

Appendix 1.1.P - Evaluation of priority services

Wessex Water

September 2018

Business plan section	Supporting document
Board vision and executive summary	
1 Engaging customers	1.1 Summary of research findings
	1.2 Communications strategy
	1.3 Customer participation and behavioural engagement strategy
2 Addressing affordability and vulnerability	
3 Delivering outcomes for customers	
4 Securing long term resilience	
5 Markets & innovation: wholesale	
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Evaluating Wessex Water's Priority Services

Research Debrief

21st March 2018
FINAL



Core objective: to evaluate Wessex Water's Priority Services amongst vulnerable customers



Elicit spontaneous service expectations (across sectors)



Evaluate existing Wessex Water Priority Services



Learn from actual experiences of Wessex Water's priority service

To provide recommendations, where possible, for improving Wessex Water's existing service provision

Detailed objectives can be found in the appendix

Qualitative
conversations
with 24 x
vulnerable
customers

20 x in-home, paired depth interviews with Wessex Water customers

- 10 x interviews with customers registered with Wessex Water's Priority Services (PS)
- 10 x interviews with customers NOT registered with Wessex Water's Priority services - but eligible

1 x 90 minute group discussion (Westbury)

- 4 x vulnerable customers (supported by carer/relative)
- Living in the area affected by water outage incident
- NOT registered on Wessex Water PS

Regional spread: Poole, Bridgewater, Chippenham, Westbury, Yeovil

Context and Sample overview



This sample included customers with a range of vulnerability risk factors

PRIMARY risk factors categorised by...



PHYSICAL / MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

e.g. wheelchair user



MENTAL ILLNESS / MEMORY LOSS

e.g. Alzheimer's, Stroke



DISCONNECTED / ISOLATED

e.g. no digital access, living
alone



SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

e.g. hearing or sight loss



CHRONIC ILLNESS

e.g. cancer, MS

ADDITIONAL factors impacting vulnerability

Young children in
household

Carer for another
member of household

Low income

Transient / in crisis e.g.
bereavement

For most in the sample, their lives feature a combination of factors

MEET SARAH: not registered for Wessex Water PS



CHRONIC ILLNESS

Sarah has been suffering from Spondylosis for many years triggering a number of other risk factors

MENTAL ILLNESS

She suffered a mental breakdown a few years ago but still feels the effects of depression and anxiety in her life today.

LOW INCOME

Sarah doesn't work. She lives alone in a one bedroom council flat in Yeovil.

TRANSIENT / IN CRISIS

Sarah is divorced. She also lost her brother which was part of her breakdown. Battling both her mental and physical health is an on-going battle.

Because of my illness I'm not always in control of my money so if I miss a payment it's good if they [companies] understand and don't put pressure on me

Mental health makes you very vulnerable to people

MEET RACHAEL: not registered for Wessex Water PS

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Rachael was diagnosed with MS 7 years ago. She has Diabetes and is sometimes incontinent (resulting in high water usage)

MEMORY LOSS

Her medication causes her to suffer from memory loss and tiredness

MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

Rachael can still walk but can't get upstairs

TRANSIENT

Her mobility is declining and will continue to deteriorate due to her MS. She recently suffered the loss of her father.

I'm grieving the loss of my father but also my old life before I had MS

I don't know how I feel about being prioritised, I don't want to queue jump but I do want them [Wessex Water] to know about my condition

MEET ALEC: registered on Wessex Water PS

SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

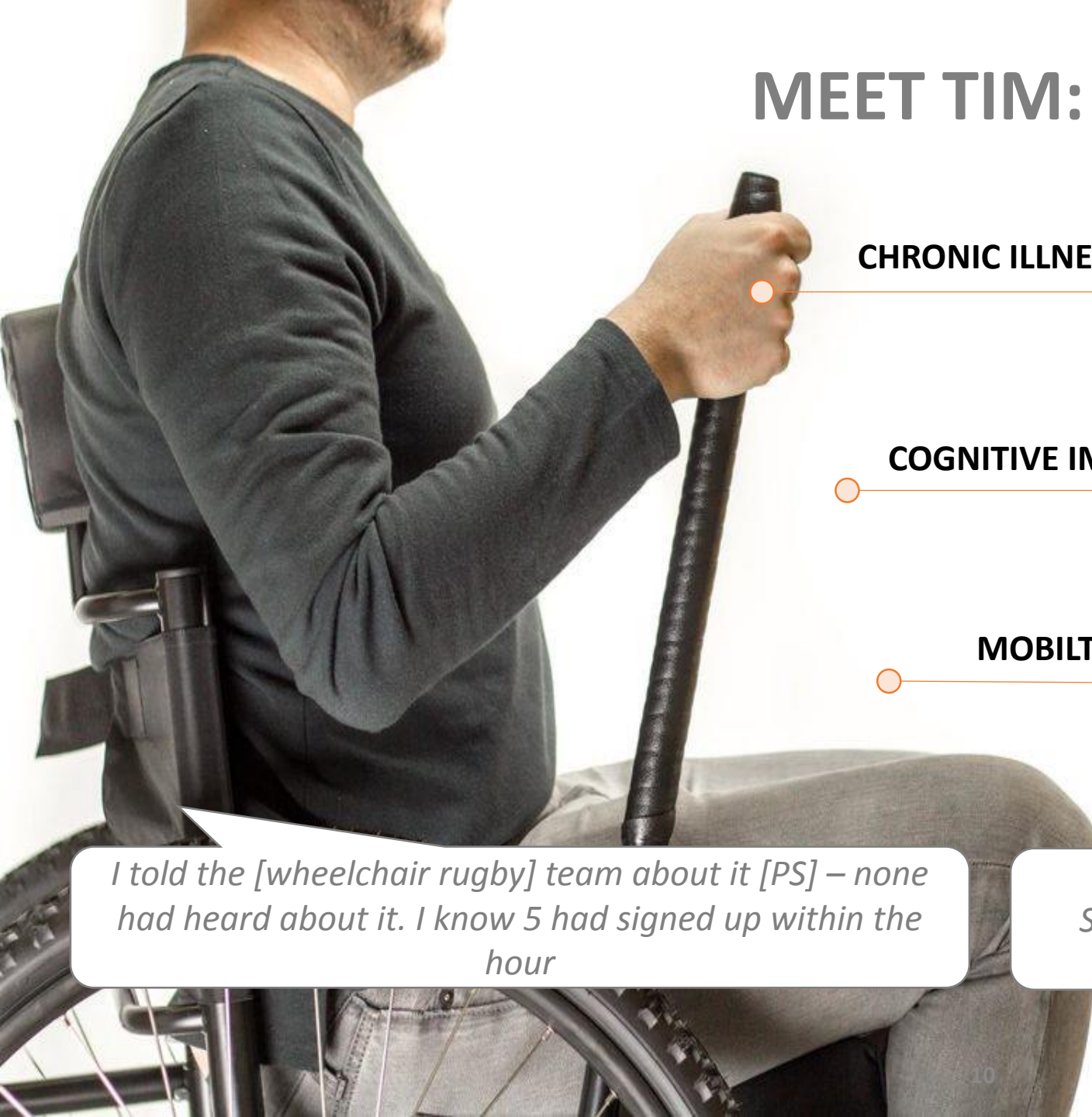
Alec has been blind since birth.

LIVES ALONE

A widower, he lives alone. Unemployed but seeking work. Active, busy and full life

About Wessex: I'd have to give their customer services 'Excellent'. They used to do bills in Braille, they're pretty up on accessibility.

When the job centre has sent a letter and hasn't given a phone call first, that's left me feeling you're not getting the same service as everyone else is getting



MEET TIM: registered on Wessex Water PS

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Tim has a life-long, degenerative – as yet undiagnosed – condition affecting his bones. All movement is very painful. He no longer works.

COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS

He also has memory loss owing to a childhood illness. Relies on his wife and (adult) children. Happy and secure family unit.

MOBILITY IMPAIRED

Tim uses a wheelchair and has an adapted car. He also plays wheelchair rugby

I told the [wheelchair rugby] team about it [PS] – none had heard about it. I know 5 had signed up within the hour

Showering when you are disabled just takes longer

MEET JOHN: registered on Wessex Water PS

TRANSIENT

John's wife died 3 weeks ago. She was disabled and required round the clock care – which he provided. His sister also died just this week.

CARER

As a primary carer he has been largely housebound and constantly anxious about his wife

MOBILITY IMPAIRED

While he is fit and active, he has a spinal condition and he is unable to maintain the house as he did – including issues like reading hard-to-access meters

NO DIGITAL ACCESS

He does not use the internet or mobile phone. His wife managed most admin and communications including bills etc. so he is feeling very worried about managing this now

[Re boiler service] I had to plead with them to come out before the winter – I couldn't bear the thought it could break down with my wife...

