



# Our Customer Care Strategy

Here for you, support when you need it

June 2025

# Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ketan Hindocha**  
**Customer Director**  
**SES Water**



# Contents



**Background and context**

**Pages 1 to 9**



**Developing our vulnerability strategy**

**Page 10**



**Our four key focus areas**

**Pages 11 to 29**



**Our key measures of success**

**Page 30**



**Keeping on track and next steps**

**Page 31 to 32**





# Introduction

At SES Water, we work hard to make sure our customers can access our services and support in a way that's right for them.

We understand that most people wouldn't like to label themselves as 'vulnerable'. But know that at any time any one of our customers might need us to tailor our services and support to meet their individual needs. We refer to customers whose circumstances make them vulnerable as those who need 'extra help'.

This strategy aims to communicate the support we already offer our customers needing extra help, as well as what we are aiming to deliver in the future to improve our service even further.

Our draft plans cover now until 2030, and have been developed in accordance with our industry regulator Ofwat's 'Service for All' vulnerability guidance for water companies, supporting customers who need extra help.

Ultimately, and most importantly, our aim is to support our customers who need extra help at any stage of their lives with the aim of being reassuringly there, whenever and whatever the need.

**This document aims to communicate what support we currently offer for customers who need 'extra help', as well as our future plans in the areas where we plan to do more.**



**'We will support customers who need extra help at every stage of their lives.'**



## What vulnerability means to us

We don't believe there is a 'one size, fits all' definition to capture the essence of what it means to face vulnerable circumstances, and how our customers may be impacted.

Our customers might be facing one or several of these circumstances at any one time, a circumstance which may be temporary (sometimes referred to as transient), sporadic (on and off) or long term.

**Our regulator, Ofwat, defines a customer whose circumstances make them vulnerable as:**

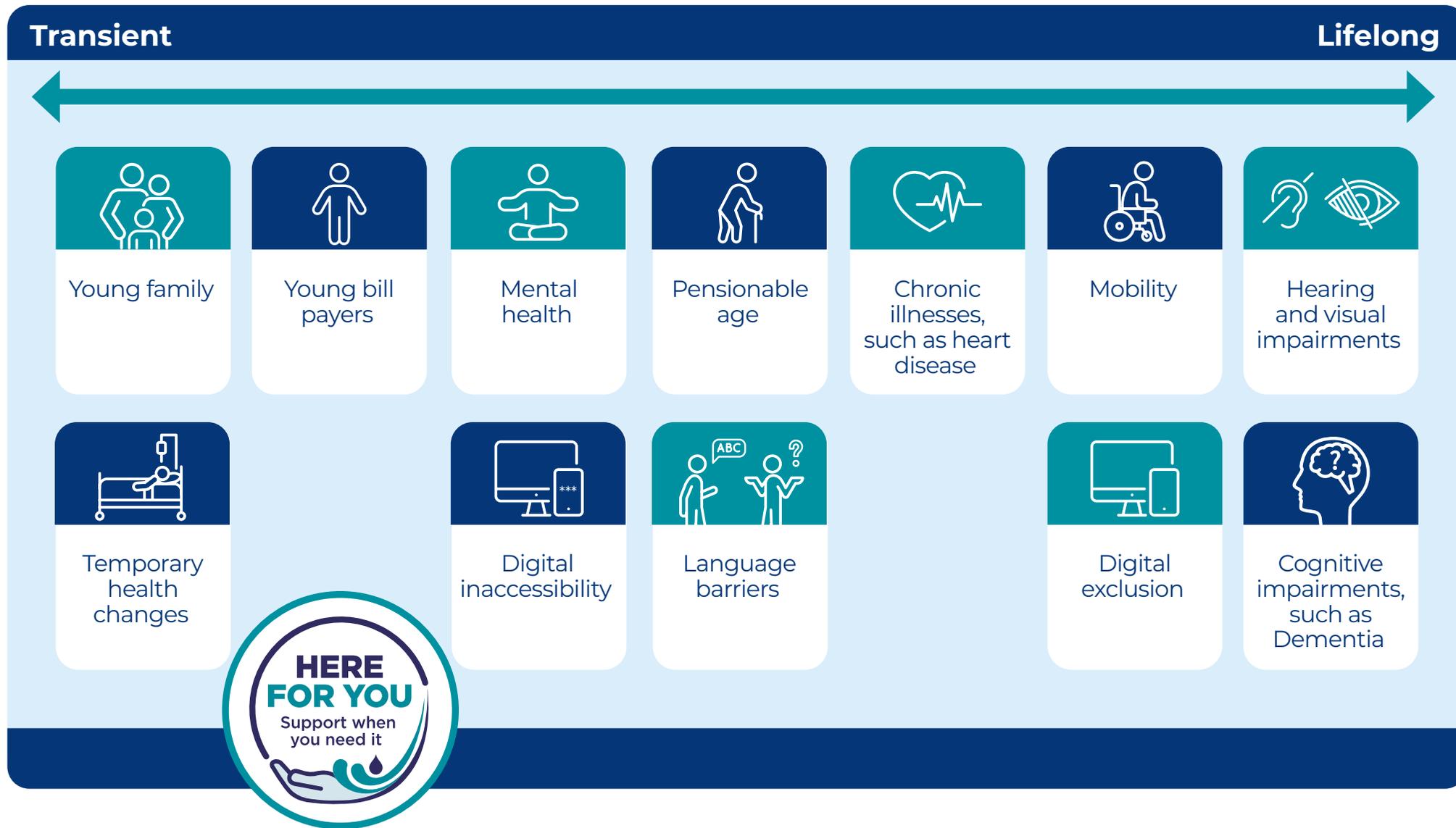
**'A customer who due to personal characteristics, their overall life situation or due to broader market and economic factors, is not having reasonable opportunity to access and receive an inclusive service which may have a detrimental impact on their health, wellbeing or finances.'**





# The different types of vulnerability

Our aim is to help customers experiencing any of the below situations, supporting them when it's needed the most.





