

# United Utilities WaterTalk

**JOB NUMBER: 4307**

**PROJECT:**  
Household Charging  
Zoom Depth Interviews

**DISCUSSION GUIDE VERSION: 1**

**DATE:**  
21/07/2020

This guide is intended to be fluid, and flow will be partly determined by individual respondents on the day.



## Zoom Depth Interviews - Core Objectives

- Understand typical queries members have regarding their water charges when reviewing their billing statement
- Identify the journey of customers when seeking out information regarding their water charges via the United Utilities website
- Uncover perceptions of the United Utilities website when searching for key information – focused on the journey, relevance of information and layout, and its abilities to resolve queries
- Gauge member's awareness of the Household Charging Document and whether they are able to locate it on the website
- Understand any improvements members would suggest in order to better facilitate their search for key information on the United Utilities website

## Sample specifications

- X10 1 hour 'Accompanied surf' depth interviews via Zoom
- Coverage across gender, age, family and working status, income, literacy and metered vs unmetered
- Throughout the interview participants and their screens will be recorded. Participants must have agreed to this prior to invite to take part.

## Research structure

- **Welcome and Housekeeping (3 mins)**
- **Introduction – Tell me about yourself (5 mins)**
  - Introductory chat with the opportunity to warm-up participant, understand their role in utilities management in the home, and perceptions of water usage
- **Water Billing – Water Bill walk through (10 mins)**
  - Gauge current water billing behaviours and experiences with United Utilities, with a primary focus on their water bill and queries
- **Accompanied surf (20 mins)**
  - Explore journey to finding information on their particular queries, awareness of the Household Charges document, and ease of finding on the United Utilities website.
- **Understanding my bill (7 mins)**
- **Household Charges 2020/21 (10 mins)**
- **Wrap Up and Vox-Pops (5 mins)**
  - Opportunity to summarise key take outs and capture on film

## Welcome and Housekeeping – 3 mins

- Welcome customer
- Verve are an independent market research agency running the WaterTalk community for United Utilities. Our role is to seek customer feedback so that United Utilities can improve its service and offerings
- Explain that the interview will be recorded but no personal details will be shared directly with United Utilities – filming for market research purposes only. Video footage and transcripts will be shared with United Utilities for internal purposes only and will also be anonymous
- Purpose of the session is to get their thoughts about water billing charges and to look at the information and support on the United Utilities website
- Timings and structure of interview
- There's no right or wrong answers so feel comfortable sharing your opinions

## Section 1: Tell me about yourself – 5 mins

### Aim: Introductory chat with the opportunity to warm-up participant, understand their role in utilities management in the home, and perceptions of water usage

- Let's start by hearing a little about you – it would be great to learn about where you live, who you live with and how long you've lived there.
- How long have you been with United Utilities and how has your experience been with them so far?
- How much water do you tend to use at home and how has this changed over the last few months?

## Section 2: Water billing – 10 mins

### Aim: To gauge an understanding of their current water billing process, engagement with water bills / payment and any queries they have with billing charges

- When did you last receive a United Utilities water bill? What happens when the bill arrives? Talk me through what you usually do
  - **Moderator:** Here we're looking to understand whether they are the main account holder, do they share the responsibilities of their water bills with someone else in the household etc
- How do you typically pay your United Utilities water bill? What are the steps you take to pay, from the moment you receive the bill to the moment you pay?
- Have you previously had any issues with your water bill, or any questions about your statement?

#### **Moderator:**

- Do you spend a lot of time reading through your bill, why / why not?



- What are the main things you look out for when reviewing your water bill?
- Do you have any particular reference for how much a bill should be?
- If they have previously had issues, talk through how effective the method of information finding was – were there any barriers to finding the information and if so, what? Were they able to find the answer to their query?
- I'd like you to spend a few moments reading through your bill.
  - What do you usually look at, if anything?
  - Generally, are there any questions you have regarding your water bill, or anything you don't understand?
  - More specifically, is there anything that you don't understand in terms of how the charges have been calculated, or any queries you have / have previously had regarding your water bill?
- If you were to have any questions regarding your water bill, where would you go to find information on this and why?

### Section 3: Accompanied surf – 20 mins

**Aim: Explore journey to finding information on their particular queries, awareness of the Household Charges document, and ease of finding on the United Utilities website.**

- Now we're going to do some online tasks. We're using the screen sharing functionality for these tasks, so I can follow your steps in reaching the desired pages.
- However, as you go through the task I would like you to use a 'think aloud' technique. This is where you chat through what you are doing, what you are reading, and your reaction to what you see. By doing this it helps me understand what exactly you are doing, why you are doing that, and what you understand. It will feel abit strange at first, but you will get used to it.
- Remember, these tasks are not tests, and there are no right or wrong answers. I just want to see what you would typically do.
- Try to be as natural as possible and think about how you would complete these tasks if you were by yourself and not being watched.

