

MINUTES OF CUSTOMER CHALLENGE GROUP

Meeting/Teleconference held on Monday 27th March at 10:00

Usk Room, Linea

Attendees: Peter Davies (Chairman); Craig Anderson (Warm Wales); Daniel Davies (Welsh Water); Nigel Draper (Valleys to Coast Housing); Louise Jackson (Welsh Water); Carly Jones (WEL representative); Chris Jones (Welsh Water); Duncan McCombie (McCombie & Daughters Ltd); Lia Moutselou (Consumer Council for Water); Alun Shurmer (Welsh Water); Dimitrios Xenias (Cardiff University) Lee Gonzales (Consumer Council for Water); Danielle Ingleson (Welsh Water); Delyth Jewell (Citizens Advice); Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU); Steve Ormerod (Cardiff University & Chairman of IEAP); Anna Riddick (Welsh Water); Jean Francois Dulong (Welsh Local Government Association);

By phone: Bill Darbyshire (Environment Agency);

Apologies: Victoria Lloyd (Age Cymru); Russell Todd (WCVA); Ruth Jenkins (Natural Resources Wales); Mike Davis (Welsh Water);

1. Welcome

2. Phase 2 Research Outcomes

- Accent presented findings of Water Resource Management Plan Qualitative work and updated on plans for progressing Quantitative work
- Blue Marble presented findings on the Customer services work and Deep Dive: Worst Served research
- DJS presented findings on the Environment research

Note and actions from discussion:

Customer services:

- Lee Gonzales, CCWater, asked if future customer have any perception of price. Blue Marble concluded that although they have high expectations of service for the majority they haven't ever been in charge of bills and so unaware of cost of services.
- Bill knowledge is an issue and understanding of how the industry works is low.
- Jean Francois Dulong- What does the company do to support vulnerable customers who feel they can't talk to us when they have an issue with their bill? DO we know if trust is increasing with vulnerable customers too?
- Examples of good service were seen through situations of poor service e.g. internal flooding.
- Lee Gonzales, customers mentioned compensation when they receive a reduced service. Did they indicate how much? Blue Marble said there was no specific numbers discussed but the general feeling from the majority was that you shouldn't pay whilst a service isn't available.
- Trust has a large bearing on the good will given to a company when poor service is experienced. This ties in with Welsh Water's CLS strategy that favourability and

familiarity lead to increasing Trust.

- Good lessons in this research for us and other non-profit organisations. How do Welsh Water plan to share this learning wider?

Deep Dives: Worst Served:

- Tom Taylor, CCWater, noted that the difference in perception between staff on the ground and head office shows the need for Welsh Water Management to be more visible.
- Lee Gonzales, CCWater, would like for us to note the interesting segmentation of vulnerable customers in this piece of research. There were a higher than normal number of customers identified as vulnerable but very few of these customers were on assistance schemes from Welsh Water. This may be because we have perceived them as vulnerable but they may not perceive themselves as vulnerable and therefore have not come forward to ask for support.
- Welsh Water to go back and see how vulnerable segment fit into PR19 vulnerable customer definition.
- Duncan McCombie, how to Welsh Water decide on the big investments made? Do local area managers have input? Alun Shurmer discussed the use of Investment Manager tool in making these decisions. Welsh Water are looking into how we can provide more local influence and empowerment but as these issues are sometimes very low cost or very high cost but benefitting a small number of people they don't end up high on a priority list.
- Dimitrios noted how proactive Northern Power Grid are with customers with repeat issues using things like newsletters and blogs. Welsh Water should consider any useful learnings from them.
- Lee Gonzales, CCWater, will we ever have no worst served customers? Cost benefit will always prioritise customer's circumstances but Welsh Water 2050 strategy will look to mitigate this and set out our strategy for those customers.
- Peter Davies recognised that this was an uncommon piece of research on an important topic so it is good news that Welsh Water are engaging with these customers.

Environment

- Noted that SME/Micro business involvement was low- hard to recruit. DJS clarified that qualitative work doesn't always have a statistically representative sample but it always aims to have representation from a similar demographic to our customer base.
- Duncan McCombie, did water dependant businesses have a different opinion to other businesses? This has sometimes influenced opinions in other surveys but here we did not see a differing opinion.
- Jean Francois Dulong- How far did the research go to inform on the future of water abstraction? Did customers make links between river water quality, abstraction and cost to serve? Understanding of abstraction as a term is limited but once explained customers were quick to recognise the impact that water abstracting could have on the environment

Accent WRMP

- Welsh Water should try to get video diaries with customers next time there are any hosepipe bands. This will help in future customer engagement.
- Tom Taylor commented on the communications of our metering strategy and how it should be an easy transaction for people.

3. Triangulation framework

- Triangulation principles presented and accepted a sound basis for further work by CCG members. Welsh Water has engaged with PWC to produce this framework and PWC will continue to support in the delivery of phase 1.

- Tom Taylor noted the triangulation points are really important for CCG to challenge as once that point has passed the next phase follows on from the agreement and discussions had at that point in time.
- Phase 1 draft report will be added to the agenda for the next CCG meeting in June.

4. **PR19 Measures of Success**

- Louise Jackson presented development of the Measures of Success and asked CCG for any gaps and if CCG feel these measures take into account the customer research preferences thus far.
- Peter Davies asks for all CCG members to take away presentation and feedback any comments to Louise prior to the next meeting.
- Jean Francois Dulong observed that there were no big gaps in the measure put forward so far.
- Some challenge around including a measure on bathing waters.
- Are there any highlights from other companies? Louise Jackson mentioned new measures being considered which others are also using are First Contact Resolution, recreational measures and external flooding.

MOS brief

- Need to include Hereford in the list of locations visited
- Welsh Water to circulate dates of workshops to CCG members

5. **Welsh Water Customer Feedback App**

Verbal update- no action by CCG

Verbal updated to be brought back every 6 months

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