

CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR



CYNGOR DEFNYDDWYR



Forward Work Programme 2015-18
CONSULTATION

“Putting consumers at the heart of the water industry”

Consultation information

How to respond to this consultation

We want to hear your views on our plans.

Please send your comments by **Monday 12 January 2015** to:

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OR

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A message from our Chair

This Forward Work Programme marks an important time in the history of CCWater. As a result of our pressure on the industry for customer involvement in the price setting process, the Price Review 2014¹ has delivered some great outcomes for customers. The vast majority of water and sewerage companies are keeping prices at or below inflation for the next five years, and this marks the end of a long journey in which Customer Challenge Groups (CCGs) have played an important role in ensuring the plans and proposals from water companies meet customer priorities.

We said customers needed to drive the price setting process and, having campaigned hard for a strong customer voice since our establishment in 2005, we supported Ofwat's approach for increased customer involvement. We have chaired 15 out of 24 Customer Challenge Groups (CCGs) ensuring that they remained totally independent of the industry and publicly accountable. We also played an important role as members of those CCGs led by company-salaried Chairs. For the years ahead we want to ensure that customers' views are embedded, not only when setting prices, but in all aspects of the way water companies are managed and regulated.

Our annual research, which tracks consumer views of water and sewerage services, shows that while satisfaction with service remains high, satisfaction with value for money is lower. Water companies will have to continue to work hard to convince their customers that they are getting a good deal. Even when prices are kept at below inflation customers need to understand the service value that is being delivered to them.

We will continue to press companies to deliver a better service for consumers. Our effort in challenging and working with companies to improve customer service has resulted in customer complaints reaching record low levels since 2005. However, disappointingly, there are still some companies who are persistently poor performers and those who are bucking the overall trend with rising complaint levels. These companies will be in the spotlight when we publish comparative results on company performance.

¹ Every five years Ofwat sets price limits that enable water and sewerage companies to finance the delivery of services to consumers, in line with relevant standards and requirements. This is called the Price Review.

Over the past year we have been working with water companies, Water UK and Ofwat to introduce an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) scheme for water customers which will be implemented in early 2015. The scheme will provide an additional and final stage to the handling of customers' complaints and offer an independent and binding resolution, in cases where a satisfactory conclusion cannot be agreed on. We hope this scheme will benefit the few consumers that find themselves in this situation by providing a binding decision without the need to go through the courts.

Greater competition in the water industry will be introduced in 2017, when all eligible non-household customers in England will be able to choose their water and sewerage retail supplier(s). Retail services include handling customer complaints and enquiries, billing and meter reading. As the arrangements for the new market are established, we are playing a central role in representing the views of customers to make sure it is delivered in a way that works for customers. We are keeping a careful watch to protect the interests of those who cannot switch supplier or those that choose to stay with their existing supplier. It is important that the mistakes made in other sectors are not repeated in the water industry. Our research into non-household customers' views on competition shows that there is still low awareness about the changes that are coming. We will be raising customers' awareness of their eligibility to switch retail supplier and how best they can benefit from the new regime.

We will continue to raise the profile of CCWater to ensure that customers know how to access our free independent advice service. We are increasing the visibility of our contact information in phone books and on the back of bills to ensure accessibility for all. We have also improved the visibility and look of our website. Consumers with online access can now more easily find our help pages and our water meter calculator. We are working closely with water companies, advice agencies and charities to further improve consumer awareness of our services and customers' right to complain. During 2015 our social media presence is planned to expand.

After ten years as chair of CCWater I will be stepping down in March 2015. I am proud to hand over to my successor a strong legacy, and have no doubt that CCWater will continue to deliver real benefits for customers including those who are hard to reach. I am passionate about the organisation's vision of a water industry with the consumer absolutely at its heart and proud of what we have achieved to date. It has been a great privilege to lead CCWater from its establishment and to build it into an important and influential voice for consumers on water issues.

Dame Yve Buckland, Chair, Consumer Council for Water.

Who we are

We are the independent and statutory organisation representing household and non-household water and sewerage consumers in England and Wales. We have offices and representatives (called local consumer advocates) in both countries.

What we are trying to achieve

We want household and non-household consumers to get a good, reliable water and sewerage service from their local water company at a price they find acceptable and can afford. We want their issues and concerns to be addressed.

