

March 2020

Customer measure of experience (C-MeX) – guidance for the 2020-25 period

About this document

The **customer measure of experience** (C-MeX) is a mechanism designed to incentivise water companies to provide residential customers with excellent levels of service.

This document provides guidance to companies, the Agent and relevant stakeholders relating to the operation of C-MeX from 1 April 2020.

The [final determinations for the 2019 price review](#) (PR19) for the 17 largest water companies in England and Wales included C-MeX as a common performance commitment. Final policy decisions for C-MeX are set out in each company's 'Outcomes performance commitment appendix' and the '[PR19 final determinations: customer measure of experience \(C-MeX\) and developer services measure of experience \(D-MeX\) policy appendix](#)'.

Notice from Ofwat – March 2020

We recognise the circumstances relating to COVID-19 will affect how the water sector operates.

As the situation develops we will consider all necessary options to meet our statutory duties and regulatory objectives while being mindful of the potential impact on companies and on customers from the operation of C-MeX and D-MeX.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

C-MeX is a mechanism designed to incentivise excellent levels of service for residential customers in the water sector.

Following the 2019-20 shadow year, C-MeX will be operational and annual financial incentives will be in place from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.

The objectives of this guidance are to support water companies to provide the necessary information to achieve an accurate and representative set of C-MeX results, and to support the Agent to conduct the surveys and otherwise support Ofwat in operating C-MeX.

To avoid inconsistency, companies should request clarification from Ofwat if they encounter any areas of doubt or ambiguity in relation to this guidance. Ofwat will either clarify the position or consult with stakeholders to inform its decision, and make any amendments to this guidance that it considers appropriate.

The development of this guidance has been informed by testing in the pilot year (2018-19) and shadow year (2019-20). A draft copy of this guidance was shared with water companies and other stakeholders through the C-MeX working group¹ and Ofwat has taken account of and addressed the feedback received when finalising this guidance in early 2020.

1.2 Definitions

- **Agent** – the contractor appointed by Ofwat to run the C-MeX surveys.
- **Channel** – any route by which a customer or consumer can contact their water company including non-online channels and online channels (see other definitions).
- **Company Do Not Contacts (DNCs)** – a customer or customer representative who has told the company that they do not want to be contacted for marketing or other purposes.
- **Contactors** – A contactor is defined as an identifiable customer who makes direct inbound contact with their water company. It includes representatives such as Members of Parliament, Citizens Advice advisers and solicitors, where they are

¹ See '[Stakeholder engagement and terms of reference](#)' for information on the membership and role of the working groups for C-MeX and D-MeX.

acting on a customer's behalf. It also includes contacts from people (including local authority staff or non-household customers acting on behalf of household customers) who may not directly be customers and make contact about services. For example, a person may contact a water company to report a defective manhole cover or a leaking pipe. As self-serve customers (i.e. those who carry out a transaction or provide information through their online customer account not those who are just visiting the website or viewing information) have had an interaction with their water company, albeit an electronic one, these should be included as contactors.

- **Customer or consumer** – any household user of water and wastewater services, not only account holders.
- **Data Protection Laws** - the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 and related statutory instruments in force or as amended from time to time; and any other applicable data protection law.
- **Designated period** – the period of time specified by the Agent when requesting a customer service survey sample from the companies. It is usually the previous week. Where a company's operational contact rate yields a small weekly sample size, the company will be asked for contacts from the previous two weeks instead.
- **Identifiable** – where a customer or consumer provides sufficient information as to be directly or indirectly identifiable for the company to either:
 - be able to respond to them by telephone or email; or
 - link details of the contact to a customer's file or account; or
 - have to store the information securely within its systems.
- **Ofwat DNC** – a customer or customer representative who has told Ofwat or any agent of Ofwat that they do not want to be contacted regarding the C-MeX incentive mechanism.
- **Online channels**
 - **Email** – incoming contact via email.
 - **Social media** – any platform used by consumers and businesses for the purpose of publishing comments, photos, media and text on which the company has a presence. It is expected this will include, but not be limited to, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A customer should only be included where they have contacted the company directly using the company social media handle, the company can identify the customer and the customer has provided further details in order for the company to follow-up with the customer.
 - **Webform**
 - **Live chat**

- **App** – where the App provides a direct means of contacting the company, rather than only signposting other contact channels.
- Customers carrying out a transaction using their water company **online account** – where customers carry out a transaction or provide information e.g. bill payments, setting up a direct debit, applying for a meter, reporting an incident, submitting meter readings etc (this does not include simple online views).
- **Non-online channels**
 - **phone** (including fully automated – for example, a bill payment)
 - **post**
 - **in person** by visit
 - **short message service**
 - **automated telephony**
- **Shadow year** – the period from 1 May 2019 to 31 March 2020.
- **Usable contacts or sample** – the sample of customer contacts that are able to be used in fieldwork after the deduplication process has been applied.

