



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Water company: SES Water
Wednesday 3rd June

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

Version: Update with SES Water Action plan response – 03.06.2026

ccw.org.uk

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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 SES 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 SES Water at the Accountability Session.

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

| | Topic | Community member question |
|-----------|--|--|
| Q1 | Water quality and confidence: Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance | <i>"A lot of us don't feel able to judge water or network quality with confidence, because available information is hard to understand, feels out of date and doesn't give straightforward reassurance. What more will SES Water do to make water quality information clear, current and easy to understand, so customers can quickly feel reassured - especially if there is a change in taste, appearance or cloudiness?"</i> |
| Q2 | Investment, resilience and water pressure: Concern about whether current action matches current problems | <i>"One of the most common issues raised has been low water pressure, but there's a wider concern about whether the network is keeping up with demand, especially with more housing... What is SES Water doing now to improve resilience and reduce problems like low water pressure and how will customers see near-term improvements rather than just longer-term plans?"</i> |
| Q3 | Value for money, communication and customer experience: Better service should feel easier and clearer | <i>"A lot of us judge value for money not just by what we pay, but by how easy the company is to deal with, how clear the information is and whether we feel informed and in control. Because we can't switch provider, things like comparing bills, better communication, easy access to information and more modern ways of managing our account really matter. SES Water already offers account information and area updates online, but what will you do to make cost comparisons with other providers clearer, and improve the day-to-day customer experience so people feel they are getting better value for money?"</i> |

Executive summary - insights by question



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The Accountability Session for SES Water highlighted customers' calls for clearer information on water quality, low pressure, network resilience and billing; SES Water acknowledged these concerns, pointed to recent improvements and broadly accepted the actions raised.

Q1

Water quality and confidence:
Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance

SES Water said it had recently upgraded its website so customers could easily access postcode-level information on water quality and hardness and said it would use texts, email, social media, PSR outreach and 'Splash' newsletter to communicate proactively; it also stressed that quality is tightly regulated and among the best in the country.

Community members welcomed the website improvements but said the information still felt too technical, inconsistent and not always easy to access, with concerns about unexplained ratings, patchy reassurance when issues arise, limited visibility of what happens after incidents and a lack of simple guidance on hardness and limescale.

Discussion focused on making water quality information more intelligible, comparable and local, through plain-English explanations, multi-channel updates, practical advice and clearer evidence of improvement over time.

Customers felt water quality information remains too technical and fragmented, with a need for simpler explanations, clearer local reassurance and more visible evidence of improvement.

Q2

Investment, resilience and water pressure:
Concern about whether current action matches current problems

SES Water highlighted its investment in a "smart" network with pressure sensors, stated that very few properties are officially affected by low pressure and explained that current known issues are being addressed in the Godstone area. It pointed to dual supply from two water treatment works, a £100m investment programme, mains replacement, and a 25-year resilience plan to meet future demand.

Customers challenged this, citing lived experiences of low or inconsistent pressure that were not recognised, communicated, or addressed by the company, alongside recurring difficulties accessing accurate, real-time information on incidents and works.

Discussion focused on bridging the gap between technical performance and customer experience, with a need for clearer definitions, better tracking of local issues and more visible evidence of near-term improvements.

Customers felt that experiences of low and inconsistent pressure are not reflected in official data, with a need for clearer definitions, better communication and more visible evidence of improvement.

Q3

Value for money, communication and customer experience:
Better service should feel easier and clearer

SES Water said its bills had remained relatively flat compared with wider sector increases but would rise around 10% this year. This is to support ongoing investment in water softening, treatment works, pipe renewal and day-to-day operations. They outlined a broad breakdown of how bill income is used and said more information is available through bills, the website and wider communications.

Customers felt the explanation lacked sufficient clarity/comparability, particularly around how charges are broken down, how freshwater and wastewater responsibilities are split, why earlier plans had changed and how lower personal usage translates into visible value.

Discussion focused on making bills and account information more transparent and comparable, improving explanation of commitments and changes, and exploring more tailored ways to help customers engage with usage and feel better value from their service.

Customers felt value for money depends on clearer, more transparent billing, better explanation of charges and commitments, and tailored ways to reward lower usage.