Our Values

- **Knowledgeable** - our work is based on evidence to help us achieve results.
- **Professional** - we consistently deliver our aims by being thorough and efficient.
- **Respectful** - we treat people fairly and with courtesy, taking account of their individual needs.
- **Open** - we are transparent and honest in our dealings with all.

What we do

We provide a strong voice for consumers by keeping in close contact with local water companies and with consumers themselves. We make sure that the collective voice of consumers is heard in national water debates and that consumers remain at the heart of the water industry. We take up consumers' complaints if they have tried and failed to resolve issues with their water companies.

How we do it

We can only achieve our objectives on behalf of water and sewerage consumers by working closely with our stakeholders. We do this by working locally, regionally and nationally with governments and our key stakeholders. These are:

- The Governments of England and Wales;
- Regulators (Ofwat, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and the Drinking Water Inspectorate);
- Other consumer organisations such as Which?, Citizens Advice, the Energy Savings Trust/Resource Efficient Wales, Age UK;
- Business groups such as Federation of Small Businesses, the National Farmers Union, The Home Builders Federation, and the Food and Drink Federation;
- Water and sewerage companies, including newly appointed water and sewerage service providers.

We work locally with water and sewerage service consumers to listen to their views, answer their enquiries and resolve their complaints about water companies. We use evidence gained from consumer research, market intelligence, cross-utility comparisons, complaints data and feedback from household and non-household consumers to inform our work on behalf of water consumers. Our duty to vulnerable people and the requirement to have regard for sustainable development (i.e. balancing economic, environmental and social aspects) underpin all our activities.

What we deliver to consumers

Since 2012 we have negotiated over £1 billion worth of benefits for customers through companies bringing forward investment, not claiming for costs incurred or providing extra help for customers in debt.

Since we were set up in 2005 we have helped return £18 million to household and business customers in compensation and rebates.

We have overseen a 350% increase in customers registered for WaterSure - a scheme to help customers struggling to pay their water bills - since 2007.

We have contributed to a 120% increase in consumers registered with companies' Special Assistance Registers - which, among other things, offer bills in large print or Braille and extra help in emergencies - since 2008.

As a result of our pressure on water companies to get things right first time, there has been an almost 55% reduction in written customer complaints since 2007-08.

We handle approximately 10,000 complaints a year.

We have made sure, more than ever before, that consumers are more central to water and sewerage companies and to the way the industry is regulated. This has been particularly the case in our work to place customers at the heart of the decisions which are made as part of the review of price limits for the next 5 years.

AND - we continue to maintain our costs at 21p per year for each water bill payer.

Our Key Strategic Issues

Our Forward Work Programme is shaped by our research on what is important to consumers.

Based on this we have developed five key strands of work which give us the framework to deliver our work.

These are:

1. Water company services that are **RIGHT FIRST TIME** and that sort out problems quickly and without hassle;
2. Fair, affordable charges that are **VALUE FOR MONEY** to help ensure a sustainable water and sewerage service now and in the future;
3. **SAFE, RELIABLE, GOOD QUALITY DRINKING WATER** that consumers value and use wisely;
4. **A SUSTAINABLE SEWERAGE SERVICE THAT WORKS** with minimal sewer flooding, and that is used responsibly;
5. **SPEAKING UP FOR AND INFORMING CONSUMERS** by providing a trustworthy, independent voice that empowers consumers by informing them about key water issues and ensuring Governments, companies and other stakeholders understand water consumers' views.

How our research drives our work

Our research tells us what is important to consumers and we gather information each year so that we can constantly review what we do in light of their opinions. Where appropriate, we work with water companies on areas of joint interest, or we work in partnership with other organisations. This is a summary of key findings from our recent research projects and how we are using the findings to drive forward our Key Strategic Issues. You can get more detail from our website www.ccwater.org.uk.

General research - all Key Strategic Issues

Water Matters: Household customer views on their water and sewerage service 2013²

Since 2006 we have tracked customer views on company performance in our Annual Household Tracking Survey. The information is also published on the “How is my water company doing?” pages of our website. This allows consumers to view how their company is performing against others.

We found that 93% of customers are satisfied with their water supply, and 87% with sewerage services, but only 70% of customers are satisfied with value for money of those services; 1 in 5 water customers say their water bill is not affordable and fewer than 6 out of 10 consider their water and sewerage charges to be fair; average trust scores have remained fairly constant for water and sewerage, but trust in energy suppliers continues to decrease.