I don't know about this [PS]. I expect my wife sorted that out.

Spontaneous service needs and expectations



First & foremost, customers expect high quality service

GENERAL CUSTOMER SERVICE



- ✓ **Polite and friendly staff:** courteous, respectful, honest
- ✓ **Knowledgeable and well trained**
- ✓ **Take accountability:** dealt with by single call handler
- ✓ Accurate and up to date bills

COMMUNICATION, CHANNEL AND ACCESS



- ✓ **Channel choice** (both digital and traditional)
- ✓ **Human:** able to speak to real person when need to, not automated system
- ✗ Foreign call centres
- ✗ Automated call systems

PROBLEM RESOLUTION



- ✓ **Quick response**
- ✓ **Quick resolution**
- ✓ **Timely communication:** about the problem, how and when it will be resolved

However, customers with vulnerability risk factors are dealing with difficult life circumstances

More complex circumstances result in additional needs...

GENERAL CUSTOMER SERVICE



Greater need for...

- **Compassion/empathy/patience:**
 - Memory loss, confusion
 - Need time: to think/speak/answer the phone/door
 - Understanding circumstances e.g. high water use, disability, low income
- **Reassurance/peace of mind** e.g. not going to be cut-off, genuine caller
- **Up to date customer data:** contact details; special circumstances
- **Proactive offer of services** esp. where extra help is available

COMMUNICATION, CHANNEL AND ACCESS



Greater need for...

- **Non digital channels** e.g. letter if not digitally connected; call if sight loss
- **Special formats** e.g. braille, large print
- **Free phone number** esp. for low income customers with PAG phones
- **Easy forms:** simple, unambiguous, (some have fear of forms)
- **Human, not automated, call centres**
 - **Human interaction reassures,** automation can create confusion/distress

PROBLEM RESOLUTION



Greater need for...

When there's a service problem

- **Prioritised contact:** esp. if sensory impairments
- **Prioritised support** e.g. deliver bottled water, energy generator

When there's a payment problem

- Flexible payment options e.g. fortnightly, monthly
- Understanding response when payments are missed/late

Vulnerable customers have low expectations of additional services from large corporations...

Driven by...

LOW AWARENESS OF PRIORITY SERVICES ACROSS SECTORS

- Few actual examples of receiving additional services
- Of our vulnerable sample, over half unaware of any additional support available from organisations
- (This includes some customers who are known to be registered on Wessex Water's PS – but are unaware)

Greater awareness of bill discounts

Mainly energy

MANY DO NOT SELF-DEFINE AS 'VULNERABLE'

- Not actively seeking additional support
- Idea of priority services can lack relevance where perception of 'vulnerable' is limited to e.g. severely disabled, with extreme needs

Currently relying on own support networks for help/a safety net...

Support networks

- Warm Home Discount, disability discounts
- Some aware (and in receipt of) Wessex Water Social Tariff (e.g. Water Sure, payment plan)

- Friends, family, neighbours
- Church
- Charities e.g. Christians Against Poverty
- Local networks of people with similar conditions e.g. spinal injury
- Lifeline services (red cord)

Organisations are perceived to understand vulnerable customers' needs when they:



OFFER DISCOUNTS

PROACTIVELY OFFER SERVICES

SHOW COMPASSION,
UNDERSTANDING AND REASSURE

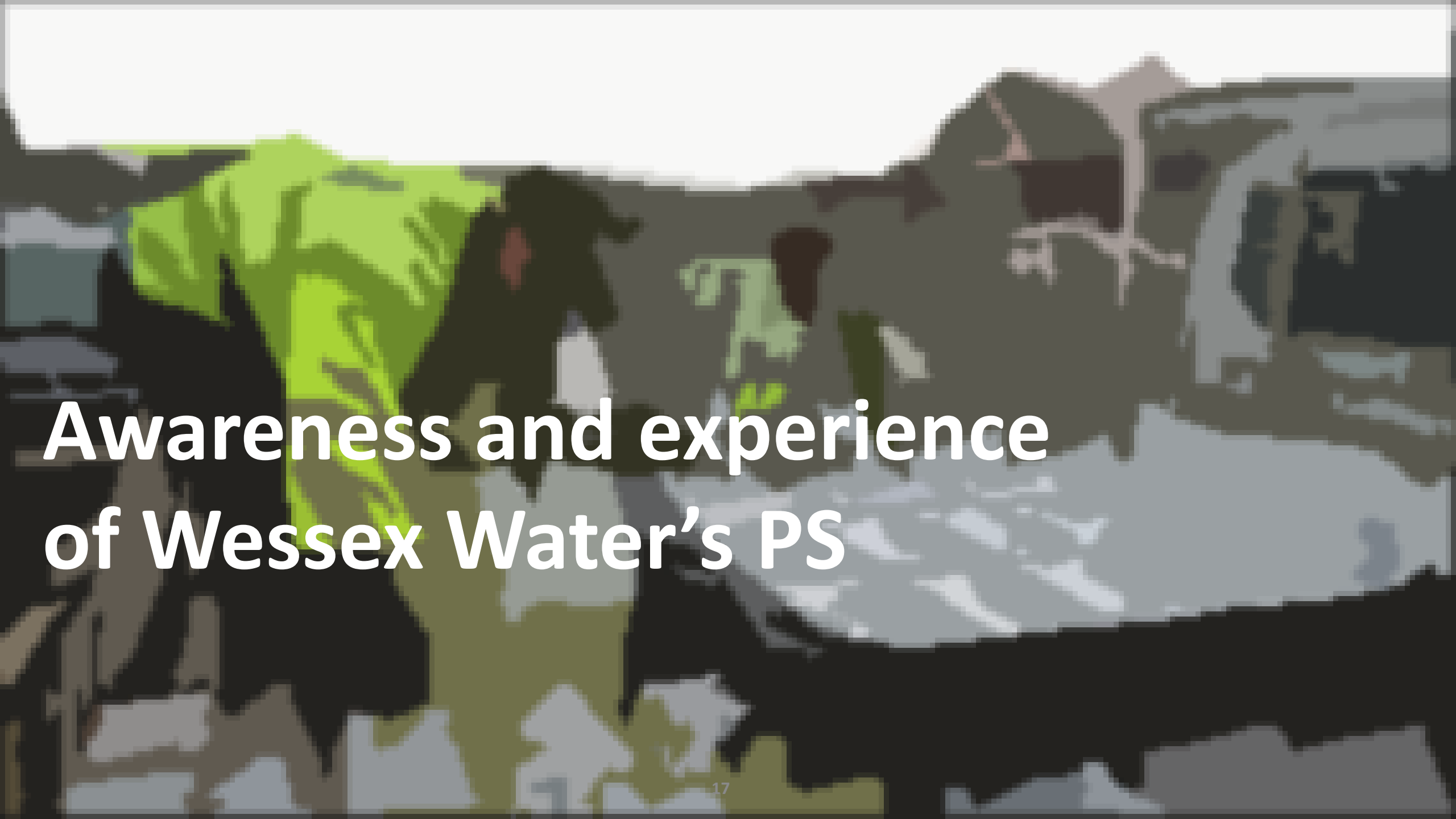
FLEXIBLE WITH PAYMENT DATES /
MISSED PAYMENTS

*I get a discount on my **energy bill** for being disabled*

***British Gas** suggested I have my bills in large print because I'm partially blind*

***Sky** were excellent. I rely on the TV because of my mental health. They **reassured** me they weren't going to cut me off. I explained my situation so **they suggested** when to pay based on the day I get my benefits*

*The **council** are aware of my condition so don't mind if I **don't make payment** on the day I'm supposed to: I sometimes don't feel well enough to go out and do it*



Awareness and experience of Wessex Water's PS

Inventory of any PS services across a sample of vulnerable consumers

KEY FINDING

- For a sample of 24+ customers in vulnerable circumstances, low levels of awareness and uptake of priority services generally e.g. only 5 aware that they are registered with their energy company

5 x Energy PSR

(2 x British Gas, 1 x Western Power 2 x unknown)

1 x BT PSR

1 x Car Breakdown Cover

Prioritised if broken down

4 x Wessex Water PS

(people with mobility and/or sensory impairments)

6 others on Wessex Water PS but unaware



PHYSICAL / MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT
e.g. wheelchair user



MENTAL ILLNESS / MEMORY LOSS
e.g. Alzheimers, Stroke



DISCONNECTED / ISOLATED
e.g. no digital access, living alone



SENSORY IMPAIRMENT
e.g. hearing or sight loss



CHRONIC ILLNESS
e.g. cancer, MS

- Those most likely to be on a PS have physical or sensory impairments. PS part of adapting life and home to permanent needs
- Other circumstances (cognitive impairments, isolation etc.) are less easy to identify, evolve over time and are less associated with readily available support

Many who are on Wessex Water's Priority Services Register are unaware

KEY FINDING: low awareness and understanding of PS

- 6/10 who are on Priority Services Register are unaware
- Some (when prompted) have vague recollection of going on the register with no further information or experiences to reinforce what it is
- Examples where understanding of 'Priority Services' is ambiguous: thought to be simply the emergency phone number
- Confusion with other services e.g. WaterSure, Password scheme
- One customer thought there was only one PS across all utilities i.e. if registered for one you are registered for them all

Others are aware that they are on Wessex Water PS

Driven
by...

