

Water Company		Northumbrian Water				
No.	Minimum Expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
1.1	Companies should adapt their services to customers in line with any known extra help needs. This is especially important during times where there is increased risk of harm; for example, during incidents.	Compliant	<p><b>Being easy to access through channels of customers' choice</b></p> <p>How our customers can contact us :-            Accessible and adaptable website using ReciteMe facilities            Customer app            Nominated contact (e.g. friend, relative or carer) for bills, making payments or incidents            Home visits            Large print            Braille            British Sign Language communication services            Talking bills/leaflets            Audio tape/cd documents            Magnifying strip            Text phone            Type talk/Text relay            Minicom            Personalised call assistance e.g. Speaking slower/giving longer thinking/response time            Web chat            Alternate colour background documents            Sign language/subtitled videos on website            British Sign Language available on website and used for home visits            Alternative language formats            Interpreter services</p> <p><b>Tailored services for Priority Services Customers</b></p> <p>These include:-            Advance supply interruption notice (this is provided for all customers where we have mobile phone contact details)            Priority reconnection if supply interrupted for customers who are unable to collect bottled water            Personal supply interruption notice            Emergency water supply for consumers who have advised us they are unable to collect from water stations, these include customers who medically need it, need to take lots of medication, unable to leave the property due to illness/recovery from illness, mobility restrictions etc.            Password Scheme            Additional water meter readings            Identity card in large print and braille            Identity Check of employees            Company follows the principles of UK Water Industry Distraction Protocol and National Cold Call Protocol</p> <p>Interruption to Supply            We will always work to prevent any loss of supply to our customers. Where the supply is interrupted either due to planned or unplanned works, we will look to provide alternative supply by using innovative mobile treatment units bypassing damaged main etc to restore supply.</p> <p>Where this is not possible, we will provide bowsers or bottled water stations in local community so that supplies can be collected free of charge. These stations will be advertised locally using social media and in partnership with councils.</p> <p>When customers register for PSR, we will ask if they are able to collect water if there is an interruption to their water supply. For customers who cannot collect water or have a medical dependency where there is an extended interruption to supply we will deliver to customers homes. Where we are seeing an incident develop, we will look to deliver in advance of an interruption to supply.</p> <p>Where interruptions are expected to be 12hrs or longer and affects many customers we will aim to set up warm hubs in community centres with our local partners. These will provide easy access to water, toilets and showering facilities and will be comfortable with heating, hot drinks, and food.</p>	<p><b>During Interruptions to Supply</b></p> <p>We set up incident groups where there is any identified risk of service disruption in order to proactively manage these before customers are impacted. Following these events a review is completed to take on board any learnings.</p> <p><b>Understanding Customer Satisfaction on Quality of Service</b></p> <p>We review a range of feedback that we receive from customers, stakeholders, and CCW. We have found these to provide us focus on areas of improvement and where customers are experiencing barriers to access services.</p> <p>This feedback includes:-            Quarterly survey with 250 customers on our Priority Services Register and 250 customers on our affordability schemes. We ask customers about their level of satisfaction and how service can be developed.</p> <p>We listen and learn from customer feedback. This includes feedback requested from customers following contacts with us, learnings from our front line agents from conversations with customers and complaints. For all written complaints, root cause analysis is completed with action plans for how services can be improved.</p> <p>We also share and review all research relating to incidents that is published by CCW/Ofwat so that we can continue to learn from others' experiences as well as our own, and seek to adopt anything identified that will complement our processes/ approaches, particularly to things like interruptions to supply, but across the full incident spectrum.</p>	<p><b>Customers on PSR</b></p> <p>We increased the number of households on PSR by over 140,000 customers in the last two years which could impact on timescale for delivery of bottled water.</p> <p>In the last 12 months we have moved to proactive delivery to PSR customers in case of disruption in supply to ensure customers expectations are met around delivery.</p> <p><b>Customers not sharing that they are eligible for PSR</b></p> <p>Customers may not have shared their details with us so we can proactively contact them, or may not be on the PSR - we need to have strong processes in place to seek to react positively and quickly to this if it occurs, as well as capture details for next time.</p>	<p><b>Support during an interruption to supply</b></p> <p>What we do            Customers will receive bottled water delivery in line with PSR requirements.</p> <p>12 new Business Continuity Associates have been appointed across the North East, Essex and Suffolk, with over 200 volunteers signing up to support in case of a future incident or event.</p> <p>Attend all flooding within four hours.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030            Where interruptions are expected to be 12hrs or longer and affects many customers we will aim to set up warm hubs in community centres with our local partners. These will provide easy access to water, toilets and showering facilities and will be comfortable with heating, hot drinks, and food.