1.3 Background

C-MeX is a mechanism designed to incentivise water companies to provide residential customers with excellent levels of service.

In effect from 1 April 2020, C-MeX is a common performance commitment. More information on the final policy decisions for C-MeX is set out in each company's 'Outcomes performance commitment appendix' in the PR19 final determinations and the '[PR19 final determinations: customer measure of experience \(C-MeX\) and developer services measure of experience \(D-MeX\) policy appendix](#)'.

Each company receives a C-MeX score based on the results from two surveys:

- the **customer service survey** – a customer satisfaction survey of a sample of residential customers who have **contacted** their company which asks them how satisfied they are with how the company has handled their issue; and
- the **customer experience survey** – a customer satisfaction survey of a randomly selected sample of a company's overall residential customer base which asks them how satisfied they are with their company.

Both survey scores contribute equally to the overall C-MeX score for each company. Each survey also includes a 'likelihood to recommend' question, the responses to which will make up the net promoter score for each company. The net promoter score will not contribute to the overall C-MeX score but will be recorded separately.

A company's overall C-MeX score, which is out of 100, is reduced by three points if it does not offer at least five communication channels, including three online channels, to receive contacts from customers.

Ofwat will publish an annual league table of the overall annual C-MeX scores, and a separate net promoter score, for all companies. Each company can receive outperformance payments or incur underperformance payments based on its annual C-MeX score compared to other companies.

Companies can receive higher performance payments if they pass all three higher incentive gates or requirements:

- the company is one of the top three performers by C-MeX score;
- the company is at or above a cross-sector threshold of customer satisfaction performance based on the all-sector upper quartile (ASUQ) of the UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI); and
- the company has lower than the industry average number of household complaints (per 10,000 connections).

2. Customer service survey

2.1 Overview

The **customer service survey** measures the satisfaction of customers who have had dealings with their company, not only through the company's main contact centre but also via any part of the business or with a contractor, and through any channel including online channels. It is intended to capture views on how the contact was handled using the same broad channel by which it was made (i.e. using an online channel for digital contactors or a non-online channel for non-digital contactors).

The survey is carried out every month for all companies with a sample of customers or consumers that contacted their company during the '**designated period**'. Respondents must be 18 or over and **do not** have to be the account holder, but should be the person who raised the originating issue with their company.

The questionnaire is short and focused, covering the customer's reason for contact, the contact channel used, whether the issue was resolved, their satisfaction with the way the contact was handled, and their likelihood to recommend the company.

2.2 Guidance for companies

The surveys are based on contact data that the company provides to the Agent. The data for all inbound contacts (whether or not the issue has been resolved) for the designated period is sent to the Agent each month when requested by the Agent.

The Agent will carry out the surveys for all companies.

2.2.1 Sampling dates

The Agent will select a single week each calendar month to be the designated period. Weeks including a bank holiday may be selected and the timings set out below will change accordingly. Companies will be given reasonable notice if the sampling week falls over the Christmas and/or New Year period.

Water companies will be notified, by email, by 10am on the Monday morning of the week following the designated period that customer contacts for the previous week (or two weeks of operational contacts for companies where 10% of usable contacts

from a single week would represent less than the target sample size) are to be provided to the Agent by all companies by 5pm on the Tuesday of that week.

Ofwat and the Agent are to be notified immediately if, for any reason, there are difficulties in providing contact data to deadlines.

2.2.2 Collation of contact data

The company will supply the Agent with details of the service type of the contact (i.e. billing, water operations or wastewater operations, as applicable) and where available the customer's telephone number (or telephone number of any representative calling on their behalf) for non-digital contacts and also the customer's email address for digital contacts. The full list of information to be included is set out in annex 1 of this document.

Companies will allocate each customer contact to a specific service type (billing, water or wastewater) based on a list of common queries, which is set out in annex 2. This ensures consistent measurement across companies and so enhances comparability across companies. Companies are to ensure all contacts are allocated to a service type. There may be types of queries that are not included in annex 2. Where there is doubt about the appropriate allocation, companies should first liaise with the Agent. Where necessary, Ofwat will make the final decision.