- GP notice about Wessex Water Password scheme (but not seen as part of wider support package)
- Put on register at time of meter being fitted or read
- Partner (wife) registered – but unclear of the trigger
- Awareness triggered by experience (bottled water delivered)
- (Awareness triggered by research)

It might be because I asked them to do a meter reading because I can't see down the hole. It's good that they're taking the initiative cause not all companies would pick up on that.

Mixed experiences of Wessex Water's priority services for those on the register



Service response (Poole) ✓✓

- Wheelchair user: received bottled water at home during an outage
- Delivery came before he realised there was no water
- Also offered transport from Wessex Water to a private member's gym that had the facilities he would require
- [Experience made him aware of PS scheme]

I felt so happy and secure because they'd really thought about what I'd needed



Service response (Westbury) ✓✗

- Chronic illness and limited mobility: delivered bottled water to home as a result of undrinkable cloudy water
- **HOWEVER:** water pack/ bottles too heavy to carry alone and lack of communication during incident

Obviously, delivered to someone who is disabled, there's a good chance a number of people can't lift those



Bill formats ✓✗

- Sight loss customer: also receives phone call at time of bill. **HOWEVER:** letters about service issues not accompanied by a call (so he hasn't known about problems until after the event)
- Information about large print currently in small print on bill

People say 'you've had a letter saying the water will be discoloured' but they read it two days later and I've drunk the water – and if I'm not dead I'm lucky.

WESTBURY OUTAGE

Qualitatively, we spoke to 7 vulnerable customers affected by the 2017 incident

- 6 x not registered for Wessex Water's PS
- 1 x registered for Wessex Water's PS



All contending with one or more vulnerable risk factor including:

- Crohn's disease
- MS
- Mental health
- Physical disability
- Diabetes
- Low income
- Elderly and living alone
- Autistic son in household

All recall the event (as per recruitment spec)

- However, one thought this was a planned outage, recalled a letter relating the event to connecting water supply to new housing. Recalls filling up baths but clearly thinking of another incident

Despite vulnerability, there's an overall acceptance and appreciation that *'these things happen'*

- Generally unconcerned about the incident
- Minimal impact: no one felt it affected them very much
- No one reporting any local unhappiness with Wessex Water
- The PS registered customer had received bottled water at home

WESTBURY | Mixed experiences amongst vulnerable customers NOT registered, but broadly positive about how Wessex Water responded

Warning and impact of incident

Initial awareness of incident:

- Two received a text from Wessex
- One found out on community Facebook page (not WW page)
- The rest don't recall any initial warning from Wessex Water

On going communications

- One received ongoing updates via text message
- One received a phone call from Wessex during incident
- The rest, no ongoing comms or updates

Provision of water

- Most aware of water being given out at health centre – combination of Wessex Water and community Facebook page
- One dissatisfied with organisation: caused 1 hour traffic jam, ended up leaving queue for water empty handed

Post event comms and compensation

- Water cloudy when came back on
- Mixed experience of receiving compensation: some had but others had not received any
- Lack of follow up communications i.e. apology, reason for outage

They did the best they could do by getting water out to people

- **No spontaneous awareness of priority services**
- **No evidence that the event had highlighted existence of priority services**

Serving the needs of vulnerable

- Many more people (than the 7 registered) would be eligible for PS in the Westbury area
- Survey reveals that there were people for whom the water outage exacerbated circumstances (health issues; small babies) – and for whom delivered water or priority communication would have helped



Implications for driving PS awareness

Satisfaction largely hinges on communication:

- Mixed experiences evident from the data
- Those receiving text updates very positive (but in the minority)
- Human (as opposed to automated) notification where possible



Implications for customer data (esp. SMS) and communications during event

Post event survey:

- Survey did not pick up any information about PS – and could be a way to promote registrations
- Measuring whether ‘affected’ did not reveal level of satisfaction with Wessex Water’s response



Adapt post-event survey to establish satisfaction and promote PS

Evaluating Wessex Water's PS



Priority Services

code of practice

Customers across the sample very positive about the types of additional services on offer

Most expected

- Advance warnings
- Channel choice
- Formats for people with sensory impairments
- Free bottled water in an event

- Valued
- But also expected

- Password scheme / ID cards
- Knock and wait
- More frequent meter reads
- Bill discounts

- Features that meet real needs – often relevant
- Desire to know more
- Meter reading frequency reveals that people often unaware of usual frequency

- Tailored emergency plans
- Home visiting service (unclear in what circumstances)

- Positive response but less immediately relevant

Least expected

Wessex Water PS exceeding expectations

Positive reactions amongst both registered and non registered

Not registered

Oh **wow**, I had no idea they offered this...being registered would make me feel more in **control and worry less**

It's all **very good**, I give them 9/10

Thank you so much for coming here today and telling us all of this...this is really exceeding my expectations

Registered

This is all very **reassuring**... am I registered for this?

They **offer a lot more** than I realised

I didn't know about that! That's **really good**, they should advertise it more



However, low awareness causes cynicism

They **don't want to tell you** that you can claim for this...will mean more people signing up (not registered)

It's like too many other things, you're just **left to discover it yourself** rather than being told (registered)

Information about priority services sometimes undermined by examples of missed opportunities to register eligible customers

Service suggests staff are trained to spot the signs of vulnerability – however, this has not always been the case:

A PAYMENT MISSED

Contacted Wessex regarding missed payment: operator did not establish personal circumstances or PS eligibility (customer disabled with learning difficulties)

APPLIED FOR WATERSURE

Application for WaterSure was unsuccessful. Despite sharing health conditions, customer was not referred to PS

REPORTING A PROBLEM

Called to report blocked toilet; informed Wessex of MS condition – not told about or offered PS registration

I told them on the phone I had MS but she suggested I use the toilet upstairs...not their fault, perhaps they don't know what MS is?

FEEDING BACK

Westbury post event survey missed opportunity to register potentially eligible customers

As well as touchpoints missed for those already registered...

SERVICE EXPERIENCE NOT ALWAYS AS SUGGESTED

e.g.

They say they do all those communications but I didn't get that when I had a problem with the water...it's worrying really

Case study

- WaterSure customer recently reviewed: perception review did not cover health/circumstances changing
- Customer remains unaware of PS (though they are on it)
- Pre-warned of outage with letter only, would have liked text message
 - Text better for specific cognitive condition but where/how request this?
 - This condition does not appear on data base

PS DATA NOT UP TO DATE ESP. WHERE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE CHANGING (TRANSIENT VULNERABILITIES)

e.g.

- Two examples in the sample where partner has died (and who were the original reason for the PS)
- Many examples where list shows one condition but not others e.g. memory issues often missing
- Incorrect or missing numbers (possibly only incorrect on PS but correct on main database)

Conclusions and recommendations



Strong endorsement for the Priority Services scheme, however:

Low awareness: only a minority experience benefits of PS but the biggest benefit – peace of mind – is denied customers

PS is not giving much reputational benefit to Wessex Water... a real demonstration of its values

**Missing opportunity:
PS has the potential to do more**

Opportunities missed at touch-points to enlist to register

Customers appear more likely to be accepting of problems when on/aware of PS (a trust factor)

Remove the bushel...

Build awareness (and peace of mind) among existing PS customers

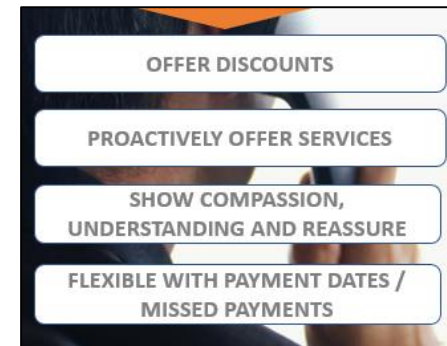
- 'Onboarding' communications to reinforce PS e.g. what it includes; how others have benefitted
- Dedicated number and/or tangible giveaway (e.g. fridge magnet; door sticker 'knock and wait')
- Part of customer communications '*as a PS customer...*' (in letters, on phone)

Use touch-points to enlist more customers to register

- Redouble efforts to take opportunities to promote service e.g. WaterSure reviews; post incident surveys; contact events
- Link PS and social tariff information: opportunity to assess circumstances for PS eligibility

Use PSR to demonstrate Wessex Water's values/commitment to customer excellence

- PS 'product' is highly praised and exceeds expectations; it also meets the criteria customers set for a company that considers vulnerable needs
- Wider awareness will encourage word of mouth, offspring enlisting elderly parents etc.
- Peace of mind is a powerful brand association...