</p> <p>Introduce a formal quarterly review to consolidate learnings from own and others experiences particularly of incidents, this would also include dissemination of findings and actions within the company and to other stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Customer Satisfaction for customers on our PSR or affordability tariffs</b></p> <p>What we do            Customer satisfaction score for customers will be in line with company wide customer satisfaction performance. Measured in quarterly telephone surveys with 250 customers registered on our Priority Services Register where we ask how satisfied they are with the service they receive and any suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Customers on PSR            What we do            We will attempt to contact 90% of households which have at least one individual registered on the PSR every two years to make sure they are still receiving the right support.            We will make contact with 35% customers every two years.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-30            We will have over 250,000 customers registered for Priority Service.            Customer Satisfaction for customers on our PSR or affordability tariffs            Customer satisfaction score for customers will be in line with company wide customer satisfaction performance. Measured in quarterly telephone surveys with 250 customers registered on our Priority Services Register where we ask how satisfied they are with the service they receive and any suggestions for improvement.            We will develop a model for measuring customers' experiences during events and incidents and carry our research on a selection of events/incidents in order to further learn and understand what matters most to customers at this time, and why.</p>
1.2	Companies should ensure that the level and nature of support available to customers is presented in a way customers can understand.	Compliant	<p><b>Letting our customers know how we can help</b></p> <p>When customers register on our Priority Services Register they will be sent a letter detailing all the services that we offer. This letter lets them know how they can register for additional services, contact them to review their requirements and also lets them know that we may share their information so that other organisations can provide them tailored services. The letter also provides information around how we protect their data and how to look at our privacy policy for priority services customers.</p> <p>Our letters will be sent to customers in the requested format, such as large print, braille, and spoken over the phone.</p> <p>To make sure we are providing the best tailored services customers, we will contact customers on our Priority Services Register every two years. We proactively contact by email, letter or text and ask them to update their records. Where we have received updated information for the customers needs through data sharing with trusted partners, this will be considered as updated.</p> <p>We share regular updates with our partnerships on the services we offer, to raise awareness and support with registration. We have a dedicated partnership page which holds all keys details of both financial and affordability services in one place.</p> <p>We have a clear section on our website about PSR that outlines what customers can expect from our PSR, and we are actively working towards accreditation of our website by the Shaw Trust who are experts in the field of accessibility and test sites for a significant range of accessibility needs. We aim to have this accreditation in the next 12 months.</p>	<p><b>Providing clear communication</b></p> <p>We want all our letters to be as clear as possible, and work with Mazaru, who are a specialist organisation, to review suite of letters that we use, improving messaging and simplifying language used for understanding.</p> <p>We have introduced a robust sign off process for any letter changes, so any letter changes are reviewed for ease of read prior to us sending out to customers.</p> <p>We complete incident reviews following major incidents to develop our approach and ensure customers are receiving proactive support.</p> <p>We have a clear page on our website about what customers can do during an incident and where to look for updates, help and support - in line with CCW recommendations of what to include. We keep our webpages updated regularly, with clear and easy-to-read copy.</p>	<p><b>Reviewing current letters</b></p> <p>Our PSR welcome letter details all additional services we offer. This will be enhanced to detail the specific services which customers are registered for.</p>	<p><b>Customer Satisfaction for customers on our PSR or affordability tariffs</b></p> <p>Customer satisfaction score for customers will be in line with company wide customer satisfaction performance. Measured in quarterly telephone surveys with 250 customers registered on our Priority Services Register where we ask how satisfied they are with the service they receive and any suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Our Plans for 2026 :            When we review our letters to customers, we will test these with a sample of customers to make sure they are easy to understand.            We will ensure that a portion of our research is targeted to customers who are on our PSR so we can understand whether their experiences and/or needs mean other/extra considerations are needed.</p> <p>Our Plans for 2035:            We will achieve +63 Net Promoter Score (NPS) for customers who need extra help.</p>
