

### Expectations of Services Depth Interview Guide

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#### Method:

16x 1-2-1 depths (video (Zoom) where possible or telephone)

Up to 60 minutes

£50 incentive (PayPal or Amazon Gift Card)

#### Sample:

United Utilities customers via supplied sample:

- 8x experienced a water supply or wastewater issue in the past 3 years
- 8x haven't experienced a water supply or wastewater issue in the past 3 years
- Mix of gender, ages and counties (within the North West)

## Expectations of service depth discussion guide

### Overview

00:00-00:10	10 mins	Intro & warm-up
00:10-00:15	5 mins	General service expectations
00:15-00:35	20 mins	Wastewater scenarios
00:35-00:55	20 mins	Water supply scenarios
00:50-00:55	5 mins	Wrap up & contingency

### Notes on the guide

*We keep interview guides flexible to allow the conversation to progress naturally and enable us to respond/direct as needed.*

*We have included an objective at the start of each section to show what we intend to get out of this part of the interview, with notes/prompts written as a guide rather than a script for the moderator*

### Discussion Guide key

Section title	How long section should last in mins / total mins count
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*Objective: Key objectives that we need to cover during the section*

Black text is key questions/information

*Purple text is moderator instructions and prompts*

*Moderator:*

- *Check allocation sheet for water supply scenarios to cover*
- *Check stimulus PDF have been emailed in advance for phone participants*

1: Introduction & Warm Up

10 mins / 00:00-00:10

*Objective: Cover off key admin points including MRS code and GDPR, ensure participants are comfortable taking part in the research, explain the interview format and address any questions participants have.*

*Ice-breaker starting at general expectations of service & UU to ease participant into the conversation.*

- Moderator name and independence of InSites Consulting
- Market research on behalf of United Utilities
- MRS code of conduct – anonymity, confidentiality, how video/quotes will be used
- All information to be used for research purposes only
- Explain purpose of research: Understand people's views on how United Utilities respond to water supply and wastewater issues you might experience at your home
- IF PHONE INTERVIEW: Check have a copy of stimulus PDF to hand
- Any questions?
- 60-minute conversation, check sitting comfortably!

To begin with...useful to understand a little more about them and their experience as a United Utilities customer for context...

Ask participant to briefly introduce themselves – where they live, work, family/who they live with, hobbies.

*Prompt for: NW county/area, type of area (urban, suburban, rural, coastal, etc.), type & age of property*

Move on to general customer service – ask for an example of a company they've dealt with recently (last 12 months) where they have either:

- Been impressed when they've dealt with them
- Found things just run smoothly/like clockwork whenever they deal with them

*Moderator: Focus on aspects like getting in touch, having a query/needing something done and the company's response*

*Prompts if needed:*

- *How they contact them*
- *How easy it is to get through/deal with them*
- *What kind of response they receive?*
- *Note sectors and types of query/inquiry*
- *Prompt for why, what makes them the best, do these experiences change their views of other companies. What does ideal customer service look like to them, how does this change in an emergency*

If time – cover a poor experience.

*Prompts if needed:*

- *Someone that was difficult/painful to deal with*

- *Not impressed with the response/way things were handled*
- *Note sectors and types of query/inquiry*

Move on to general perceptions and experience of dealing with United Utilities

*Prompts if needed:*

- *General perception of the company*
- *Contact channels/how they've dealt with them in the past*
- *NB. Avoid getting into detail at this stage if participant has experience of wastewater/water supply scenarios (cover in subsequent sections)*

Ask participant to think of another company/brand they imagine United Utilities is similar to in terms of the level of customer service, ease of dealing with them and how responsive they are.

*Prompts if needed:*

- *This could be any brand/sector*

*Moderator:*

- *Establish if this is a positive or negative comparison*
- *Prompt to understand what is underpinning this view/comparison, e.g.:*
  - *Size of company*
  - *The sector*
  - *Types of dealings with the company*
  - *First-hand experience*
  - *What they've heard from others*
  - *Contact channels, etc.*

2: General Customer Service Expectations

5 mins / 00:10-00:15

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*Objective: Understand expectations for key service areas (time to answer telephone calls, email response to billing queries, time to receive refunds)*

Ask participant how they would deal with United Utilities for something 'routine' like a billing or water account query.