Where a company uses regional company names or frequently used third party organisations who act on behalf of the company, these should also be indicated in the data provision so customers can more readily associate with and recall the company contact. For example, South Staffs Water may include 'Cambridge Water' in the data provision for its relevant customers.

Internal jargon or codes should not be used for 'reason for call' field in the data provision because customers may not necessarily understand them.

2.2.3 Eligibility of customers for the survey

Companies are to provide data for all contacts received from all channels. This includes both online and non-online channels (see full definitions in section 1.2):

- **Online channels** – email, social media, webform, live chat, apps or online accounts.

- **Non-online channels** – phone, post, in person, short message service or automated telephony.

This includes all calls to all lines, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of whether the line is a principal advertised contact point. It also includes contacts to automated systems and agencies working on behalf of the company, such as debt collection agencies. It may potentially also include contacts from customer representatives, as outlined in the definition of Contactor above. However if the customer representative cannot answer the survey their responses to the survey will not be used by the Agent.

Where the contactor's name in a completed interview does not match the account holder's name but confirmation has been sought and obtained in the interview that they were the one who contacted the water company, the date, type and reason for contact must be confirmed with the contactor by the Agent.

Where a 'nominated speaker' communicates on behalf of a vulnerable person the nominated speaker will communicate between the interviewer and the vulnerable person regarding their contact with the water company.

Where a company offers a call back via their website or telephony system, then the company call back is to be treated as an inbound telephone contact rather than a digital contact in the data provided by companies.

Only household queries should be included in the data provided by companies.

2.2.4 Exclusions

The company may exclude from the contact data provided to the Agent:

- a) contacts made to advise that a customer is deceased, or in relation to a deceased customer;
- b) non-customer contacts – for example, calls from contractors, suppliers and employees (unless on behalf of a customer as per the definition of Contactor);
- c) non-household or private network² customers;
- d) contacts dealt with by or with regard to developer services;
- e) wrong numbers, including calls where a customer is referred to another company (that is, where the customer has contacted the wrong company); where the customer is calling about a non-appointed activity and the call has no connection with the appointed business – for example, insurance services and plumbing;

² i.e. not supplied by one of the water companies to which C-MeX applies.

- private septic tanks/cesspits; highway gullies; hot water issues where it is confirmed there is no issue on the cold water supply;
- f) contacts about recreational and amenity activities e.g. water skiing or angling facilities at visitor sites;
 - g) contacts with organisations acting as agents for the water company – for example, local authority wastewater agencies, contractors and debt collection agencies can be excluded where the number of customer calls to an individual agency or contractor is below 0.5% of the total number received by the company for that particular operational area. The 0.5% is calculated using a denominator of total calls for that particular operational area including the agency calls, e.g. a debt collection agency's contacts would be compared against the total number of billing contacts received including any agents dealing with billing contacts. This is to avoid an undue data burden.
 - h) contacts in response to feedback requests – returned in response to or alongside customer satisfaction survey questionnaires/ texts / calls / webforms / cards or research exercises where the outgoing company contact is solely a survey;
 - i) for social media postings, customer comments exclusively about another customer's posting should not be included;
 - j) enquiries from CCWater on behalf of a customer;
 - k) if Ofwat agrees that there are other exceptional circumstances where it would not be in the best interests of the customer to be contacted (e.g. customers who are part of an ongoing legal case / litigation process).

In exceptional circumstances, Ofwat may ask companies to exclude some customers from the samples they provide. Ofwat intends to keep its exclusions policy under review and may change its policy from time to time, to ensure the effective functioning of the survey.

Do not contacts (DNCs)

Ofwat, via the Agent, is able to contact Company DNC customers for the survey as long as these customers have not expressly opted out of receiving surveys from Ofwat. Consequently, companies must include Company DNCs in the contact data provided to the Agent in the 2020-25 period.

To support the effectiveness of C-MeX, companies should articulate the benefits of participating in the customer service survey to customers. Companies should make clear that this survey is an important part of Ofwat's activity in regulating the performance of companies and the services they provide to customers and is neither marketing nor market research. Companies should ensure this information is easily accessible on company websites, ideally being well-signposted from relevant sections such as complaints or contact pages.

2.2.5 Contact data provision

It is essential that the contact data provided is as accurate and up-to-date as possible, and that the appropriate fields are completed correctly, according to the template in annex 1 of this document.

Companies are not to remove duplicate contacts from their contact data. The Agent will do this.

