep pace with inflation, alongside rising demands and investment needs. • Annual bill communications already explain spending. • Gave examples e.g. £1.5bn on storm overflows between 2025–2030 and around 1,000km of water main replacement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visibility of support and investment information online. • Clearly explain why bills are rising, what customers' money is funding and what this means at the <u>local level</u>. • Provide direct-to-customer, easy-to-follow updates on spending, delivery and outcomes. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Existing pages already cover 'Help Paying Your Bill' and 'Investing in Yorkshire'. A six-monthly update document would be shared widely, but direct communications are constrained by marketing rules unless customers have opted in.</p>
<p>Proactively tell customers what support is available, who may qualify and how to access it through clear communications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of support schemes already exists, not only for low-income households. • Over 200,000 customers were supported in the last year, with around £60m of support. • Support is promoted through debt agencies, charities, Citizens Advice, local government and other partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate eligibility more clearly through email, text, letter and other channels. • Make it easier for customers to understand whether they may qualify them for support. • Reduce reliance on customers having to discover support for themselves. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Company will continue using a range of channels and partnerships to improve awareness/access to support. Further comment expected in company action plan.</p>
<p>Capture customer circumstances early and use them to guide eligibility checks, tailored support and communication routes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different schemes for different circumstances, including households with more children. • Highlighted the option to move to a meter, with a two-year guarantee to move back if not better for customer. • Some support links already operate through direct connections with local government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for relevant customer information at first contact or account set-up - use this information to target support efforts. • Explore ways of helping customers check likely eligibility without creating extra barriers – for example, a website 'eligibility calculator'. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Company open to website calculator, but stressed complexity and risk of excluding eligible customers if oversimplified.</p>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

Q2. Bills and value for money



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Yorkshire Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Yorkshire Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / Company comments
<p>Offer accessible person-to-person contact options beyond the phone, especially for vulnerable customers needing support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Said customers can call for support and that Yorkshire Water is working to make support better known. • Referred to broader communications through media, local mailing lists and social channels. • Stated app had been discontinued due to low take-up, investment had been re-prioritised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide real-person chat (non-AI agent) or WhatsApp support alongside phone contact. • Ensure vulnerable customers can access help through channels they are comfortable using. • Maintain accessible, practical alternatives to digital self-service only. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Company accepted the need to keep improving communication routes for vulnerable customers.</p>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

Q2. Bills and value for money

(Q 2. Actions A)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

13. Improve visibility of support and investment information online
14. Clearly explain why bills are rising, what customers' money is funding and what this means at the local level
15. Provide direct-to-customer, easy-to-follow updates on spending, delivery and outcomes

Whilst information on bill increases and investment is already available on our website, including our page explaining why bills are rising (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/bill-account/why-is-your-bill-going-up>), it is not always easy for customers to find or clearly understand how this links to investment and improvements in their local area. We are making improvements to address this, focusing on how information is structured and presented so that it is easier to navigate and more clearly links what customers pay to the outcomes being delivered -we are currently developing plans to introduce a postcode-based map view of investment so customers can pinpoint investment and improvements at a postcode level.

Customer who don't or can't access the website are highly likely to receive their bills by post. However, every customer receives a bill and enclosed in this is a letter and leaflet which explain how we're investing customers' money and the benefits this will bring. In the latest annual billing comms for 2026-27, we have included extra information to explain the investment in North, East, South and West Yorkshire to ensure the information is more relevant for those who can't access this information online. We also communicate bill changes and available support, and direct customers to further information online if needed.

While key information will continue to be included within customer bills, they are not the most effective format for presenting more detailed content. Given the scale of the 2.4 million households we serve — many of whom receive paper bills — providing this information through our website and digital channels is more cost efficient and allows it to be clearer, more accessible and kept up to date.

Improvements altogether will mean that customers can access clearer, more relevant information through our website, including dedicated bill spend and investment pages, alongside annual bill communications which direct them to simple explanations of investment and the improvements being delivered in their area.

Website updates to improve information on investment so customers can see a map of improvements at a local level will be delivered by December 2026

Q2. Bills and value for money

(Q 2. Actions B)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

16. Communicate eligibility more clearly through email, text, letter and other channels.
17. Make it easier for customers to understand whether they may qualify for support.
18. Reduce reliance on customers having to discover support for themselves.