## Our customers

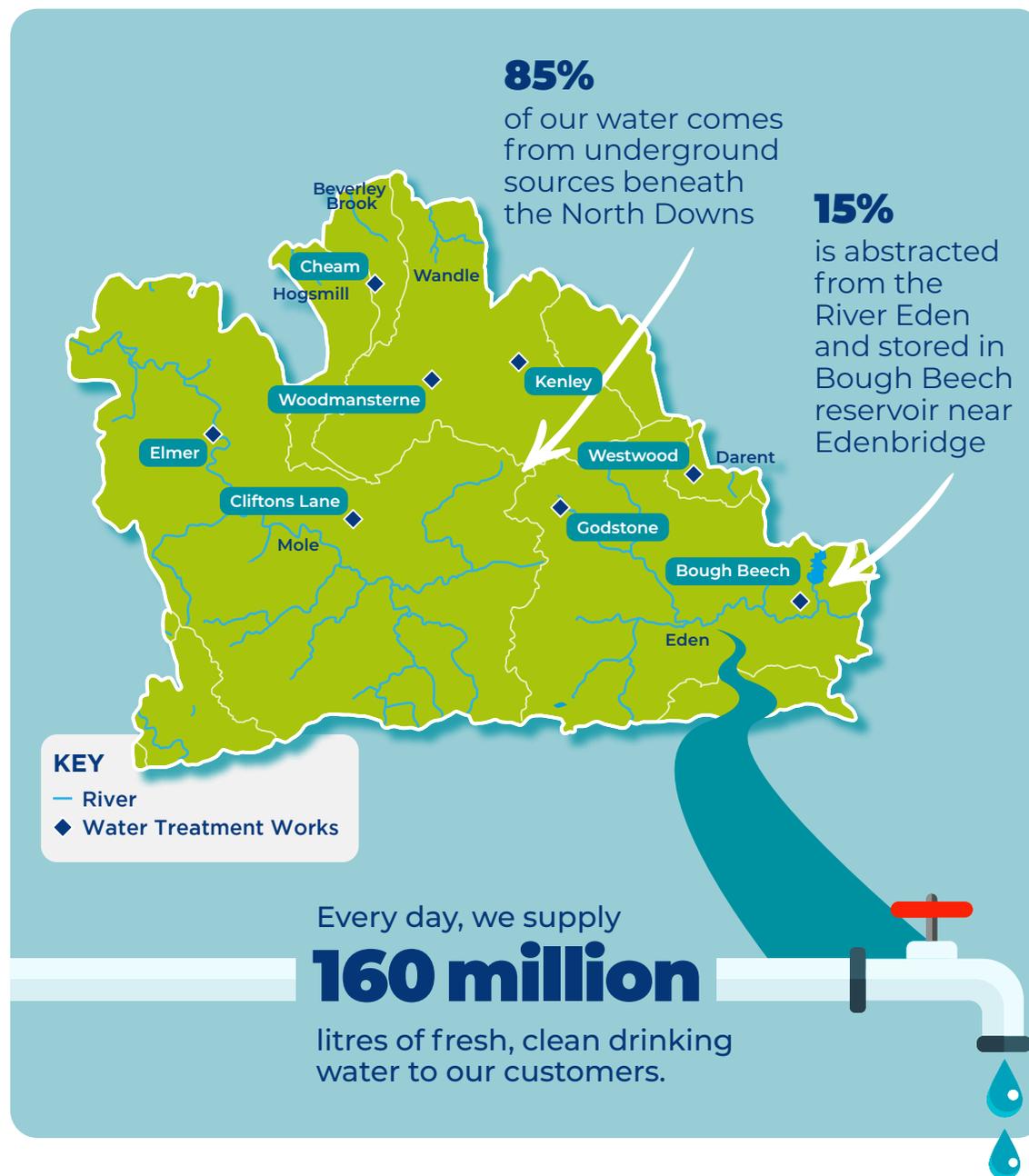
We supply 160 million litres of clean water every day to over 750,000 customers comprising over 278,000 households in parts of Surrey, Kent and south London.

We have a diverse supply area covering 322 square miles.

More than 99% of our customer accounts sit within nine Local Authority (L As) areas. This includes three London L As (Croydon, Merton and Sutton), which together cover less than 15% of our supply area but 44.5% of our customers, due to their high population density. The remaining 85% is covered by six L As in Surrey and Kent, where 54.9% of our customers reside. The remaining 0.6% of our customers live in parts of Crawley, mid Sussex and Guildford.

The high population density in London means that 57% of properties are flats or terraced housing compared to 38.6% in Surrey and Kent.

Our customer needs are therefore diverse.





The demographic makeup of our customers living within the different geographic areas varies considerably. Therefore, our support schemes need to be inclusive and accessible for all customers, recognising the diversity of our customers across our region, and understanding that a 'one size will fit all approach' won't work.

At a glance:



**16%**

Of our customers are on the Priority Services Register



**9%**

Of our customers are in receipt of one of our financial support schemes



**Around a fifth**

Of our customers are aged 65 years or older



**1 in 6**

Is the number of our customers on both a financial and service-related support scheme



**47%**

Of the customers currently on our Priority Services Register either have a chronic illness or are of pensionable age



**23%**

Is the number of households with an average income of less than £20,000



## Looking ahead – our customers of tomorrow

The number of people joining our financial and support services is increasing each year.



The Office of National Statistics expect **population growth** of 3.2% by the mid 2030's. In our supply area, that would mean an increase of 9.4k households.



The number of **people over the age of 65** is expected to grow, with the proportion aged 85 years and older projected to almost double in the next 25 years.<sup>1</sup>



Every 3 minutes, someone in the UK develops Dementia, and the number of **people living with Dementia** is expected to surpass one million this year.<sup>2</sup>



By 2035, the number of **adults experiencing hearing loss** is estimated to increase to 14.2 million<sup>3</sup> and the number of people living with a major illness is projected to increase by 2.5 million by 2040.<sup>4</sup>

It's important therefore we continue to understand the predictions for various health factors in the years to come, and with this in mind, our work in supporting customers who need extra help becomes ever more important and evolving.