Actions agreed during the Accountability Session



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Q1

Water quality and confidence:
Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance

- Provide simple, plain-English, comparable explanations of water quality ratings, standards and local performance.
- Ensure website and other channels provide complete, current and accessible local water quality information and reassurance.
- Give regular updates on incidents, actions taken and whether water quality is improving, with outcomes customers can track.
- Share practical advice on water hardness and limescale, including impacts, health reassurance and available support.

Q2

Investment, resilience and water pressure:
Concern about whether current action matches current problems

- Clearly define and communicate what constitutes 'low water pressure' and how it is measured in simple terms.
- Enable customers to easily report, track and receive updates on pressure through reliable, real-time channels.
- Ensure online tools (e.g. works maps and alerts) are accurate, current and reflect real local conditions.
- Communicate infrastructure investment and resilience improvements in simple, tangible ways linked to customer outcomes.

Q3

Value for money, communication and customer experience:
Better service should feel easier and clearer

- Show simpler, more comparable bill information, including price comparisons and a more granular spending breakdown.
- Communicate openly about plans and commitments and when these change - what happened, and why, in clear customer terms.
- Help customers understand and engage with their water usage and its billing impact
- Clearly explain the split between freshwater and wastewater service - how this works operationally, and financially.



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Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Our findings in detail

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

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Q1. Water quality and confidence:

Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance



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Question asked by SES Water Community member:

“A lot of us don’t feel able to judge water or network quality with confidence, because available information is hard to understand, feels out of date and doesn’t give straightforward reassurance.

“What more will SES Water do to make water quality information clear, current and easy to understand, so customers can quickly feel reassured - especially if there is a change in taste, appearance or cloudiness?”

SES Water said it had recently upgraded its website so customers could easily access postcode-level information on water quality and hardness and said it would use texts, email, social media, PSR outreach and its ‘Splash’ newsletter to communicate proactively; it also stressed that water quality is tightly regulated and among the best in the country.

Community members welcomed the website improvements but said the information still felt too technical, inconsistent and not always easy to access, with concerns about unexplained ratings, patchy reassurance when issues arise, limited visibility of what happens after incidents and a lack of simple guidance on hardness and limescale.

Discussion focused on making water quality information more intelligible, comparable and local, through plain-English explanations, multi-channel updates, practical advice and clearer evidence of improvement over time.

Actions

- Provide simple, plain-English, comparable explanations of water quality ratings, standards and local performance.
- Ensure website and other channels provide complete, current, and accessible local water quality information and reassurance.
- Give regular updates on incidents, actions taken and whether water quality is improving, with outcomes customers can track.
- Share practical advice on water hardness and limescale, including impacts, health reassurance and available support.

“Where’s the feedback to the customer saying that ‘This has been resolved and what we’ve done’?”

“What are the ratings they’re using to be able to say that they’re one of the best water companies?”

“SES have got some great information about water quality but you’ve got to read through a load of technical information.”



Customers felt water quality information remains too technical and fragmented, with a need for simpler explanations, clearer local reassurance and more visible evidence of improvement.

Q1. Water quality and confidence:

Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance



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| "You said" (Community member actions) | "We did" (SES Water response on the night) | What is the 'Ideal' SES Water response? (In the eyes of our community) | Timescale / final comments |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Provide simple, plain-English, comparable explanations of water quality ratings, standards and local performance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently upgraded the website so all important information is '2-clicks away' Provides postcode-level information on hardness and quality. Publishes information on what water quality means, including technical aspects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present water quality performance in a directly comparable, contextualised and easy-to-digest format. Clearly explain the ratings and standards behind statements about strong performance. | <p>Company comment: SES Water said national standards already exist via the Drinking Water Inspectorate, but acknowledged these need to be communicated more clearly and simply.</p> |
| <p>Ensure website and other channels provide complete, current, and accessible local water quality information and reassurance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website positioned as information 'golden source' Customers can be directed to the site via bills, email, PSR outreach, partner organisations and the quarterly Splash newsletter. Also uses texts and social media when it needs to contact customers quickly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure website tools work reliably and provide coverage of the whole customer base. Use multiple channels to bring water quality information to life, and to celebrate successes. Develop an app to reach customers who do not use social media channels. | <p>Agreed on the need for broader and more accessible communications. Confirmed that part of ongoing IT upgrade is to facilitate app development.</p> |
| <p>Give regular updates on incidents, actions taken and whether water quality is improving, with outcomes customers can track.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SES Water said it aims to communicate in a timely way during incidents, with priority communications about whether tap water is safe to drink. Said proactive updates are given through available channels when local circumstances change. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate clearly, consistently and regularly about actions taken. Show whether water quality is improving over time. Close the loop after incidents so customers can see what happened and what changed. | <p>Company broadly agreed and said some communications improvements could be delivered relatively quickly.</p> <p>Company confirmed limescale is not harmful to health and supported clearer, more practical advice for customers.</p> |
| <p>Share practical advice on water hardness and limescale, including impacts, health reassurance and available support.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides postcode-level hardness information. Stated water supply is particularly hard, and that it is the only water company to soften supply. Accepted the need to make information simpler and more tangible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively share practical tips on managing hardness and household impacts. Explain clearly whether limescale is harmful or only aesthetic. Consider how support and products could be signposted and/or optionally integrated into billing. | <p>Timescale: No firm timeline committed. Detail expected in company action plan</p> |