We provide information on financial support through a range of channels, including annual billing communications, webpages (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/bill-account/help-paying-your-bill>) and wider communications. These explain available support and options such as switching to a meter or reducing water use for those who may not be eligible.

This is supported by in-community engagement and partnerships with external organisations, helping us reach customers through trusted local routes. This includes key relationships across the region as mentioned above to make help more visible and targeted initiatives such as our 'brew bus', which visits more deprived areas to speak directly with customers about available support and help them access it.

We are strengthening our approach so customers do not need to identify support themselves. Again as mentioned previous, this includes improving how we use data and sharing agreements and insight to proactively identify customers who may need additional support and/or auto enrolment, alongside making eligibility clearer and easier to understand. We are also improving how eligibility information is presented and signposted on our website, helping customers access the right support at the right time.

During the Accountability Session our customers recommended that we include additional functionality to take the pain away from customers having to do the heavy lifting when it comes to identifying if they qualify for financial support - whilst the breath of support and qualification can be circumstance specific and include many factors such as benefits and allowances, we will work to review the possibility of including such a tool on our website - this would be hugely beneficial for customers. We'll let customers know about our improvements through social media and signposting from letters we send out.

Together, this will make it easier for customers to understand what support is available and access it without needing to seek it out themselves.

Website updates to improve information on investment so customers can see a map of improvements at a local level will be delivered by December 2026

To support customers and aim to reduce barriers, we will review additional functionality on the website to signpost income maximisation and access to wider financial help in the next 6months.

Q2. Bills and value for money

(Q 2. Actions C)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

19. Ask for relevant customer information at first contact or account set-up and use this to target support efforts
20. Explore ways of helping customers check likely eligibility without creating extra barriers

Understanding customer circumstances early is key to ensuring the right support is provided at the right time. Contact centre colleagues are trained to gather relevant information during customer interactions to identify where extra care support may be needed. This information is used to tailor support, helping ensure customers are directed to the most appropriate schemes and services based on their individual situation.

As mentioned earlier, as identified in our ISO22458 inclusive customer service assessment, we are enhancing vulnerability training for customer-facing colleagues. This includes a structured programme for contact centre and operational teams, combining classroom and online learning, focused on helping colleagues better identify, understand and respond to both visible and hidden vulnerabilities.

We are also reviewing how customers access support through our website. This includes assessing where additional tools or prompts could help customers better understand their eligibility for support and reduce barriers to accessing help. During the Accountability Session our customers recommended that we include additional functionality to take the pain away from customers having to do the heavy lifting when it comes to identifying if they qualify for financial support. Whilst the breath of support and qualification can be circumstance specific and include many factors such as benefits and allowances, we will work to review the possibility of including a digital tool such as this on our website - this would be hugely beneficial for customers. We'll let customers know about our improvements through social media and signposting from letters we send out. This will allow our customers to experience more tailored support during contact, provide clearer online guidance to help them understand eligibility and access support more easily.

Our new vulnerability training for contact centre colleagues has been rolled out with delivery of the first quarterly vulnerability module due to be completed by July 2026

To support customers and aim to reduce barriers, we will review additional functionality on the website to signpost income maximisation and access to wider financial help in the next 6months.

Q2. Bills and value for money

(Q 2. Actions D)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

21. Provide real-person chat (non-AI agent) or WhatsApp support alongside phone contact.
22. Ensure vulnerable customers can access help through channels they are comfortable using.
23. Maintain accessible, practical alternatives to digital self-service only.

A range of contact options is already available to customers, including phone, digital and written channels, as well as support accessed through external organisations. This ensures customers can choose how they engage with us and access extra care support in a way that works for them.

Support is also tailored to meet a range of communication needs, including offering information in different languages and accessible formats such as Braille. Additional support is available through Priority Services, including the option for customers to nominate someone to manage communications on their behalf where needed.

As highlighted in earlier actions, this is supported by in-community engagement and partnerships with external organisations, helping ensure customers who may be less comfortable using digital channels can still access support through trusted routes.