<sup>1</sup>Source – Office National Statistics. <sup>2</sup>Source – Dementia UK. <sup>3</sup>Source – RNID. <sup>4</sup>Source – Health Foundation Centre.



## Our existing support

We're proud of the range of support we already provide our customers who need extra help.

Our main service-related support scheme is called the **Priority Services Register**. It is designed for customers who have health, access or extra communication needs and helps us tailor our services to support households who may need extra help.

Examples of the support we offer include:



**Bills in alternative formats**, such as braille, large print, electronic PDF and audio CD.



**Hand delivered bottled water** during water supply emergencies and scheduled interruptions.



A **welcome letter**, when a customer joins our Priority Services Register.



A **meter reading service**, for customers who may want more frequent meter readings throughout the year.



A **'knock and wait'** service for those who may need a little longer to answer the door.



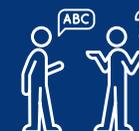
A **'nominee contact'** so we're able to speak to a friend or family member directly if extra support is required.



A **password scheme** so our customers know it's us, and not a bogus caller.



**Home visits** with our 'Here for You' officers, who specialise in our financial and service support schemes.



**Foreign language support** through our team of internal volunteers and through the ReciteMe tool on our website.

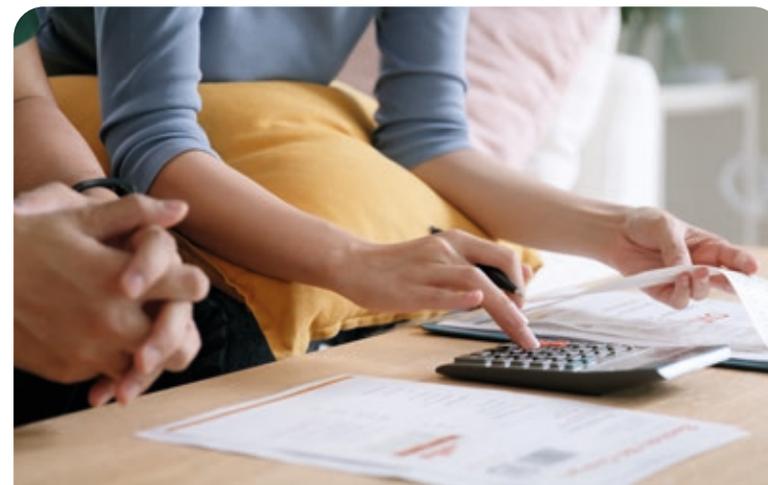


## Our financial support

Whilst this strategy focuses on ‘non-financial’ or ‘service-related’ support we understand that many of our customers who need this support may also be facing financial hardship and that customers’ circumstances can change, and this change can either temporarily or permanently impact their ability to pay their water bills. We have a range of financial support available to customers, which include:

- Eligible low-income households can receive a 50% discount on their water bill through our **Water Support scheme**.
- Customers can ask for a payment break under our scheme **Breathing Space** to help them get back on their feet. This scheme pauses payments to us for three months.
- **WaterSure** is an industry wide, government based scheme providing a capped bill for eligible customers on a water meter.
- Using benefit payments under our **Water Direct** scheme, where payments are deducted from customers’ benefits, leaving one less bill to worry about.

We offer a range of financial support for customers struggling to pay their bill.



We currently have over just 25,000 customers on our **Water Support scheme**, we will maintain this.



We also understand that some customers might be experiencing financial hardship but may not qualify for our schemes. Although we cannot always reduce a customer's bill we will always discuss their individual financial situation and consider whether a **flexible payment plan** is a suitable alternative.

We also refer our customers to advice and support providers, such as StepChange, Citizens Advice (CA) and the National Debtline to offer more specialised support. These organisations are promoted on our website.

More information on how we support customers who are struggling to pay their bill, can be found at <https://seswater.co.uk/your-account/paying-your-bill/help-paying-your-bill>.

Or scan the QR code





# Developing our vulnerability strategy

## Engaging with stakeholders

We very much value the close involvement and relationships we enjoy with our customers, colleagues, local community groups and our stakeholders who have played an active role in developing this strategy. The insights we gain by listening and engaging with them enables us to improve outcomes for our customers.

We regularly engage with our trusted and charitable partners, our local councils, and our customers through the work we do in our community.

We invite challenge through our Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel, as well as embracing direct relationship with independent professional bodies such as CCW and Water UK.

Whilst we have focused on non-financial needs, we have not forgotten that financial vulnerabilities can sometimes be intrinsically linked, therefore we have involved customers and stakeholders who face both financial and non-financial barriers as part of these discussions.

Some of the stakeholders we've engaged with and what we have learnt from them can be seen in our Appendix, on pages 33 to 35.



We talked to our customers and stakeholders when developing our strategy.

From this, we have come up with four key focus areas, the details of which can be seen pages 11 to 29.

## Our four key focus areas

Guided by our purpose and informed by our stakeholder engagement and research, we have defined four key priorities to make sure we deliver the best experiences for all our customers who may find themselves in need of some extra help.

1

**Raising awareness** of our support, and identifying customers who need our help.



Accurate and up to date Information about our customers.

2

**Making it easy** for our customers to access the support they need - how and when they need it.



3

**Listening to our customers and stakeholders**, so we meet expectations now and in the future.



4

**Training our people and partners** to recognise and support the diverse needs of our customers.



## Customer data

Having up to date and accurate information about our customers and their circumstances is central to our plans. By having a more complete view of our customers means we provide the right service and experience in a way that works for our customers. It also allows us to tailor and personalise the services accordingly.

The following sections give more information on our focus areas, our initiatives to date and our plans for the next five years.