Each company will send the Agent data files containing all Contactors in the designated period (whether resolved or not). Data files are to be uploaded by means of a secure online portal (it is the responsibility of the Agent to set up, secure and operate the online portal). Customer files are not to be sent by email, even if password protected.

Companies are to complete an audit sheet as specified by the Agent each time sample details are sent, outlining the total number of contacts received through each contact channel in the designated period, the number of customers excluded from the contact data provided and the reasons for any exclusions.

Companies are to capture customer email addresses for all contacts made through an online channel. Companies are to use every endeavour to capture these email addresses.

2.2.6 Check and challenge

In the surveys the Agent will ask customers if they object to the Agent sharing their feedback with their company. This is so companies can use this to ensure that the Agent has accurately recorded customer survey feedback.

If the customer does not object to the feedback being shared with the relevant company, their feedback and relevant recordings will be sent to the companies on a quarterly basis shortly before results are finalised.

Companies will have three working days from receipt of the feedback and recordings to review the data and submit any issues or queries using the template in annex 3. Companies can raise issues with the interview process and where they believe an interview has been incorrectly allocated to a particular 'Reason for contact', for example.

Types of issue that might be raised include:

- incorrect categorisation of type of contact;
- interviews wholly relating to non-appointed activity;
- the contact related to a non-household issue;
- basing responses on the performance of external organisations not the water company or its subcontractors;
- manifestly incorrect data capture (including scores) by the interviewer.

For the avoidance of doubt, examples of the types of issues that would not be included in this process include, but are not limited to:

- disagreement with the score given by customers (unless data was captured incorrectly); or
- disagreement with the format of the questioning.

Information that has been collected by another means than the customer service survey is not relevant to this process, as this may result in the removal of valid interviews where the respondent has had an experience with the company and wants to share their views. If the Agent has made best efforts to probe for details of the contact as provided by the company in the sample, but the respondent recalls a different interaction, then this interaction is considered valid and within scope.

Each query by a company will be considered by the Agent, before responding to the water company with a decision.

The Agent is required to record the responses to all issues raised.

The Agent will provide Ofwat with an overview of the extent and outcome of the check and challenge process each year during the 2020-25 period. Ofwat will monitor this information when considering whether to continue with this process, balancing the administrative costs with the benefits of this process.

Where data is provided to companies as part of this check and challenge process, the water companies act as separate controllers (as defined in the Data Protection Laws) of that data and as such are responsible for complying with the obligations of a controller (such as providing a privacy notice to data subjects). Water companies are not permitted to use the personal data for purposes the customer has not been informed of (e.g. direct marketing) which would lead to the water companies breaching the Data Protection Laws.

Companies are to delete any personal data they receive from Ofwat or the Agent for these purposes once the check and challenge process is complete, to comply, as

controllers, with the principle of storage limitation as provided in the Data Protection Laws.

2.2.7 Sampling approach for common service providers

Some companies have an arrangement where customers of multiple companies are served by the same provider (for example, a common billing centre). In these cases customers may have the same experience regardless of which company they are a customer.

Where companies have a shared service model, they can propose that one of the following sampling approaches for C-MeX is applied. Affected companies can request to receive either:

- the same score for the relevant service (for example, a service type in the customer service survey) with the annual quota across the affected companies equal to the relevant annual quota for a single company; or
- separate scores for the relevant service with the annual quota for each affected company equal to the relevant annual quota for a single company.

Based on the proposal and taking all relevant circumstances into account, Ofwat will decide whether it is appropriate to apply an alternative sample approach, considering factors such as whether the approach supports consistency across companies and the level of available sample for a particular service type. The Agent will report on the sampling approach that is undertaken in its annual report.

2.3 Guidance for the Agent

2.3.1 Sample preparation

The Agent will produce an audit sheet in order to assess the extent and types of exclusions in the data submitted by companies. The Agent will examine and monitor this over time, reporting any discrepancies or potential issues of concern to Ofwat.

The Agent will remove duplicates from the data provided by companies and select a randomised sample reflecting the relevant quotas. The Agent will remove customers who have responded to either the customer service survey or the customer experience survey in the last six months – this is to avoid the same customers being contacted excessively. The Agent will aim to include those contacts that are not

allocated to a service type when preparing its sample, and on the basis of the interview allocate it to an appropriate service type.

Where customers have made multiple contacts during the designated period, when de-duplicating the data the Agent is to retain only the most recent contact details as these will be the most up to date. The exception is that if a third-party organisation contacts (on one or multiple occasions) a company on behalf of several different customers; these contacts will remain as separate records in the dataset.