We are currently reviewing opportunities to introduce additional contact options, including real-person chat functionality, to complement existing services and provide greater flexibility in how customers get in touch - currently the pilot WhatsApp (real person chat) is available to all customers experiencing waste water issues.

Together these options should ensure our customers will be able to access support through a range of channels, including phone, written and digital options, with increased flexibility as additional services are introduced.

21. A WhatsApp pilot is underway and will continue through this year from which the learnings can be utilised for expanding as appropriate. Currently the pilot is WhatsApp (real person chat) available to all customers experiencing waste water issues. .

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Question asked by Yorkshire Water Community member:

“We are deeply concerned about sewage spills and pollution in rivers and coastal areas...

What will Yorkshire Water do now and in the future to reduce pollution and sewage discharges, make rivers and coastal waters safer and show customers clear evidence of progress?”

Yorkshire Water outlined a substantial programme of work on combined sewer overflows, bathing waters and wider pollution reduction, including past investment, a larger programme through to 2030, published pollution reporting and partnership work with councils, regulators and other bodies.

Community members recognised that action was underway, but many still felt there was a disconnect between the scale of investment described and the clarity of evidence available to customers, particularly on when places would become safer, how priority areas are chosen and how progress should be measured in ways that reflect real-world impact rather than headline numbers alone.

Discussion focused on the need for clearer, more local and more transparent communication on safety, timelines, prioritisation and progress, alongside simpler explanations of storm overflows and more accessible tools to help customers understand what is happening in their area.

Actions

- Communicate local improvements, timelines and outcomes so customers can see what investment is changing and when.
- Explain storm overflows, pollution and bathing water safety in plain English, including what customers should expect locally.
- Strengthen information on spills, pollution and improvement plans through online tools and on-location signposting.
- Be transparent about how areas are prioritised and use the clearest available measures of progress and safety.

“To me any pollution is serious, it doesn't matter how big or how small...it's all serious and it affects the people...around those areas immediately”

“I've tried to read up on how this...overflow thing works and to be honest it's too technical, I need...in plain English, how it happens, why it happens...and what are they going to do about it?”

“I'd rather them be honest but to give specific dates and times as to when [a pollution incident] is going to be clean.”



Customers felt investment alone was not enough; they wanted clearer local evidence, clearer safety information and more transparent reporting on where progress is being made.

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Yorkshire Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Yorkshire Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / Company comments
Communicate local improvements, timelines and outcomes so customers can see what investment is changing and when.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained three areas of focus: combined sewer overflows, bathing waters, and wider pollution incidents. £180m invested across ~100 locations, with £1.5bn planned investment 2025-2030 across ~450 locations to halve discharges. Gave examples of improvement and further focus (e.g. Ilkley). Pollution incident reporting published to be updated next year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly set out what customers should expect to improve over the next 5 years. Clearly communicate whether key improvements are delivered, including local examples and outcome evidence. Host regular open-rooms between customers and company representatives. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Company confirmed more specific examples could be communicated.</p> <p>Bi-annual regional meetings are held.</p> <p>It also said some interventions already show results, but others will take 2-4 years to design and deliver.</p>
Explain storm overflows, pollution and bathing water safety in plain English, including what customers should expect locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified that overflows are automated and said that the system is complex and heavily affected by rainfall and wider network pressures. Said bathing water quality is also affected by agricultural runoff, roads, harbours, birds and dogs. Confirmed 80% of bathing waters in Yorkshire Water's area are currently rated Excellent, Good or Sufficient, with only four below sufficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a plain-English explanation of why and how storm overflows happen. Communicate clearly and frankly on bathing water safety and quality, including where waters are sub-standard. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Company accepted the need for clearer plain-English explanation and said it would keep working on this.</p> <p>Noted that bathing water ratings are based on a four-year rolling average, which can delay visible improvement in official classifications.</p>
Strengthen information on spills, pollution, and improvement plans through online tools and on-location signposting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution Improvement Programme is published on its website. A map showing discharging assets and where investment is planned is already available. Said risk forecasting and local signage are used at some beaches when bathing is unsuitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signpost heavily polluted areas more clearly. Provide simple online tools showing spills and local information. Make Pollution Reduction Programme information easy to find on the website. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: These tools exist in part, inc. improvement plan and online overflow map.</p> <p>Confirmed signage is used in some locations through existing arrangements with the Environment Agency and councils.</p>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Yorkshire Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Yorkshire Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / Company comments
<p>Be transparent about how areas are prioritised and use the clearest available measures of progress and safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said the company prioritises according to legal and regulatory duties, including bathing waters, reducing spills by 2030 and areas of scientific or environmental importance. Said customer concern also informs additional focus. Reports progress via spill numbers and duration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify how Yorkshire Water prioritises locations for action. Use clearest possible measures of progress, not just spill counts. Be transparent on performance and safety where volume data is not available. 	<p>Timescale: To be provided in the company action plan.</p> <p>Final comments from water company: Flow-rate and total volume data is not currently possible – only duration and spill numbers.</p> <p>Prioritisation is already shaped by legislation, regulators, environmental impact and customers</p>