Q1. Water quality and confidence:

Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance
(Q1. Action A)



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

Timescale

We recognise that customers want clearer visibility of water quality performance in a simple and easy-to-understand way. While we already publish factsheets and explanations, we also recognise the value of independent comparison through DiscoverWater.co.uk.

To strengthen our approach, we will:

- clearly signpost Discover Water from our water quality webpages
- align our website content with Discover Water's plain English explanations
- improve how we explain ratings, standards and what good performance looks like

These changes will help customers better understand and compare our performance with confidence.

30th June 2026

Q1. Water quality and confidence:

Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance
(Q1. Action B)



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

Timescale

We recognise that customers need a reliable, accessible and easy-to-use website that allows them to quickly find the information and services they need. We have recently migrated the SES Water website to a new platform, enabling us to refresh content, improve navigation and create a clearer visual hierarchy. The site now delivers a consistent experience across devices and browsers, improving usability on both desktop and mobile.

We have also enhanced our triage tools to streamline the customer journey, ensuring key tasks and information can be accessed in just a few clicks.

We also recognise that a strong digital platform must be supported by a range of communication channels that bring our services and performance to life. Our quarterly newsletter already shares local updates, water-saving advice, financial support information, water quality content and investment activity. However, we acknowledge that we can do more to proactively communicate and celebrate our performance, particularly in relation to water quality and resilience.

SES Water already offers a secure MyAccount service, enabling customers to manage their account, submit meter readings and access key services online. As customer expectations continue to evolve, we will continue to assess opportunities to enhance our digital services. This will include understanding customer needs and preferences, evaluating potential solutions and considering how future investments can best improve accessibility, convenience and the overall customer experience.

To strengthen our approach, we will:

- review and improve key website tools (such as the postcode checker) to ensure they work reliably for all customers
- continue to enhance website usability, accessibility and navigation based on user feedback and insight
- expand the use of our newsletter and other channels to proactively share water quality and resilience information, including celebrating performance and progress
- explore future digital enhancements, including app functionality, to better meet evolving customer expectations

These improvements will ensure customers can access information and services easily, while also increasing awareness and understanding of our performance and investment.

30th September 2026

Q1. Water quality and confidence:

Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance
(Q1. Action C)



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

Timescale

We recognise that customers expect us to communicate clearly, consistently and proactively about our investment programme and the actions we are taking across our network. While we already provide dedicated webpages for ongoing projects, helping customers understand what work is taking place and when, alongside live incident updates, we recognise that we need to do more to clearly explain our overall plans, progress and outcomes.

To strengthen our approach, we will:

- Strengthen local communication of works through targeted letters, emails, SMS notifications (where appropriate), local stakeholder engagement and dedicated webpages for major schemes.
- Use our website, quarterly customer newsletter, social media channels and media relations activity to provide updates on investment activity, progress and outcomes.
- Link to Discover Water and align our explanations with its plain English approach, helping customers better understand our performance.
- Embed a clear "close the loop" approach following incidents and major works, using website updates, customer communications and community-facing channels to explain what happened, what action has been taken and what has changed as a result.
- Create a clearer signposting approach so customers can easily find information through our website, MyAccount service, incident pages and project-specific webpages.

30th September 2026

Q1. Water quality and confidence:

Unclear and outdated information undermining reassurance
(Q1. Action D)



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

Timescale

We acknowledge that customers want to understand how the water in their home should be managed. While we already publish a range of helpful factsheets on our website (<https://www.seswater.co.uk/household/your-water/water-quality/water-in-your-home>), we recognise that we could do more to ensure water safety is central to our customer messaging. We will also look to proactively share practical advice on managing water hardness and its impacts within the home.