Contacts from online and non-online channels are to be separated with each set of data sorted by service type (i.e. billing, water operations and/or wastewater operations) and then contact channel. A random sampling procedure is to be carried out to extract a representative sample of customers to approach to take part in the survey.

All interviews will need to be recorded for monitoring purposes and stored securely. This information may be shared with companies as per the 'check and challenge' guidelines in section 2.2.6.

The Agent will check the data submitted by companies against its list of Ofwat DNCs. The details of customers who request no further contact from the Agent on behalf of Ofwat for the purposes of the C-MeX incentive mechanism (Ofwat DNCs) will be passed on to the relevant water companies on completion of each quarter's fieldwork. Ofwat DNCs' data must no longer be processed for the purposes of the C-MeX survey, i.e. they must no longer be contacted for these purposes. Therefore, each company, upon receipt of this information, must maintain an up-to-date record of Ofwat DNCs and, when providing customer information to the Agent, must ensure all Ofwat DNCs are excluded.

2.3.2 Fieldwork

Customers in the selected sample who contacted water companies via online channels will be sent an email invitation to participate online via a unique link.

Customers in the selected sample who contacted companies via non-online channels will be contacted via telephone to participate.

2.3.3 Interview questions

When conducting fieldwork for the customer service survey, the Agent will base its interviews on the questionnaires in annex 4. Ofwat may change the questions from time to time during the period having regard to factors such as survey duration (i.e. the time taken for customers to complete the survey) and the effectiveness of C-MeX.

2.3.4 Quotas and weights

The quotas for the fieldwork carried out by the Agent will be aligned to the weightings for the customer service survey. The Agent will ensure the quotas are met each quarter as a whole, and where possible aim to achieve this in each month's fieldwork.

When calculating scores, the Agent will apply weights for the different service types of contacts so that billing contributes 50% and operations 50% to the customer service survey results. For companies providing both water and wastewater services, the agent will instead apply weightings of 50% for billing, 25% for water operations and 25% for wastewater operations.

Within each of these components of the customer service survey (billing, water operations and wastewater operations) the results of the interviews are weighted further by the proportion of contact channel (online and non-online) in the usable sample for that service type.

2.3.5 Online responses adjustment

As set out in the PR19 final determinations, based on experience in the C-MeX testing phase, online responses to surveys were found on average to be less positive than those collected by telephone. This was due to the relatively low response rates of those customers that used online channels compared to those who used non-online channels and so resulted in online response scores that were less representative of the contactor population than non-online response scores.

To address this, the Agent will apply an adjustment of +5% to online results in the customer service survey. For instance a score of 8.0 out of 10 would be multiplied by 105% to become 8.4. This shall be the case regardless of the score provided (i.e. at a customer level, scores could go up to 10.5).

2.3.6 Calculating scores for Hafren Dyfrdwy and Severn Trent Water

Because Hafren Dyfrdwy has relatively few wastewater customers, it is unlikely to have many wastewater contacts in the customer service survey and so will struggle to achieve survey quotas for this service type. As set out in the PR19 final determinations, to address this the wastewater operations scores for Hafren Dyfrdwy and Severn Trent Water are to be combined.

The Agent will conduct fieldwork for both companies separately with the aim to achieve the relevant quotas. The Agent will combine the interview responses from both companies to calculate each company's wastewater operations score.

3. Customer experience survey

3.1 Overview

The **customer experience survey** measures the satisfaction of water users aged 18 or over with their water and/or wastewater company. Respondents **do not** have to be the account holder. Customers to be surveyed are randomly selected by the Agent, and interviews are either conducted face-to-face or over the telephone.

The survey is carried out for all companies over the course of the quarter in order to mitigate against any one-off events which otherwise might bias results. The Agent will need to ask the respondent to identify which water company supplies them. If a customer has different providers of water and wastewater services, they are asked about the company that provides their water services.

The questionnaire is short and focused, covering the customer's satisfaction with their company, their likelihood to recommend it, and reasons for their responses.

3.2 Guidance for companies

There are no requirements for companies in relation to the customer experience survey.

3.3 Guidance for the Agent

3.3.1 Fieldwork

The Agent will carry out 200 interviews for each company over the course of the quarter using a mixture of face-to-face and telephone interviews.

Telephone interviews will use a combination of random digit dial (RDD) and available lists, e.g. mobile phone number lists, lifestyle lists (that come with age data to help target quotas) and other potential list-sources such as electoral roll samples.

