



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Water company: Thames Water
Tuesday 2nd June

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

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

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

	Topic	Community member question
Q1	Water quality and perception: Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives	“For many of us, day-to-day service is actually fine, but our overall view of Thames Water is shaped much more by what we’re seeing in the news. This creates a gap where the water quality we experience might be okay, but confidence in the company is low... How will you reassure customers about water quality, improve communication beyond the headlines and rebuild confidence in Thames Water?”
Q2	Sewage and pollution: Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change	“Pollution and sewage is a really high priority for all of us because it’s such a visible and concerning issue. From our perspective, it feels like the same problems keep happening... What specific changes will you deliver in the next 12–24 months to reduce sewage pollution, what work is already funded and how will customers see clear local evidence of improvement?”
Q3	Bills, value and trust: Lack of confidence in how money is spent	“We’re seeing bills go up, and at the same time we’re reading about things like dividends, financial issues and the company not meeting expectations. We’re being asked to pay more without seeing clear improvements... Can you clearly explain where our money is going, how we know it is being used for customers, and what improvements we will actually see as bills rise?”

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 **Tuesday 2nd June**.

Executive summary - insights by question



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The Accountability Session for Thames Water highlighted customers' calls for clearer communication on water quality, sewage pollution and rising bills, alongside stronger evidence of local improvement and greater clarity on how customer money is being used; Thames Water acknowledged these concerns and broadly accepted the actions raised.

Q1

Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives

Thames Water said water quality is strong, citing low levels of customer contact about water quality, extensive random sampling, published performance data and recent investment in more personalised customer support (inc. additional staff) when issues arise.

Community members welcomed some of these steps, particularly the move towards more human support, but said confidence remains low because statistics and reassurance alone do not rebuild trust when many customers feel disconnected from the company, influenced by negative coverage, and unsupported by regular, visible communication.

The discussion therefore focused on the need for Thames Water to rebuild trust through an ongoing relationship with customers, supported by proactive updates, clearer public evidence on water quality, more accessible explanations and communication that feels credible, transparent and relevant to customers' lived experience.

Customers wanted clearer, more tangible and more local explanations of rising bills, with visible links between extra cost, specific projects and real customer benefit.

Q2

Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

Thames Water said it had made progress on sewage pollution, citing an 18% reduction in pollution incidents and 60% reduction in spills in the last year, alongside targeted network cleaning, sewer depth monitors, £200m of pollution-related interventions and a 5-year, £6bn investment plan.

The community welcomed the scale of activity but did not feel the response yet gave clear enough evidence that local conditions are improving, with several questioning whether headline figures, rainfall effects and company-level reporting reflected what they see locally or addressed wider concerns about monitoring and transparency.

Discussion focused on a need for simple, localised and independently credible communication on what is funded, what is changing in practice, and how customers will be able to see measurable improvement in sewage pollution over the next 12–24 months.

Customers wanted simpler, local and independently credible evidence that funded investment is reducing sewage pollution, rather than relying on high-level figures and company-wide claims.

Q3

Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

Thames Water explained that customer bills are being used to fund infrastructure investment, day-to-day network operations and financing costs, while also outlining a wider £20bn investment programme and the company's ongoing recapitalisation.

Community members welcomed the clearer breakdown, but remained concerned that rising bills are being asked of customers at the same time as Thames Water is undergoing major financial restructuring, with limited clarity on how refinancing decisions have been made, why financing costs are so significant and what this will mean for customers over the longer term.

Discussion focused on the need for much clearer, more transparent communication on both spending and refinancing, showing not only where customer money is going now, but how financial decisions will affect future bills, investment and customer outcomes.

Customers wanted clearer proof that higher bills will deliver visible improvements, alongside evidence and transparency around key financing decisions and how these will shape long-term outcomes.

Actions agreed during the Accountability Session



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Q1

Water quality and perception:
Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives

- (Re)build trust through regular, proactive, evidence-led communication to create and sustain customer relationships.
- Provide clear, customer-friendly evidence on water quality and safety across website, email and social channels.
- Maintain human, personal, responsive support when issues arise, shaped by customer feedback on channels and format.
- Explain sampling and hard water clearly, linking technical data to customers' lived experience and concerns.

Q2

Sewage and pollution:
Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

- Communicate sewage pollution performance and funded investment in simple, local and customer-friendly formats.
- Show clear local evidence of improvement, linking area issues to projects, timelines and expected outcomes.
- Give customers confidence that monitoring, treatment and reporting are robust, maintained, and independently assured.
- Educate customers on behavioural impacts on sewers and infrastructure, with clear guidance on how to reduce harm.

Q3

Bills, value and trust:
Lack of confidence in how money is spent

- Provide clear, regular and accessible breakdowns of where customer money goes and what bill increases are funding.
- Show year-on-year evidence of the service and infrastructure improvements delivered through customer bills
- Clearly explain refinancing, including decision-making and its impact on future customer bills and outcomes
- Demonstrate how investment in people, skills and service delivery is improving long-term value for customers.



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Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Our findings in detail

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Q1. Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives



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Question asked by Thames Water Community member:

“For many of us, day-to-day service is actually fine, but our overall view of Thames Water is shaped much more by what we’re seeing in the news. This creates a gap where the water quality we experience might be okay, but confidence in the company is low...

How will you reassure customers about water quality, improve communication beyond the headlines and rebuild confidence in Thames Water?”

Thames Water said water quality is strong, citing low levels of customer contact about water quality, extensive random sampling, published performance data and recent investment in more personalised customer support (inc. additional staff) when issues arise.

Community members welcomed some of these steps, particularly the move towards more human support, but said confidence remains low because statistics and reassurance alone do not rebuild trust when many customers feel disconnected from the company, influenced by negative coverage, and unsupported by regular, visible communication.

The discussion therefore focused on the need for Thames Water to rebuild trust through an ongoing relationship with customers, supported by proactive updates, clearer public evidence on water quality, more accessible explanations and communication that feels credible, transparent and relevant to customers’ lived experience.

Actions

- (Re)build trust through regular, proactive, evidence-led communication to create and sustain customer relationships.
- Provide clear, customer-friendly evidence on water quality and safety across website, email and social channels.
- Maintain human, personal, responsive support when issues arise, shaped by customer feedback on channels and format.
- Explain sampling and hard water clearly, linking technical data to customers’ lived experience and concerns.