# 1. Raising awareness of our support, and identifying customers who need our help

A key part of our strategy is to increase the awareness of our schemes and identify customers who may need extra help. We have a variety of communication channels which we currently use to increase awareness:



Currently **40%** of our customers are aware of the support we provide. This is behind where we want to be, and we have plans to improve this.

Having information on a customer's potential vulnerability allows us to tailor our interactions and proactively offer more support, including during incidents. It's vital customers know how we can help them.

We plan to raise awareness of support schemes and identify customers who need extra help through our continued work in the community, through our communication channels, and our partnerships.

## What we've already done:

- Expanded our programme of community events. Last year we attended 30 events, including Run Reigate, Edenbridge & Oxted Show and Feasty Fest. In total we reached an audience of 100,000 customers.
- Attended more than 100 local engagements across foodbanks warm hubs and community centres. We also worked with various local charities including Welcare, Crossroads Care and MHA which all provide support for customers who need extra help within our community.
- Enhanced the messaging across our communication channels including our website, social media channels and our bills. We recently added support information to all envelopes and launched a dedicated email campaign to more than 100,000 customers promoting our support.
- Set up over 40 partnerships with local authorities, charities, housing partnerships and many other organisations, to increase awareness and identify customers who need our help.



Last year we created a short video, for use across our social media channels.

<https://seswater.co.uk/your-account/priority-customers>

Or scan the QR code



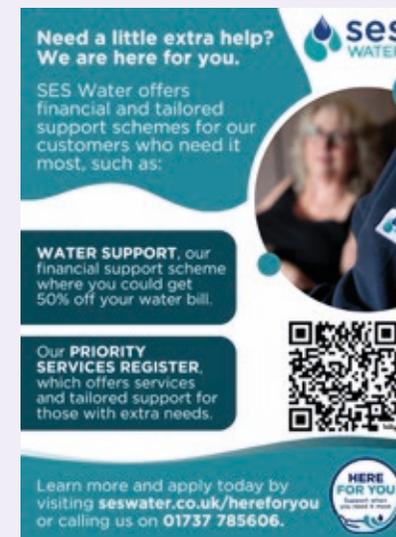


## Our plans, now until 2030:

- Expand the range of community events we attend to reach a broader and more diverse audience.
- Develop year-round promotional activities and test this messaging with our customers and stakeholders, as well as monitor how well these initiatives perform.
- Use our data to better identify customers and provide more targeted and personalised messaging about the support we offer in the right way, at the right time.
- Double the number of partners we work with and broaden our network, so we're covering a full range of vulnerabilities.

## Trialling new ways to reach those that need help

Last year we trialled advertising on local hospital appointment cards, to help reach customers who might not be as connected digitally, but in a situation where our services could help.



We'll continue to evaluate new ways (such as event programmes or other specialised media) to reach a wider and more diverse audience. We've also work with local community partners and charities, providing information that can be used on their websites, social media channels and newsletters.

## Case study – Spreading festive cheer

In December 2024, we supported customers on our Priority Services Register by delivering 38 festive hampers across our supply area. The hampers were packed, wrapped and delivered by SES Water colleagues and we were also joined by local Councillor, Gayle Gander and local Councillor Shelly Newton. These customers were nominated by our trusted partners, and we received some fantastic feedback.

We've delivered hampers for the last four years, and we remain committed to this initiative by further expanding and reaching even more of our customers who need extra help in the future.



From September 2024 to March 2025, we introduced our first Autumn/Winter roadshow specifically designed to reach our customers who need extra help. SES colleagues spent time at 14 community events across Sutton and East Surrey, working with partners such as Jigsaw4u, Christians Against Poverty, Helping Hands, Together for Sutton, The Sutton Housing Partnership and the NHS. We spoke to over 100 customers and were able to sign the majority of these customers up to our Water Support scheme and Priority Services Register.



## 2. Making it easy for our customers to access the support they need – how and when they need it

We're committed to providing high levels of service for all our customers. This includes making sure they can easily access the support they need, using their channel of choice.

As well as looking at how people access our services and improving their interactions with us, we're also increasing what our customers can do across our digital channels. We recognise some customers may feel more comfortable disclosing personal information in that way.

This next section shows some of the work we've done to improve the way our customers access our support, and some of our plans to improve it further.



## What we've already done:

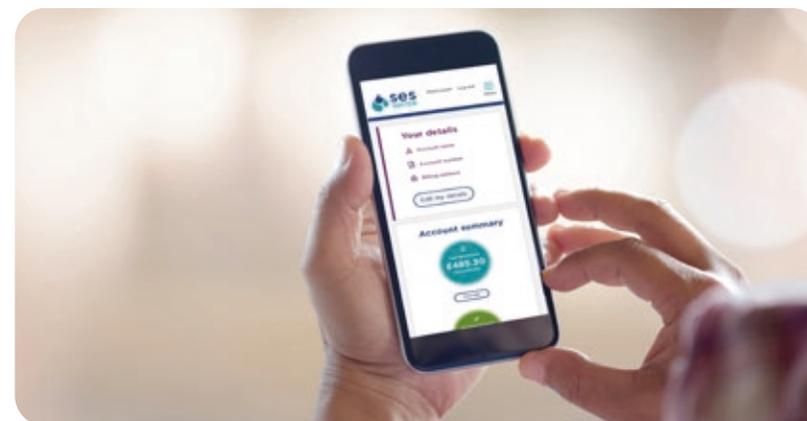
- Our website has an in-built accessibility tool, ReciteMe, which allows users to access a screen reader, translate the information into more than 100 languages, and enlarge text.
- Introduced SignVideo, so customers who use British Sign Language can speak to us via a translator or live chat. The service is available 24/7.
- Provide on-going support for customers during an incident by delivering bottled water when needed. We use our internal rating system to make sure we prioritise the customers that need our help the most.
- Established data sharing agreements with UK Power Networks, the DWI and Southern Water, so customers don't have to give the same information to multiple organisations.
- Expanded our home visits as we know some of our customers prefer face-to-face conversations. Customers also have the option to visit us at one of our weekly community engagements, or at our Head Office.
- Created a simple online application form for our customers to fill out. From this our Customer Care team can see the range of support required, rather than the customer having to fill out multiple forms.