1.3	Companies should seek to continuously improve the service they provide to customers who need extra help. This may include finding innovative ways to design or implement services.	Compliant	<p><b>How we look to improve our services</b></p> <p>We continually review feedback that we receive, this includes:-            Quarterly survey with 250 customers on our Priority Services Register and 250 customers on our affordability schemes.            Feedback from customers following contacts with us, using Medallia where we ask for customer satisfaction feedback following each engagement.            Learnings from our front line agents from conversations with customers and complaints.            Root cause analysis is completed with action plans for how services can be improved.            Feedback from research, engagement, as well as more formal feedback forums like Have Your Say, or when we do customer journey mapping etc. We are also working to further enhance our website accessibility through working with the Shaw Trust to gain accreditation.</p> <p><b>Benchmarking</b></p> <p>We are members of a number of cross utility groups to share best practice on services for now and the future, such as Infrastructure North which brings us together with Northern Gas and Northern Power Grid.</p> <p><b>Innovation Festival</b></p> <p>Our annual Innovation Festival is now in its 8th year and brings together experts, customers and stakeholders from across industries. Each year, we take a selection of business challenges and issues currently facing our industry, as well as wider global issues that impact everyone, like climate change and water poverty. We bring together people from all over the globe with different skills and knowledge and we work together to produce solutions and viable outcomes - solving challenges which affect our customers. We have, for example, completed sprints where we have looked at how we can improve engagement with customers, supporting customers with paying their bills, designing bills which are easy to read.</p>	<p><b>BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022</b></p> <p>We are proud to have achieved this accreditation. This robust external audit assesses that the service we offer all customers is of the highest standard and that we continually challenge ourselves to innovate and extend our services.</p> <p><b>Understanding Customer Satisfaction on Quality of Service</b></p> <p>We review a range of feedback that we receive from customers, stakeholders, and CCW. We have found these to provide us focus on areas of improvement and where customers are experiencing barriers to access services.</p> <p>This feedback includes:-            Quarterly survey with 250 customers on our Priority Services Register and 250 customers on our affordability schemes. We ask customers about their level of satisfaction and how service can be developed.</p> <p>We listen and learn from customer feedback. This includes feedback requested from customers following contacts with us, learnings from our front line agents from conversations with customers and complaints. For all written complaints, root cause analysis is completed with action plans for how services can be improved.</p> <p><b>Institute of Customer Service (ICS) ServiceMark accreditation.</b></p> <p>We have recently been given this accreditation following a robust and comprehensive review process. this accreditation looks at overall service culture, how customers are able to access services, what customers and employees think of service and engagement as well as a whole range of other criteria that test service culture and customer centricity.</p>		<p>What we do            Maintain BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022</p> <p>Continuous improvement of customer journeys based on customers' priorities</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-26            We will formalise our continuous improvement plans, with a new role to manage how these improvements are shared with customers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030            We will introduce a formal quarterly review to consolidate learnings from own and others experiences particularly of incidents, this would also include dissemination of findings and actions within the company and to other stakeholders.            Maintain ServiceMark accreditation - it's a 3 year accreditation given in June 2024.            Attain accreditation for our website from the Shaw Trust and use insights from their testing to keep enhancing our website accessibility for customers</p>
1.4	Companies should use a range of data to monitor the effectiveness of their extra help services, and the satisfaction levels of customers who have made such needs known.	Compliant	<p><b>Understanding Customer Satisfaction on Quality of Service</b></p> <p>We review a range of feedback that we receive from customers, stakeholders, and CCW. We have found these to provide us focus on areas of improvement and where customers are experiencing barriers to access services.</p> <p>This feedback includes:-            Quarterly survey with 250 customers on our Priority Services Register and 250 customers on our affordability schemes. We ask customers about their level of satisfaction and how service can be developed.</p> <p>We listen and learn from customer feedback. This includes feedback requested from customers following contacts with us, learnings from our front line agents from conversations with customers and complaints. For all written complaints, root cause analysis is completed with action plans for how services can be improved.</p>	<p>BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022</p> <p>We are proud to have achieved this accreditation. This robust external audit assesses that the service we offer all customers is of the highest standard and that we continually challenge our selves to innovate and extend our services.</p> <p>Understanding Customer Satisfaction on Quality of Service</p> <p>We review a range of feedback that we receive from customers, stakeholders, and CCW. We have found these to provide us focus on areas of improvement and where customers are experiencing barriers to access services.</p> <p>This feedback includes:-            Quarterly survey with 250 customers on our Priority Services Register and 250 customers on our affordability schemes. We ask customers about their level of satisfaction and how service can be developed.</p> <p>We listen and learn from customer feedback. This includes feedback requested from customers following contacts with us, learnings from our front line agents from conversations with customers and complaints. For all written complaints, root cause analysis is completed with action plans for how services can be improved.</p> <p>In any customer research we do, we will make sure that at least 25% of those involved are in circumstances where they may be considered or consider themselves vulnerable.</p>	<p>Gaining feedback from customers who are in vulnerable circumstances can be more challenging, due to the nature of their needs.</p>	<p>What we do            In any customer research we do, we will make sure that at least 25% of those involved are in circumstances where they may be considered or consider themselves vulnerable.</p> <p>Maintain BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030            We will engage with customers after major incidents to ensure that support provided was adequate to their needs. We will use this feedback to develop plans for the future.</p>