“A good starting point would be to take accountability... we made a mistake, but we want to put things right.”

“I feel Thames Water should be proactive... rather than crisis to crisis and kind of being a submarine in terms of communication and not say anything until it goes wrong.”

“Personally for me, there is no relationship between myself and Thames Water... I’m right at the bottom, I need to have that trust built and have that relationship with the company.”



Customers wanted clearer, more tangible and more local explanations of rising bills, with visible links between extra cost, specific projects and real customer benefit.

Q1. Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Thames Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Thames Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale/ final comments
(Re)build trust through regular, proactive, evidence-led communication to create and sustain customer relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said transparency is crucial to rebuilding confidence. Said more regular water quality updates are being explored. Referenced engagement through council events, outreach and forums such as this one. Confirmed company uses multiple survey sources to understand trust, service and public perception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build trust through regular communications, not only during incidents. Create a stronger media presence and build ongoing relationships with customers through visible, credible updates and ownership around issues and mistakes. Track trust over time and use customer feedback to shape communications. 	<p>Company comment: Thames Water acknowledged need for trust-building. Advised that trust looks different for different customers, and recognised the need for a more proactive, multi-channel approach.</p> <p>Positive around ask for continued human support, stated that further customer involvement could be used to advise on their action plan.</p> <p>Clarified the sampling process in-session.</p> <p>Timescale: Initial, visible trust-building actions requested within 2-3 months. No timeline committed, detail expected in company action plan.</p>
Provide clear, customer-friendly evidence on water quality and safety across website, email and social channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said water quality data already available on website. Said company carries out extensive annual water quality sampling and that performance is strong. Referenced previous TV and social media campaigns, with further activity planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present water quality and safety information in plain English and easy-to-digest formats. Make reassurance more visible and easier to find across channels customers already use. Evidence that is simple and relatable, not just technically available e.g. actual rates of tap water consumption. 	
Maintain human, personal, responsive support when issues arise, shaped by customer feedback on channels and format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said 12 additional staff have been added to improve support when things go wrong. Said generic responses are not sufficient and more personal communication is needed. Indicated a willingness to involve customers more directly in shaping future communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep support channels human, personal and responsive. Ensure customers receive communication that feels reassuring rather than scripted. Use customer views to shape how support is delivered and through which channels. 	
Explain sampling and hard water clearly, linking technical data to customers' lived experience and concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said around 500,000 water quality samples are taken each year. Clarified that sampling is generated randomly and explained how addresses are selected. Said most water quality contacts relate to appearance and taste rather than safety concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain sampling clearly and transparently so customers understand why it can be trusted. Address perceived gaps between company data and customers' local experience. Provide clearer information on hard water, taste and what Thames Water can do in response. 	

Q1. Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives

(Q1. Action A: (Re)build trust through regular, proactive, evidence-led communication to create and sustain customer relationships.)



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Please find the response from Thames Water’s Action Plan below	Timescale
<p>In order to be more visible and engage with our customers we did undertake a range of communications during 2025 across television and social media, with one of our London based water quality samplers as the face and voice of the campaign. This campaign delivered 70million impressions . As a result, we saw a positive customer reaction, with an 11% increase in customer confidence with their drinking water quality and 60% of participants more reassured about their tap water quality having seen or heard the campaign. However, we know that there is more to do and that this is an area where continual effort is required; as a result we plan to repeat this campaign between July and September 2026.</p> <p>As we all know, very occasionally things can go wrong. When that happens we believe that it is important to own the issue, to provide clear and calm communication and where possible timescales for the problem being fixed. We have been a lot more visible in this area recently, on our website , to councils and MPs and where necessary on the TV and radio. We will continue to do this, but look to enhance this further, continually seeking to simplify the message.</p> <p>During the year we have introduced a whole new team of dedicated customer communication leads who are available 7 days a week to provide the kind of service that our customers would expect. They are there to ensure that our communication is timely, local, personal and clear. In addition, our customer team has grown providing greater support, particularly for vulnerable customers, when things don't go as they should. This can include making personal phone calls, visits at home or attendance at community or residents meetings. Over the coming year, we are focused on continued improvements to how we communicate, whether digitally or personally, with investment in new technology, enhanced training for colleagues and a relentless focus on learning. We have an ongoing improvement plan to strengthen incident communications. This includes further enhancement of our website incident pages, the introduction of video updates across appropriate channels and greater engagement with multi-agency responses and incident planning. We are continually improving our communication with Non House-Hold/New Appointments and Variations (NHH/NAVs) by increasing notifications above the current industry recommendation. We are also driving internal collaboration between teams to ensure a seamless communication experience for customers, this involves teams across clean, waste and planned events. Enhanced training includes refreshed training for different roles within incident management to reflect new ways of working from a communications perspective. Training is being provided to wider teams who, collectively, will provide video content for customers when incidents occur. Guidance is being delivered for an expanded crisis communication team which has an expanded view of the incident and crisis landscape. This also involves an element of media handling training. Our focus on learning includes using incident debriefs, exercises and a structured programme of customer feedback to identify lessons, understand customer preferences, and make continuous improvements to our communications approach.</p>	<p>Water quality information on the Thames Water website was reviewed and updated as appropriate in May 2026.</p> <p>We will confirm the future frequency of published water quality results at the next accountability session on 4 November 2026.</p> <p>Repeat media campaign – 1st July and 30th September 2026.</p>

Q1. Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives

(Q1. Action B: Provide clear, customer-friendly evidence on water quality and safety across website, email and social channels)



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

Timescale

Your water gets tested every day and must meet strict UK drinking water standards, with results checked by the independent Drinking Water Inspectorate.

Some information on our website may look out of date, but this is because water quality data is published retrospectively after a full year of testing and verification. For example, 2024 results were published in 2025, and 2025 results are now live for 2026. This ensures the data is complete and accurate.

We know this isn't always clear, so we're improving it:

We've already added clearer explanations on our website to explain when and how water quality data is updated. We are also reviewing whether more frequent updates, such as biannual summaries, could be provided, informed by practices adopted by other companies. We will share a further update at the next accountability session on 4 November 2026

Water quality is monitored continuously, not just once a year, and safety checks happen before water reaches your tap.

You can view your local results here:

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/water-and-waste-help/water-quality/check-your-water-quality>

Water quality information on the Thames Water website was reviewed and updated as appropriate in May 2026.