## Our draft plans, now until 2030:

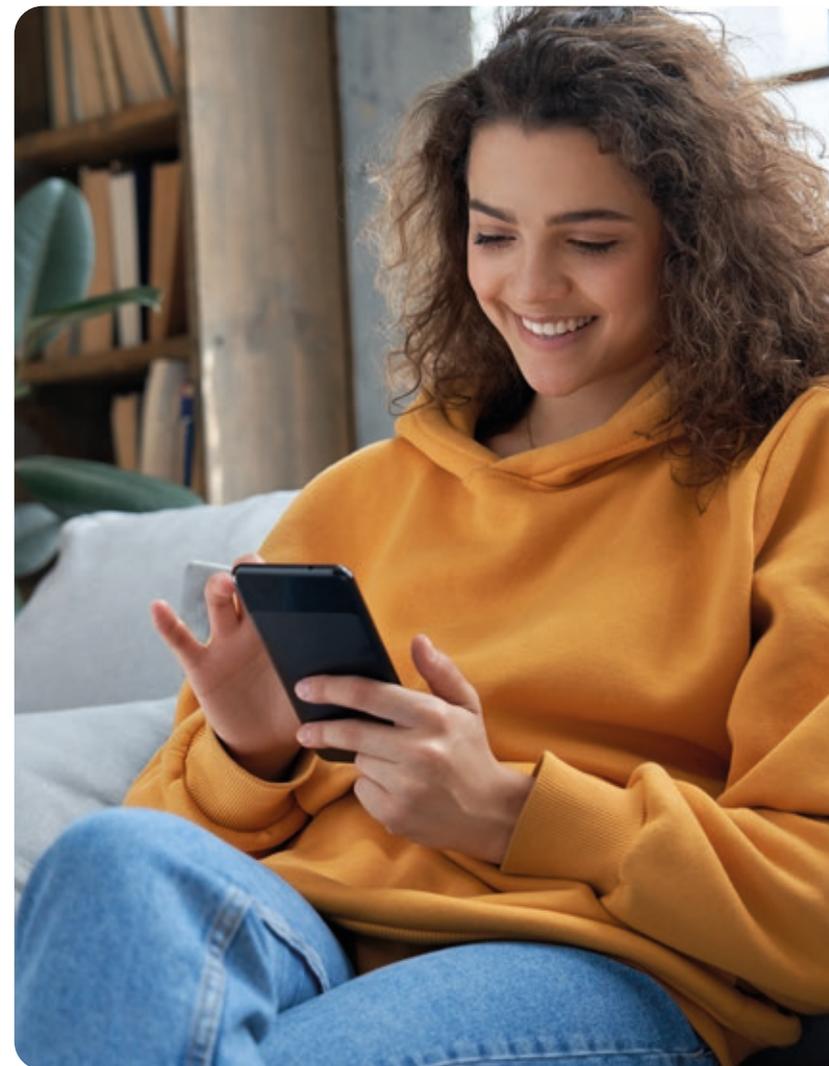
- Improve our written communication, including our complaint responses and bills, so they are customer friendly and jargon-free.
- Allow more customers to sign up and register for our support through 'MyAccount'.
- Continue to regularly review our customer journey to remove any barriers for our customers who need extra support.
- Continue to contact 90% of our customers on our register every two years to check if their situation has changed and whether their information is still up to date. We'll tailor the way we communicate with customers with lifelong conditions and we'll also reach out more regularly to our customers with temporary help needs.
- Review our website navigation and page structure to make sure information is easy to find, and labelled in a way customers understand.
- Make sure our telephone system is reviewed regularly and simplified where possible.
- Introduce new contact channels such as SMS and live chat, which customers have told us would be useful.





## Our plans, now until 2030 continued:

- Review our support applications process, to make it easier for customers to apply for the help they need.
- Continue to deliver bottled water to those that need it the most, and contact customers in alternative ways during planned and unplanned incidents. This will extend to contacting 'nominee contacts'. We'll also launch a post event check-in for our most at risk category customers.
- Launch easier ways for customers to pay, for example adding Apple Pay to our payment options.
- Expand our customer sharing data arrangement. Our plan is to reach all our supply area.
- Expand alternative formats (where possible) to include other forms of communication.
- Benchmark our performance against best in class performers (both inside and outside the water industry).
- Tailor our welcome letter to comply with Ofwat's **PSR Standards**, so our customers know what to expect from us.
- And finally, achieve the BSI Kitemark for inclusive service, so we can demonstrate the services we provide are accessible for all.



## Case study – ‘Tell us once’ bereavement service

Last year, we introduced a ‘tell us once’ bereavement service as we recognise this can be a difficult time for loved ones and want to make contacting us as easy as possible.

As part of this we;

- Set up a **dedicated option** on our phone line for bereavement-related calls, so next-of-kin notifying us of a bereavement can get through to us quickly
- Partnered with **Life Ledger**, which is a service that helps families deal with death notifications, removing the need to notify **numerous organisations following** the death of a loved one. More information about this service can be found here <https://www.lifeledger.com/>

Or scan the QR code



- Provided specialist training for our frontline agents, to help them support next-of-kin contacting us in the best possible way.



### 3. **Listening to our customers and stakeholders, so we meet expectations now and in the future**

We need to make sure we're listening and actively engaging our customers so we meet their expectations now, and in the future.

This extends to our key stakeholders and partners, who are able to share key insights from their respective areas of expertise.

It's important they are involved in our decision making, and that any changes to our services are underpinned by insights from our customers and stakeholders.

We want to consider the impact on all our customers when designing our journeys.