INCREASE ELIGIBILITY

- Families with young children (under 5) and bottle fed babies

PRODUCT ENHANCEMENTS

- Tailoring e.g. more frequent meter reads - more than 4 times a year - for greater control over bill amounts (single mention)
- Extra help for people unable to lift water bottles

COMMUNICATION ENHANCEMENTS

- Text reminders of outage e.g. night before
- Follow up communications post event
- Dedicated PS number for registered customers (many think it already exists)
- Freephone number (for low income/PAYG)
- Give choice of channel (or drive increase of mobile numbers to increase numbers getting text alerts)

INCREASE PARTNERSHIP WORK


- Partner with Life Line for reporting emergencies to customers

Kids are always a priority – should be prioritised because some have bottled milk and need water

There should be a free and dedicated number for registered customers to call

Driving awareness and take up | recommendations

- **USE EXISTING CUSTOMER DATA**
 - Many WaterSure applicants eligible for PS
 - Target customers on social tariffs – low income linked with disability / vulnerability
 - Continual cleaning and updating PS database
- **USE CUSTOMER TOUCHPOINTS TO IDENTIFY VULNERABILITY**
 - New occupancy
 - Meter installation
- **CUSTOMER INFORMATION**
 - Give standout via name / identity / web link e.g. in magazine, bill
- **THIRD PARTY CHANNELS**
 - Partner with landlords, housing associations, councils
- **PROACTIVE TARGETING OF VULNERABLE GROUPS**
 - Via community groups for elderly, carers, young families, registered disabled
 - Via GP surgeries
 - Wider media activity



I don't think they [Wessex Water] are as good as British Gas because they're not as proactive – British Gas offered me large print

We moved into the house 8 months ago and when we registered with Wessex Water they didn't ask about my health or anything



Appendix

Core objective was to evaluate Wessex Water's Priority Services amongst vulnerable customers



Spontaneous service expectations

- To explore customer expectations of priority services provided by Wessex Water – both in relation to ongoing services for people with additional needs, and in response to incidents
- To explore what services might be required in the future (both for them as individuals with changing needs - and for the wider population and changing demographic or weather factors)
- To explore whether service of other organisations is driving expectations



Evaluation of existing service

- To evaluate Wessex Water's code of practice in relation to priority services: does the service offer meet expectations?
- To explore satisfaction of the current service amongst customers on the register
- To explore how eligible customers not currently on the register, would like (or would be likely to) hear about it
- Specifically, does the process of signing up meet customers' needs?
- Does it compare with other priority services from other sectors?



Experience of existing service

- To explore experiences of customers in the Westbury area following the recent water outage
- Specifically, to understand the impact and the support/communication needs for customers in vulnerability
- To understand residents' perceptions of Wessex Water (and any other relevant agencies) during and after the incident

Stimulus tested across sample

Introduction to Wessex Water's Priority Services

- Wessex Water offers a range of Priority Services **to customers who may require extra care** or who have particular requirements
- Once a customer / household is registered, Wessex Water **can identify and respond quickly** to their needs
- Being registered for Priority Services **is free and available to anyone in the Wessex Water region**



Who are these services for?

Physical disability

Blind or partial sight loss

Deaf / hearing loss

Health condition requiring constant supply of water e.g. Dialysis

Memory loss e.g. Dementia, Alzheimer's

Language other than English / literacy difficulties

Mental health condition e.g. depression

Older people

Unable to use internet (digitally excluded)

Developmental conditions e.g. Autism

Ill health

Vocally impaired

Anyone else?

General communication and billing

Wide range of channels



Other forms of communication:

- Text Relay for customers with hearing loss
- Bills available in braille, audio, via telephone, CD, in large print, other languages
- Language line/ interpreter/ Google Translate
- Home visiting service
- Nominate e.g. a carer or family member to receive correspondence
- Follow up emails explaining what has been agreed
- All videos subtitled

Jargon free and in plain English

Priority Services: in the event of a problem

Sometimes Wessex Water may need to turn off water to carry out essential work, or there is an unexpected problem

Additional services to communicate the problem

- Advance warning (if possible) by letter
- Loudspeaker vans during the event
- Alerts by telephone or text message (for e.g. sight loss)
- Home visit or neighbour contacted (for e.g. hearing loss)
- Individual emergency plans tailored where specific needs e.g. Autism

Additional services to help customers cope

- Free bottled water delivered to home
- Bowsers / water tanks conveniently located

Priority Services: to meet additional needs of customers

Password Scheme	Agreed personal password when visiting homes (written and verbal) All Wessex Water staff carry identity cards
Knock and wait scheme	Staff wait a little longer to give customers time to answer the door
Meters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meter read up to 4 times a year, if unable to do it themselves• Wessex Water will look at moving meter to a place that's easier to see

How customers can register for Priority Services

Ways to register

- Online
- Via email
- Call via Text Relay
- Paper form

A friend, carer or family member can contact Wessex Water on a customer's behalf.

The image shows a two-step registration process for Priority Services. The first step, 'Your details', includes fields for Title, First name, Surname, Preferred contact number, Alternative contact number, Email address, Confirm email address, Customer reference number, and Postcode lookup. The second step, 'Your needs', asks the user to select applicable conditions from a list: Disabled, Deaf / difficulty hearing, Mobility problems, Blind / partially sighted, Kidney dialysis treatment at home, Wheelchair user, Vocally impaired, Learning difficulties, A medical condition which requires a constant water supply, and Other. A note at the bottom of the second step explains the password system for home visits.

Your details Step 1 of 2

Title* Please select

First name* First name*

Surname* Surname*

Preferred contact number* Preferred contact number*

Alternative contact number Alternative contact number

Email address* Email address*

Confirm email address* Confirm email address*

Customer reference number Customer reference number

To find your address, enter your postcode and then click on the postcode lookup button

Postcode lookup POSTCODE LOOKUP

Your needs Step 2 of 2

Please tell us which of the following apply to you or someone living in your home:

- Disabled
- Deaf / difficulty hearing
- Mobility problems
- Blind / partially sighted
- Kidney dialysis treatment at home
- Wheelchair user
- Vocally impaired
- Learning difficulties
- A medical condition which requires a constant water supply
- Other

Our password system helps you to guard against bogus callers. If you would like us to use a confidential password when we visit your home, please enter one here

Staff training to spot the signs of additional needs

All Wessex Water staff are trained to:

- Spot the signs of customers who may require additional help
- Recognise when to refer customers to appropriate services outside of Wessex Water e.g. support charities
- Deal sensitively with customers who have conditions such as Dementia, mental illness, hearing loss etc.
- Use non-judgemental listening and appropriate language

Wessex Water work in partnership with other organisations who support customers e.g.



Other ways Wessex Water supports customers with additional needs

Bill discounts (available to all eligible customers)

- For pensioners on low incomes (state pension only, receive Pension Credit): 20% off bill
- For customers who use large amounts of water due to medical condition: bill discount
- For customers in hospital or residential care for a long period of time: no charge for period they are living away from home, (if unmetered)

Overarching objective: to evaluate Wessex Water's current Priority Services, identifying possible areas for future improvement

For Poole, Taunton, Chippenham: lead respondent to be registered for Wessex Water's Priority Services
For Trowbridge: lead respondent NOT registered for Wessex Water's Priority Services, but eligible

Project Introduction (2 minutes)

To explain the purpose and process of the research

- **Blue Marble and project introduction:** we are an independent market research agency commissioned by Wessex Water to understand the needs and circumstances of customers who may require additional help and support, and to review the services they currently offer to them.
- *Reassurances:* recording, confidentiality, end time, how information will be used etc.

Understanding circumstances and service needs (20 minutes)

a) to understand household circumstances

b) to understand spontaneous service needs and expectations

- Please **introduce yourself** ...
 - Name, how pair know one another
 - Living situation: where living, who's in household
 - Work status
- **STIMULUS 1:** pick an image(s) that best reflects you and your life at the moment – why have you chosen this picture?
- Tell me a little bit more about you and your current **circumstances**?
 - What's life like for you at the moment? For what reasons? E.g. listen out for long-term health issues, disabilities, low income, unemployed etc
 - What are the challenges and struggles you are dealing with, if any at all?
 - *Moderator to sensitively probe where appropriate*

Service needs and expectations

- How, if at all, might your circumstances mean that you might **require additional help and support** from companies? Please explain...
- Are there any examples of companies who really **understand your needs**?
 - Which companies? *Moderator to probe utility providers, TV / broadband providers, Council*
 - What is it they've done for you to understand and meet your needs /circumstances?
- Are there any examples of companies who really have **not understood your needs**?
 - **For each example given (both good and bad) use STIMULUS 2:** using the images to help, how did this experience leave you feeling? Please explain why you chose that image.
- Are any of these **companies aware of your circumstances / additional requirements** you may have?