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2.1	Companies should interact with customers in a way that is inclusive for a diverse range of audiences. This should be underpinned by relevant insights, which may include research, engagement and accreditation.	Compliant	<p>We provide range of contact methods as covered in 1.1.</p> <p>Unrivalled Customer Experience Strategy Our strategy is built around the things that our customers told us matter most to them and outlined in six customer priorities. They form the backbone of what we must focus on in striving to drive our unrivalled customer experience strategy. We use KPMG Nunwoods six pillars of customer experience excellence to show us how we must focus our energies and efforts to provide unrivalled customer experiences every time.</p> <p>Our new tone of voice If it matters to our customers, it matters to us, so the way we write helps us to show who we are what's important to us. To help us embed our tone of voice across our many channels we're continuing to work with our partner, communications experts, Mazaru to make sure our written communications are simple and easy to understand and always show how much we care.</p> <p>Our front line teams are accredited by the Institute of Customer Service for Unrivalled Customer Connections. This is the foundation for any advisor to be able to understand and deliver the service which individual customers need and focusses on their situation and any barriers. The training looks in detail at the emotions of the advisor and customer and gives tools and techniques.</p> <p>The Institute of Customer Service ServiceMark Accreditation We're delighted to have been awarded the coveted business wide Service Mark Accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service (ICS), the UK's independent professional customer service body, this month. ServiceMark recognises our commitment to customer service and to upholding high standards as part of our long-term embedded customer service strategy.</p> <p>ServiceMark will sit proudly alongside, the ICS Training Mark accreditation that we already hold for the quality of our internal customer service training.</p> <p>Website Accessibility We have been working with The Shaw Trust Accessibility Service who have completed a comprehensive audit of our website and provided us an accessibility assessment report outlining all of the changes we need to make to achieve Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA. We have already completed more than half of the changes required and we aim to have them all completed in the next 2 months. Once we have actioned everything in the report Shaw Trust will complete another audit and we can confidently say we have achieved Level AA guidelines and we will receive accreditation from Shaw Trust, which we will continue to have reviewed every year.</p>	<p>BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022 We are proud to have achieved this accreditation. This robust external audit assesses that the service we offer all customers is of the highest standard and that we continually challenge our selves to innovate and extend our services.</p> <p>Institute of Customer Service Accreditation</p> <p>Annual website accessibility assessment by The Shaw Trust Accessibility Service</p>		<p><b>Customer Satisfaction for customers on our PSR or affordability tariffs</b></p> <p>What we do Customer satisfaction score for customers will be in line with company wide customer satisfaction performance. Measured in quarterly telephone surveys with 250 customers registered on our Priority Services Register where we ask how satisfied they are with the service they receive and any suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Our plans by 2035 : We will achieve +63 Net Promotor Score (NPS) for customers who need extra help.</p> <p>Website accessibility Our plans for 2025 Achieve Web Content Accessibility guidelines level AA</p>
2.2	Companies should offer their customers a range of ways to interact and communicate. This includes allowing customers to opt for third party billing where appropriate.	Compliant	<p><b>Being easy to access through channels of customers choice</b> We are there to help our customers and they can contact using the following methods:-</p> <p>Accessible &amp; Adaptable website Customer App Nominated contact (e.g. friend, relative, carer or someone with power of attorney) for bills, payments or incidents, this can be temporary or ongoing Home visits Large print Braille Talking bills/leaflets Audio tape/cd documents Magnifying strip Text phone Type talk/Text relay Minicom Video call facility for customers to speak to company Personalised call assistance e.g. Speaking slower/giving longer thinking/response time Web chat Alternate colour background documents Sign language/subtitled videos on website Sign language home visits Alternative language formats Interpreter services</p> <p>Where we know customers need alternative format of bills, we will make sure that all letters and leaflets are sent in the required format.</p>	<p>BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022 We are proud to have achieved this accreditation. This robust external audit assesses that the service we offer all customers is of the highest standard and that we continually challenge our selves to innovate and extend our services.</p> <p>We have a robust process for setting up nominated contacts on bills to protect our customers.</p>		<p>What we do We will send all bills and letters to customers in their required alternative format, i.e. large print, braille, audio.</p> <p>Maintain BSI Kitemark for Inclusive Service ISO 22458:2022</p> <p>In any customer research we do, we will make sure that at least 25% of those involved are in circumstances where they may be considered or consider themselves vulnerable.</p>