We will confirm the future frequency of published water quality results at the next accountability session on 4 November 2026.

Q1. Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives

(Q1. Action C: Maintain human, personal, responsive support when issues arise, shaped by customer feedback on channels and format.)



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Please find the response from Thames Water’s Action Plan below	Timescale
<p>We endeavour to recruit and create opportunities within our local communities at every turn. All our customers have a choice in terms of how they wish to contact us - our customer service phone lines, for issues with your water or waste, are available 24/7, 365 to talk to a colleague. Customers can also talk to us on Whatsapp, webchat, email, private message on social media or report an issue to us online, where you can also manage your bill and other billing-related queries. We are working hard to support colleagues with prompting tools (rather than scripts) so that experiences for customers are personalised, tailored and don't feel generic - this is a continued focus for us as we continue to handle over 1.5million calls each year. We continue to prioritise local recruitment of colleagues where community support, knowledge and relationships are fundamental and for those supporting customers during operational incidents or periods of vulnerability. We do rely of some support from further afield during periods of very high demand, prioritising a customer being able to reach us when they need to. Customers can find information on how to contact us on their bills, by visiting our website, and through our social media channels.</p> <p>Our customer surveys, as well as local engagement forums, complaints reviews and general feedback from our team of customer representatives (field-based colleagues dedicated to supporting customers) are used weekly to inform how we focus our service improvements, including how we improve all of the channels customers use and want to use to communicate with us, where we can introduce enhanced customer care or change processes and ways of working.</p>	<p>Water quality information on the Thames Water website was reviewed and updated as appropriate in May 2026.</p> <p>We will confirm the future frequency of published water quality results at the next accountability session on 4 November 2026.</p>

Q1. Water quality and perception:

Rebuilding confidence in the face of negative public narratives

(Q1. Action D: Maintain human, personal, responsive support when issues arise, shaped by customer feedback on channels and format.)



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Please find the response from Thames Water’s Action Plan below

Timescale

We take over 500,000 samples every year, for our raw water, at our Water Treatment Works, our storage reservoirs and randomly at customers taps. At the start of every year our independent laboratory and sampling team randomly select a number of customer addresses from each water supply area. These samples are taken equally spaced throughout the year, so that we get a true picture of water quality regardless of the time of year. For customer samples our samplers knock on the customers door without an appointment, so that we take a true representative sample of the water that we supply. If our sampler is unable to gain access they are permitted to go to a neighbours and if that is not successful they then select another address from the list of properties chosen at random at the start of the year.

We are always keen to understand our customers perception of the water they receive and we record all customer contacts for water quality throughout the year – for example of taste, smell or appearance. This is extremely important, as customers can alert us if something is wrong, although in almost all cases this is usually due to internal plumbing issues (for example due to building works). We investigate anything unusual and will take action if necessary – for example requiring the building owner to make changes to plumbing. That said, we are extremely proud that very few customers contact us about the quality of their water and during 2025 only 0.45 customers per 1000 contacted us, the lowest in the whole water industry – placing us first for customer acceptability for water quality across the whole of the UK. That said we are not resting and we will continue to take action where customers report problems to us.

We do know that the hardness of our water can be a concern. However, very few customers contact us about this. Hardness within the tap water that we supply is due to the presence of naturally occurring minerals, whose concentrations can naturally vary depending on whether the water initially came from groundwater or river water. These minerals pose no health concern at the concentrations found within our tap water, in fact there is some scientific evidence that they may be beneficial. We have reviewed information on our website and compared it to other water companies to ensure that it continues to meet the questions that our customers have about the hardness of their water, and we believe the information we provide is appropriate and accessible.

More information about water quality including hard water can be found on our website - www.thameswater.co.uk/help/water-and-waste-help/water-quality and we will be repeating our water quality campaign in summer 2026 to reach more customers.

Water quality information on the Thames Water website was reviewed and updated as appropriate in May 2026.

We will confirm the future frequency of published water quality results at the next accountability session on 4 November 2026.

Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change



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Question asked by Thames Water Community member:

"Pollution and sewage is a really high priority for all of us because it's such a visible and concerning issue. From our perspective, it feels like the same problems keep happening...

What specific changes will you deliver in the next 12–24 months to reduce sewage pollution, what work is already funded and how will customers see clear local evidence of improvement?"

Thames Water said it had made progress on sewage pollution, citing an 18% reduction in pollution incidents and 60% reduction in spills in the last year, alongside targeted network cleaning, sewer depth monitors, £200m of pollution-related interventions and a 5-year, £6bn investment plan.

The community welcomed the scale of activity but did not feel the response yet gave clear enough evidence that local conditions are improving, with several questioning whether headline figures, rainfall effects and company-level reporting reflected what they see locally or addressed wider concerns about monitoring and transparency.

Discussion focused on a need for simple, localised and independently credible communication on what is funded, what is changing in practice, and how customers will be able to see measurable improvement in sewage pollution over the next 12–24 months.

Actions

- Communicate sewage pollution performance and funded investment in simple, local and customer-friendly formats.
- Show clear local evidence of improvement, linking area issues to projects, timelines and expected outcomes.
- Give customers confidence that monitoring, treatment and reporting are robust, maintained, and independently assured.
- Educate customers on behavioural impacts on sewers and infrastructure, with clear guidance on how to reduce harm.

"It was statistically quite a lot of information to take in... there's something about... simple messaging."

"A lot of people don't know this, so we need to be educated on what we should do and how we can help."

"That could be me being misled by things I've read online... I'm just a little bit confused about actually what the figures are telling us in reality."



Customers wanted simpler, local and independently credible evidence that funded investment is reducing sewage pollution, rather than relying on high-level figures and company-wide claims.

Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change



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"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Thames Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Thames Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
Communicate sewage pollution performance and funded investment in simple, local and customer-friendly formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered sewage, pollution and investment information in-session. Said Thames Water was the first company to publish live overflow data on a website map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present pollution performance and investment plans in plain English and easy-to-follow formats. Make it easier for customers to understand key data points and track progress. Clearly explain what funded investment means in practice for customers and the environment. 	<p>Company comment: Sewage/pollution data is available through Pollution Incident Reduction Plan and website, but will explore how this info should be communicated to customers. Upcoming marketing campaign will help explain £6bn investment plan.</p>
Show clear local evidence of improvement, linking area issues to projects, timelines and expected outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said pollution incidents are down 18%, spills down 60%, while acknowledging rainfall had been a factor. 1,500km of network cleaning and 23,000 sewer depth monitors are already in place. £200m spent on pollution-related interventions, with further infrastructure investment planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link company-level reporting to local conditions and lived experience. Show what improvements customers should expect to see in their area. Be clearer about how local issues, including sensitive local environments, are being addressed. 	<p>Said local communication is important, also noted that major infrastructure improvements take time.</p>
Give customers confidence that monitoring, treatment and reporting are robust, maintained, and independently assured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said sewer depth monitors are used to identify issues earlier and improve response times. Confirmed incidents are independently monitored. Reporting is provided through a self-reporting mechanism to the Environment Agency, with wider reporting changes also being worked through. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide reassurance that monitoring and treatment assets are maintained and upgraded. Explain more clearly how reporting and assurance processes work. Show that data can be trusted and is not solely reliant on company's own interpretation. 	<p>Confirmed independent monitoring is deployed around incidents.</p> <p>'Bin it, don't block it' campaign is in place, communicates info and advice on customer behaviours - can be ramped up.</p>
Educate customers on behavioural impacts on sewers and infrastructure, with clear guidance on how to reduce harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said many incidents are linked to customer behaviour, including fats, oils, grease and wet wipes. Customer campaigns are already being used, including with communities, food service establishments, care homes and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give customers clearer guidance on what not to put down sinks and toilets, and why it matters. Communicate impacts of poor disposal behaviour on infrastructure, pollution and customer costs. Use a wider range of channels to make this messaging more visible and practical. 	<p>Timescale: Requested 1 month for sewage/pollution communication. No timeline commitment, detail expected in company action plan.</p>

Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

(Q2. Action A: Communicate sewage pollution performance and funded investment in simple, local and customer-friendly formats.)



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

Timescale

Every year we publish a Pollution Incident Reduction Plan (PIRP) which captures pollution performance and our improvement plans. This can be found on our websites through a dedicated landing page > <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/regulation/pollution-incident-reduction>

We appreciate that the document is quite technical in nature due to the information and format demands set by the Environment Agency. In response to the feedback of the panel, we are planning to create a shorter, more accessible version of the PIRP which we will use to accompany our biggest upgrade campaign and share more widely on external platforms. This will be completed within 3 months.

On 27 May, we launched the next phase of our biggest upgrade marketing campaign, with a focus on our investment to reduce our impact on river health. It will appear on TV, radio and on social media. We've also increased our communications around project completion, for example we recently held a stakeholder and media visit at Henley sewage treatment works highlighting the investment we've made and what it will mean for customers and the local community. We plan to continue this approach to show customers where their money is being spent and the benefits to their community. We also do hyper local communications with updates on local social media pages for projects where possible, and we're using reactive communications during incidents to also highlight where we're making improvements to reduce the likelihood of repeat incidents.

We will publish customer friendly version of PIRP by 1 September 2026.

We will publish Investment stories regularly on our website.

We will publish frequent stories through local media outlets in line with our campaigns.

We will provide update with further sites where we install Continuous Water Quality Monitors by 4 November 2026

Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

(Q2. Action B: Show clear local evidence of improvement, linking area issues to projects, timelines and expected outcomes.)



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

Timescale

In recent years, we've kicked off a more hyper local approach to communications helping customers understand what we're doing in their local communities, which include targeting local social media and Nextdoor.

We're also launching the next phase of our biggest upgrade campaign, focused on rivers and the investment we're making, which will include TV, radio and social, and will be further supported through advertorials in local newspapers making the upgrade relevant to those communities. We plan to use our website to showcase stories from our upgrade programme. These stories will be regularly refreshed to ensure they are kept relevant

To make a meaningful difference in local areas we've kicked off a programme to work more collaboratively with local councils, tailoring our approach to address the primary causes of blockages in their areas which includes both operational and communications led interventions. We have included some examples below:

HA8 Edgware – Pollution prevention programme - Together with our Network Protection Team and the London Borough of Barnet, we have been collaboratively working to protect the environment across the HA8 postcode area following a rise in pollution incidents affecting the Silk Stream, Deans Brook, and Edgware Brook last year. We have been visiting Food Service Establishments (FSEs) across the borough to ensure they are compliant and not abusing the network through the disposal of Fats Oils and Grease (FOG). We have visited over 8 FSEs on Watling Avenue in Edgware that were noncompliant but now have suitable grease management measures in place. In addition, we have been working with Barnet’s Parks Team to gain access to all network assets within park areas to clean, survey, and line our sewers, helping to prevent any further pollution incidents.

FOG reduction programme – Local Authority collaboration - In the Mogden catchment, we have been building strong relationships with our local authorities by collaboratively working to reduce sewer abuse across the area, helping to minimise flooding and pollution incidents.

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(Q2. Action B: Show clear local evidence of improvement, linking area issues to projects, timelines and expected outcomes.)



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

Timescale

Several local authorities, including Harrow, Brent, and Hounslow, have taken a keen interest in the work we have been carrying out and the positive results it has achieved. Together, we have not only been educating businesses but also engaging with local residential communities and groups on the best ways to dispose of materials that could be harmful to the sewer network and our pumping stations. Investigating hotspot areas – In collaboration with our local authorities, we have identified multiple FOG hotspot areas across our catchment, particularly within the northern regions. By working closely with the environmental teams, we are using our Network Engineers to investigate and address these areas. Through this collaborative approach, we are helping to reduce FOG levels rapidly.

Crane Valley - Community Interest Company - We've built a strong working relationship with Crane Valley Community Interest Company to ensure the health of the River Crane remains our top priority. Working collaboratively with Habitats & Heritage, we are preparing a series of educational sessions this summer focused on protecting our rivers and raising awareness around sewer abuse. As part of this initiative, we will be attending the Scouts Summer Camp and delivering several sessions at Richmond upon Thames College to help educate younger generations about the impact of sewer misuse on the environment and local rivers.