Face-to-face interviews are to be carried out in at least two different locations for each water company each quarter (subject to the feasibility of this given the size of each company's geographic footprint or other external factors) and interviewing locations will be rotated across the company's region from quarter to quarter. Where

possible, when choosing locations, a mixture of larger and smaller urban centres are to be used for interviewing.

3.3.2 Quotas and weights

Quotas for the age and gender of respondents will be set by the Agent based on the latest available census data using mid-year estimates [released by the Office for National Statistics](#) prior to the commencement of each reporting year (during the 2020-25 period). Figures for England and Wales will be used, with no company-specific quotas.

Once a quota is achieved for a particular water company, subsequent interviews beyond the quota are screened out. Final data may be weighted slightly by age or gender to account for any discrepancies in profile compared to the quota.

3.3.3 Exclusions

To take part, survey respondents must be aware of who their water company is, demonstrated with or without prompting. If customers are not aware of their company, they are to be asked for their home postcode so the Agent can identify which company provides clean water services to their household and ask them if they are aware of that company. The interview will close if the respondent is not aware of their water company (or identifies an incorrect company) upon prompting. If an incorrect identification is found after the call, respondents will be removed from the sample.

Respondents do not have to be account holders, only water users of that water company. All respondents must answer the questions based on their personal experience of household (rather than non-household) supply.

3.3.4 Interview questions

When conducting fieldwork for the customer experience survey, the Agent will base its interviews on the questionnaires in annex 4. Ofwat may change the questions from time to time during the period having regard to factors such as survey duration (i.e. the time taken for customers to complete the survey) and the effectiveness of C-MeX.

4. C-MeX reporting

4.1 Calculating the C-MeX score

The overall C-MeX score calculation is as follows:

$$\text{C-MeX} = 50\% \text{ CSS-CSAT} + 50\% \text{ CES-CSAT}$$

The Agent will calculate the customer satisfaction scores for each of the customer experience survey and customer service survey.

A downward adjustment of three points will be applied to a company's overall C-MeX score should the company have provided fewer than five contact channels (or three online) throughout the year. This adjustment will apply to the company's annual C-MeX score only. The adjustment will not be applied by the Agent – instead each company will apply this adjustment while providing appropriate assurance in its annual performance report.

Ofwat will determine the outperformance or underperformance payments earned by companies in its annual in-period determination. This process will apply to all performance commitments with in-period financial incentives. Ofwat will also base its determination of higher performance payments on information provided by CCWater on water company household complaints and the latest available and relevant data for the UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI).

4.2 Calculating the net promoter score

The Agent will calculate the net promoter score for each company using the same weights as the C-MeX score. The communication channels adjustment will not apply.

The Agent will report the net promoter score as follows:

$$\text{Net promoter score} = \% \text{ promoters} - \% \text{ detractors}$$

where:

- promoters are those customers that give a rating of 9 or 10;
- detractors are those customers that give a rating of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6; and
- customers that rate 7 or 8 are excluded.

As a result, for each company the Agent will report its net promoter score between -100 and +100.

4.3 Reporting to water companies

4.3.1 Quarterly company scores

Each quarter, the Agent will provide companies with their own interim scores for the customer experience survey, the customer service survey and their overall C-MeX score. These quarterly scores will be weighted and presented on:

- that quarter's results; and
- year-to-date results on a rolling basis, for example the first quarter will be based on data and weightings for the first three months of the year, the second quarter on the first six months of the year and so on.

The Agent will supply the company's net promoter score on the same basis.

4.3.2 Quarterly league tables

The Agent will provide ranked league tables of all companies' qualitative survey scores with all companies identified, broken down by the customer service survey, customer experience survey and overall C-MeX score as follows:

- that quarter's results; and
- year-to-date results on a rolling basis, for example the first quarter will be based on data for the first three months of the year, the second quarter on the first six months of the year and so on.

The Agent will supply net promoter scores on the same basis.

4.3.3 Annual company scores

The Agent will provide companies with their own scores for the customer experience survey, the customer service survey and their overall C-MeX score. This will be based on annual survey results for the entire reporting year, with weightings applied on an annual basis.

The Agent will supply each company's net promoter score on the same basis.

4.3.4 Survey data

Each quarter the Agent will provide each company with:

- customer level data from their own customer interviews from the customer service survey – this will contain personal data unless the customer objects, in which case the data will be anonymised;
- anonymised customer level data from their own customer interviews from the customer experience survey.