2.3	Companies should consult with CCW, and engage with stakeholders and other customer representatives, when making significant changes to their proposed service offering around vulnerability.	Compliant	<p>We gather our customers' views about the services we provide, as well as about how we provide them. We do this so that we can make sure we deliver the services our customers need and want, in the best possible way. We also make sure our services are inclusive to everyone.</p> <p>We have Customer Challenge Group (the Water Forum) and a sub group of the Water Forum, the Customer Engagement Panel (CEP), Both have representatives from CCW as well as a wide range of other experts. We share our plans for customer research and engagement with the CEP and share back results to the wider Water Forum.</p> <p>For some specific customer research, we work more closely with CCW - this is particularly true for any work we carry out in relation to social tariffs. For that customer research, CCW are involved in the design of our approach and methodology, and are part of the sign-off process for them and the survey questionnaire that we use.</p> <p>Another sub group of the Water Forum works closely with us as we have developed and enhanced our Unrivalled Customer Experience Strategy and Inclusivity Strategy.</p> <p>We are improving our CCW quarterly liaison meetings and they will follow a structured agenda with policy and procedures updates as a standing item. CCW are also happy to - and have - provided insight and advice on such topics on an ad hoc basis if and as requested, and we will continue to work closely to ensure alignment.</p>	<p>Commitment that will engage when making significant changes.</p> <p>We regularly consult with CCW.</p> <p>Stakeholder partnership meetings e.g. StepChange</p>		<p>What we do We will continue to engage with customers, stakeholders, Water Forum and CCW when proposing changes to our offerings for vulnerable customers. We have a formal agenda item for CCW quarterly liaison meetings to review policies and procedures.</p> <p>We have a nominated independent Non-executive Director who has specific responsibility for overseeing all things related to our Inclusivity Strategy and will champion our customers when reviewing any proposed changes.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030 We will invite all customers registered on our Priority Services Register to join our 'Have your say' community. We will complete regular research with this group, including design and changes to any vulnerability services. We will also engage with other customer representatives to take account of their experience and knowledge.</p>
3.1	Companies should take active steps to identify customers who require extra help who have not yet been identified.	Compliant	<p><b>Identifying customers for tailored support through partnerships and data sharing</b> We proactively work with a range of partners to help us understand customers who need tailored support.</p> <p>We securely share details of customers who would benefit from our Priority Services Register with a range of organisations such as energy and councils and partner water companies. This means that customers can get help in the event of an emergency such as power cuts as well as support for water interruptions.</p> <p>Northumbrian Water have been leading on an exciting project - Support for All, to deliver a central Priority Services Register for a wide range of pattern organisations, such as energy, telephone etc. The aim is to help customers to register and maintain a record of their needs with one central place. The expansion of this pilot will deliver a geographical expansion, inclusion of selected third parties such as RNIB and Telco, alongside additional functionality.</p> <p>We work with partner support agencies such as Kidney Care and Age UK to help us identify and register customers on our Priority Services Register.</p> <p>Where there are major incidents, we work with Local Resilience Forums tend share PSR data as required under the Emergency Planning Guidance for water companies.</p> <p><b>Training our teams to identify</b> Our frontline teams have received Inclusivity Awareness training to give them the tools to identify customers in situations where we can offer further support. Customers will be added to our PSR with records of the services they require. This information can then be seen by all of our teams for future contacts.</p>	<p>Commitment to maintain existing data sharing commitments in energy and expand as part of work with Support for All.</p> <p>We are expanding the use of external data working in collaboration to help us understand our changing customer circumstances and plan ahead. Partnering with several energy providers (including Northern Gas Network, Cadent Gas and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks), we are developing a tool with Open Maps to measure and assess community vulnerability both now and in the future. We will also use climate change data into this.</p>	<p>We need to enhance relationships with wider stakeholders to share data ahead of Support for All expansion. Currently no dedicated roles for partnerships, additional resource required to expand to level we would like to.</p> <p>Currently overall awareness levels are not increasing, despite wide range of promotion.</p> <p>Whilst we are seeing more customers on our PSR through data sharing and partnership work, general awareness of PSR across our customers is lower than is expected. We have a strategic plan to increase awareness.</p>	<p>What we do: Continuing to expand partnerships with organisations that support customers in vulnerable circumstances, such as councils, local and national charities and support organisations.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030 We will increase awareness of our Priority Services to 65% and keep awareness at this level as a minimum.</p> <p>Introduce dedicated engagement ambassadors who will attend local events, community centres etc to raise awareness of support and understand how we can better support our customers.</p> <p>Create an enhanced inclusivity training package for employees. The training will be tailored to the frequency and nature of our teams engagement with customers.</p> <p>We will develop a leaflet that we can proactively share during events and incidents that encourages customers to sign up to our PSR and / or share their contact details. We know that this is a great opportunity to capture customers who may be in vulnerable circumstances but have little reason to reach out; by being in their community and having an easy-to-access route to share information we may be able to increase numbers for those that are hardest to reach normally.</p>