Together, we have also created a public survey, which Habitats & Heritage will be sharing across the local boroughs connected to the River Crane. The survey aims to gather community feedback, increase public awareness, and encourage local residents to play an active role in protecting the river and its surrounding habitats. Link to survey created - [Used Cooking Oil & Fats Survey \(Page 1 of 5\)](#)

London Borough of Harrow – Flood Awareness Group - We have been engaging with the London Borough of Harrow and play a key role in their flood prevention programme. Earlier this year, we attended their Flood Prevention Day at Stanmore Fire Station, where it was fantastic to work alongside so many like-minded organisations to help educate the community. Since joining this platform, we have built strong relationships with The Environment Agency, London Fire Brigade, Thames21, REACT Disaster Response, and National Flood Forum. Together, we are working proactively to develop effective methods for preventing flooding across Harrow and supporting local communities.

We will publish customer friendly version of PIRP by 1 September 2026.

We will publish Investment stories regularly on our website.

We will publish frequent stories through local media outlets in line with our campaigns.

We will provide update with further sites where we install Continuous Water Quality Monitors by 4 November 2026

Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

(Q2. Action C: Give customers confidence that monitoring, treatment and reporting are robust, maintained, and independently assured.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We're committed to transparency and maintaining high levels of confidence in our monitoring, reporting and asset performance. We were the first company to launch a public Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) map, so that customers and communities can see near real time storm overflow activity more easily.

Our map can be found here: www.thameswater.co.uk/edm-map. We also publish information about our investment activity and programmes of work on our website so customers can see what upgrades are planned and where work is happening in their area.

We recognise that reassurance depends not only on publishing data, but also on the standards and assurance methods behind it. Our EDM monitoring approach is underpinned by the Environment Agency's Monitoring Certification Scheme (MCERTS), which ensures that quality requirements are met and that data is produced to consistent, independent standards. Our data is also reported in its entirety to the Environment Agency via the regulatory annual return process and made publicly available on our website each year.

In addition, we have started a phased programme to install Continuous Water Quality Monitors upstream and downstream of our assets to determine their impact on river health. We will cover around 25% on our assets between 2025 and 2030, focussing on sites where we subsequently have investigation or upgrade projects planned. Since January 2026, we have installed monitors at the following sites: Bicester, Brentwood, Cholsey, Cropredy, Fleet, Forest Hill, Hamstead Marshall, Horton-cum-Studley, Kings Sutton, Ludgershall, Maple Lodge, Middleton Stoney, Princes Risborough, Standlake, Stanton St John, Wash Water. We are working with contractors and landowners to carry out feasibility surveys to identify further suitable locations to install monitors in accordance with Defra guidance. We will continue to engage with the Environment Agency to discuss appropriate monitor locations. We will provide an update on further sites at the next accountability session on 4 November.

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Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

(Q2. Action C: Give customers confidence that monitoring, treatment and reporting are robust, maintained, and independently assured.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We are committed to making this data publicly available and are working with our Catchment Partnerships to train members of the community in how to interrogate and interpret the data, given its complex nature.

Catchment Partnerships are also at the heart of our Chalk Stream strategy. Chalk streams are globally important, unique, and diverse habitats. There are only 260 chalk rivers worldwide, 85% of those are located in England, making their protection and recovery a matter of national importance. We prioritise chalk streams through targeted investment to reduce the pressures we can influence directly—particularly by upgrading wastewater assets to reduce storm overflow activity and by progressing abstraction reduction schemes that leave more water in environments known to be abstraction sensitive. Alongside this, we also deliver practical, on-the-ground river restoration, focusing on restoring and improving specific stretches of river and associated habitats so that benefits are tangible, measurable, and sustained.

However, improving the health of a chalk stream in its entirety cannot be achieved through single-issue interventions alone. Chalk stream recovery depends on addressing water quantity, water quality, and physical habitat together, and that requires a catchment-based approach delivered in partnership with others, including local communities, land managers, environmental organisations, regulators and river groups. This allows us to coordinate solutions at catchment scale and reflect local evidence and priorities.

We are proud to support two Flagship Chalk Stream Partnerships that demonstrate what this collaborative model can achieve: the River Chess in the Chilterns and the River Pang and Sulham Brook in West Berkshire. For both catchments, a partnership-led model is in place to deliver restoration plans from 2025 to 2035; on the Chess, we have worked through this approach since 2020 and it has already delivered substantial improvements (including improving over 500 hectares of habitat and around 8km of watercourse).

Our dedicated partnership websites can be found here, Chess: <https://chesssmarterwatercatchment.org/> and, Pang: <https://pangchalkstreamcatchment.org/> respectively.

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We will publish Investment stories regularly on our website.

We will publish frequent stories through local media outlets in line with our campaigns.

We will provide update with further sites where we install Continuous Water Quality Monitors by 4 November 2026

Q2. Sewage and pollution:

Ongoing frustration at the lack of visible change

(Q2. Action D: Educate customers on behavioural impacts on sewers and infrastructure, with clear guidance on how to reduce harm.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We're running a strategic and targeted approach to sewer misuse communications, bringing together communications and operations teams to drive multi-channel communications through media relations, social media, marketing, public affairs and local engagement.

In August 2025, we collaborated with the PLA and Thames 21 on the removal of the wet wipe island, a project we helped fund, raising awareness about the impact of wet wipes on blockages, pollution, and customer bills. Our continued engagement included highlighting the Feltham fatberg, which not only secured widespread coverage about the impact of wet wipes on our network and therefore bills, but supported Fleur Andersen MP in her campaign for a ban on plastic wet wipes, which will come into effect in May 2027.

Due to the colder weather causing more Fats, Oils and Grease, (FOG) blockages, we delivered an integrated FOG awareness campaign on earned and paid channels in November and December 2025, reaching 3 million people through broadcast campaign and associated coverage, achieving 19.8 million impressions on paid social, and securing over 60 pieces of coverage on the festive fatberg. We used our local marketing campaign in hotspot areas as an opportunity to engage proactively with councils with the aim of working collaboratively to tackle the challenges in their particular areas – we've engaged positively with Brent Council and will roll out the same model in other areas.

We continue to find ways to communicate the impact of customer behaviour on pollutions in local communities, with a recent story about the dumping of oil into our works being covered by local media in Gerrards Cross and including a call to action for support in reporting sewer misuse.

We have a series of stories planned over the next few months around misconnections, sewage derived litter and the results of a customer survey about customer flushing behaviour to keep up the drumbeat of awareness about the impact of sewer misuse on the environment and customers. We are also using behavioural science to inform communications.

We will publish customer friendly version of PIRP by 1 September 2026.

We will publish Investment stories regularly on our website.

We will publish frequent stories through local media outlets in line with our campaigns.