To strengthen our approach we will:

- review the factsheets to ensure they are easy to understand and customer friendly
- clearly pull out the key message that limescale is only aesthetic and not harmful
- review how we can best signpost productst that can remove limescale

30th July 2026

Q2. Investment, resilience and water pressure:

Concern about whether current action matches current problems



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Question asked by SES Water Community member:

“One of the most common issues raised has been low water pressure, but there’s a wider concern about whether the network is keeping up with demand, especially with more housing…”

“What is SES Water doing now to improve resilience and reduce problems like low water pressure and how will customers see near-term improvements rather than just longer-term plans?”

SES Water highlighted its investment in a “smart” network with pressure sensors, stated that very few properties are officially affected by low pressure, and explained that current known issues are being addressed in the Godstone area. It pointed to dual supply from two water treatment works, a £100m investment programme, mains replacement and a 25-year resilience plan to meet future demand.

Customers challenged this, citing lived experiences of low or inconsistent pressure that were not recognised, communicated, or addressed by the company, alongside recurring difficulties accessing accurate, real-time information on incidents and works.

Discussion focused on bridging the gap between technical performance and customer experience, with a need for clearer definitions, better tracking of local issues, and more visible evidence of near-term improvements.

Actions

- Clearly define and communicate what constitutes ‘low water pressure’ and how it is measured in simple terms.
- Enable customers to easily report, track and receive updates on pressure through reliable, real-time channels.
- Ensure online tools (e.g. works maps and alerts) are accurate, current and reflect real local conditions.
- Communicate infrastructure investment and resilience improvements in simple, tangible ways linked to customer outcomes.

“I didn’t know you could sign up, if I’m being honest, to get the notifications.”

“I am signed up to the alerts but you don’t get any… I have contacted SES and they’re very much like, ‘We can’t see it, we’ll monitor it’, I’m not getting any good feedback really.”

“Tell us what low pressure is… is there a metric that says water pressure has got to be consistent?”



Customers felt that experiences of low and inconsistent pressure are not reflected in official data, with a need for clearer definitions, better communication and more visible evidence of improvement.

Q2. Investment, resilience and water pressure:

Concern about whether current action matches current problems



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| "You said" (Community member actions) | "We did" (SES Water response on the night) | What is the 'Ideal' SES Water response? (In the eyes of our community) | Timescale / final comments |
|---|---|--|---|
| Clearly define and communicate what constitutes 'low water pressure' and how it is measured in simple terms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained pressure is monitored via sensors across the network. Stated thresholds exist (e.g. pressure triggers below set levels). Said low pressure affects very few properties. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain what 'low pressure' means in practical, measurable terms. Help customers understand how to assess pressure in their own home. | <p>Company comment: SES Water acknowledged the need to explain pressure measures in plain English and make them more accessible to customers.</p> |
| Enable customers to easily report, track and receive updates on pressure through reliable, real-time channels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers can sign up for alerts and use website tools. Company uses SMS and other channels for notifications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear processes for reporting and tracking issues. Enable two-way communication, including through future app functionality. Ensure follow-up where issues are not formally recorded. | <p>Confirmed app development and willingness to improve two-way communication and responsiveness to customer-reported issues.</p> |
| Ensure online tools (e.g. works maps and alerts) are accurate, current and reflect real local conditions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live works map available on website. Alerts available for network issues. Website positioned as key information source. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep works map fully up to date and reflective of real activity. Ensure alerts are triggered consistently during incidents. Set clear expectations on how current information is. | <p>Acknowledged gaps in accuracy of online tools (e.g. works map) and committed to improving ownership, updating and reliability of online information.</p> |
| Communicate infrastructure investment and resilience improvements in simple, tangible ways linked to customer outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted £100m investment and 53km of mains renewal. Referenced 25-year resilience plan and dual supply capability. Stated all customers are supplied by two treatment works, with ability to reconfigure supply if required e.g. during incidents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translate investment into clear customer benefits (e.g. reduced outages, improved pressure). Provide simple, visual explanations of resilience and supply capacity. Share regular updates on progress and outcomes. Proactively communicate and celebrate strengths e.g. SES Water's infrastructure | <p>SES agreed more can be done to communicate investment benefits in plain English and link them to customer experience.</p> <p>Timescale: No firm timeline committed. Detail expected in company action plan.</p> |

Q2. Investment, resilience and water pressure:

Concern about whether current action matches current problems
(Q2. Action A)



The voice for water consumers
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Please find the response from SES Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We recognise that water pressure is a top priority for our customers and that information should be practical and easy to understand. SES Water already provides guidance on water pressure through its online FAQs, including a simple flow test customers can carry out at home. We will review how this information is presented and consider whether additional practical examples, visual guidance and self-service tools could further help customers understand and assess water pressure issues.