- What do they know, how do they know this, what difference does it make in terms of the service, help and support they give you? *Moderator to listen for energy PSR*
- **Let's think about what you need from companies when:**
 - a) you need to communicate with them on a daily basis (*probe channels*)
 - b) they need to communicate with you (*probe bill format and other correspondence*)
 - c) there's a service problem
 - Any other needs you have because of your specific circumstances?

Let's talk specifically about Wessex Water...

- Firstly, what are your **perceptions** of Wessex Water?
 - What words would you use to describe them?
 - How do they treat their customers? How do you feel they have treated you?
 - What **contact**, if any at all, have you had with them? *Moderator to probe last 12 months, longer*
 - How do they compare to other companies you deal with – better / worse? Why?
- **Moderator to refer to service needs and expectations discussed earlier – looking back at what you've already said, is there anything else you specifically need / expect from Wessex Water?**

Evaluation of Wessex Water's existing Priority Services (20 minutes)

To assess current Priority Services against spontaneous service needs and expectations

Moderator to probe accordingly i.e. for those registered and for those not registered for Priority Services

- Are you **aware of or benefitting from any additional help / support** Wessex Water offers to customers who may require it?
 - If so, what? How, where and when did you hear about this? *Moderator to probe channel and message*
- **STIMULUS 3: 'Introduction to Wessex Water's Priority Services'**
 - Initial reactions
 - **For registered:** how does this fit with your understanding of Priority Services?
 - **For not registered:**
 - Have you heard of this before? How, where, when?
 - What services would you expect Wessex Water to offer as part of this?
- **Who** do you think Wessex Water should be helping and offering additional help and support to?
 - What type of customers, what types of households / circumstances? Why?
- **STIMULUS 4: 'Who are the services for?'**
 - Initial reactions
 - Any types of customers / circumstances missing?
 - **For not registered:** do you think these services are for you and your household?
- **STIMULUS 5,6,7,8,9: Breakdown of Priority Services**

For each board...

 - Overall reactions...
 - Have you heard of this before? How, where, when?
 - Anything you haven't heard of before?
 - How well does this meet your service needs / expectations?

- Anything missing?
- **For not registered:** how relevant does this feel for you and your circumstances?
- **For registered:** moderator to probe registration / sign up process – pros, cons, areas for improvement
- **STIMULUS 10: Other ways Wessex Water supports customers with additional needs**
 - Moderator to probe response to financial assistance
 - Moderator to explain that financial support is currently separate to Priority Services – they are called Social Tariffs
 - What are your thoughts on this?
 - Should they be separate or should financial support also be part of Priority Services?
 - Should Wessex Water automatically be telling customers about financial support when talking about Priority Services?

NB moderator to watch out for any unfamiliar language and clarify meaning e.g. Text Relay, Language Line, browser etc

Summary and areas for improvement

- **STIMULUS 2:** I've shown you the ways Wessex Water can help customers who need additional care. Please pick an image that best reflects how you feel about Wessex Water now. Please explain why you chose that image.
- **Probe:**
 - Are there services below expectations, meeting expectations, exceeding expectations?
 - How would you **score them out of 10**?
- How do Wessex Water's Priority Services **compare** to how other companies help and support customers?
 - Moderator to probe energy PSR
- How, if at all, could Wessex Water **improve** its Priority Services?
 - Is there anything missing? Any unmet needs or service expectations?
- **For not registered:** you're currently not registered for Wessex Water's Priority Services
 - Why do you think that is? Do you think you should be? Please explain...
 - How could Wessex Water rectify that? What else could / should they be doing?
- **Working in partnership / emergency response:** *Wessex Water is looking to work more closely with key local charities and in-home services to provide support to its vulnerable customers when they need it, an example may include the red cord service. Ultimately, the idea is to provide a joint service when things go wrong.*
 - Overall reactions to this idea?
 - What's the benefit of Wessex Water working together with other organisations / services?
 - Who would this idea benefit? In what situations?
 - How relevant does it feel to you and your household?
 - Based on your personal opinion, should Wessex Water move forward with this idea? Why / why not?

Final thoughts (3 minutes)

- Do you have any final recommendations or suggestions for how Wessex Water could improve the way they meet the needs of you and your household?
 - Now...?
 - And in the future...?

Overarching objective: to evaluate Wessex Water's current Priority Services, identifying possible areas for future improvement

NB lead respondent to be registered for Wessex Water's Priority Services

Project Introduction (2 minutes)

To explain the purpose and process of the research

- **Blue Marble and project introduction:** we are an independent market research agency who has been commissioned by Wessex Water to understand the needs and circumstances of customers who may require additional help and support, and to review the services they currently offer to them.
- *Reassurances:* recording, confidentiality, end time, how information will be used etc.

Understanding circumstances and service needs (15 minutes)

a) to understand household circumstances

b) to understand spontaneous service needs and expectations

- Please **introduce yourself** ...
 - Name, how pair know one another
 - Living situation: where living, who's in household
 - Work status
- **STIMULUS 1:** pick an image that best reflects you and your life at the moment – why have you chosen this picture?
- Tell me a little bit more about you and your current **circumstances**?
 - What's life like for you at the moment? For what reasons? E.g. listen out for long-term health issues, disabilities, low income, unemployed etc
 - What are the challenges and struggles you are dealing with, if any at all?
 - *Moderator to sensitively probe where appropriate*

Service needs and expectations

- How, if at all, might your circumstances mean that you **require additional help and support** from companies? Please explain...
- Are there any examples of companies who really **understand your needs**?
 - Which companies? *Moderator to probe utility providers, TV / broadband providers, Council*
 - What is it they've done for you to meet your needs and understand your needs /circumstances?
- Are there any examples of companies who really have **not understood your needs**?
 - **For each example given (both good and bad) use STIMULUS 2:** using the images to help, how did this experience leave you feeling? Please explain why you chose that image.
- Are any of these **companies aware of your circumstances / additional requirements** you may have?

- What do they know, how do they know this, what difference does it make in terms of the service, help and support they give you? *Moderator to listen for energy PSR*
- **Let's think about what you need from companies when:**
 - a) you need to communicate with them on a daily basis (*probe channels*)
 - b) they need to communicate with you (*probe bill format and other correspondence*)
 - c) there's a service problem
 - Any other needs you have because of your specific circumstances?

*Let's talk specifically about **Wessex Water**...*

- Firstly, what are your **perceptions** of Wessex water?
 - What words would you use to describe them?
 - How do they treat their customers? How do you feel they have treated you?
 - What **contact**, if any at all, have you had with them? *Moderator to probe last 12 months, longer*
 - How do they compare to other companies you deal with – better / worse? Why?
- **Moderator to refer to service needs and expectations discussed earlier – looking back at what you've already said, is there anything else you specifically need / expect from Wessex Water?**

Learning from the Westbury water outage (15 minutes)

To understand how well service needs and expectations were met in the reality of a service failure, identifying possible areas for improvement

Moderator to explain that we want to discuss a recent Wessex Water service failure which was experienced in the Westbury area...

- In September of last year, customers in the area experienced a period of time without water, **STIMULUS 2:** which image best reflects how you felt when you first realised you were without water? Please explain why you chose that image.
- Can you tell me a little bit more about **what happened from start to finish** and you were **affected**?
 - *Moderator to allow customer to spontaneously share their story, before probing how they first found out about the problem, what they initially did, length of time without water, whether or not they had to buy / collect bottled water, impact had on lives thinking about circumstances e.g. if have health condition*
- How did **Wessex Water react** to the problem? Talk me through what Wessex Water did...
 - Initially e.g. informing you of the outage. *Probe channel of communication*
 - During the outage e.g. *probe channel of communication, provision of bottled water, other services*
 - Post outage e.g. *probe communication, follow ups etc*
 - **Moderator to probe how reacted to specific needs**
- What was the **mood in the community** at the time, how did people feel?
 - How were people feeling towards Wessex Water? What were people saying?

Evaluation of Wessex Water's response

- How do you feel about how well **Wessex Water dealt** with the problem?
 - What did they do well? What did they do less well?
- How well did they meet your **needs and service expectations**?

- What could Wessex Water have done **differently to better meet your needs** and service expectations?
 - If this were to happen again, how could Wessex Water better support customers like yourselves?