We will provide update with further sites where we install Continuous Water Quality Monitors by 4 November 2026

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Question asked by Thames Water Community member:

“We’re seeing bills go up, and at the same time we’re reading about things like dividends, financial issues, and the company not meeting expectations. We’re being asked to pay more without seeing clear improvements...

Can you clearly explain where our money is going, how we know it is being used for customers, and what improvements we will actually see as bills rise?”

Thames Water explained that customer bills are being used to fund infrastructure investment, day-to-day network operations and financing costs, while also outlining a wider £20bn investment programme and the company’s ongoing recapitalisation.

Community members welcomed the clearer breakdown, but remained concerned that rising bills are being asked of customers at the same time as Thames Water is undergoing major financial restructuring, with limited clarity on how refinancing decisions have been made, why financing costs are so significant and what this will mean for customers over the longer term.

Discussion focused on the need for much clearer, more transparent communication on both spending and refinancing, showing not only where customer money is going now, but how financial decisions will affect future bills, investment and customer outcomes.

Actions

- Provide clear, regular and accessible breakdowns of where customer money goes and what bill increases are funding.
- Show year-on-year evidence of the service and infrastructure improvements delivered through customer bills.
- Clearly explain refinancing, including decision-making and its impact on future customer bills and outcomes.
- Demonstrate how investment in people, skills and service delivery is improving long-term value for customers.

“Showing that year on year that we are investing in this, things are improving, and we are on the right track, that would be good, I think for building public confidence as well.”

“It’s all to do with a fundamental question, really, understanding the increase and where the money’s going...”

“Yes, because essentially we are the ones who are paying for this [decision-making on refinancing]”



Customers wanted clearer proof that higher bills will deliver visible improvements, alongside evidence and transparency around key financing decisions and how these will shape long-term outcomes.

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

"You said" (Community member actions)	"We did" (Thames Water response on the night)	What is the 'Ideal' Thames Water response? (In the eyes of our community)	Timescale / final comments
Provide clear, regular and accessible breakdowns of where customer money goes and what bill increases are funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that the average metered bill is around £700. Broke down each £1 of customer spend into infrastructure investment, network running costs and financing costs. Said operating costs include salaries, consumables, energy and communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give customers a simple, tangible breakdown of where their money goes, presented in accessible formats e.g. bill insert, infographic or website. Connect bills with cost-to-company for service provision Make it easier to understand what specific spending categories mean in practice. 	<p>Timescale: Update of website within 3 months.</p> <p>Company comment: Broad acceptance of actions raised, detail expected in company action plan.</p> <p>Confirmed that they already invest in UK apprenticeships.</p>
Show year-on-year evidence of the service and infrastructure improvements delivered through customer bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said company plans to invest £20bn over five years. This is intended to deliver fewer disruptions, fewer supply interruptions, less pollution and better customer service. More than 1,000 additional people have been recruited over the past 12 months to support service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show clear evidence of what customer bills are delivering over time. Link spend to visible service and infrastructure improvements. Demonstrate progress in a way that customers can easily track and understand. 	
Clearly explain refinancing, including decision-making and its impact on future customer bills and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained that part of each bill goes on financing costs. Thames Water is undergoing recapitalisation, involving debt restructuring and new shareholders. Said no shareholder has taken dividends since 2017, with none expected for any new shareholders until at least 2030. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain how refinancing decisions have been made and why. Show how these decisions affect future customer bills and longer-term outcomes. Provide greater transparency on how financial decisions are being taken in customers' interests. 	
Demonstrate how investment in people, skills and service delivery is improving long-term value for customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Said additional recruitment is supporting more consistent service delivery. Linked higher spending to improved resilience and customer service outcomes. Framed investment as necessary to improve long-term performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show how spending on people and capability supports better service for customers. Demonstrate long-term value, not just short-term cost increases. Where relevant, show how Thames Water is investing in skills and future workforce development. 	

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action A: Provide clear, regular and accessible breakdowns of where customer money goes and what bill increases are funding.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

This year we included an insert in our customer bills/link in emailed bills, giving details of the breakdown of what a customer's 'pound' is spent on. This can be found here: thameswater.co.uk/charges We are always keen to improve this information and will be seeking customer feedback on our bill insert in order to inform our approach for next year. [Bill insert](#) provided in Annex.

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action B: Show year-on-year evidence of the service and infrastructure improvements delivered through customer bills.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

Our approach is to show evidence of our improvements transparently and consistently across customer, stakeholder and community communications.

At the customer level, our Biggest Upgrade in 150 Years [campaign](#) explicitly links bill investment to tangible outcomes. This includes showing how funding is being used to upgrade ageing infrastructure, reduce pollution incidents, improve river health, and strengthen resilience across the network. The campaign aims to provide clear proof points, progress updates and real world examples, so customers can see what is being delivered and why it matters.

Evidence of investment is embedded across different customer communications. This includes bill inserts, social media and website content, service updates and explainer content such as [Thames Water Explained](#) videos. These touchpoints set out how customer money is being invested, what has already been achieved, and what customers can expect next.

We regularly issue media releases updating on progress. Whilst most of these are reported in local and trade media, they can also be found on our website [here](#). We keep up a regular drumbeat of stories that we anticipate will accelerate as our investment programme continues, giving details of mains replacements, [Essex project underway | Newsroom | Thames Water](#), works to improve river quality [£20million Chesham Sewage Treatment Works upgrade boosts water quality in the River Chess | Thames Water](#) and new innovative projects to improve our performance [New leak detection tool | Newsroom | Thames Water](#).

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action B: Show year-on-year evidence of the service and infrastructure improvements delivered through customer bills.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

For wider stakeholders, such as MPs, local authorities and community stakeholders, we provide briefings and localised communications that explain where investment is being directed in their areas, supported by local examples. This helps demonstrate how customer funding is delivering improvements at a regional and community level.

We also deliver hyperlocal communications to communities in which we are doing particularly extensive works. This engages with our customers on channels that are local to them, for example on Nextdoor or local Facebook groups, and give updates about the purpose of our works and the benefits they will bring. An example can be found here: [Mitigating flooding in Misbourne Valley](#)

Each year we publish a round up of our performance in our [Annual Performance Report](#), which sets out clearly and simply how we have performed against a range of metrics. This is published annually and is available every July. Alongside this we have regular information on metrics that customers will be interested in, such as [leakage](#) and our impact on [river health](#), available and accessible from the front page of our website.