<https://www.seswater.co.uk/household/help-support/noticed-a-problem/supply-issues>

30th July 2026

Q2. Investment, resilience and water pressure:

Concern about whether current action matches current problems
(Q2. Action B)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We recognise the importance of providing customers with clear and timely information during incidents and operational events. Our Customer Promise sets out what customers can expect during incidents, and where to find incident pages and supply interruption information:

- Customer Promise: [SES Water Customer Promise](#)
- In Your Area: [Work in your area | SES Water](#)
- - Supply interruptions and incidents: [Noticed a problem? | SES Water](#)

These channels explain what is happening, what actions are being taken, and where customers can access additional support.

We are also exploring how future investment in customer technology could further enhance self-service and customer communications. As part of our ongoing digital transformation, we will consider opportunities such as improved issue reporting, personalised updates and enhanced digital engagement channels, subject to business priorities, customer needs and future investment decisions.

30th September 2026

Q2. Investment, resilience and water pressure:

Concern about whether current action matches current problems
(Q2. Action C)



The voice for water consumers
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Please find the response from SES Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We understand that our customers expect clear and timely updates on events and incidents. While we have an interactive "In Your Area" map that provides updates on events and issues, we recognise from customer feedback that it does not always work effectively or alert customers in a timely manner.

To improve our approach, we will:

- Carry out an in-depth review of the "In Your Area" service.
- Develop an internal process for updating "In Your Area" through closer collaboration between operational, -engineering, and customer teams.
- Conduct ongoing testing of its functionality, using lessons learned to drive continuous improvement.
- Promote sign-ups to alerts at key customer contact points.
- While improvements are being implemented, ensure we send SMS alerts to customers during significant events.
- Advertise sign-ups for incident alerts including call centre briefings
- Promote and simplify sign-up to SMS and incident alerts at key customer contact points, including through our website, My Account, customer communications and contact centre interactions, ensuring customers understand how to register for and manage their alert preferences.

30th September 2026

Q2. Investment, resilience and water pressure:

Concern about whether current action matches current problems
(Q2. Action D)



The voice for water consumers
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Please find the response from SES Water's Action Plan below

Timescale

We recognise that customers want to understand how their bills and investment translate into tangible benefits. While we already provide dedicated webpages for ongoing projects, helping customers see what work is taking place, when and why, alongside clear explanations of outcomes such as increased water pressure and improved supply resilience, we know we can go further to communicate the long-term value of our plans.

To strengthen our approach, we will:

- Create a dedicated investment webpage that clearly sets out our plans and milestones, using plain English to explain the benefits for customers.

Our existing webpages already provide information on resilience, supply capacity and investment activity, including:

- Water Resources, Rainfall and Resources: <https://www.seswater.co.uk/your-environment/water-resources/rainfall-and-resources>
- Current Projects and Work in Your Area: <https://www.seswater.co.uk/household/help-support/work-in-your-area/current-projects>
- Investment in Cheam Water Treatment Works: <https://www.seswater.co.uk/about-us/news-and-resources/news/investing-to-upgrade-cheam-water-treatment-works>

To build on this, we will:

- Add a clear, accessible explanation of the water supply and demand graph, helping customers understand how to read and interpret it.
- Continue to signpost customers to project-specific webpages and investment updates, helping them understand what work is being delivered in their area and the benefits this will provide.
- Continue to share key investment updates and celebrate milestones through a multi-channel approach, including social media, press releases, customer newsletters and website news updates.
- Continue delivering our Customer Communication Approach training programme and CCW Accountability Session workshops with operational, engineering and customer-facing colleagues. These sessions focus on translating technical investment activity into clear customer benefits, using plain English, understanding customer expectations, identifying customer impacts and proactively sharing positive outcomes. Delivery of this programme is ongoing and will be completed by 30 June 2026.
- Continue to identify and promote examples of investment delivering tangible benefits for customers and communities, including improvements to resilience, water quality, reliability and service outcomes, through project case studies and milestone communications.