#### **TASK A**

- For the first task I would like you to think about {INSERT ANY QUESTIONS RAISED. IF NO QUESTION IS RAISED, PLEASE USE ONE OF THE TASKS BELOW}.
  - *A1 – How are your water charges calculated if you **do not** have a water meter? What are the charges made up of and what determines the amount you pay?*
  - *A2 – How are your water charges calculated if you have a meter? What are the charges made up of and what determines the amount you pay? What would be the options open to you if you did not think your meter was giving you an accurate picture of your consumption?*
  - *B – What help is there is if you required additional support due to age, ill health or disability? What are some of the different types of services available?*

- **C** – *What would you need to do if you were carrying out some home improvements and needed to move your water meter to a new location? What are the options open to you i.e. who is able to relocate the meter and what are the stages involved?*
- **D** – *What support is available if you were struggling to pay your water bill? What are the different conditions under which you would be eligible for help?*

**Moderator:**

- If respondent does not specify a query, allocate based on list of priority queries. Rotate the priority queries across the depth interviews.
- Moderator to make note of how they approached the question.
- During the 'Think aloud' technique Respondents may go silent for a moment. Pause for a moment as well. If they do not start thinking aloud again. Gently remind them to:
  - "Remember to tell me your thoughts" or
  - "What is going through your mind?" or
  - "What are you thinking about now?"
- Combine with your observations:
  - If they go silent and look puzzled or curious, try "You look puzzled (curious). Tell me what you are thinking"
  - Why did you use that word / phrase to search for information? Why did you think they would get the best results?
  - What initially stands out the respondent, and which pages are they clicking on?
  - Do they end up somewhere unexpected?
  - How do they go back if they take a 'wrong turn'?

***For those who found the information they wanted***

- Now that you have found the information you wanted, please talk me through the process of landing here
  - How easy / difficult was it to find this page?
  - Did the route to finding this page make sense and feel intuitive?
  - Were there any particular issues you encountered when looking for the page, and what do you think United Utilities could do to make this easier?
- What are your thoughts on the presentation of the page and key information (likes and dislikes of the page)?
  - After reading, are you able to find the answer to your query and was it easy to understand?
  - Reviewing the page, is there anything you would want to improve?
  - Has it told you everything you wanted to know

***For those who could not find the information they wanted***

- Thanks for having a go at this task. What do you think were the biggest issues when looking for information on your query?
- How do you think the site could be improved to make it easier when searching?
- What information did you expect to find?
- How do you feel that you cannot find the information?

- What would be your next step to finding out information about your query if you were unable to find the relevant page on the United Utilities website?

**Moderator:** Help guide those who were unable to find information re. their query and discuss the second paragraph of questions for ‘those who found the information they wanted’

## TASK B – ALTHOUGH REPEAT AS MANY TIMES AS POSSIBLE IN 20 MINS

- Repeat process for a new task
- Use same prompts, but make specific note if the process is easier

### Section 4: Understanding My Bill – 7 mins

#### Aim: Evaluation of the central hub for finding out information about the bill.

- **Moderator:** Adapt this introduction if participant has already been on the page. On the United Utilities website, there is a specific page which helps you answer questions you may have about your bill. First of all we would like you to find this page.
- Again using the think aloud technique I would like you to chat through this page, and do what you would do if you came across it.

#### **Moderator:**

- Allow the respondent to navigate as naturally as possible around the page, while noting their behaviours and journey around the site.
- Make a note of what they do and where they click
- Make a note of how quickly they were able to find the document
- Use the same ‘think aloud’ prompts as before

I'd now like you to spend a few moments reviewing this page, and I'll have a couple of questions for you.

- In your own words and only considering the information relevant to you, what is this page communicating? I'm not too knowledgeable on Water charges and billing, so how would you describe it to me?
- How easy or difficult was the information to understand?
- What are your thoughts on the layout and presentation of the information? Is there anything more that could be done to make it easily digestible?

### Section 5: Household charges – 10 mins

#### Aim: Evaluation of the household charges.

- **Moderator:** Adapt this introduction if participant has already been on the page. On the United Utilities website, there is a specific page provides a lot of information on water charges. It is called Household Charges 2020/2021. First of all we would like you to find this page.

- Again using the think aloud technique I would like you to chat through this page, and do what you would do if you came across it. **If respondent does not find, share link via Zoom Chat**

**Moderator:**

- Allow the respondent to navigate as naturally as possible around the page, while noting their behaviours and journey around the site.
  - Make a note of what they do and where they click
    - Do they click on any other links regarding charges?
  - Make a note of how quickly they were able to find the document
  - Use the same 'think aloud' prompts as before
- How easy / difficult was it to find this page?
  - Did the route to finding this page make sense and feel intuitive?
  - Were there any particular issues you encountered when looking for the page, and what do you think United Utilities could do to make this easier?
- I'd now like you to spend a few moments reviewing this page, and I'll have a couple of questions for you.
    - In your own words and only considering the information relevant to you, what is this page communicating? I'm not too knowledgeable on Water charges and billing, so how would you describe it to me?
    - How easy or difficult was the information to understand?
    - Is this something you would read? Why, why not?
    - What are your thoughts on the layout and presentation of the information? Is there anything more that could be done to make it easily digestible?
  - On the page, you'll see there are a few links to other documents, and the full Household Charges document. Having now read the page, would you click on any of the other links, or read the full document? Why / why not?
- Moderator:** If participant would click on this, continue task and probe on presentation, content and navigation around these pages
- What are your initial thoughts of the Charges document?
  - Reviewing the contents page, does it feel comprehensive and is it clear where you would need to go to find information to your queries?
  - What are your thoughts on where the document is located, both on this Household charges page and on the United Utilities website as a whole? Would you make any changes here?

## Section 6: Wrap up and Vox-Pops – 5 mins

### **Aim: Opportunity to summarise key take outs and capture on film**

Thanks for all your great comments so far, I mentioned earlier that I might ask you to repeat a few of your answers for the camera at the end of the interview. After this we are all done.

- Overall what are your views on the United Utilities website in terms of understanding your water charges and bill? Are there any particular likes or dislikes on this?
- How was navigation around the website to these pages, and what did you think of the information provided and layout?

- Is there anything you'd like to see on the site that you think is missing would better help with this process?
- What key things would you improve on the pages to help with your queries?
  - What are the most important and least important things to you?
- Is there anything you would keep the same?

Thank you very much for taking part. END