During the session with customers there was some misunderstanding in relation to the way in which bill rises are phased. The 'rise and flat' bill profile that was proposed in our PR24 Business Plan and agreed by Ofwat through the PR24 Final Determination will enable us to deliver the significant investment that we have committed to in the period 2025 – 2030 (known as AMP8). With the 'front loaded' bill increases, sufficient funds are generated at the start of the five-year period through customer revenues to start AMP8 at a rate of investment that is capable of delivering all of the schemes and projects that we have committed to for the benefit of our customers and the environment.

After typical bill increases of c. 40% in 2025-26, we are seeing typical bill increases of just over 3% in 2026-27 as we enter the 'flat' phase of the 'rise and flat' profile mentioned above. We anticipate that typical bill increases for the remainder of AMP8 will be significantly lower than that seen in 2025-26 and more in line with inflation, per the increase being seen in 2026-27.

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action C: Clearly explain refinancing, including decision-making and its impact on future customer bills and outcomes.)



The voice for water consumers
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Please find the response from Thames Water's Action Plan below (Page 1 of 2)

Timescale

This means the financial burden falls primarily on investors, not customers. This was tested in the court case that agreed the first phase of the restructuring and details can be found in paragraph 303 of the High Court judgement. <https://www.judiciary.uk/judgments/in-the-matter-of-thames-water-utilities-holdings-limited-and-in-the-matter-of-the-companies-act-2006/>

What will happen next

1) Agreement with investors and regulators

- Thames Water is working with:
- Investors (creditors and potential new equity providers)
- Regulators (including Ofwat)
- Any deal must be:
- Approved by regulators
- Structured to deliver long term financial stability

2) Financial reset through recapitalisation

The agreed plan is likely to include:

- New investment coming into the business
- Some existing debt written off
- A stronger, more sustainable financial structure

This creates a more stable company able to invest in improvements.

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action C: Clearly explain refinancing, including decision-making and its impact on future customer bills and outcomes.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

- 3) Continued regulatory oversight
- Ofwat will continue to:
 - Set bill levels
 - Monitor performance
 - Ensure customers receive value for money
- 4) Focus on improving service and the environment
- With stronger finances, the company can:
 - Deliver major infrastructure upgrades
 - Improve environmental performance
 - Provide more reliable services

In summary: the cost of fixing Thames Water's finances is being met by investors and lenders, not by customers. Customer bills remain independently regulated, and any investment secured will be used to improve services and the environment—not to pay off past debt.

When the company moves to the next phase of the recapitalisation all details will be made public and will then be fully tested in court under the UK's corporate restructuring law using a Part 26A restructuring plan under the Companies Act 2006

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action D: Demonstrate how investment in people, skills and service delivery is improving long-term value for customers.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

We invest in our people because skilled, confident and engaged colleagues deliver better outcomes for customers. Our learning offer ensures colleagues have the technical competence to work safely and compliantly, alongside the skills to interact effectively with customers and communities. This includes building customer awareness into technical and operational training, strengthening capability in customer facing systems and processes, and investing in manager capability and induction so colleagues understand our purpose, values and service expectations from day one. Alongside this, we are reviewing and evolving our learning offer to strengthen the connection between workforce capability, colleague experience and customer outcomes as part of our ongoing investment in the learning function.

Our approach to learning and development is focused on long term value, not short term cost increases. Historically, investment has been concentrated on essential health, safety and technical compliance. Over the past year, we have begun to broaden this to build stronger foundations for the future workforce by improving the quality, relevance and consistency of learning content, delivery and partners. This includes investing in updated learning assets, more engaging and immersive experiences, and a clearer learning value proposition. Over time, this investment will support improved capability, reduced reliance on short term fixes, stronger retention and more consistent service delivery for customers.

We take a structured, long term approach to building the skills Thames Water needs now and in the future. We use our skills framework and workforce insight to understand current and emerging skills gaps and to shape targeted investment across learning, early careers and resourcing.

This includes:

- Investment in core learning that builds technical, managerial and essential business skills for existing colleagues
- Strong early careers pathways, including apprenticeships, graduates and other entry routes, aligned to future workforce demand
- Targeted untapped talent approaches to widen access to roles where we see current and future skills shortages

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

Q3. Bills, value and trust:

Lack of confidence in how money is spent

(Q3. Action D: Demonstrate how investment in people, skills and service delivery is improving long-term value for customers.)



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

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

Timescale

Apprenticeships remain a key part of this approach. We have 271 apprentices, of which 84 are existing employees and the remainder are new hires in the past year. Our apprenticeship programme currently support 41 apprenticeship standards from Level 2 to degree level, offered to both internal colleagues and external candidates. We also maximise the impact of our apprenticeship levy by gifting unused funds to local small and medium sized organisations, supporting skills development in our communities, particularly in early careers and healthcare. Delivery is supported through partnerships with over 15 training providers, including Further Education colleges and local providers, working closely with us to ensure high quality, relevant provision.

We work closely with teams across the business to identify current and future skills gaps and design apprenticeship offers that directly align to these workforce needs.

We currently support 41 apprenticeship standards, ranging from Level 2 through to degree level, offered to both internal colleagues and external candidates, depending on business requirements.

To maximise the impact of our apprenticeship levy, we gift unused levy funding to local small and medium sized organisations, extending our reach and supporting skills development within our communities, particularly within early careers and healthcare sectors.

We partner with over 15 training providers, including Further Education colleges and local independent training providers, to deliver our apprenticeship programmes.

We work closely and collaboratively with these providers to ensure they fully understand our operational and skills requirements, enabling high quality apprenticeship delivery that meets both business and learner needs. In addition, we also have 18 graduates on programme

We will publish our annual report for 2025/26 in July 2026 and will continue to update our website when appropriate

What happens after the Accountability Session?

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



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Publication and transparency

Within 5 working days

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

Tuesday 28th April

Within 10 working days

A plain-English summary is published, setting out:

The questions asked.

The key points raised by Community members.

The actions agreed for inclusion in the action plan.

Anything recorded as *not yet agreed*.

Wednesday 6th May



Action plan

Within 28 days

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

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

Tuesday 2nd June



Customer feedback

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

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

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



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Water Voice - Accountability Session

Action plan response

Annex: Research approach

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie
Research & Energy Saving Trust

ccw.org.uk

Background



What is an Accountability Session?