30th June 2026

Q3. Value for money, communication and customer experience:

Better service should feel easier and clearer



The voice for water consumers
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Question asked by SES Water Community member:

"A lot of us judge value for money not just by what we pay, but by how easy the company is to deal with, how clear the information is and whether we feel informed and in control.

Because we can't switch provider, things like comparing bills, better communication, easy access to information and more modern ways of managing our account really matter.

SES Water already offers account information and area updates online, but what will you do to make cost comparisons with other providers clearer, and improve the day-to-day customer experience so people feel they are getting better value for money?"

SES Water said its bills had remained relatively flat compared with wider sector increases, but would rise around 10% this year to support ongoing investment in water softening, treatment works, pipe renewal and day-to-day operations. It outlined a broad breakdown of how bill income is used and said more information is available through bills, the website and wider communications.

Customers felt the explanation lacked sufficient clarity/comparability, particularly around how charges are broken down, how freshwater and wastewater responsibilities are split, why earlier plans had changed, and how lower personal usage translates into visible value.

Discussion focused on making bills and account information more transparent and comparable, improving explanation of commitments and changes, and exploring more tailored ways to help customers engage with usage and feel better value from their service.

Actions

- Show simpler, more comparable bill information, including price comparisons and a more granular spending breakdown.
- Communicate openly about plans and commitments, and when these change - what happened, and why, in clear customer terms.
- Help customers understand and engage with their water usage and its billing impact
- Clearly explain the split between freshwater and wastewater service - how this works operationally and financially.

"In our bills...I don't think it's clear what's going to you and what's going to Thames Water or whoever else for dealing with the waste products"

"There's no explanation as to why things didn't happen... Do you trust for the future if you're told something... five years ago, that doesn't appear to have been acted upon?"

"you're showing me that I'm using less water, but my bills are going up, that doesn't add up for me."



Customers felt value for money depends on clearer, more transparent billing, better explanation of charges and commitments, and more tailored ways to reward lower usage.

Q3. Value for money, communication and customer experience:

Better service should feel easier and clearer



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| "You said" (Community member actions) | "We did" (SES Water response on the night) | What is the 'Ideal' SES Water response? (In the eyes of our community) | Timescale / final comments |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Show simpler, more comparable bill information, including price comparisons and a more granular spending breakdown.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bills had stayed relatively flat compared with wider sector increases, rising around 10% this year. Gave a broad breakdown of how each £1 is spent, including operations, energy, people, rates/licences and investment/financing. Said more information on bill spending is available via the website and bill explainers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide simpler bill comparisons with other providers in a format customers can quickly understand. Show a clearer and more detailed breakdown of where money goes, including financing and investment. Make cost and value comparisons easier to access in routine customer communications. | <p>Company comment: SES Water said comparison data is available via Discover Water but could be better signposted, and accepted the need for clearer explanation of bill breakdowns.</p> <p>Said delivery and progress are heavily tracked and regulated, but agreed this could be communicated more clearly to customers.</p> |
| <p>Communicate openly about plans and commitments, and when these change - what happened, and why, in clear customer terms.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said investment is supporting water softening, pipe renewal, treatment works improvements, and day-to-day operations. Framed bill increases as linked to this investment and operational need. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate openly when plans, forecasts or commitments change. Explain clearly why outcomes differ from earlier expectations. Show customers what has been delivered, what has changed, and why. | <p>Confirmed innovative tariffs are being trialled elsewhere in the Pennon Group¹ and may become more feasible as smart metering expands.</p> |
| <p>Help customers understand and engage with their water usage and its billing impact</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said account and billing information is intended to help customers understand value for money. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help customers understand how their consumption affects their bill. Explore innovative or creative tariffs that reward lower usage. | <p>Confirmed wastewater charges are based on assumed return to the system and was willing to improve communications explaining the arrangement.</p> |
| <p>Clearly explain the split between freshwater and wastewater service - how this works operationally, and financially.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referred to water-only billing levels and comparisons with other companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain who provides which service, how charges are calculated and how the billing arrangement works. Make the freshwater/wastewater split easier to understand in customer-facing communications. | <p>Timescale: No firm timeline committed. Detail expected in company action plan.</p> |