Evaluation of Wessex Water's existing Priority Services (10 minutes)

To assess current Priority Services against spontaneous service needs and expectations

- Are you **aware of or benefiting from any additional help / support** Wessex Water offer to customers who may require it?
 - If so, what? How, where and when did you hear about this? *Moderator to probe channel and message*
- **STIMULUS 3: 'Introduction to Wessex Water's Priority Services'**
 - How does this fit with your understanding of Priority Services?
 - *NB all to be registered for Wessex Water Priority Services*
- **Who** do you think Wessex Water should be helping and offering additional help and support to?
 - What type of customers, what types of households / circumstances? Why?
- **STIMULUS 4: 'Who are the services for?'**
 - Initial reactions
 - Any types of customers / circumstances missing?
- **STIMULUS 5,6,7,8,9: Breakdown of Priority Services**
For each board...
 - Overall reactions...
 - Have you heard of this before? How, where, when?
 - Anything you haven't heard of before?
 - How well does this meet your service needs / expectations?
 - Anything missing?
 - **Moderator to probe registration / sign up process – pros, cons, areas for improvement**
- Any further reflections on how Wessex Water reacted during the water outage, now you have reviewed all of its Priority Services?
- **STIMULUS 10: Other ways Wessex Water supports customers with additional needs**
 - *Moderator to probe response to financial assistance*
 - *Moderator to explain that financial support is currently separate to Priority Services – they are called Social Tariffs*
 - What are your thoughts on this?
 - Should they be separate or should financial support also be part of Priority Services?
 - Should Wessex Water automatically be telling customers about financial support when talking about Priority Services?

NB moderator to watch out for any unfamiliar language and clarify meaning e.g. Text Relay, Language Line, bowser etc

Summary and areas for improvement

- **STIMULUS 2:** I've shown you the ways Wessex Water can help customers who need additional care. Please pick an image that best reflects how you feel about Wessex Water now. Please explain why you chose that image.
- **Probe:**
 - Are there services below expectations, meeting expectations, exceeding expectations?
 - How would you **score them out of 10**?
- How do Wessex Water's Priority Services **compare** to how other companies help and support customers?
 - *Moderator to probe energy PSR*
- How, if at all, could Wessex Water **improve** its Priority Services?
 - Is there anything missing? Any unmet needs or service expectations?

Working in partnership / emergency response: *Wessex Water is looking to work more closely with key local charities and in-home services to provide support to its vulnerable customers when they need it, an example may include the red cord service. Ultimately, the idea is to provide a joint service when things go wrong.*

- Overall reactions to this idea?
- What's the benefit of Wessex Water working together with other organisations / services?
 - Who would this idea benefit? In what situations?
- How relevant does it feel to you and your household?
- Based on your personal opinion, should Wessex Water move forward with this idea? Why / why not?

Final thoughts (3 minutes)

- Do you have any final recommendations or suggestions for how Wessex Water could improve the way they meet the needs of you and your household?
 - Now...?
 - And in the future...?

Overarching objective: to evaluate Wessex Water's current Priority Services, identifying possible areas for future improvement

NB group have been recruited in pairs, lead respondent to be eligible for Wessex Water's Priority Services but not registered

Project Introduction (5 minutes)

To explain the purpose and process of the research

- **Blue Marble and project introduction:** we are an independent market research agency who have been commissioned by Wessex Water to understand the needs and circumstances of customers who may require additional help and support, and review the services they currently offer to them.
 - *Reassurances:* recording, confidentiality, end time, how information will be used etc.

Understanding circumstances and service needs (30 minutes)

a) to understand household circumstances

b) to understand spontaneous service needs and expectations

Moderator to go around the room asking each pair to introduce themselves and their circumstances in detail

Customer introduction (10 minutes)

- Please **introduce yourself** to the group...
 - Name, how pair know one another
 - Living situation: where living, who's in household
 - Work status
- **STIMULUS 1:** pick an image that best reflects you and your life at the moment – why have you chosen this picture?
- Tell me a little bit more about you and your current **circumstances**?
 - What's life like for you at the moment? For what reasons? E.g. listen out for long-term health issues, disabilities, low income, unemployed etc
 - What are the challenges and struggles you are dealing with, if any at all?
 - *Moderator to sensitively probe where appropriate*

Service needs and expectations (20 minutes)

- How, if at all, might your circumstances mean that you might **require additional help and support** from companies? Please explain...
- Are there any examples of companies who really **understand your needs**?
 - Which companies? *Moderator to probe utility providers, TV / broadband providers, Council*
 - What is it they've done for you to meet your needs and understand your needs /circumstances?

- **STIMULUS 2:** using the images to help, how do you feel about the way companies treat you generally? Which image best reflects the way you feel you are treated? Why?
- Are any of these **companies aware of your circumstances / additional requirements** you may have?
 - What do they know, how do they know this, what difference does it make in terms of the service, help and support they give you? *Moderator to listen for energy PSR*
- Let's think about what you need from companies when:
- **Moderator to flipchart needs and service expectations**
 - a) you need to communicate with them on a daily basis (*probe channels*)
 - b) they need to communicate with you (*probe bill format and other correspondence*)
 - c) there's a service problem
 - Any other needs you have because of your specific circumstances?

Let's talk specifically about Wessex Water...

- Firstly, what are your **perceptions** of Wessex water?
 - What words would you use to describe them?
 - How do they treat their customers? How do you feel they have treated you?
 - How do they compare to other companies you deal with – better / worse? Why?
- **Moderator to refer to service needs and expectations (flipchart) – looking back at what you've already said, is there anything else you specifically need / expect from Wessex Water?**

Learning from the Westbury water outage (20 minutes)

To understand how well service needs and expectations were met in the reality of a service failure, identifying possible areas for improvement

Moderator to explain that we want to discuss a recent Wessex Water service failure which was experienced in the Westbury area...

Recall of the incident (10 minutes)

- Check **recall of incident**
 - In September of last year, customers in the area experienced a period of time without water, how were you **affected** by this?
- **STIMULUS 2:** which image best reflects how you felt when you first realised you were without water?
- Can you tell me a little bit more about **what happened from start to finish?**
 - *Moderator to allow customers to spontaneously share their stories, before probing how they first found out about the problem, what they initially did, length of time without water, whether or not they had to buy / collect bottled water, impact had on lives thinking about circumstances e.g. if have health condition*
- How did **Wessex Water react** to the problem? Talk me through what Wessex Water did...
 - Initially e.g. informing you of the outage. *Probe channel of communication*
 - During the outage e.g. *probe channel of communication, provision of bottled water, other services*
 - Post outage e.g. *probe communication, follow ups etc*
- How well did Wessex Water **react to your specific needs?**
 - Did you need any additional help or support? If so, what?
- What was the **mood in the community** at the time, how did people feel?
 - How were people feeling towards Wessex Water? What were people saying?

Evaluation of Wessex Water's response (10 minutes)

- How do you feel about how well **Wessex Water dealt** with the problem?
 - What did they do well?
 - What did they do less well?
- How well did they meet your **needs and service expectations**?
 - *Moderator to refer to flipchart of needs*
- What could Wessex Water have done **differently to better meet your needs** and service expectations?
 - If this were to happen again, how could Wessex Water better support customers like yourselves?

Evaluation of Wessex Water's existing Priority Services (30 minutes)

To assess current Priority Services against spontaneous service needs and expectations

- Are you **aware of or benefiting from any additional help / support** Wessex Water offer to customers who may require it?
 - If so, what? How, where and when did you hear about this? *Moderator to probe channel and message*
- **STIMULUS 3: 'Introduction to Wessex Water's Priority Services'**
 - Overall reactions...
 - Have you heard of this before? How, where, when?
 - What services would you expect Wessex Water to offer as part of this?
- **Who** do you think Wessex Water should be helping and offering additional help and support to?
 - What type of customers, what types of households / circumstances? Why?
 - How relevant does this feel for you and your household?
- **STIMULUS 4: 'Who are the services for?'**
 - Initial reactions
 - Any types of customers / circumstances missing?
 - Do you think these services are for you and your household?
- **STIMULUS 5,6,7,8,9: Breakdown of Priority Services**
For each board...
 - Overall reactions...
 - Have you heard of this before? How, where, when?
 - How relevant does this feel for you and your circumstances?
 - How well does this meet your service needs / expectations? **Refer to flipchart**
 - Anything missing?

NB moderator to watch out for any unfamiliar language and clarify meaning e.g. Text Relay, Language Line, bowser etc

Summary and areas for improvement

- **STIMULUS 2:** how are you currently feeling about Wessex Water's Priority Services? Pick an image that best reflects how you feel – please explain...
- Based on everything we've looked at and discussed, how do you feel about what Wessex Water offer to customers who require additional help?
 - Below expectations, meeting expectations, exceeding expectations?
 - How would you **score them out of 10**?
- How, if at all, could Wessex Water **improve** its Priority Services?
 - Is there anything missing? Any unmet needs or service expectations?
- You're currently not registered for Wessex Water's Priority Services
 - Why do you think that is?
 - How could Wessex Water rectify that? What else could / should they be doing?
- How may your service needs and expectations **change in the future**?
 - Thinking of your own circumstances, what does Wessex Water need to be thinking about long-term in terms of the services they offer you?
- **'Response button' idea:** moderator to explain that Wessex Water have an idea for an alarm button placed in customers' homes. If there is a problem e.g. no water, dirty water etc the customer can press the button, alerting Wessex Water to the problem resulting in Wessex contacting the customer straight away
 - Overall reactions to this idea?
 - What's the benefit of this idea? Who would this idea benefit?
 - How relevant does it feel to you and your household?
 - How does this idea compare to how you would currently contact Wessex Water?
 - Based on your personal opinion, should Wessex Water move forward with this idea? Why / why not?

