

CCW



CCW's Forward Work Programme
2022-23

About CCW

CCW is the independent voice for water consumers in England and Wales. We help thousands of people resolve complaints against their water company, while providing free advice and support.

At CCW, we stand up for what is right, championing people's best interests and making sure decisions are made with their views in mind. We're committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and think that everyone should be treated with care and respect and receive the service they deserve.

We are a trusted and credible source of intelligence, using what we learn from combining our own research and complaints data to step into the shoes of water consumers. We understand their experiences and use the facts and evidence behind this to share best practice and improve industry standards.

As well as the strategic priorities outlined in this document, we'll also deliver our ongoing activity to influence changes across the sector, including ensuring the customer voice is heard throughout the price review process, and providing constructive challenge to water companies on areas of importance to customers.

Our expertise helps to provide people with the clarity and support they need. Households and businesses turn to us to resolve their questions and complaints, and the information we publish about water company and retailer performance helps people to stay informed about the issues that affect them.

People are at the heart of everything we do, whether that's influencing policy change or handling each complaint with respect. As a team, we are committed to protecting everyone who uses water, now and in the future.



What makes us tick...



Our mission

Ensure people are well-informed, treated fairly and have confidence in their water services.

Our purpose

We are passionate about championing the best interests of everyone who uses water, now and in the future.

Our vision

A water sector that listens to people and delivers exceptional, sustainable services that are accessible to all.

Four long-term objectives guide our work...



People and the environment

We are facing an unprecedented climate crisis, which will impact us all as well as generations to come.



To play our part in tackling this, we will work with the sector to increase the transparency of environmental performance information and lead a sponsored campaign to raise awareness among people and businesses of the value of water in society and how people's behaviour affects the water environment. Over the next twelve months we will baseline and set a target for increasing awareness of the link between personal behaviours and the impact on the environment by 2030. Ultimately our work in this area will lead to measurable behaviour change in the form of lower consumption and less sewer misuse.

Affordability and vulnerability

1.5 million people currently don't get the support they need when they're struggling to pay their water bill, and that's why the recommendations in 2021's independent review of water affordability are so important.



We will work to deliver 80% of these recommendations by 2025, with the remaining recommendations – including the elimination of water poverty in England and Wales – delivered by 2030. We'll also continue to deliver our Vulnerability Manifesto, sharing best practice across the sector on supporting people with a non-financial vulnerability.

Customer complaints journey

Customers should never have to complain to their water company, but sometimes things do go wrong. When this happens, we want the complaints process to be as swift and hassle-free as possible.



We will improve the customer complaint experience by reducing customer effort, driving efficiency and delivering high-quality responses across the sector, showing an increase in satisfaction with CCW's service to 80% by 2023 and getting all companies to provide a substantive response to customers within five working days by 2025.

Business customers

Satisfaction levels for business customers have been too low since the retail market opened in 2017.



We want satisfaction for all business customers in England and Wales to show a rising trend, with satisfaction with retail services to exceed 85% by 2027.

What we'll do in 2022-23...



People and the environment

- Unite the industry under a CCW-led campaign to raise awareness among people and businesses of the value of water in society and how people's behaviour impacts the water environment.
- Conduct a global analysis of past and present initiatives that have sought to educate people and businesses about water. We will use this insight to co-create an action plan using a citizens' forum. This action plan will be shared across the water industry in England and Wales by March 2023, with implementation in the following years.
- Improve the availability of public information on environmental issues by introducing new digital tools on CCW's website by March 2023 and by educating and informing people when they contact us.



Affordability and vulnerability

- Publish a one-year-on report in Summer 2022, which shows clear progress against all ten of the recommendations from the independent review of water affordability.
- Share the findings from all water companies' affordability review pilots by Summer 2023, to set a new standard of 'best practice' performance.
- Raise people's awareness of the financial support offered by their water company. By the Spring of 2023, we want awareness to increase by more than 10%*.

*This figure refers to percentage points rather than a percentage change.