3.2	Companies should take steps to proactively increase customer awareness of the extra help available to those who need it.	Compliant	<p><b>How we promote PSR:</b> •Information on the reverse of all our bills •Back of our reminder notices •We have information on our website, and we regularly include PSR information when we're promoting digital campaigns like signing up for an online account etc. We are looking to develop our app features to include links to specific PSR content there too. •When we send 'hero comms' to our customers informing them of weather-related events (for example winter preparedness, preparing for severe rain or storm weather) we make them aware that signing up will have their needs prioritised in adverse circumstances. •We also have copies of our promotional literature available on our leisure sites so customers can pick these up when engaging with our wider brand and when they are in different headspaces. •Information leaflets included with overdue payment reminder letters. •We have community engagement vehicles and pop up shops which we use to attend local events, incidents and planned works to engage with customers and actively sign up customers for tailored support. •We will promote PSR when letting our customers know about incidents and planned work which may affect them. •We use radio adverts and shortly will be using TV adverts to promote our financial and non financial support.</p> <p>We do targeted promotion to those customers who are most likely to benefit from support and registration is low to target those who would be most likely to benefit from the services.</p>	<p>CCW water matters responses for awareness.</p> <p>Quarterly measures of customer engagement with our promotion, which looks at how many customers see the messages, and click through to our websites for more information and registration.</p> <p>Quarterly measurement of customers on PSR and our affordability schemes by region to identify areas to focus for promotion.</p>	<p>Working with stakeholders to promote awareness, which generally will require additional funding for projects/promotion material.</p> <p>Whilst we are seeing more customers on our PSR through data sharing and partnership work, general awareness of PSR across our customers is lower than is expected. We have a strategic plan to increase awareness.</p> <p>Supply interruptions are relatively rare so customers have little lived experience to understand need.</p>	<p>Our plans for 2025-2030 We will increase awareness of our Priority Services to 65% and keep awareness at this level as a minimum.</p> <p>We will develop a leaflet that we can proactively share during events and incidents that encourages customers to sign up to our PSR and / or share their contact details. We know that this is a great opportunity to capture customers who may be in vulnerable circumstances but have little reason to reach out; by being in their community and having an easy-to-access route to share information we may be able to increase numbers for those that are hardest to reach normally.</p>

No.	Minimum Expectation	Compliance	Implementation	Monitoring	Challenges	Targets
3.3	Companies should train their staff to spot potential requirements for extra help, even when a customer has not previously declared it.	Compliant	<p><b>Inclusivity awareness for all our teams</b></p> <p>We have trained all our frontline teams to identify signs of extra support needs and sign-up customers to our Priority Services Register. All PSR information is recorded on our billing system which is used by both our billing and operational teams.</p> <p>We use 'prompts' which are displayed on the main screen of our billing system to highlight to advisors where customers are registered for PSR. All PSR details are date stamped with the date last reviewed. Where these records have not been updated for more than 18 months advisors are prompted to review.</p> <p>Our field teams are trained to recognise signs of vulnerability. They can sign customers up on the doorstep on their tablets or leave leaflets/information for the customer to use. We have also recently rolled out a bespoke PSR video training module to all staff and are working to share this and raise awareness with our delivery partners and wider supply chain.</p> <p>We have specialist partners come in to provide training or provide online training on areas such as neurodiversity conditions such as autism, dementia awareness, mental health, stop loan sharks and StepChange. We have developed in house training to support our teams with empathy, with the aim of actively listening to the customer to understand and to respond to show you have heard and we care.</p>	<p>All employees to receive Inclusivity Awareness training which is tracked on our training system.</p> <p>Annual training refresher to be completed by frontline colleagues.</p>		<p>What we do</p> <p>Delivering online Inclusivity Awareness Training to all our frontline teams.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030</p> <p>Create an enhanced inclusivity training package for employees. The training will be tailored to the frequency and nature of employee's engagement with customers.</p> <p>Completion and effectiveness of training will be monitored and with expectation of no less than 95% compliance.</p> <p>Host regular diversity and inclusion sessions which are open to all employees.</p>