*Moderator: Briefly explore contact/channel preferences and why they favour this approach*

Explore expectations for **phoning** United Utilities for a routine billing or water account query:

*Prompt for:*

- *Finding the right contact number & where they would look*
- *Time it would take to get through:*
  - *Short or long waiting time*
  - *Simple or long-winded menu options*
- *Why they think this amount of time and ease/difficulty:*
  - *Past experience?*
  - *General impressions and equating to other service providers?*
- *Service & how the query would be handled once they get through*

Move on to explore expectations for **emailing** United Utilities and waiting for a response:

*Prompt for:*

- *Finding the right email/contact form & where they would look*

- *How long it would take to receive a reply:*
  - *Short or long waiting time*
- *Why they think this amount of time?*
  - *Past experience?*
  - *General impressions and equating to other service providers?*
- *The response they receive / how the query would be handled*

Move on to explore expectations for how long it would take if they were due a **refund** on their water bill (from being notified of the refund/amount to it being paid into their bank account):

*Prompt for:*

- *How long it would take for the refund to come through:*
  - *Short or long waiting time*
- *Why they think this amount of time?*
  - *Past experience?*
  - *General impressions and equating to other service providers?*

Finally for this section...briefly touch on what they would expect from United Utilities in a 'emergency' situation (such as a burst pipe, loss of supply, blockage, etc.)?

How does this differ from the above?

*Prompt for views on:*

- *How they would get in touch*
- *Looking up a number to call*
- *Same customer service phone number with menu options for an emergency vs. dedicated number*
- *Expectations for call waiting times*

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## 2: Wastewater scenarios

20 mins / 00:15-00:35

*Objective: Deep dive into expectations for wastewater scenarios – general expectations, then comparing/contrasting between scenarios (and how differs for more severe impact issues), probing to explore factors that drive/underpin expectations, nuances, and emotional aspects. Explore people's thought-process behind trade-offs for initial response vs. overall resolution times.*

*Moderator: Participants see all 4 wastewater scenarios – introduce all together, then compare/contrast between scenarios as work through prompts.*

*Explain that we'll be looking at different scenarios with wastewater issues they might experience at their home, asking for their views on getting in touch with United Utilities and what that experience would be like.*

*Where participants have past experience of similar situations, encourage them to draw on that experience and consider what could potentially be done differently.*

Introduce scenarios, ask participant to pick one initially and walk us through what they think they would do / what would happen in that situation – then consider if things would be different for the other scenarios.

Begin with initial contact:

*Prompt for:*

- *How they would get in touch with UU*
- *Looking up a number to call*

- *Same customer service phone number with menu options for an emergency vs. dedicated number*
- *Time it would take to get through...*
  - *Initially*
  - *To someone able to deal with incident*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*

Move on to what would happen once they get through to someone:

*Prompt for:*

- *How long would they expect to be on the phone reporting the issue?*
  - *Short call capturing basic details vs. longer call with more detailed questions?*
  - *Would they expect that person to be able to properly diagnose the problem?*
- *How would they feel if they were told they'd receive a call back (from a technician to diagnose the issue)?*
  - *How soon would they expect this?*
  - *How do they feel about 'within 2-hours' as a timeframe for a call back in this situation?*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*

Moving on to someone from United Utilities attending the property/location...

*Prompt for:*

- *How long would they expect it to take for someone from UU to attend the scene?*
  - *What is this expectation based on?*
  - *Would they expect the first person on the scene to be there to diagnose the problem or someone with the right equipment to start fixing it?*
    - *Which would be preferable in each scenario?*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*

Explain that in some cases it will be United Utilities' responsibility to resolve, others it will be the homeowners (e.g. if the source of the problem is within their property boundary) – assume here we're looking at a situation that is UU's responsibility.

Move on to explore views on trade-offs:

- *More time spent on the phone (or waiting for a call back) to properly diagnose the problem and get someone out with the right equipment (longer until someone from UU is on the scene)*  
VS.  
*Someone from United Utilities attending the scene at the earliest opportunity to assess the situation – even if they then need to call out another team with the right equipment*

*Probe to understand why, how they feel about the trade-off, what underpin preferences, and how this differs for different scenarios.*

- *Which will ultimately resolve the issue quicker*
- *Which is the most efficient way to handle the situation*
- *Which would put them most at ease*

Finish with expectations for how long it would take overall to resolve the issue (from first reporting)

*Prompt for:*

- *How long would they expect it to take (in hours or days)*
  - *What is this expectation based on?*
- *What kind of work/disruption might it involve?*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*
- *Overall, what is the best way for United Utilities to handle each kind of situation?*

Having considered who this situation might play out, what would they want to receive in terms of updates from United Utilities in this situation?

Prompt for:

- *The key junctures in the process for updates*
- *What they'd want to receive info/updates on*
- *Channels for different types of updates (email, text, phone call, formal letter, in-person visit, app notifications)*
  - *Explore reaction to an online incident tracking tool (similar to order updates/parcel delivery tracking)*
- *Look to understand what the right balance is of information/feeling informed and not being bombarded*

In instances where it's the homeowner's responsibility, how would they feel about paying for United Utilities to fix the issue?