Customer complaints journey

- Speed up our initial response to customers so that they hear back from us within 2 working days. We'll do this by upskilling our front line team to better answer customer complaints and enquiries at the first point of contact. We will increase satisfaction to over 80% with further increases in subsequent years. We will encourage all organisations across the water industry to join the Institute of Customer Service's Service With Respect initiative.
- Help people to understand what to expect, from both their water company and us, when making a complaint. We'll do this by publishing information for customers on common complaint types and expected service standards by 2023.
- Work with all parties to establish a one-stop shop for mediation and adjudication for customer complaints by October 2023



Business customers

- Reduce the number of complaints received by CCW from business customers by 10%* by March 2023.
- Help business customers become better informed about their payment options and the credit levels on their accounts, and work to ensure retailers return the credit owed to business customers on an annual basis, from April 2023.
- Publish a report by March 2023 assessing how the first five years of the market have delivered for business customers, covering key areas such as customer service, support for struggling businesses and water efficiency advice.

*This figure refers to percentage points rather than a percentage change.

Our campaigns...



Credit where it's due

All business customers should have confidence that their money and retail service is protected. At the moment, many customers could be unaware of the payment options available to them and the amount of credit that could be building up in their accounts. We want business customers to be informed about their choices and to have any credit returned to them automatically by their retailer, on an annual basis.

In the event of a retailer exiting the market in England, there must be a seamless transition process where continuation of retail service and credit protection is guaranteed, and business customers are kept well-informed throughout.

In 2022-23, CCW will take action to strengthen the market rules on delivering a continuous service and protecting customers' money if a retailer were to leave the market. We will also work with retailers to increase customers' awareness of the impact of advanced payment.



Don't let people suffer in silence

We believe that a reliable and consistent supply of water is the minimum water consumers should be able to expect. However, we know that repeat low pressure and supply interruptions are impacting tens of thousands of customers every year.

Although we know water companies work hard to address these issues, we are not confident that the industry is currently engaging with and focussing on those worst served water customers in an effective or consistent way. It is therefore unlikely that many companies can accurately identify those customers that suffer repeat issues when it comes to their water supply.

In 2022-23 CCW will work with companies to agree an effective and consistent framework for recording low pressure and supply interruption contacts, with a specific focus on repeat contacts. CCW will also speak to consumers to understand what barriers currently stop them seeking help, and encourage them to stop suffering in silence.

CCW



End water poverty

We are campaigning to end water poverty by implementing a single social tariff across England and Wales. Even before the economic impact of Covid-19, 1 in 10 households in England and Wales told us that they struggled to afford their water bill. Water companies do offer help through social tariffs, but this support is not consistent and the number of people who we think could qualify far exceeds the level of funding that is available.

There are also certain groups who are even more at risk of missing out on financial support with bills – the under 25s, over 75s and minority ethnic groups. We want to drive change to create a fairer system that offers meaningful help to everyone who struggles to pay their bills.

In 2022-23, this campaign will work with the water industry and decision-makers to gain support for legislation to implement a single social tariff.

CCW will continue its action to end water poverty by 2030.



End sewer flooding misery

Being flooded with sewage – particularly inside our home or business – is one of the worst ways our wastewater company can fail us and the environment.

Our campaign to end the misery caused by sewer flooding started in 2021. We've made positive progress in bringing the industry together and moving towards agreeing improved clean-up times, better compensation for victims of repeat sewer flooding, and to end to the “exceptional” weather clause for those at risk.

In 2022-23, we'll continue this campaign to deliver more support and compensation for those who suffer repeat sewer flooding by 2023. This will include standard on-site times by 2023 and a review of how compensation is offered.

How we deliver our work...

Positive Energy

We are energetic and enthusiastic, with a strong 'can-do' attitude. We actively focus on using research and evidence to understand people's views and find solutions to the problems they face.

Respect for all

Inclusivity is at the heart of life at CCW. We respect people's individual differences. We constructively challenge our industry partners and decision-makers to do what's best for people and the environment.

Innovative spirit

We encourage bravery and creative thinking, always seeking to improve. We share knowledge and celebrate success while striving for continuous improvement across the sector.

Deliver Our Promises

We show commitment: to the people we help, to our goals, and to each other. We behave with integrity and always seek to do what we say we are going to do, putting the best interests of people first.

Engaged as one

We drive collaboration within the water sector, encouraging the industry to take action together towards clear goals that have tangible consumer benefits.