This section sets out how we plan to do this, building on the strong foundations we already have in place.



## Collaboration for success

We work closely with our stakeholders and partners when developing and evolving our services and policies. They include:

### The Consumer Council for Water (CCW)

The Consumer Council for Water (CCW) is an independent body that represents customer interests across England and Wales. They help customers resolve complaints against their water company or retailer, while providing free advice and support.

We engage regularly with CCW to get their feedback as we develop (or renew) our services. We also attend vulnerability workshops and consult with CCW's vulnerability lead.



'As part of our engagement with SES Water we have been working with the company in the development of its vulnerability strategy providing feedback and challenge. We are pleased to see that the company has taken an inclusive design approach to aim to make it easy to understand for customers and stakeholders. We look forward to continuing working with the company as it implements its plans to ensure that they deliver improved outcomes for customers.'

**Ana Maria Millan, Policy Manager at CCW**

## Our Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel

Our panel was formed in 2020 as an expert group to challenge, and in the process, accelerate our ambitions in the environmental and customer arena.



‘Consumer vulnerability has been a major focus area for SES Water’s Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel (CESP) in recent years. Our panel members, who include SES Water customers with lived experience of vulnerability, as well as external experts, have

worked closely with the SES team on all aspects of vulnerable customer support from high-level strategy to hands-on workshops on billing and other key aspects of customer experience, supporting and challenging SES’s vulnerability leads on a journey that has delivered significant and measurable improvements for customers.’

**Steve Crabb, Independent Chair, Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel**





## What we've already done:

- Collect insight from several several sources, such as our customer surveys, contact and complaint analysis, website analytics and our 'Voice of the Customer' programme, and our CMEX results
- Through our data (CACI), identify (by postcode or area) and understand the make-up of customers who are on any of our support schemes, in receipt of benefits or identified as being less affluent.
- Established a post-event research mechanism, particularly those on the Priority Services Register, as this helps us identify areas for improvement when there's an incident.
- Finally, we have over 100 customers on our 'Talk On Water' panel, who regularly provide their feedback on our future initiatives, Over the last 12 months, we have completed 15 individual research pieces with our panel, from getting their thoughts on our new Priority Services Register page content and design, to what's important to them during an incident.



## Our plans, now until 2030:

- Continue to test our new initiatives through our online community panel 'Talk on Water', our Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panel, or through ad hoc customer research.
- Create a community of customer champions (Vulnerability Heroes) who can provide more detailed feedback as we develop our services so the needs of our end users are at the centre of our design thinking.
- Monitor customer journeys using data and insight to understand how customers who need extra help access our services, so any improvement areas can be identified (and acted upon in a timely way).
- Further improve our understanding and identification of customers who need extra support.
- Create customer personas so we can 'stress test' our journeys to make sure they are fully accessible and deliver positive outcomes for all.
- Make sure our customers needing extra help are fully represented on our customer challenge groups and our 'Talk on Water' customer panel.
- Stay ahead of industry trends by working closely with other support organisations across our supply area, using their expert knowledge, so we understand emerging vulnerability trends, and use best practice. This includes looking outside of the industry for best practice.
- Continue to regularly engage with relevant organisations, such as CCW and other partners. We will receive insight, and where appropriate invite challenge, to make sure we're doing our best for our customers.



## 4. Training our people and partners to recognise and support the diverse needs of our customers

We want to empower our customer-facing colleagues so they have an understanding of our customers' needs, and feel able to support and respond to their individual circumstances in a respectful and appropriate way.

Our partners and our customers tell us this should be an important area of focus for us. We will commit to specific training and guidance to help recognise, record and best support customers who need extra help, further building on the great work we have already done in this area.



Our colleagues are our greatest asset in delivering exceptional customer care. We're investing significantly in comprehensive training programmes designed to equip our team with the skills and knowledge necessary to identify and support vulnerable customers.

This training goes beyond the basics, fostering a deep culture of empathy, sensitivity, and understanding within our organisation. By empowering our workforce with these critical competencies, we can ensure every interaction with our customers is respectful, informed, and genuinely supportive.

This programme of training will aim to cover both temporary and long term vulnerability.

## What we've already done:

- We've launched a new training module within our Training Academy to provide vulnerability training for our new Customer Care advisors, and this has also been extended to our offshore teams.
- 166 colleagues have completed Dementia Friendly training.
- We've completed specialist training to support our advisors, such as bereavement and autism awareness training.
- We took part in a joint exercise with Affinity Water to test our approach to providing alternative water in the event of a water emergency. A number of colleagues from across the business took part, and as part of this we also practised delivering bottled water to volunteers' homes to simulate real life deliveries to our Priority Services Register customers.
- Last year, 107 colleagues completed 870 hours of volunteering time across 16 charities, many of them supporting customers who have extra needs.

