



Our Customer Care Strategy to 2030 – Summary

Here for you, support when you need it

June 2025

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce our updated customer care strategy, which outlines our plans and initiatives to support customers who need extra help.

We already provide extensive support to customers in our community who need extra help, whether the need is temporary, permanent or changes over time. We work closely with a wide variety of local stakeholders, community groups and charitable partners.

We reach out to customers by sponsoring and attending community events and having a trusted partnership approach. Our team of Extra Care colleagues and 'Here for You' officers provide support and home visits when extra help is needed.

Our customer strategy is based on getting things right first time, providing a high level of service for all customers. We have dedicated policies, financial or otherwise, to ensure customers in need get the right support for their circumstances and stage of life. We aim to be easy to deal with and we tell customers about the support that is available regularly.

However, we're always looking for ways to improve and we welcome the chance to reflect on the support we offer to make sure we're living up to our strategy of being:

'Here for you, support when you need it'.

In this document, we share the existing support on offer and our plans to further improve this support. This will ensure our strategy reflects and adapts to the ever-changing needs of the community we serve, and the particular needs of our customers.

We welcome any feedback and look forward to further extending our awareness, empathy and support for customers who need extra help. This will be demonstrated through the culture of our entire organisation, as well as our everyday actions.

Ketan Hindocha
Customer Director
SES Water

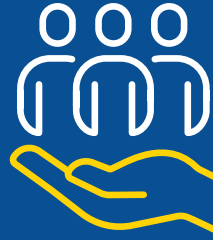


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Introduction

As the only provider of water and wastewater services to customers across our region, we need to consider and understand the needs and expectations of all our customers. This is especially important for those customers who may need additional support, both financial or due to other vulnerabilities. We absolutely recognise how critical it is to ensure that every customer is able to get the help they need from us.

We don't want any customer to struggle because they have extra needs or find it hard to afford their water bill. Our Customer Care Strategy sets out what we are doing to support all the customers we serve, and the commitments we are making to improve on the support and help we provide by 2030.

We already work hard to identify customers in need of additional support and provide a tailored package of help.

- **For customers who are financially vulnerable**, we have an affordability toolkit that includes discounted tariffs, payment breaks, debt support and help to reduce bills by being more water efficient.
- **We also provide support for customers who need extra help due to a non-financial vulnerability**, for example a medical condition, disability or being older. We are proactive in helping customers sign up for our Priority Services Register, which means they are helped first in an emergency. Our teams have specialist training to ensure they respond sensitively to customer needs.





Our draft plans for 2025-2030 will build on this platform to provide even better support for customers. We will continue to use data to help us identify the customers and communities who have the greatest need of support.

We will also engage with communities across all regions to raise awareness of our plans and activities. We will improve customer experience by rolling out upgraded metering, optimising customer journeys and ensuring the process of moving onto a social tariff is as smooth as possible.

Our ultimate aim is to ensure that customers get the support and care they need, whatever their situation or stage of life. We want to continue to build our strategies to improve services even further.



Our Customer Care Services

We are committed to delivering easy, tailored care to customers who need it the most. It is vital that we are able to identify customers in need of help and have systems to provide the right support.

Clean fresh water on demand is a right that should be available to all, regardless of financial circumstances, accessibility of homes, health, age or ability to use technology. By providing a tailored service to those who need extra support, we will ensure nobody goes without the water they need.

We provide support focussed on two areas.

Non-financial vulnerabilities

Many customers require a helping hand at some time in their life. There may be many reasons for this and we are proud to be accredited through the Kitemark scheme as providing inclusive services. We are constantly looking to improve and expand on the support we offer, and provide a range of services to support those that need it. Our staff are also trained to identify those customers who may need support, so that they can provide a safe, reassuring presence.

To register for our Priority Service please see our contact details on the [**last page**](#).

Financial vulnerabilities

We know many customers are under financial pressure due to the high cost of living. We provide support to ensure no customers are in Water Poverty.

If you are struggling to pay your bills we can help, please see our contact details on the [**last page**](#).

Read the full document [**here**](#).



What we are doing to help

Affordability strategies



Good management practices. We work efficiently and plan infrastructure investments carefully, to manage the impact on customer bills.



Working to identify people struggling with their bills so we can provide advice and support.



Supplying upgraded meters so customers only pay for the water they use, and can track their usage.



Compensating customers if we do not meet our promises.



Supporting customers with water efficiency measures to help reduce consumption.



Here for you, support when you need it

Strategy for helping customers in water debt

We aim to keep our bills as low as possible, making them affordable for all. However, we recognise that even so, some customers will struggle to be able to afford their water services. We are committed to ensuring no customer is in Water Poverty, and have strategies to support customers with their water bills.

Our Affordability Toolkit provides a range of support that can be tailored to customer needs.