We use the report’s findings to press companies to improve service; provide evidence to governments and select committees; develop/support policy positions; and develop our Forward Work Programme and Operational Business Plan.

Testing the Waters: Small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) customers’ views on water and sewerage services 2014³

Since 2012, SME satisfaction with water services and value for money has remained stable at 88%, but their satisfaction with service and value for money for sewerage and surface water drainage services has fallen to 78%. One in eight SMEs has

² You can read Water Matters [here](#).

³ You can read Testing the Waters [here](#).

experienced a service failure at some time - a third of them say this had a major impact on their business. SMEs are not in the habit of either looking for, or asking their water company for information about things like water efficiency or other service options, but the few who do so generally find it useful. Awareness of plans to extend retail competition in England from 2017 is very low across the range of SMEs. The research is being used to inform discussions with water companies and parliamentarians about service improvements and to provide information to consumers on our website.

Research on competition - Key Strategic Issues 1 and 2

Uncharted Waters: Non-household customers' expectations for competition in the water industry⁴

Ahead of the water and sewerage retail market opening for all non-household customers in England from April 2017, we commissioned research into non-household customers' views on their expectations for the competitive market. The key findings are that: baseline satisfaction with water companies is good for most non-household customers; most non-household customers in our research support the introduction of competition; cost reduction, bill consolidation, consumption reduction and the possibility of a better product or service are some of the reasons why non-household customers switch supplier in other competitive markets; based on experience in other markets, non-household customers are keen to avoid cold calling, contracts which lock them in or roll-over automatically, complicated tariffs and poor customer service; and there is a lack of awareness across all business sizes about the retail market changes in England from April 2017. We are using evidence from this research to inform the design of the market so that it meets the needs of non-household customers, through our membership of Open Water⁵ working groups and in discussion with Ofwat, governments, water companies, water supply licensees and new appointees.

⁴ You can read Uncharted Waters [here](#).

⁵ Open Water has been tasked with designing and implementing market reform in the water sector. This role will be taken over by Ofwat in January 2015.

Research on PR14 - Key Strategic Issue 2

Outcome and delivery incentives in the water industry⁶

Following Ofwat's guidance in January 2014 on incentive proposals we undertook research into customers' views of the principle of rewards and penalties for service delivery. The key findings were: domestic customers were opposed to the proposal of penalties and rewards; business customers from smaller companies expressed views that were broadly similar to those of domestic customers; and business customers from larger organisations tended to be more aware of the use of the incentives and were generally more receptive to the proposal.

We raised the findings with Ofwat as evidence that its model for financial incentives does not have wide customer support. We also raised this with companies in discussions on how they should adapt to Ofwat's requirements to introduce financial incentives for the delivery of outcomes in 2015-20 Business Plans.

Draft Determinations⁷

It's important that regulatory decisions by Ofwat on price and investment are acceptable to customers. We carried out research to measure customer acceptability of Ofwat's 2014 draft determinations. Customers were asked how acceptable the draft determination is when presented with basic information about how the average bill will change over 2015-20. They were then asked again how acceptable the package is, once they had seen more detailed information about prices (including the potential effect of inflation) and then the service levels companies will deliver from the draft determination package. 74% of customers found the draft determination package to be acceptable. However, this dropped to an industry average 55% once customers saw a detailed breakdown of prices and the effect of inflation, rising to 58% once customers had seen more detail about the services they will get for their money.

We are using this information to challenge Ofwat and companies where necessary to help ensure final determinations meet customers' expectations and are acceptable to the majority.

⁶ You can read Outcome and Delivery Incentives in the Water Industry [here](#).

⁷ The final report will be available in late October 2014.

Research on affordability - Key Strategic Issue 2

Living with Water Poverty⁸

We re-visited research carried out in 2009 to further enhance our understanding of the coping strategies customers use to meet the challenge of paying water bills from a very limited budget. We found that coping strategies include going without, cutting back, relying on cheaper but poorer quality goods or only buying things when there is spare money, and this cuts across all areas of expenditure and has a significant impact on quality of life. Customers and suppliers seemed more willing to engage in dialogue and negotiate extended payment periods and amounts than in 2009. One of the reasons people were reluctant to seek help with their bills was the perception that there is no help available to them. Although the majority of respondents perceived their water bill to be affordable, and it is a relatively high priority, it is also the bill most likely to be allowed to slip when people are short of money.