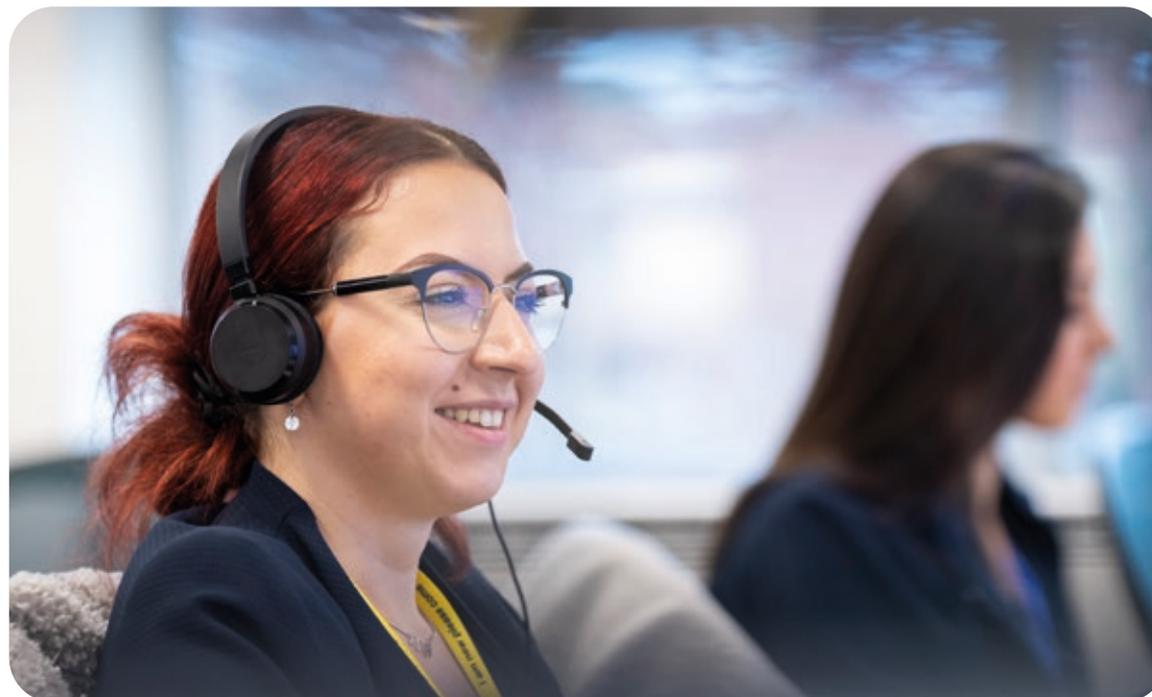


### Our Mental Health First Aiders

We recognise our colleagues may sometimes be emotionally impacted when supporting customers with extra needs. This is why we have a team of trained mental-health first aiders (MHFAs) available to support our colleagues as and when needed. This initiative launched in 2018 and today we have around 30 MFHAs across our business.

## Our plans, now until 2030:

- Roll out training to all our customer facing colleagues, to make sure all our people have a good understanding and awareness of what vulnerability means, including the different types of vulnerability, and how it can impact our customers. We'll also make sure our teams know the appropriate terminology to use when describing vulnerability, and the support and services we offer.
- Extend our vulnerability training to all the customer facing partners who work with us, so we're consistent in our approach.
- Continue to work with our external partners to deliver specialised training, making sure we cover a range of vulnerabilities, including supporting customers experiencing mental health issues. We'll also develop a vulnerability training skills matrix to provide further specialised training to those where more in-depth training may be required.
- Become a Dementia Friends company.
- Use our internal communications channels to share information on our improvement plans, and share customer feedback to help raise awareness of the great work we're doing.



### Case study – Autism awareness

Over the last two years, 30 colleagues from across our business completed autism awareness training. This training covered an introduction to autism, and how we best tailor communication and behaviour to support someone living with autism, to provide an inclusive service.



‘Following the training, I was able to appreciate and anticipate the different needs of someone with autism, and this helped me understand the best way to approach resolving the customer’s query.’  
**Jake, Complaint Specialist**

### Case study – Safeguarding training from Surrey Fire and Rescue

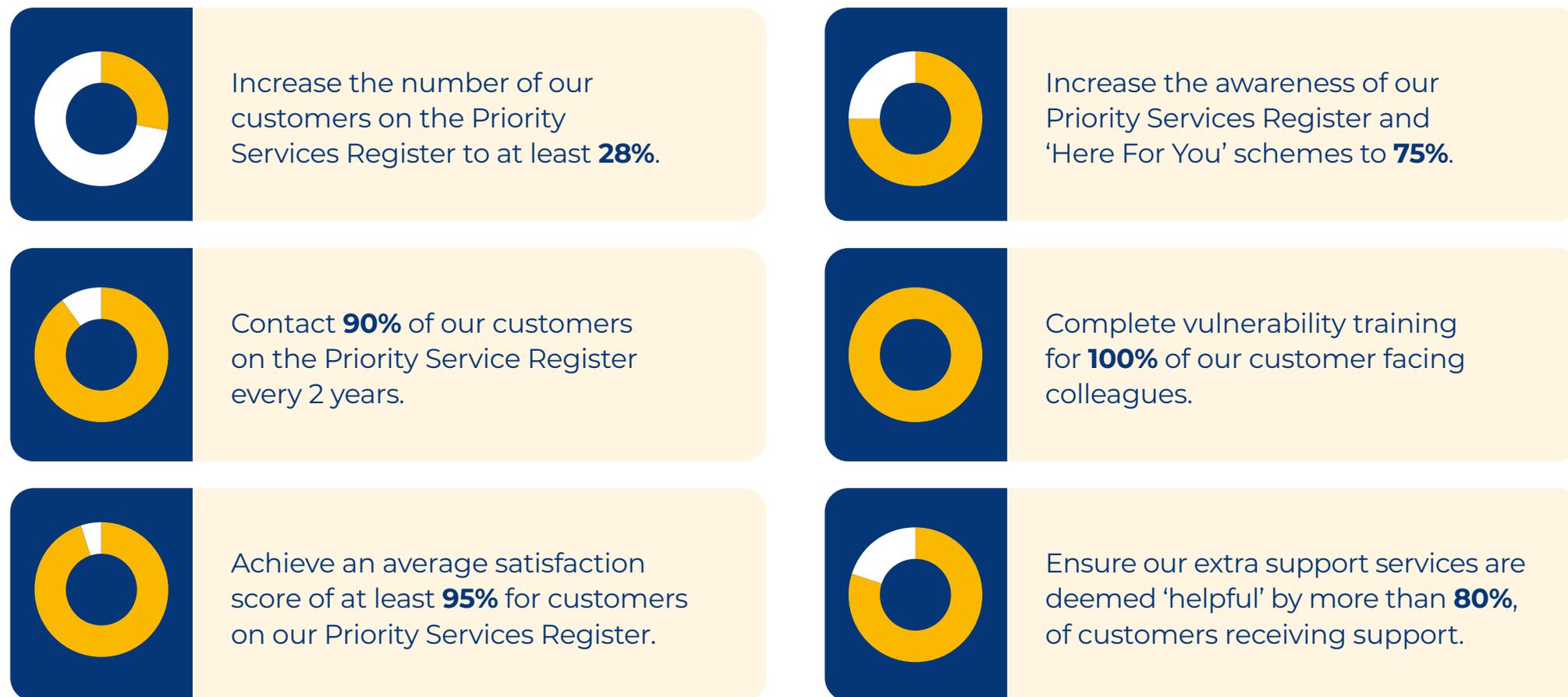
The Surrey Fire and Rescue service provided specific training focusing on safeguarding, hoarding and how to spot potential fire hazards. This training was completed by all customer-facing colleagues to improve their awareness of customers in these situations, and what to do if supporting a customer in this situation.