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

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

*<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.





The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Bill insert 2026



Our 2026 price rise – everything you need to know

We know times are tough, and many people are feeling the strain of rising costs. That's why we're committed to being open about any changes to your bill and making sure we're investing as much as possible to improve the service you rely on every day. From 1 April 2026, our charges will go up to help fund our biggest upgrade in 150 years. This is in line with inflation for most of our customers. The price rise will look a little different for everybody. To understand exactly what it means for you, scan the QR code or head to thameswater.co.uk/charges



See inside:

- Our biggest upgrade in 150 years
- Support options if you're struggling with bills
- How we spend every £1



Our biggest upgrade in 150 years

You've told us you want a more resilient, reliable service – and we're here to make it happen. Over the next four years, we're tackling some of our biggest challenges head-on. We're investing a record **£20 billion** to improve water and wastewater services across London and the Thames Valley – more than double what we invested from 2020 to 2025. This essential project will see us:

<p>Replacing hundreds of miles of ageing and leaky pipes</p>	<p>Installing over one million smart meters</p>	<p>Upgrading sewerage systems to reduce pollution</p>
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Dive into the details at thameswater.co.uk/biggest-upgrade



How we spend every £1

For more information, please see the latest Annual Report on our website.

<p>55p on infrastructure</p> <p>We invest over half of every £1 to strengthen our water and wastewater services.</p>		<p>8p on financing</p> <p>We borrow money to invest in our infrastructure, like our pipes and underground systems, and pay interest on the amount we borrow.</p>
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37p on service

Our day-to-day running costs help us to keep your water flowing, such as:

- Energy bills**
We pay to keep our sites running – and work hard to keep costs down. Last year, we self-generated over a quarter of our own electricity.
- Government rates**
We pay all the business rates and taxes we owe.
- Salaries**
We pay our people to deliver your essential service.

Did you know?

Since 2020, we've invested a record **£8.5 billion** in our infrastructure.

Our commitment to you

We know we've got a long way to go to improve and deliver the standard of service you expect from us. But we've got talented, hard-working teams ready to get us there over the next four years. With new investment, we're confident we can create a water service we can all be proud of.

Zero dividends

We've not paid any dividends to group shareholders since 2017.

Last year, we made it count

From treatment to tap, your money made a difference in 2025.

<p>We've reduced leakage by more than*</p> <p>13%</p>	<p>Water outages dropped by**</p> <p>15%</p>	<p>Serious pollution incidents dropped by**</p> <p>18%</p>	<p>The Tideway Tunnel diverted over 12 million m³ of sewage from the Thames***</p>
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* Compared to 2019/20 leakage performance.
** Figures based on our 2024/25 annual report.

*** As of November 2025.



If paying feels difficult right now, we're here to help

Last year we helped thousands of customers pay their bills. If you're finding it hard to pay, our specialist Extra Care team is here to find the right support for you. We'll check if you're eligible for one of our financial support schemes and guide you to trusted debt advice if you need it.

See how you can make your bills as affordable as possible today at thameswater.co.uk/help-paying

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Did you know?

In 2025, we helped **70,000** customers sign up for financial support.

Stakeholder engagement – May 2026



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Mogden Catchment – Stakeholder Engagement



Stakeholder engagement – May 2026



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HA8 Edgware – Pollution prevention programme

Together with our Network Protection Team and the London Borough of Barnet, we have been collaboratively working to protect the environment across the HA8 postcode area following a rise in pollution incidents affecting the Silk Stream, Deans Brook, and Edgware Brook last year.

We have been visiting FSEs across the borough to ensure they are compliant and not abusing the network through the disposal of FOG. Our Network Protection Team has been engaging and educating local businesses and working collaboratively with Barnet's Environmental Health Department where required.

In addition, we have been working with Barnet's Parks Team to gain access to all network assets within park areas to clean, survey, and line our sewers, helping to prevent any further pollution incidents.

- ❖ We have visited over 8 FSEs on Watling Avenue in Edgware that were noncompliant but now have suitable grease management measures in place.



Stakeholder engagement – May 2026

FOG reduction programme – Local Authority collaboration

In the Mogden catchment, we have been building strong relationships with our local authorities by collaboratively working to reduce sewer abuse across the area, helping to minimise flooding and pollution incidents.

Several local authorities, including Harrow, Brent, and Hounslow, have taken a keen interest in the work we have been carrying out and the positive results it has achieved. Together, we have not only been educating businesses but also engaging with local residential communities and groups on the best ways to dispose of materials that could be harmful to the sewer network and our pumping stations.

Investigating hotspot areas – In collaboration with our local authorities, we have identified multiple FOG hotspot areas across our catchment, particularly within the northern regions. By working closely with the environmental teams, we are using our Network Engineers to investigate and address these areas. Through this collaborative approach, we are helping to reduce FOG levels rapidly.



Stakeholder engagement – May 2026



Crane Valley - Community Interest Company

We've built a strong working relationship with Crane Valley Community Interest Company to ensure the health of the River Crane remains our top priority. Working collaboratively with Habitats & Heritage, we are preparing a series of educational sessions this summer focused on protecting our rivers and raising awareness around sewer abuse.

As part of this initiative, we will be attending the Scouts Summer Camp and delivering several sessions at Richmond upon Thames College to help educate younger generations about the impact of sewer misuse on the environment and local rivers.

Together, we have also created a public survey, which Habitats & Heritage will be sharing across the local boroughs connected to the River Crane. The survey aims to gather community feedback, increase public awareness, and encourage local residents to play an active role in protecting the river and its surrounding habitats.

[Link to survey created](#) [Used Cooking Oil & Fats Survey \(Page 1 of 5\)](#)



Stakeholder engagement – May 2026

London Borough of Harrow – Flood Awareness Group

We have been engaging with the London Borough of Harrow and play a key role in their flood prevention programme. Earlier this year, we attended their Flood Prevention Day at Stanmore Fire Station, where it was fantastic to work alongside so many like-minded organisations to help educate the community.

Since joining this platform, we have built strong relationships with The Environment Agency, London Fire Brigade, Thames21, REACT Disaster Response, and National Flood Forum. Together, we are working proactively to develop effective methods for preventing flooding across Harrow and supporting local communities.



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Thank you!



ccw.org.uk