Taken from Action Plan summary report.

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance

(Q 3. Actions A)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

- 24. Clearly set out what customers should expect to improve over the next 5 years
- 25. Clearly communicate whether key improvements are delivered, including local examples and outcome evidence
- 26. Host regular open-rooms between customers and company representatives

We already communicate local investment and activity through a range of channels, including our website (<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/investing-in-yorkshire>), letters, social media, media coverage and engagement with local stakeholders. A key part of this communication is explaining why work is taking place and how it will benefit customers and the environment.

We also provide opportunities for customers to engage with us directly in their communities. When delivering significant schemes, we host customer drop-in sessions so customers can understand more about what we are doing, ask questions and raise concerns. We are also trialling different approaches to increase participation, such as online forums and pop-up events in town centres. Engagement is further supported through live biannual Your Yorkshire Water Your Say (YYWYS) sessions and attendance at community events and fairs, where senior leaders are present to listen directly to customer views and respond to any questions or challenges. Our next YYWYS sessions will take place on 9 and 14 July (6:00–7:30pm). These events are open to all customers and are promoted through email, our website, social media, press releases and targeted campaigns, including encouraging key regional stakeholders and local authority press offices to share information with their audiences.

We are aware there is more to do, we will strengthen how we communicate progress, delivery and outcomes, including enhancing our website with postcode-enabled and map-based views of activity. This will include clearer, more localised information on investment, including postcode-based and map-enabled views of activity, so customers can see what work is taking place in their area, alongside plain English explanations of what is being delivered, why it is needed, and the expected benefits.

Website updates to improve information on investment so customers can see a map of improvements at a local level will be delivered by December 2026

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance

(Q 3. Actions B)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

27. Provide a plain-English explanation of why and how storm overflows happen
28. Communicate clearly and frankly on bathing water safety and quality, including where waters are sub-standard

We aim to provide plain-English explanations of storm overflows on our website, including an animation to help customers understand how and why they occur, you can visit it here: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/river-health/storm-overflow-investment/>.

This is supported by face-to-face engagement, where interactive models are used at community events to show how storm overflows operate in practice. These models link to real-life video examples via QR codes, helping customers better understand the solutions being delivered in their local area. Additional models are currently being developed for use in education centres and schools to further support awareness. We're currently running a series of consultation events in Scarborough so we can understand the local community's views while we're developing our plans for the town. We have lots of scheme information on our website and we advertise community events when they're happening via customer letters, social media and the website. They happen as and when we're starting work in an area.

Information on bathing water quality is also available through our website here: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/bathing-water-to-boast-about/>, including a dedicated section showing the latest classifications across our region on SWIMFO. This is supported by signposting to official sources, including the Government's SWIMFO platform, where customers can access up-to-date results and detailed explanations of classifications. SWIMFO is a webpage held by Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs - it allows you to look up details of a designated bathing water by name or location, you can view this here: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles>.

We are continuing to improve how this information is presented, including updating capital scheme webpages to provide clearer information on investment in coastal assets and local areas such as Scarborough, alongside opportunities for customers to provide feedback on schemes in their communities. We have entire portions of our website dedicated to outlining the investment in leakage, storm overflow, financial support, improving our water supply and more here: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/investing-in-yorkshire/>.