## Our Key Measures of Success

We're fully committed to delivering the plans outlined in this strategy and we will continually monitor our progress using the key metrics shown below.

### By 2030, we plan to:





# Staying on Track

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

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

- Publish our strategy on our website, to provide both accountability and visibility to our customers, and stakeholder groups.
- Review our strategy every year so it's kept up to date with any social, technological or regulatory changes. We promise to include our customers and stakeholders when we do this.
- Measure our progress against our key metrics as shown on page 30.
- Provide regular reporting to our Board, challenge groups and stakeholders to make sure we're delivering against our strategy, and doing what we said we would.



## Next Steps

We are very excited about the plans we have set out in this strategy to ensure we are reassuringly there for our customers, whatever the need.

We would love to hear from you if you've got any ideas, comments or questions on our strategy, as we continue to shape and evolve our plans.

Please contact: [customerexperience@seswater.co.uk](mailto:customerexperience@seswater.co.uk), or write to us with your comments to:

SES Water  
London Road  
Redhill  
Surrey  
RH1 1LJ

We have also completed the template supplied by our regulator, Ofwat. This can be found here <https://seswater.co.uk/about-us/publications>

Or scan the QR code



# Appendix

## Customer and Stakeholder Engagement – Summary

The table below shows how we engaged with our stakeholders and customers, and summarises what they told us in 2024 when we drafted our vulnerability strategy.

Who are they	How we engaged	What they told us
<p><b>Independent Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP)</b></p> <p>The CSP is a group of stakeholders that reflect the interests and expectations of our customers – they include representatives from Consumer Council for Water, local authorities, businesses, and SES Water. It plays a role in monitoring our performance on delivering our current commitments and challenging our progress on improvement plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have held collaborative face to face workshops with our Customer Scrutiny Panel members in January 2024.</li> <li>In March 2024, we then worked with a smaller group virtually.</li> </ul>	<p><b>We asked</b> - Who manages vulnerability and extra help well?</p> <p><b>CSP said</b> - Companies who have universally trained employees – stopping vulnerable customers from being passed around.</p> <p><b>We asked</b> - What would you like to see in our strategy?</p> <p><b>CSP said:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training including consideration on how it will reach field teams and the wider business.</li> <li>Senior employees leading by example so that vulnerability is championed at all levels of the business.</li> <li>Having up to date information about our customers.</li> <li>Having a customer listening and feedback framework.</li> <li>Having a tailored approach to customer communications.</li> <li>Investing in diverse partnerships.</li> </ul>



Who are they		How we engaged	What they told us
<b>Trusted Partners</b>	Age UK Sutton, Raven Housing Trust, and Surrey Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In April 2024 we completed 121 interviews with our partners to get their thoughts on what matters to their members and what areas are important when building our strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>There were two residing themes:</p> <p><b>Make it easy as possible</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our partners told us communications should be straightforward, using customer friendly language, and avoiding complex words and jargon.</li> <li>They also said customers should be able to access the support they need with ease, and this includes catering for customers who are not digitally savvy, or don't have access to digital channels. Therefore we need to maintain a range of ways to get in touch, allowing them to access support through their channel of choice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increase Awareness of our Support Schemes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our partners suggested we needed to raise the awareness of our support schemes.</li> </ul>



Who are they	How we engaged	What they told us
<p><b>Existing customers</b></p>	<p>In April 2024 we completed eight in-depth telephone interviews with customers who are already on our <b>Priority Services Register</b> to understand what was important to them, and to get their views on our proposals. This was run by our Explain Market Research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was important to be able to get in touch with us, receive a quick, personalised and easy service.</li> <li>• They valued being able to communicate with us and emphasised the importance for the customers services team to be fully trained to support customers with extra needs.</li> <li>• Most respondents had limited awareness of the additional support services offered by us, and felt it was really important for us to promote our services to raise awareness and accessibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>They also felt:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That customers with life-long conditions shouldn't need to reconfirm their eligibility for our services every 2 years and any communication should be to 'check in' instead.</li> <li>• Positive about the provision of bottled water to those who need extra help and that other customers would understand this need.</li> <li>• It was important to keep a record of communication preferences – particularly for those customers with lifelong conditions.</li> </ul>



## SES Water – customer demographic data

	Area	London	Surrey / Kent
	Volume of accounts	131,945	163,071
	% of accounts	44.5%	54.9%
<b>Acorn scores</b>	Affluent achievers	31.51%	46.7%
	Rising prosperity	14.93%	12.3%
	Comfortable communities	26.49%	19.73%
	Financially stretched	9.01%	12.13%
	Urban adversity	15.52%	5.14%
	Other	2.54%	3.96%
	<b>Age</b>	18-24	9.00%
25-34		18.12%	13.03%
35-44		19.45%	15.47%
45-54		17.42%	17.52%
55-64		15.68%	18.46%
65-74		11.26%	13.49%
75+		9.07%	12.68%
<b>Household size</b>	1 person	25.63%	25.69%
	2 persons	28.49%	36.43%
	3 and 4 persons	37.82%	32.07%
	5+ persons	8.06%	5.81%

Source: CACI 2023 update