This research was used to inform a CCWater-led workshop in October 2014 on tackling customer indebtedness.

Research about CCWater - Key Strategic Issue 5

Stakeholder perceptions of CCWater - *due end December.*

All our research drives our Key Strategic Issues shaping our Forward Work Programme and the work we do for consumers.

⁸ You can read Living with Water Poverty [here](#).

Our Forward Work Programme 2015-2018

Achieving our Key Strategic Issues

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE 1

Water company services that are RIGHT FIRST TIME and that sort out problems quickly and without hassle

What we will do to achieve this:

For Individual Customers

Help household and non-household consumers with their enquiries and help resolve their complaints with water companies by:

- Maintaining and building on our complaint handling service;
- Working with a new Alternative Dispute Resolution provider on deadlocked complaints.

Driving up company performance

Press for a better service and fewer complaints for consumers by focussing on underperforming water companies.

Ensuring competition delivers

After competition in the non-household market in England is introduced in April 2017, provide support to those customers with competition issues, such as complaints and enquiries about switching retailer. We will make sure those customers, particularly those from SMEs, are supported so that they can switch confidently and know they can re-negotiate with their current provider if they prefer.

What consumers will see as a result of this work:

Our performance standards*

- 75% of customers will be satisfied with our complaint handling;
- 61% of customers will be satisfied with the outcome of their complaint;
- 80% of customers will be satisfied with the speed of our service;
- We will respond to 99.5% of complaints in 5 working days;
- 79% of cases will be resolved in 20 working days;
- 91% of cases will be resolved in 40 working days;

**note - Operational Business Plan (OBP) figures for 2014-15. OBP figures for 2015-18 will be annually reviewed.*

Driving up company performance

- Companies who are highlighted as poor performers in our annual complaint report or by the numbers of complaints we receive against them or in Ofwat's Service Incentive Mechanism (SIM)⁹, will commit to improve and provide evidence of their improvements. As a result the number of complaints they receive will reduce;

⁹ SIM is designed to improve the level of service that water companies provide.

- Underperforming companies will adopt the recommendations from our risk based complaint and debt assessments. We will identify good practice and share it with companies at the assessments themselves and with the industry through our published report. As a result the number of complaints for the poorer performers will be closer to the better performers.

Consumer satisfaction with services will continue to improve from the current figures of 93% (water) and 87% (sewerage).¹⁰

Ensuring competition delivers

Consumer concerns will be addressed and lessons learnt from problems encountered in other sectors, such as energy; complaints relating to competition will be proportionately lower than when the energy market opened and an effective Code of Practice on Marketing will be in place.

¹⁰ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see p10)

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE 2

Fair, affordable charges that are VALUE FOR MONEY to help ensure a sustainable water and sewerage service now and in the future

What we will do to achieve this:

Acceptable and affordable bills

- Challenge companies to clearly demonstrate that they are meeting consumers' service expectations, achieving performance targets, and delivering value for money;
- Review the success of implemented social tariff schemes with companies and identify potential improvements to help maximise the help which is provided to customers;
- Raise customer awareness of ways to minimise bills through our communications and our work with companies on their communication strategies;
- Highlight customer views to companies and Government to help identify opportunities to improve water affordability and spread good practice;
- Press for the costs of the Thames Tideway Tunnel project, which are passed on to customers, to be kept to a minimum and spread over time to lower the impact on customers' annual bills.

Fair charges

- Represent water customers' interests on charging matters to water companies, regulators and Government;
- Press companies to improve their charging policies, ensuring they are customer focussed.

Help for those struggling to pay

- Press for companies to continue to take account of the needs and views of local customers in developing effective social tariff schemes.
- Work with companies to ensure they offer a range of assistance schemes and facilities to help customers who may otherwise struggle to pay.

Sharing outperformance

Press companies to share their financial success with customers. Some companies have already committed to do this on an on-going basis. Our research tells us that customers would like excess financial gains to be used to “improve services that customers think are important” (50%) or provide more financial help to customers on low incomes (42%)¹¹.

Market Reform

Work with Open Water, Ofwat and UK Government to design a competitive retail market that will deliver benefits for non-household consumers, without disadvantaging those who can't change supplier. This includes helping to shape the operational and market rules, draft regulations, guidance, codes of practice and governance of the market, and working to ensure that customers are no worse off if their incumbent retailer exits the non-household retail market. We will use consumer views from our “Uncharted Waters” research and our “Testing the Waters” research to prompt market design to address business customer concerns and to try and avoid the problems customers experience in other sectors, such as energy. Currently 56% of SMEs believe that water companies care about the service they give to their business customers¹². We want to try to get companies to engage better with SMEs and improve on this figure.