3.4	Companies should actively consider how they can reduce communication burdens on customers who need extra help; this could include establishing data sharing arrangements with partner organisations.	Compliant	<p><b>Sharing customer data</b></p> <p>Priority Services Register</p> <p>We proactively work with a range of partners to help us understand customers who need tailored support.</p> <p>We securely share details of customers who would benefit from our Priority Services Register with a range of organisations such as energy and councils and partner water companies. This means that customers can get help in the event of an emergency such as power cuts as well as support for water interruptions. We are working to expand this with other local authorities and housing associations.</p> <p>Support for All will expand data sharing for PSR to bring in registrations from wider partners.</p> <p>We partnered with Settid to ease the end of life admin stress for our customers. The services allows next of kins to send us, and all other companies, a death notification at one time by completing just one form. The families are then able to manage all contacts on an easy to use portal, sharing documents electronically.</p>	<p>Commitment to maintain existing data sharing commitments in energy and expand as part of work with Support for All.</p> <p>As part of proposed expansion of partnership working - identify new data sharing opportunities</p>	<p>Data sharing is currently at needs codes only which is very high level.</p> <p>We need to understand the service required by our customer which is relative to water .</p>	<p>What we do</p> <p>We will continue to share new PSR registrations and updates with energy suppliers every month.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030</p> <p>Set up Data-sharing agreements with local authorities and housing providers in our operating areas and incorporated PSR in our scheduled agreements with local authorities.</p> <p>Expand arrangements to share data with trusted partner organisations, with customers' consent, so that customers who need extra support do not have to keep providing information to multiple organisations</p> <p>Deliver next phase of 'Support For All' - a single online support hub to allow energy and water companies to share details of who is on their PSR. The ambition is for this to eventually lead to data being shared by utility providers to make it easier for customers in need of financial help to be identified and helped at an earlier stage.</p>
4.1	Companies should take appropriate steps to record customers' extra help needs. These records should be held securely and in line with wider data protection requirements.	Compliant	<p><b>Understanding our customers needs</b></p> <p>We record our priority services records at individual level, so that we can tailor the service depending on who we are in contact with. We have aligned our needs codes with the Our PSR records align to those used in energy to allow for ease of sharing. Alongside the needs codes which we use, we also record the services customers require, such as delivery of bottled water so that we can understand who is most in need when an incident could occur.</p> <p>As we know that everyone's circumstances are different, on our registration forms and on our PSR records on our billing system, we have a how can we help area. In this customers can share any information which they feel we may need to know to provide tailored support.</p> <p>Customers PSR information is visible to all our teams, and will prompt our contact teams to check records are up to date when speaking to customers.</p> <p>To reduce customer effort for both registering and keep records up to date, we share PSR information with a range of organisations such as energy and councils and partner water companies. Our PSR records are inline with data protection requirements and visible on our billing and operational system.</p>	<p>Quality Monitoring</p> <p>Our teams receive monthly coaching and quality monitoring, where we check that they are meeting our customers needs. The quality assessments look at empathy, personalisation, time and effort, expectations, resolution and integrity. As part of coaching, this will continue to focus on identifying tailored support requirements, proactive adding customers to our Priority Services Register and being clear in our conversations with customers. All coaching and compliance reviews also check compliance to data protection.</p> <p>Data Protection Training</p> <p>Regular training is provided for all employees on data protection which includes a knowledge check to ensure understanding.</p>	<p>Data sharing is currently at needs codes only which is very high level. We need to understand the service required by our customer which is relative to water .</p>	<p>What we do</p> <p>All teams to receive regular data protection training</p> <p>Quality Monitoring</p> <p>Complete a complete a robust privacy impact assessment prior to any data sharing</p> <p>We will attempt to contact 90% of households which have at least one individual registered on the PSR every two years to make sure they are still receiving the right support.</p> <p>We will make contact with 35% customers every two years.</p>
4.2	Companies' records should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date.	Compliant	<p>We proactively contact customers who have been registered on our Priority Services Register for over 18 months to ask them to update the services they are registered for. We will try it contact by phone, email or text and use this time to remind customers of the additional tailored services we can offer.</p> <p>Where customers contact us, our billing systems highlights where customers records need to be reviewed and prompts our teams to update. We achieve the Ofwat requirements for validation of PSR needs.</p>	<p>Ofwat Annual Performance Reporting for contacting customers on PSR every two years.</p>	<p>Getting hold of hard to reach customers to check information.</p>	<p>Maintain current process. Review engagement process to include enhanced messaging around services to raise awareness of expectations.</p>