1. Payment break

2. Discounted tariff

3. Upgraded meter

4. Metered tariff

5. Debt support

6. Water efficiency advice

7. Auto-enrol onto the right help

8. Lowest Bill Guarantee



How we provide support to those who need it most

- We train our staff to identify **customers in need of extra care** and can support with **knock and wait**, giving you extra time to get to your door. We can also communicate through **a nominated friend**, family member or other representative.
- We encourage eligible customers to join our **Priority Services Register**. This allows us to identify those most in need and tailor our services when necessary. On registering we will send a warm 'welcome letter' which highlights the services a customer will receive based on their needs. We also let them know what to do if they are struggling to pay their bill.
- During incidents we contact customers affected so they are aware of what is happening. We have **dedicated pages on our websites** which provide essential information on what happens during an incident and what a customer can expect from us. We also have website pages explaining how to prepare for an incident.
- We have established **datashares** with energy to help reduce the need for customers to tell us more than once.
- Customers registered for **Priority Services** will be contacted once every two years to check their needs are up to date.
- We hold **annual workshops** with partner organisations, including a wide range of community charities.



- We carry out **customer research** to monitor satisfaction of those who are registered for the Priority Services Register.
- We run regular **community outreach events** to help eligible customers sign up for the Priority Services Register.
- We use **our data** to help target the areas most likely to need additional support.
- We **continually look for ways** for our staff to have real lived experiences insight with external training from organisations including MIND, Centre for the Deaf in Bristol Dementia Friends and the visit of the Dementia Bus.
- We hold the Inclusive Service Provision **BS ISO 22458**.
- We are **committed to the promises** we make and if we fail to do what we say we will, priority services customers are entitled to compensation. There is to be new guidance published by Defra in 2025 on what this compensation should be and in what circumstances we must pay, and we will follow this.
- We **support our customers** and staff with the use of the National Support Network – a hub that provides a one-stop shop for help and support.





Services we offer to our customers on PSR:

1. Communicating in preferred format for their needs i.e. braille, different languages, British Sign Language (BSL), large print, Relay UK
2. Water delivery in incidents, dependent on customer need
3. Contact in advance of a supply interruption
4. Extra meter readings and relocation of meter if we can do so
5. Named nominee to receive bills and other communications
6. Reading your bills over the telephone or in person
7. Selecting a password



Accessible communication

A tailored service to support customers who need extra care

When a customer signs up to the Priority Services Register, we record the details of their need to help us target our support. We send a friendly message welcoming them to the service.

Customers can choose communication formats such as braille or large print, which we use wherever possible when contacting them.

When an incident occurs, our systems help us identify which affected customers need extra support. Where appropriate, we provide alternative water supplies including bottled water based on registered need.

Tailored SMS messages provide customers with alerts and updates. Our welcome letters and website set out what customers can expect. After an event, we survey all customers impacted by a loss of water supply to help improve our service.

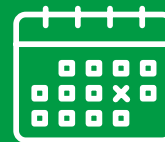


Good communication is critical for customers who need extra support. We provide:



Tailored written communications

as requested for bills and planned supply outages. Examples of this could be communications in braille, large print or different languages.



Bi-annual check in to ensure our records of customer needs are up to date.



Welcome information to about the Priority Services Register.



We plan to use more posters in rural communities to signpost sources of help.



Dedicated web pages for what help to expect during an incident and also how to prepare for an incident.



Tailored communication for unplanned supply outages.



Our Customer Care Strategy Commitments 2025-2030

Non-financial vulnerability: what actions we are taking

Using data wisely

Commitments 2025-30

Using data, we will identify customers in need of our vulnerability support.

Increase our use of data shares to help us target the most accurate support to customers who need it.

Explore IT options to help staff have the information they need to help customers efficiently.

How we will achieve this

Across all our regions we will use data, both internally held and reliable external data to identify our hard-to-reach customers that are in most need of our support. We will also continue to use social media, company newsletter and information on bills to reach customers.

Establish a two-way data share between Bournemouth and Wessex for PSR so customers in the Bournemouth area have the full support from both their waste and water bill.

Drive automation of two-way data shares.

Explore PSR data shares with retail energy providers.

Review the best use of our systems to flag specific customer needs for our staff to service them.



Growing partnerships

Commitments 2025-30

Identify partnerships gaps based on our coverage of support and data.

Testing our future plans with our partners.

How we will achieve this

Use our existing data on our partnerships, along with insights from the Local Insight tool to help us identify the areas where new partnerships are needed most, e.g. in rural communities and to help digitally-excluded communities access information about priority services.

Continue to host annual debt advice workshops in the Bristol region, which include seeking feedback on our plans.

Establish annual workshops with our partners across Devon, Cornwall, and Bournemouth to gather feedback on our plans.

Community engagement

Commitments 2025-30

Using a data-led approach to focus our community engagement.

How we will achieve this

Across all our regions, we will use both internal and external data to identify which communities need additional support from our digital customer communications and services.

Using the data tool to ensure the community strategy is tailored to the needs to the area.