¹¹ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see p10)

¹² Figures taken from Testing the Waters research (see p10)

Work to increase consumer awareness about market reform by:

- Helping to raise awareness of eligibility to switch retailer, including in the English/Welsh border areas (the eligibility threshold to switch is 50 megalitres of water a year in Wales);
- Making sure independent information is available on the registration and switching processes;
- Making sure information about switching is available to non-household consumers whose incumbent water company transfers their retail service to a new licensee through retail exits; and making sure customers who had no choice about the move don't see a reduction in service or a higher bill as a result.

After 2017, engage with consumers and stakeholders on upstream competition.

Work with Welsh Government and water companies operating in Wales so the services offered to non-household consumers strive to be innovative.

What consumers will see as a result of this work:

Acceptable and affordable bills

- More customers will receive a quality of service that they consider represents good value for money in return for the bill they pay; satisfaction levels will increase above the current level of 69%¹³;
- Consumers will be at the centre of the 2019 Price Review process, early in the planning stages; we will lead or bring robust challenge and information to the companies' Customer Challenge Groups;

¹³ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see p10)

- All key parties in the 2019 Price Review (water companies, Governments and regulators) will be focussed on how to deliver outcomes that customers will accept and find affordable;
- Customer concerns around having affordable bills will be tackled; the proportion of customers who find their bills unaffordable decreases from the current figure of 1 in 5¹⁴.

Fair charges

- The percentage of customers who think their water bill is fair will increase from the current figure of 54%¹⁵;
- Companies will amend their charges schemes as a result of us identifying issues and pressing for improvements. All companies will make a non-return to sewer allowance available to household customers. The number of companies offering an Assessed Volume Charging band for properties with a shared laundry or other such facilities will increase.

Help for those struggling to pay

Companies will implement and refine social tariff and other assistance schemes which meet the needs and expectations of customers. The number of companies offering social tariffs will increase as will the number of customers helped through existing schemes.

Sharing outperformance

Where evidence shows water companies have financially outperformed compared to Ofwat's decisions on company cost and financing, they will share this success with customers - either through bill reductions or through extra investment and service improvements.

¹⁴ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see p10)

¹⁵ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see p10)

Market Reform

- The design of the market will be shaped to meet non-household consumers' needs and expectations, but will have considered the effect on those who cannot switch supplier;
- Household consumers will be protected from adverse effects of market reform, and non-household customers will be protected from mis-selling or unfair contract terms; robust marketing controls will be in place and there will be less complaints about unfair contract terms than when the energy market opened;
- Non-household customers will be protected from mis-selling and unfair contract terms; robust marketing controls will be in place and there will be less complaints from non-household customers than when the energy market opened to them;
- Non-household customers in England will be aware of their eligibility to switch retailer;
- Non-household consumer satisfaction with water and sewerage services in Wales, where competition remains limited at a threshold of 50 megalitres of water a year, will remain high.

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE 3

SAFE, RELIABLE, GOOD QUALITY DRINKING WATER that consumers value and use wisely

What we will do to achieve this:

- Press companies to maintain the high level of consumers who are satisfied with the reliability of their water supply. At the moment this is 97% (compared to 96% in 2012)¹⁶.
- Monitor companies' actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change to ensure services to consumers are resilient, for example to drought and potential flooding of key assets.
- Press for a reliable, high quality water supply at an acceptable price.
- Encourage water companies to prioritise leakage work and communications about leakage in a way that meets their consumers' expectations.
- Press water companies to deliver water resources plans that consider consumers' long-term needs, as well as their priorities, preferences and ability to pay.
- Raise awareness of the need for water efficiency so that at least 66% of household consumers will say they make a conscious effort to use less water¹⁷.

What consumers will see as a result of this work:

- Companies' supply networks will be resilient and allow for the provision of a safe and reliable supply of water to consumers.