Prompt for:

- *What other options they'd consider (home insurance, emergency plumber, something else?)*
- *Explore factors that are important/considered here:*
  - *Speed of resolving*
  - *Convenience of resolving*
  - *UU's expertise*
  - *Cost of fixing the issue*

Show stimulus/outline option for UU service and explore price expectations:

Prompt for:

- *How much they would expect to pay for this*
- *Why/what they're basing this on*
- *Depending on initial answers, prompt for reaction to £60, £120, £240*
  - *Sounds cheap/good value/worth paying for, expensive/off-putting, etc.*

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### 3: Water supply scenarios

20 mins / 00:35-00:55

*Objective: Deep dive into expectations for water supply scenarios – general expectations, then comparing/contrasting between scenarios (and how differs for more severe impact issues), probing to explore factors that drive/underpin expectations, nuances, and emotional aspects. Explore people's thought-process behind trade-offs for initial response vs. overall resolution times.*

*Moderator: Participants see 4 of 8 water supply scenarios – introduce all together, then compare/contrast between scenarios as work through prompts.*

*Explain that we'll be looking at different scenarios with water supply issues they might experience at their home, asking for their views on getting in touch with United Utilities and what that experience would be like.*

*Where participants have past experience of similar situations, encourage them to draw on that experience and consider what could potentially be done differently.*

Introduce scenarios, ask participant to pick one initially and walk us through what they think they would do / what would happen in that situation – then consider if things would be different for the other scenarios.

Begin with initial contact:

Prompt for:

- *How they would get in touch with UU*
- *Looking up a number to call*

- *Same customer service phone number with menu options for an emergency vs. dedicated number*
- *Time it would take to get through...*
  - *Initially*
  - *To someone able to deal with incident*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*

Move on to what would happen once they get through to someone:

*Prompt for:*

- *How long would they expect to be on the phone reporting the issue?*
  - *Short call capturing basic details vs. longer call with more detailed questions?*
  - *Would they expect that person to be able to properly diagnose the problem?*
- *How would they feel if they were told they'd receive a call back (from a technician to diagnose the issue)?*
  - *How soon would they expect this?*
  - *How do they feel about 'within 2-hours' as a timeframe for a call back in this situation?*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*

Moving on to someone from United Utilities attending the property/location...

*Prompt for:*

- *How long would they expect it to take for someone from UU to attend the scene?*
  - *What is this expectation based on?*
  - *Would they expect the first person on the scene to be there to diagnose the problem or someone with the right equipment to start fixing it?*
    - *Which would be preferable in each scenario?*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*

For situations where a customer is **without water** or has **low/no pressure**...

*Moderator: Moderator: Set the scene for street repairs and the two alternative approaches using the stimulus – workforce, vans, traffic measures, noisy Alternative Supply Vehicle, etc.*

*Highlight benefits of newer technology - less disruption (avoids digging up as much road/pavement, less traffic disruption, less noise from Alternative Supply Vehicles, more cost effective, uses fewer materials/reduced carbon footprint from refurbishing/ re-lining water pipes/mains (rather than replacing altogether)*

Explore views on different ways to handle works/repairs:

- *Repairs using newer technology (with benefits outlined in the stimulus) – but could take longer due to the availability of specialist equipment)*  
VS.  
*More conventional repairs, digging up roads/pavements/the ground, with traffic measures – but potentially gets fixed sooner*

*Probe to understand why, how they feel about the trade-off, what underpin preferences, and how this differs for different scenarios.*

- *Which will ultimately resolve the issue quicker*
- *Is traffic interruptions and noise disruption a consideration?*
- *Which is the most efficient*
- *What is underpinning this preference? Especially if option 1 – is it the reduced disruption or the environmental benefit?*

Finish with expectations for how long it would take overall to resolve the issue (from first reporting or being notified)

*Prompt for:*

- *How long would they expect it to take (in hours or days)*
  - *What is this expectation based on?*

- *What kind of work/disruption might it involve?*
- *How they think they would feel in this situation (emotions)*
- *Overall, what is the best way for United Utilities to handle each kind of situation?*

Having considered how this situation might play out, what would they want to receive in terms of updates from United Utilities in this situation?

*Prompt for:*

- *The key junctures in the process for updates*
- *What they'd want to receive info/updates on*

How do they want to be updated?

- *Key to understand the channels for different types of updates and how they want to be updated (email, text, phone call, formal letter, in-person visit, app notifications)*
  - *Explore reaction to an online incident tracking tool (similar to order updates/parcel delivery tracking)*
- *Look to understand what the right balance is of information/feeling informed and not being bombarded*

4: Wrap up

5 mins / 00:55-00:60

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*Objective: Bring the interview to a close, opportunity for respondents to share any final comments.*

Explain that we're nearing the end of the discussion.

Ask participant to take a step back and reflect on everything we've discussed/looked at.

What are the main things that stand out/stick in their mind from the conversation we've had?

If you had to give United Utilities one piece of advice about how these kinds of situations are handled what would they say?

Check if any final questions/comments/queries about the research.

Recap incentives if needed.

Thank and close.