Final thoughts (5 minutes)

- Do you have any final recommendations or suggestions for how Wessex Water could improve the way they meet the needs of you and your household?
 - Now...?
 - And in the future...?

Which image reflects life for you?



What's your response?



Introduction to Wessex Water's Priority Services

- Wessex Water offers a range of Priority Services **to customers who may require extra care** or who have particular requirements
- Once a customer / household is registered, Wessex Water **can identify and respond quickly** to their needs
- Being registered for Priority Services **is free and available to anyone in the Wessex Water region**



Who are these services for?

Physical disability

Blind or partial sight loss

Deaf / hearing loss

Health condition requiring constant supply of water e.g. Dialysis

Memory loss e.g. Dementia, Alzheimer's

Language other than English / literacy difficulties

Mental health condition e.g. depression

Older people

Unable to use internet (digitally excluded)

Developmental conditions e.g. Autism

Ill health

Vocally impaired

Anyone else?

General communication and billing

Wide range of channels



Other forms of communication:

- Text Relay for customers with hearing loss
- Bills available in braille, audio, via telephone, CD, in large print, other languages
- Language line/ interpreter/ Google Translate
- Home visiting service
- Nominate e.g. a carer or family member to receive correspondence
- Follow up emails explaining what has been agreed
- All videos subtitled

Jargon free and in plain English

Priority Services: in the event of a problem

Sometimes Wessex Water may need to turn off water to carry out essential work, or there is an unexpected problem

Additional services to communicate the problem

- Advance warning (if possible) by letter
- Loudspeaker vans during the event
- Alerts by telephone or text message (for e.g. sight loss)
- Home visit or neighbour contacted (for e.g. hearing loss)
- Individual emergency plans tailored where specific needs e.g. Autism

Additional services to help customers cope

- Free bottled water delivered to home
- Bowsers / water tanks conveniently located

Priority Services: to meet additional needs of customers

Password Scheme	Agreed personal password when visiting homes (written and verbal) All Wessex Water staff carry identity cards
Knock and wait scheme	Staff wait a little longer to give customers time to answer the door
Meters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meter read up to 4 times a year, if unable to do it themselves• Wessex Water will look at moving meter to a place that's easier to see

How customers can register for Priority Services

Ways to register

- Online
- Via email
- Call via Text Relay
- Paper form

A friend, carer or family member can contact Wessex Water on a customer's behalf.

Your details Step 1 of 2

Title*

First name*

Surname*

Preferred contact number*

Alternative contact number

Email address*

Confirm email address*

Customer reference number

To find your address, enter your postcode and then click here

Postcode lookup

Your needs Step 2 of 2

Please tell us which of the following apply to you or someone living in your home:

- Disabled
- Deaf / difficulty hearing
- Mobility problems
- Blind / partially sighted
- Kidney dialysis treatment at home
- Wheelchair user
- Vocally impaired
- Learning difficulties
- A medical condition which requires a constant water supply
- Other

Our password system helps you to guard against bogus callers. If you would like us to use a confidential password when we visit your home, please enter one here

Staff training to spot the signs of additional needs

All Wessex Water staff are trained to:

- Spot the signs of customers who may require additional help
- Recognise when to refer customers to appropriate services outside of Wessex Water e.g. support charities
- Deal sensitively with customers who have conditions such as Dementia, mental illness, hearing loss etc.
- Use non-judgemental listening and appropriate language

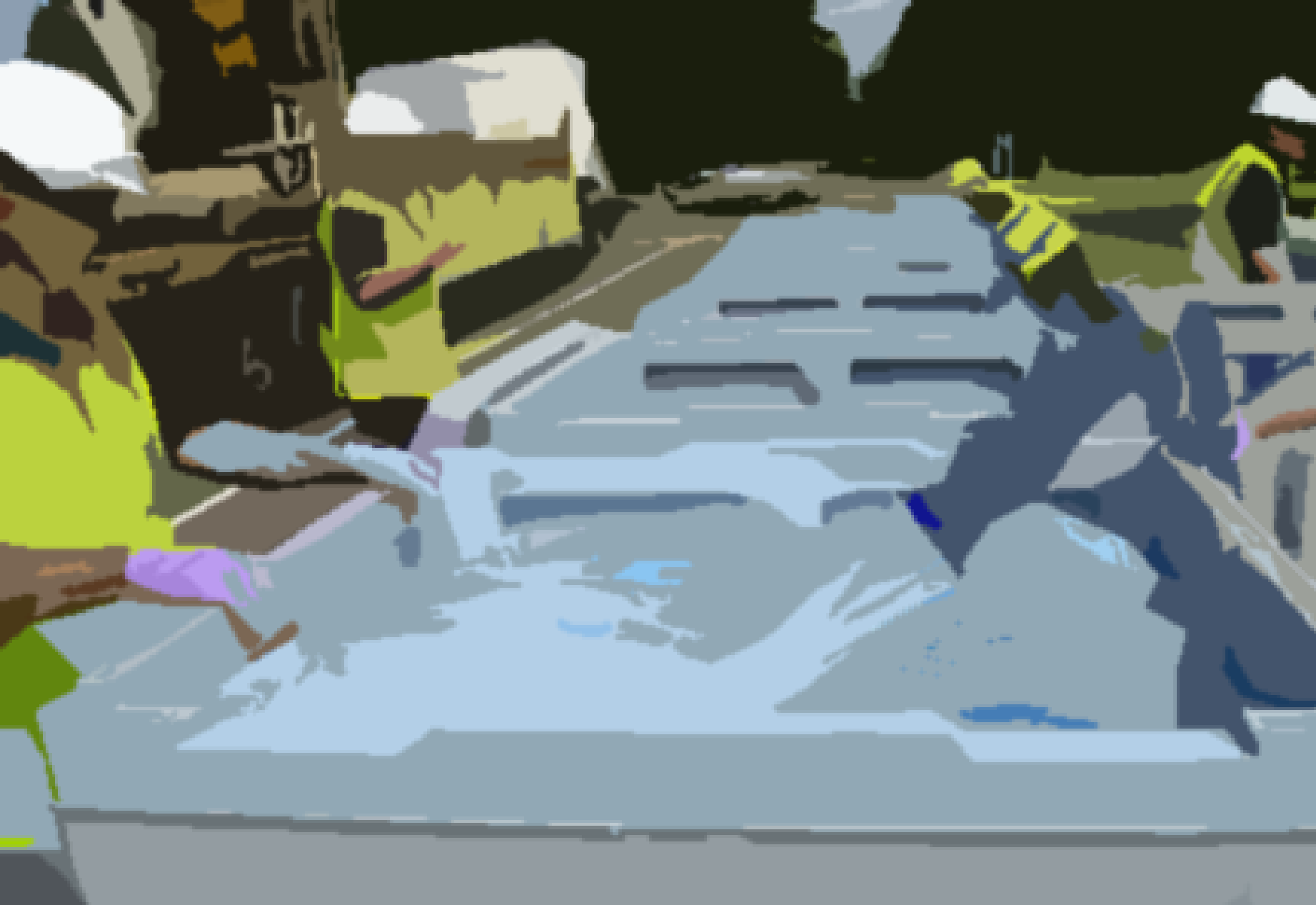
Wessex Water work in partnership with other organisations who support customers e.g.



Other ways Wessex Water supports customers with additional needs

Bill discounts (available to all eligible customers)

- For pensioners on low incomes (state pension only, receive Pension Credit): 20% off bill
- For customers who use large amounts of water due to medical condition: bill discount
- For customers in hospital or residential care for a long period of time: no charge for period they are living away from home, (if unmetered)



Customers in vulnerability: evaluation of priority services

Proposal for research prepared for Wessex Water

24th January 2018

Ofwat's December statement on the PR19 methodology underlined the importance of companies demonstrating that customers support the services offered to the most vulnerable customers. Wessex Water has a wealth of evidence in relation to its work in this area – and a close working relationship with many partner organisations such as debt agencies and CAB. This includes: customer support for social tariffs; level of take up of the services within the TAP offer; and the widespread endorsement (by name) of organisations supporting Wessex Water's vulnerability strategy.