As set out in section 2.2.6, unless the customer objects, companies will be provided with personal data from the customer service survey on a quarterly basis for the purposes of the check and challenge process prior to the finalisation of quarterly results as above.

4.4 Reporting to Ofwat

4.4.1 Company scores and league tables

The Agent will provide company scores and league tables to Ofwat each quarter and annually on the same basis as for companies.

4.4.2 Annual report to Ofwat

The Agent will provide a consolidated annual survey report to Ofwat, with:

- an overall summary of results, scores and rankings;
- company-specific summaries;
- analysis of the data;
- median/mean results for the industry for comparison;
- key conclusions, trends or emerging issues, including any data issues and the extent and types of exclusions;
- an overview of the extent and outcome of the check and challenge process; and
- any recommendations for potential efficiencies and improvements;
- copies of the questionnaires used during the year, noting and explaining any differences with the copies appended to this guidance.

4.4.3 Survey data

The Agent will provide the underlying anonymised customer level survey data to Ofwat upon request.

Annex 1: Contact data provision template

For the customer service survey:

Field
Parent water company
Water company brand
Account number/unique reference number
Name
Telephone number (for all contactors)
Postcode
Email address (for digital contactors)
Service type (billing, water or wastewater)
Contact channel
Date of contact
Lower level reason for contact

Annex 2: Categorising by service type in the customer service survey

As set out in section 2.2.2, companies are to categorise each contact into each service type (billing, water operations or wastewater operations) based on the following prescribed allocation of common queries.

Billing	Water operations	Wastewater operations
A query about a bill	About a connection to the water supply network	About a blockage in the sewer/drains
A query about a payment	About a faulty meter	About a connection to the sewer, wastewater network
Amend personal details on account	About a leak on my meter	About faulty wastewater equipment or sewer pipes
Asking for a bill reduction or discount	About a meter installation	About finding the location of sewers, drains etc
Direct debit query	About defective/dangerous water equipment ie stop taps, manhole covers, hydrants, raised/sunken chambers	About flooding with sewerage or foul water
Direct debit set up	About finding the location of water equipment (incl. pipes/meter/stopcock)	About smells from sewers and sewage treatment works
Due to a recent move, or planning to move	About flooding with clean/drinking water	Empty septic tank
Online account problem/setting up	About the colour of the tap water	Private sewer query
Payment card query	About the hardness of the water	Toilet query
Payment plan set up	About the Lead and Common Supply Pipe Scheme	
The bill seemed too high	About the taste or smell of the tap water (quality)	
To advise that I'm unable to pay	Asking for water supply to be turned on or off	

To apply for/to get a water meter	Because of a water leak/burst on my property	
To give/request a water meter reading	Because of a water leak/burst on the road	
To make a payment	Because the tap water is/was making me feel ill	
To notify of a customer having died	High pressure from my tap	
To query a reminder or debt collection activity	No supply/water gone off	
To report a problem with my meter/meter query	Regarding a poor reinstatement	
To request a refund	Regarding low pressure of tap water	

Annex 3: Check and challenge template

Field
Wave
Agent ID
Recording ID
Water company
Service type (billing, water or wastewater)
Customer satisfaction score
Net promoter score
Water company's query
Water company's proposed action
Agent's explanation
Agent's action

Annex 4: Survey questionnaires

SYSTEM INFORMATION:

Interviewer number:

Interviewer name:

Date:

Time interview started:

C-MeX CSS

CATI Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is and I am calling from Accent on behalf of Ofwat, the economic regulator for the water sector in England and Wales. Could I talk to [NAME FROM SAMPLE]?

WHEN TALKING TO RIGHT PERSON: Ofwat would like your help in understanding how water and sewerage companies deal with their customers. I understand that you have been in contact with **[Water Company Name]** and we would like to ask you a few questions about the service you received.

IF NO NAME ON SAMPLE SAY. I understand that someone on this number has been in touch with **[Water Company Name]**. Could I talk to the person who was in contact with [Water Company Name]?

IF TALKING TO CORRECT PERSON, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE ASK TO BE TRANSFERRED OR MAKE APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK

WHEN TALKING TO RIGHT PERSON: Ofwat would like your help in understanding how water and sewerage companies deal with their customers and we would like to ask you a few questions about the service you received.

ALL: This information will be used to help Ofwat understand how **[Water Company Name]** is performing.

The survey will take around 5 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. Accent abides by data protection laws at all times.

