

YourVoice – Customer Engagement sub group:

Terms of Reference & Membership

1. Requirement and Role

- 1.1. YourVoice, the Independent Challenge Group for North West water customers and stakeholders, provides independent scrutiny, advice and challenge in relation to United Utilities' customer engagement and research activities.
- 1.2. In addition, YourVoice reviews and challenges United Utilities' business plan delivery as well as reviewing and assuring its customer reporting. It considers, reviews and challenges the company's customer research and engagement, and its PR24 business plan submission to Ofwat.
- 1.3. The role of YourVoice is to be a 'critical friend' to United Utilities, understanding challenges, commenting on plans and expressing views about the key issues and priorities.
- 1.4. To support its work, and enable more detailed scrutiny of important work areas, YourVoice has established four sub-groups focusing on customer engagement & research; the environment, natural capital & social capital agenda; seeking the views of regional stakeholders; and looking at customer vulnerability and affordability. The Chair of YourVoice will be a member of each of the sub groups.
- 1.5. **These are the Terms of Reference are for the Customer Engagement sub group.**

2. Purpose & Terms of Reference

The Customer Engagement sub group will:

- 2.1. undertake detailed reviews, scrutiny and challenge of United Utilities' performance and service proposals from a customer engagement perspective. It will review and challenge the company's approach to customer research, customer engagement, best practice, triangulation and how this insight, and that from central research, informs its PR24 submission to Ofwat. It will review the company's longer term plans and business-as-usual activity.
- 2.2. as a critical friend to United Utilities seek to understand the challenges facing the company and its customers, comment on plans and express views about the issues and priorities from a customer service perspective. It will consider issues faced by the company and customers such as reaching and listening to all customers, tariffs, affordability, use of new technology and innovative approaches to research and delivery.
- 2.3. comment on the extent to which the company has listened to customers and stakeholder

views and taken account of these in its business planning and normal operations.

- 2.4. review engagement methods and materials, attend engagement sessions and receive and review outcomes from research and engagement work and follow the 'golden thread' from engagement to Business Plan.
- 2.5. monitor and comment on company performance against target and undertake deep dives into areas of concern and / or poor performance.

On the delivery of the **2020-25 Business Plan (AMP7)**, the sub group will:

- 2.6. review and challenge the company on the delivery of its AMP7 business plan commitments and ODIs, including contractual over- and under-performance payments. It will consider key issues and challenges and, where appropriate, undertake a 'deep dive' looking in detail at particular areas and emerging issues.
- 2.7. consider the ways in which the company reports progress on its customer engagement activities, including advising on improvements to the clarity of information provided to customers and stakeholders.
- 2.8. review the company's performance against other water companies.
- 2.9. contribute to the design of customer and stakeholder communications, particularly on performance reporting and on the annual communication to customers through bills.

On preparations for the **PR24 Price Review process (2025 – 2030)**, the sub group will:

- 2.10. provide challenge and assurance to the company on the quality, clarity, inclusivity, and extent of its customer research and engagement ensuring it is robust, balanced and has a proportionate evidence base. It will look for innovative approaches to customer engagement and examples of co creation with customers.
- 2.11. ensure the company has engaged with different types of existing customers whilst considering the impact on future customers.
- 2.12. consider whether evidence from customers exists to influence a business plan proposal and will review whether or not the final Business Plan takes account of these views.
- 2.13. review the outcomes of central research work carried out by Ofwat and CCW and the ways in which this and other engagement work is triangulated with local research and engagement work.
- 2.14. work very closely with the Affordability and Vulnerability sub group in ensuring that research, engagement, reporting and communication is widespread and reaches vulnerable and hard to reach groups. The chair of the Affordability and Vulnerability sub group will sit on the Customer Engagement sub group to support this requirement.
- 2.15. will work closely with the Stakeholder group to seek its assurance on the spread, quality and resonance of stakeholder communication and engagement.

3. Governance and membership

- 3.1. The Sub-Group's membership will be drawn from customer and regulatory representatives, reflecting a cross section of skills and experience ranging from customer service organisations and those with an understanding of customers in vulnerable circumstances or facing affordability challenges to those with experience in customer research and engagement and social value fields. Membership will reflect a cross-section of skills and experience covering policy, community, operational and regulatory expertise and may include representatives of:
- Statutory agencies
 - Advice services
 - Health sector
 - Voluntary and community sector
 - Experts in research and engagement
 - Disability organisations
 - CCW
 - Operational experts
- 3.2. The Chair will be selected by the YourVoice panel and will be responsible for reporting back on sub group activities in line with agreed levels of delegation. Administrative support in holding and reporting on meetings will be provided by the independent YourVoice Secretary.
- 3.3. The relevant Director, or senior nominee, will be United Utilities' lead representative on the sub group, and will be supported by colleagues from across the organisation as required.
- 3.4. The sub group will aim to meet at least quarterly but with more frequent meetings as required, for example to deal with urgent issues or during the later stages of the PR24 process.
- 3.5. The sub group will be quorate if the Chair is present plus at least two other members.
- 3.6. Members may meet in private if they deem it necessary.
- 3.7. Papers will be circulated to Sub-Group members at least three working days in advance of meetings. Meeting minutes will be published on the YourVoice web pages.
- 3.8. Members will declare any interests at least annually and if applicable at any meeting of this sub group.
- 3.9. Appropriate induction and training will be provided to Sub-group members, and detailed briefing made available on any new policy introductions, consultations or changes.