In terms of its priority services, Wessex Water has support in place to accommodate customers with fixed needs (e.g. physical or mental health conditions, disability and/or high dependency on water, etc.) who require:

- Ongoing services such as communications (including bills) in particular formats or a nominee service
- Specific support during a water related incident such as an unexpected interruption to supply

A good test of how an organisation is managing the needs of the most vulnerable is what happens in the face of a major incident - yet such events have been rare occurrences in Wessex Water's region. However, an incident in September 2017 which left the residents of parts of Westbury without water for several hours provides the opportunity to assess both the needs and experiences of customers in vulnerable circumstances from a real-life and relatively recent event.

- On 1st September 2017, Wessex Water experienced a burst water main affecting residents of Westbury, Westbury Leigh and Dilton Marsh who were left with low water pressure or a cut off in the supply.
- Around 1,400 customers were affected by loss of supply, and Wessex Water arranged for 65,000 litres of bottled water to be made available as well as distributing water to customers with specific needs.

Spontaneous service expectations:

- To explore customer expectations of priority services provided by Wessex Water – both in relation to ongoing services for people with additional needs, and in response to incidents
- To explore what services might be required in the future (both for them as individuals with changing needs - and for the wider population and changing demographic or weather factors)
- To explore whether service of other organisations is driving expectations

Evaluation of existing service:

- To evaluate Wessex Water's code of practice in relation to priority services: does the service offer meet expectations?
- To explore satisfaction of the current service amongst customers on the register
- To explore how eligible customers not currently on the register, would like (or would be likely to) hear about it
- Specifically, does the process of signing up meet customers' needs?
- Does it compare with other priority services from other sectors?

Experience of existing service:

- To explore experiences of customers in the Westbury area following the recent water outage
- Specifically, to understand the impact and the support/communication needs for customers in vulnerability
- To understand residents' perceptions of Wessex Water (and any other relevant agencies) during and after the incident



- To conclude on whether the current service offering meets both the ongoing needs of vulnerable customers and support needs during major water incidents
- To provide recommendations where possible for improving the existing service provision

Defining the sample

- Our sampling strategy is to seek the views of customers who are at higher risk of vulnerability, using the broad definitions highlighted in recent research (see 'vulnerability risk indicators' box)
- The main purpose of this research is to evaluate the support services offered to customers with a wide range of circumstances – summarised by the PSR categories
- Part of the sample will be drawn from the Westbury community and will include a range of customers including those not on the PSR
- We will also locate the research in a number of other locations across the region in order to assess wider customer expectations of and satisfaction with the current PSR.

Sample sensitivities

- Experience has shown that customers who are in the types of circumstances that are covered by the PSR are more likely to participate if the research is conducted in the familiarity and security of their homes
- Customers recruited from the PSR lists – who may well have complex personal circumstances – will be recruited with a friend or carer
- We will use similarly sensitive recruitment processes to identify non PSR customers in or at greater risk of vulnerability i.e. eligible for the PSR. They too will be convened to participate with a friend or carer.

Vulnerability risk indicators

- We currently measure risk indicators within the quarterly tracker
- Currently, 29% of customers code against one risk indicator including: long term illness in household; live in social housing; on pension tax credits or other means tested benefits; no internet access at home etc.
- While there is a common correlation between low income and other vulnerable circumstances the two are not always linked.
- **We will therefore focus recruitment on risk factors that would indicate customers who are eligible for the PSR**
- We will use Wessex Water's existing categories as recruitment criteria

PSR categories

- Physical disability
- Mental health condition
- Password scheme
- Unable to carry water
- Communication need
- Etc.

Locations across the region

- In order to answer the full range of objectives, we propose to recruit a sample of customers – some of whom are already on the PSR and others who are not.
 - This sample will provide the views of customers who are unlikely to have experienced a major incident
- ▼
- Our recommended approach is to conduct depth interviews across 4 locations
 - We will recruit part of the sample from the PSR database via telephone. This recruitment will be conducted by Blue Marble executives.
 - We will provide suitable wording to enable Wessex Water to pre-warn a subset of PSR customers drawn from the main database
 - The non PSR sample will be free found using our regional recruiters. We do not anticipate pre-warning these customers but will provide a letter from Wessex Water to demonstrate that the research is bona fide.



We propose the following locations where there are clusters of customers on the PSR database

- Bath area
- Taunton/Bridgwater area
- Blandford/Salisbury area
- Dorchester area

Westbury location

- The work in Westbury will enable customers to evaluate the priority services offer in the context of a real incident
- We will canvas the views of this community via qualitative interviewing as this will help people to recall the day of the supply stoppage itself - and through careful probing, we will understand people's experiences and needs
- We understand that some 1,400 customers were affected by the supply stoppage but anticipate that only a relatively small proportion will fall within the 'vulnerable' definition. Indeed, we understand that just 9 households sit on the PSR in the affected area in Westbury.
- We propose to include 3 households who are on the PSR: this is a realistic assessment of the number of interviews we can secure from the list of 9
- We propose to supplement this with a group discussion of residents whose circumstances could make them eligible for the PSR. These will take place within the main community centre in the area: Leigh Park Community Centre
- The advantages of running a group in Westbury are twofold:
 - The group environment will elicit richer information about the day of the supply interruption and implications for service needs
 - The group will comprise **non** PSR customers who are an important constituent in the research



Optimising recruitment process:

- As part of the process of finding and screening Westbury residents, our recruiter will ask everyone whether they recall the incident, how inconvenient it was and overall how satisfied they were with how it was managed
- This mini-survey will be added to the body of evidence in the report

Our recommended approach is to conduct 16 in home depth interviews supplemented with 1 qualitative group discussion (1½ hours).

	Customers on the PSR register	Non PSR customers (but eligible)
4 x locations across Wessex region	9 x in-home paired depths	4 x in-home paired depths
Westbury (affected area)	3 x in-home paired depths	1 x group discussion (8 customers)

12 x 45 minute interviews

- In pairs (with carer or friend/relative – ideally living in the area and/or affected by the water stoppage)
- Conducted in-home
- Conducted from lists supplied by Wessex Water
- Forewarned sample

4 depths and 1 group x 1½ hours

- Paired recruitment for both depths and groups: friends, carers or neighbours
- Lead respondent: sample to represent different vulnerability categories (where possible within the small area)
- Ideally second respondent to also live within the affected area but not from the same household (depending on circumstances)

A full project timeline with dates for signing off research materials (screeners and discussion guides) will be drawn up on commission. We can take account of any internal deadlines when scheduling the project.

	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7
w/c	22/1	29/1	5/2	12/2	19/2	26/2	5/3
Project commission; agree sample screener; book venue; brief recruiters							
Pre-warning letter to list samples and opt out time							
Sample recruitment (in community and list samples); agree discussion guides							
Fieldwork: group & depths							
Analysis							
Reporting							



Wider sources for evaluation

- We will review and incorporate the following wider sources into the report:
 - The incident report
 - Westbury post event survey
 - Recruitment survey
 - Examples of good practice from other companies



Outputs

- Face to face debrief
- PowerPoint report document drawing together all information sources and including case studies of customers



E: enquiries@bluemarbleresearch.co.uk

W: www.bluemarbleresearch.co.uk

T: 01761 239329

Evaluation of priority services – updated sample specification 19.02.18

OPTION A (AS PER PROPOSAL)

	PSR Register – list recruitment	Non PSR – free find recruitment
Westbury	3 x in-home paired interviews	1 group (4 x pairs)
SN15 (Chippenham)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
BH15 (Poole)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
TA6 (Bridgewater)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
Trowbridge		4 x in-home paired interviews
Total	12 x vulnerable customers (c.24 x customers in total)	8 x vulnerable customers (c. 12 x customers in total)

OPTION B (SAME SAMPLE, SPLIT DIFFERENTLY)

- No cost implications

	PSR Register – list recruitment	Non PSR – free find recruitment
Westbury	3 x in-home paired interviews	1 group (4 x pairs)
SN15 (Chippenham)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
BH15 (Poole)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
TA6 (Bridgewater)	1 x in-home paired interviews	2 x in-home paired interview
Trowbridge		4 x in-home paired interviews
Total	10 x vulnerable customers (c.20 x customers in total)	10 x vulnerable customers (c. 20 x customers in total)

OPTION C (ADDITIONAL LOCATION FOR NON PSR)

- Cost implications for additional days (fieldwork and associated analysis and reporting)

	PSR Register – list recruitment	Non PSR – free find recruitment
Westbury	3 x in-home paired interviews	1 group (4 x pairs)
SN15 (Chippenham)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
BH15 (Poole)	3 x in-home paired interviews	
TA6 (Bridgewater)	3 x in-home paired interviews	4 x in-home paired interviews*
Trowbridge		4 x in-home paired interviews
TOTAL	12 x vulnerable customers (c.24 x customers in total)	12 x vulnerable customers (c.24 x customers in total)

*location to be agreed