Community engagement continued

Commitments 2025-30

Expand our messaging into our communities on water efficiency, metering and PSR through our staff.

A multi-channel community engagement strategy including social media, face to face, pop up stalls, literature. Targeting the best channel to reach the customers who can benefit from the messaging.

We will start to complete impact assessments of our community activities, and review the level of interaction regarding additional support.

How we will achieve this

Spread awareness of our campaigns through staff, equipping them with literature and digital products to share.

We will use our data to understand more about hotspots of digitally-excluded customers. We will ensure we meet their needs through community events and printed rather than materials. This will help to serve the needs of the high levels of digitally-excluded customers in the South West area.

We will use our data to help us target the best channel to reach the customers who can benefit from the messaging. We will ensure this includes the key priorities for our customers this is currently understanding storm overflows impacting their local beach, water efficiency and keeping bills low through metering or a tariff.

We will do this across all of our community activities and compare the results to what we expected of the region. This will help inform our future plans and community activities, and that it is tailored to our customer needs.

Community engagement continued

Commitments 2025-30

We will use our community events to test new ideas and service options for customers who need additional care.

How we will achieve this

Our community events provide a great opportunity to engage with customers when they are relaxed and have time to talk. It is a great opportunity to share new literature and discuss new technology. This builds on similar testing we have used our partners for (such as reviewing the accessibility of our Bristol Water website with Scope), we will continue to do this. Extending the concept to customers in the community is a new minimum expectation from Ofwat's draft vulnerability guidance.



Financial vulnerabilities: what actions we are taking

Using your data wisely

Commitments 2025-30

Using data, we will identify customers in need of support to remove them from water poverty.

We will auto enrol them onto the right support.

We will proactively contact customers who can take themselves out of Water Poverty by being more water efficient or switching to a metered tariff.

We will use intelligent data sets to target our affordability support.

Increase our use of data shares to help us target the most accurate support to customers who need it.

How we will achieve this

We will use our water poverty data tool to identify those customers in or at risk of water poverty.



We will use data to identify customers that are in most need of our support.

We will use data to apply the support offered by our affordability toolkit to reach those most in need.

Establish a two way data share between Bournemouth and Wessex for customers on a social tariff and voids, so customers in the Bournemouth area have the full support from both their waste and water bill.



Growing partnerships with our customers

Commitments 2025-30

Identify partnerships gaps based on our coverage of support and data.

Testing our future plans with our partners.

We will continue to listen to our Affordability Board.

How we will achieve this

We will use data from our Water Poverty tool, existing data from partnerships and insights from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to identify areas to develop new partnerships, e.g. helping digitally-excluded people in rural communities to access our financial support.

We will host annual workshops with our partners which will include the opportunity to provide feedback on our plans.

We will also share our draft plans with our partners individually for feedback.

Continue to hear feedback from our Affordability Board on our future plans.





Engaging with our community

Commitments 2025-30

Using a data-led approach to focus our community engagement.

Annual refresh of messaging on key priorities to ensure it's relevant to the communities we are working with.

A multi-channel community engagement strategy including social media, face to face, pop up stalls and literature. Targeting the best channels to reach the customers who can benefit from the messaging.

We will support our customers and communities through our community funds.

How we will achieve this

We will use data to identify the communities that need additional support from our digital customer communications and service to get the help they need.

We will use the data tool and new technologies to ensure the community strategy is tailored to the needs in the area.

Spread awareness of our campaigns through a variety of channels including social media, newsletters, community roadshows and staff, equipping them with literature and digital products to share.

A multi-channel community engagement strategy including social media, face to face, pop up stalls and literature. Targeting the best channel to reach the customers who can benefit from the messaging.

Continue to provide our customers access to our community fund.



Improving your customer journey

Commitments 2025-30

Introducing upgraded metering to help customers take better ownership and lower their water usage and bill.

Campaigns to encourage customers to recognise that they pay for what they use and lower their bill.

Use of data shares to enhance the customer journey.

How we will achieve this

Rolling out upgraded metering to provide our customers with information they need to conserve water and lower their bills.

We will continue to offer the lowest bill guarantee.

We will continue to work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to ensure support tariff customer journeys are as easy as possible for the customer.

This table lists our commitments included in our Customer Care Strategy to 2030. We will refresh this annually.

Staying on Track

We're confident we'll be able to deliver the plans as set out in our in this strategy by 2030, if not before.

To make sure our strategy stays on track, we will:

- Publish our stakeholder and customer strategy documents on our website, to provide both accountability and visibility to our customers, and stakeholder groups.
- Review our strategy every year so it's kept up to date with any social, technological or regulatory changes. We promise to include our customers and stakeholders when we do this.
- Provide regular reporting to our Board, challenge groups and stakeholders to make sure we're delivering against our strategy, and doing what we said we would.





Contact Us



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Isles of Scilly
Water

Isles of Scilly

Please refer to [South West Water website](http://www.southwestwater.co.uk)
for Isle of Scilly services.





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