Website updates to improve Capital Scheme information availability will be provided by October 2026

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance

(Q 3. Actions C)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

- 29. Signpost heavily polluted areas more clearly
- 30. Provide simple online tools showing spills and local information
- 31. Make Pollution Reduction Programme information easy to find on the website

We already provide information on discharges and local environmental performance through our storm overflow map on our website: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/river-health/storm-overflow-investment/event-duration-monitoring>, allowing customers to see when a specific overflow last discharged and whether it is planned for investment. Information on our Pollution Reduction Programme is also available on our website through dedicated pollution pages: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/pollution>. To support our customers finding this information, we will make Pollution Reduction Programme content easier to find from the pollution landing page which will be live by the end of Summer

Our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan uses a targeted, insight-led approach to reduce incidents and better protect customers and the environment. This includes understanding the root causes of pollution events and prioritising interventions that deliver the greatest impact, alongside our ambition to reduce incidents and eliminate serious pollution wherever possible.

Right now, we are assessing where additional signage could be introduced to help customers recognise when something may be wrong and understand how to report this to us quickly. This signage will be in addition to the available information on our Storm Overflow Map, with the first signs being rolled out at hotspots by August 26. Hotspots are still to be determined but will be selected on an evidence/need basis.

We will make our Pollution information easier to find on our website by September 2026

Tools are available to view spills and investment plans on our website through our EDM map

Signage will be in place on a trial basis at bathing hotspots by August 2026

Q3. Pollution and environmental performance

(Q 3. Actions D)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

- 32. Clarify how Yorkshire Water prioritises locations for action
- 33. Use clearest possible measures of progress, not just spill counts
- 34. Be transparent on performance and safety where volume data is not available

We prioritise improvements based on a combination of regulatory requirements, environmental impact and customer insight, ensuring investment is focused where it will deliver the greatest benefit for customers and the environment.

This approach is supported by more targeted, insight-led methods, including strengthened understanding of the underlying causes of pollution incidents. By identifying root causes, we are able to prioritise interventions more effectively and focus investment on areas where it will have the greatest impact.

We use a range of measures to track and communicate performance, not limited to the number of discharges alone. This includes considering factors such as the frequency and severity of incidents, alongside the outcomes delivered through investment and operational improvements.

We provide updates on our progress in reducing spills in a number of ways. Our Annual Performance Report outlines overall performance across the year and whether we have met the targets set by our regulator, Ofwat. Our Performance Statement provides a half-yearly update on performance and whether we are on or off track. You can find these on our website here: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/about-us/reports/>. Finally, our Pollution Reduction Plan outlines our performance, progress over the year, and plans for the coming year. This is published and updated annually here: <https://www.yorkshirewater.com/environment/pollution>.

N/A

What happens after the Accountability Session?

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



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Publication and transparency

Within 5 working days

A full (anonymised) transcript of the session was [published](#) on **Wednesday 22nd April**

Within 10 working days

A plain-English summary is published, setting out:
The questions asked.
The key points raised by Community members.
The actions agreed for inclusion in the action plan.
Anything recorded as *not yet agreed*.
Tuesday 28th April



Action plan

Within 28 days

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

The action plan will be **shared with the Water Voice community on Friday 22nd 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

Action plan response

Annex: Research approach

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

Background



What is an Accountability Session?

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

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

[*https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/5/enacted](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2025/5/enacted)

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.

Objectives

What the session aims to achieve



1. Give customers a real voice

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

2. Make companies answer directly to the people they serve

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

3. Agree clear actions that lead to real improvements

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

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

4. Build trust through transparency

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

5. Make sure all types of customers are represented

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

Outputs

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

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

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

Methodology

How does it work?

CCW

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01



Prioritising what matters most

1. We listen to what customers tell us each month

Through Barometer & Spotlight surveys and the online community

2. We play back what they said

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

3. Confirm their priorities

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

02



Getting ready (Briefing session)

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

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

The facilitator talks them through:

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

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

03



The Accountability Session (Main meeting)

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

TMcK facilitator & Chair guiding the conversation:

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

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

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

04



Agreeing what should happen next

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

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

05



Publishing the outcomes and following up

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

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

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

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

[Priorities will be shared with the ISG]

Sample

Who takes part in an Accountability Session



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Thank you!



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