¹⁶ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see P10)

¹⁷ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see P10)

- Key decision makers will be informed about the potential customer impacts of new or changing policies, for example proposals for abstraction reform.
- Water Resource Management Plans¹⁸ will show how consumers' needs and priorities have been considered.
- Consumers will be better informed about their company's policy and performance on leakage. Companies will provide information on their website and in their billing information.
- We will work with key stakeholders to promote water efficiency and the link to energy efficiency so that consumers can recognise how they can use water and energy wisely and save money. Water Matters research will show an increase in the number of customers acting on water efficiency advice.
- Compulsory metering programme implementation will be reviewed, and lessons learned will inform future programmes.

¹⁸ Water companies produce Water Resource Management Plans that set out how they propose to manage water resources over a 25 year time horizon. These plans are monitored by CCWater and others.

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE 4

A SUSTAINABLE SEWERAGE SERVICE THAT WORKS with minimal sewer flooding and that is used responsibly

What we will do to achieve this:

- Monitor companies' actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change and its effect on consumers resulting from, for example, flooding.
- Press companies to resolve sewer flooding problems for consumers so that it remains a key priority and contributes to keeping the level of satisfaction with overall sewerage service high, at 87%¹⁹.
- Monitor the transfer of private pumping stations to company ownership.
- Press for, and monitor, the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems to reduce or control surface water flows into the sewerage network.

What consumers will see as a result of this work:

- Companies' sewerage networks will be more resilient and reliable, with incidents of sewer flooding reduced. Performance will be measured by progress towards commitments given by companies in their 2015-2020 business plans.
- Consumers will be satisfied with the response from their sewerage company following a sewer flooding event. Complaints to companies and to CCWater will reduce over the period.

¹⁹ Figures taken from Water Matters research (see p10)

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUE 5

SPEAKING UP FOR AND INFORMING CONSUMERS by providing a trustworthy, independent voice that empowers consumers by informing them about key water issues and ensuring Governments, companies and other stakeholders understand water consumers' views.

What we will do to achieve this:

Influencing the agenda

- Influence key legislation and decision makers on water consumer issues.
- Ensure we have written to and/or met with all key politicians and advisors identified in the public affairs strategy.
- Attend all appropriate All Party Parliamentary Water Group and Efra (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Select Committee meetings to highlight the opinions of water customers gathered through our research.
- Provide representation at key water industry events and take every relevant opportunity to speak on behalf of water consumers.

Informing consumers

- Tell consumers about key water and sewerage issues so they can make informed choices about how they use these services.

What consumers will see as a result of this work:

Influencing the agenda

- As Government develops regulations allowing water companies to exit the non-household retail market, adequate customer protections will be put in place.
- The consumer view will be considered as Government prepares its legislation on abstraction reform and as the draft Bill goes through the Parliamentary process.
- We will act if water companies are not receiving the reputational pressure on performance that they need to deliver a good service to consumers.
- We will hold companies to account if they do not share their financial success with customers.
- Consumers will get benefits after any merger/acquisition.

Informing consumers

- Water consumers who need us, will know who we are and how to contact us.
- Agencies who work with vulnerable consumers, such as Citizens Advice and Age UK, will know about us locally and nationally, and know to seek our advice on water and sewerage issues.
- Water consumers will hear key messages through joint campaign work with water companies and other organisations.
- Consumers will get the opportunity to hear and see our key messages in broadcast and print media (at least 75 million opportunities)²⁰.

²⁰ Figures taken from CCWater's Public Relations Strategy

- Consumers will be able to get the information and advice they need on our website, including through our online water meter calculator and our knowledge database. We will aim to get a total of 500,000 visitors to the water meter calculator on our website.²¹

How the Forward Work Programme contributes to the achievements of Defra and Welsh Government's wider objectives for the water sector

Defra and Welsh Government's wider objective for water include reducing the risk of flooding (from sewers and more generally), improving water efficiency, tackling affordability and reforming the water industry.

The priorities and activities outlined under each of the five key themes in this Forward Work Programme accord with these governmental objectives.

What we cost

We have demonstrated, through our real term cost reductions since we were set up, that we are committed to providing good value for money and minimising our costs to water customers.

In previous years, we have supplemented our annual budget with accumulated savings to enable us to deliver our FWP. We anticipate our budget for 2015/16 to be approximately £5.7m, which includes the last of our accumulated savings.

From 2016/17, in line with a change in accountancy practice by Defra, CCWater's budget will be funded directly from the forthcoming year's Licence Fee and will have to match our forecast costs. As a result the Licence Fee could vary by approximately +/- 5% per annum depending upon the initiatives and activities we plan to undertake.

²¹ Figures taken from CCWater's Public Relations Strategy