4.3	Companies should consider how their records of customers' needs can be designed in a way that can help deliver wider benefits to their customers; for example, reducing communication burdens for customers through data sharing.	Compliant	<p><b>Understanding our customers needs</b></p> <p>We record our priority services records at individual level, so that we can tailor the service depending on who we are in contact with. We have aligned our needs codes with the Our PSR records align to those used in energy to allow for ease of sharing. Alongside the needs codes which we use, we also record the services customers require, such as delivery of bottled water so that we can understand who is most in need when an incident could occur.</p> <p>As we know that everyone's circumstances are different, on our registration forms and on our PSR records on our billing system, we have a 'how can we help' area. In this customers can share any information which they feel we may need to know to provide tailored support.</p> <p>Customers PSR information is visible to all our teams, and will prompt our contact teams to check records are up to date when speaking to customers.</p> <p>To reduce customer effort for both registering and keep records up to date, we share PSR information with a range of organisations such as energy and councils and partner water companies. Our PSR records are inline with data protection requirements and visible on our billing and operational system.</p> <p>Northumbrian Water have been leading on an exciting project - Support for All, to deliver a central Priority Services Register for a wide range of pattern organisations, such as energy, telephone etc. The aim is to help customers to register and maintain a record of their needs with one central place. The expansion of this pilot will deliver a geographical expansion, inclusion of selected third parties such as RNIB and Telco, alongside additional functionality.</p>	<p>Commitment to maintain regular data sharing for new and updated PSR registrations, to reduce customer effort.</p>	<p>Additional needs codes to be added to our billing system to bring other utilities service requirements into consideration.</p> <p>Current records are based on needs where drivers are services, which we will consider as part of Support for All and how we can record and share.</p>	<p>What we do</p> <p>Leading Support for All project which is developing a tell us one service for - widening of partners using aligned codes.</p>
4.4	In designing their approach to recording and, where relevant, sharing customer vulnerability data, companies should clearly explain to customers how their data will be used, including any choices available to them. Companies should take steps to understand how their customers who need extra help feel about the use of their data.	Compliant	<p><b>Informing our customers</b></p> <p>When customers are signed up to our PSR, we send a welcome letters which gives information about how we may share their information to help them get similar support from other organisations such as gas and electricity companies. This also gives details of our privacy statement and how we will protect their information.</p> <p>We have a privacy policy for customers on our priority services - nwl.co.uk/psrprivacy or eswater.co.k/psrprivacy.</p> <p>When we are working with partners to share data to reduce customer effort, we assess impact of sharing and any potential harm. This will include a robust privacy impact assessment.</p>	<p>Commitment that we will continue with involve customers in research on their views on significant changes.</p>	<p>Data sharing nervousness could cause barriers to us providing customer benefits.</p>	<p>Our plans for 2025-2030</p> <p>We will ask our customers view on data sharing, and whether this should be expanded for both financial and non financial support.</p>
5.1	Companies should develop and maintain a vulnerability strategy setting out how they plan to support the extra help needs of their customer base.	Compliant	<p><b>For Everyone: Our customer inclusivity strategy 2023-30</b></p> <p>We engaged with customers as part of the design of our Inclusivity Strategy in 2018 which has been reviewed in 2023. The revision took into account the changes we had seen through covid and cost of living crisis and learnings from external reports. Throughout our business planning and with all research that we complete, at least 25% of our research participants are those who are in circumstances where they may be considered or consider themselves vulnerable.</p>	<p>All customer research will be completed with at least 25% of our research participants are those who are in circumstances where they may be considered or consider themselves vulnerable.</p>		<p>What we do</p> <p>All customer research will be completed with at least 25% of our research participants are those who are in circumstances where they may be considered or consider themselves vulnerable.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025</p> <p>We will invite all customers registered on our Priority Services Register to join our 'Have your say' community. We will complete regular research with this group, including asking for feedback on our draft strategy. We will also involve specialist organisations such as Scope to provide insight and guidance.</p>
5.2	Companies should take steps to understand the likely underlying requirements for extra help in their areas.	Compliant	<p><b>Understanding our customers</b></p> <p>We use external data to understand our customers and target support both now and as our customer population changes. For example, we have mapped the postcodes we serve against indices of Multiple Deprivation to understand which neighbourhoods are most deprived nationally. This covers combined metrics relating to income, educational attainment, health and disability, risk of being a victim of crime, access to housing and the quality of the locate environment.</p> <p>We are expanding the use of external data working in collaboration to help us understand our changing customer circumstances and plan ahead. Partnering with several energy providers (including Northern Gas Network, Cadent Gas and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks), we are developing a tool with Open Maps to measure and assess community vulnerability both now and in the future.</p>	<p><b>What we do</b></p> <p>Each year we work with TransUnion Credit reporting company to understand the level of water poverty for our customers. This provides us insight into areas to target when developing our affordability support schemes and additional measures.</p>		<p>What we do</p> <p>Each year we work with TransUnion Credit reporting company to understand the level of water poverty for our customers. This provides us insight into areas to target when developing our affordability support schemes and additional measures.</p> <p>Our plans for 2025-2030</p> <p>Annual measure of changes in customer demographics to be produced in partnership with Open Maps. This will be completed at regional level and published on our website.</p>