¹The Pennon Group is a British water utility company, owning companies including SES water, South West Water, Bournemouth Water and Bristol Water

Q3. Value for money, communication and customer experience:

Better service should feel easier and clearer
(Q3. Action A)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We understand that customers want to know how their bill compares to the wider industry, and that independent comparison is an important way of assessing their water company. While we already provide industry averages within our bill communications, we will also include a link to the Discover Water bill comparison page (<https://www.discoverwater.co.uk/annual-bill>) on our "Understanding Your Bill" webpage:

<https://www.seswater.co.uk/household/your-account/paying-your-bill/understand-your-bill>

We also recognise that bill and investment information needs to be clearer, simpler, and more accessible for all customers. While detailed explanations are available, technical language and lengthy reports can make this information difficult to understand and, at times, hard to find.

To improve this, we are:

- Publishing an "Understanding Your Bill" animation across our website to explain bills in a simple, visual format.
- Providing an infographic bill breakdown alongside the animation, clearly showing how customer payments are used (for example, through a visual "glass" breakdown).

These changes will help ensure information is easy to understand, more engaging, and accessible to all customer groups.

30th June 2026

Q3. Value for money, communication and customer experience:

Better service should feel easier and clearer
(Q3. Action B)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We recognise the need to provide clearer and more transparent explanations of how investment decisions are made, and why plans, forecasts, and commitments can change.

To support this, we will:

- Add clearer information to our website explaining how we make investment decisions. This will show how our plans are shaped by legal duties, regulatory requirements, and customer priorities. It will explain how these factors come together to form our business plan, how Ofwat reviews and approves our proposals, how delivery is monitored throughout the regulatory period, and how we respond if something unexpected occurs. This will give customers a transparent view of how and why we make investment decisions.

We also recognise that regulatory performance metrics are complex, and we need to do more to make them easier for customers to understand. To support this, we have brought copywriting expertise in-house to help teams use plain English, reduce jargon, and present information in a clearer, more accessible way.

30th July 2026

Q3. Value for money, communication and customer experience:

Better service should feel easier and clearer
(Q3. Action C)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We recognise that customers need to quickly and easily understand their bills, tariffs and how their water use affects the amount they pay. To support this, we have published an "Understand Your Bill" page, which includes information, infographics and videos explaining bill components, payment options and how consumption can influence charges.

<https://www.seswater.co.uk/household/your-account/paying-your-bill/understand-your-bill>

We also recognise that innovative charging approaches can help customers better understand the relationship between water use, affordability and environmental impact. Through the wider Pennon Group, South West Water is currently trialling a number of innovative tariff approaches, including seasonal and usage-based tariffs designed to encourage water efficiency while maintaining affordability. These trials commenced in 2024 and are being independently evaluated to understand their impact on customer behaviour, water consumption and customer perceptions before any decisions are made about wider adoption.

As these trials are still being assessed, it would be premature to commit to introducing similar tariffs in the SES Water region. However, we will continue to monitor the results, share learning across the Pennon Group and consider whether innovative charging approaches could deliver benefits for SES Water customers in the future.

30th September 2026

Q3. Value for money, communication and customer experience:

Better service should feel easier and clearer
(Q3. Action D)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

SES Water provides information on wastewater arrangements through its website, including a dedicated sewerage services page which explains that wastewater services are provided by a separate company depending on a customer's location. The page also explains how customers can identify their wastewater provider and provides links to further information.

[Sewerage services | SES Water](#)

We recognise there is an opportunity to make this information more visible and easier for customers to access. Over the next 12 months, we will review how wastewater information is presented across key customer touchpoints, including bills, MyAccount, customer correspondence and relevant website journeys. This will include considering clearer explanations of the split between water and wastewater services, how charges are calculated, and who customers should contact for different services.

We will also explore opportunities to improve signposting through digital communications and customer education content, helping customers better understand the distinction between water and wastewater responsibilities and the associated charging arrangements. Progress will be reviewed as part of our ongoing customer communications and digital improvement programme during 2026/27.

30th September 2026

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 **Wednesday 29th 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*.
Thursday 7th May



Action plan

Within 28 days

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

The action plan will be **shared with the Water Voice community on Wednesday 3rd June**



Customer feedback

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

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

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



The voice for water consumers
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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>

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Thank you!



ccw.org.uk