You can find out more information about Ofwat's surveys and what is done with the information that is collected in the Privacy Policy on Ofwat's website <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/publication/privacy-policy>

INTERVIEWER TO DETERMINE IF PARTICIPANT WANTS WEBSITE ADDRESS BEFORE PROVIDING IT OR IF IT IS TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL

Please note that this call may be monitored or recorded to verify accuracy or for training purposes.

IF NECESSARY:

- You have been selected at random from customers contacting [Water Company Name].
- Ofwat's privacy policy can be accessed using this link: www.ofwat.gov.uk/privacy-policy

Can I confirm that you are happy to participate in the survey?

Yes

No THANK & CLOSE

INTCHECK. **INTERVIEWER:** PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ADVISED THE PARTICIPANT OF:

Calls being recorded

INTCHECK2. **INTERVIEWER:** PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ASKED AND CHECKED THAT THE PARTICIPANT IS **NOT** TAKING THE INTERVIEW ON A MOBILE DEVICE WHILE DRIVING OR OPERATING EQUIPMENT

Yes, it is safe for the participant to proceed

No, it isn't safe – we need to call back later GO TO APPT SCREEN

ONLINE: Thank you in advance for your participation. Accent is conducting a survey on behalf of Ofwat, the economic regulator for the water sector in England and Wales.

Ofwat would like your help in understanding how water and sewerage companies deal with their customers and as you have recently contacted **[Water Company Name]** we would like to understand your views about the service you received.

This information will be used to help Ofwat understand how **[Water Company Name]** is performing. The survey will take around 5 minutes to complete.

Just to confirm, your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. Accent abides by data protection laws at all times.

You can find out more information about Ofwat's surveys and what is done with the information collected in Ofwat's Privacy Policy which is here: <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/publication/privacy-policy>

Click here to begin the survey.

By clicking the button you agree to participate in the survey.

Scoping questions

Q1. **CATI:** Firstly, can I confirm that you were the person who was in contact with [Water Company]?
INTERVIEWER: PROMPT PARTICIPANT WITH DETAILS OF CONTACT IF NECESSARY [CONTACT TYPE]

Yes GO TO Q3

No GO TO Q2

Q1. **ONLINE:** According to our records, on [DATE] you dealt with [Water Company]. Please confirm that it was you personally who interacted with your water company, as mentioned above.

Yes GO TO Q3

No THANK & CLOSE

Q2. **CATI:** Can I speak to the person who was in contact with [Water Company] please?

Yes

No, they are unavailable MAKE APPOINTMENT OR THANK & CLOSE

No one has contacted the company THANK & CLOSE

Refused THANK & CLOSE

Q3. **CATI:** Could I just check, was this contact in regard to [Water Company] supplying you as a domestic water user?

ONLINE: Was this matter in regard to [Water Company] supplying you as a domestic water user?

Yes

No THANK & CLOSE

ONLINE GO TO Q6

Q4. **CATI. IF NO REASON FOR CONTACT AVAILABLE ON SAMPLE, GO TO Q5. ASK OTHERS:** Can I confirm that you contacted [Water Company] about [CONTACT TYPE]? **PROBE FULLY**

Yes GO TO Q10

No

Q5. IF NO AT Q4 ASK: What was the main reason for making contact with [Water Company] on that occasion?

.....

INTERVIEW ON REASON GIVEN AT THIS QUESTION

ENSURE PARTICIPANT IS THINKING ABOUT WATER COMPANY INDICATED IN SAMPLE. IF PARTICIPANT CONFUSED AT ALL ABOUT WHICH ORGANISATION THEY CONTACTED, THANK & CLOSE

Main Questionnaire

Q6. **ONLINE** Thank you, I can confirm you are in scope for the survey. The questionnaire will take about 5 minutes to complete.

What was the subject of the matter that you wanted [Water Company] to deal with on this occasion? Please pick the closest that applies.

Anything to do with billing, your account or a general query GO TO Q7

Anything to do with their supply of water GO TO Q8

Anything to do with their sewerage service GO TO Q9

Q7. **ONLINE BILLING/ACCOUNT RELATED QUERIES.** Please pick the closest that applies.

Amend personal details on account

A query about a bill

A query about a payment

Due to a recent move, or planning to move

Direct debit set up

Payment plan set up

Direct debit query

To make a payment

To advise that I'm unable to pay

To apply for/to get a water meter

To give/request a water meter reading

To report a problem with my meter/meter query

To request a refund

To notify of a customer having died

To query a reminder or debt collection activity

The bill seemed too high

Payment card query

Asking for a reduction/discount in bill
Online account problem/setting up
To make a query or complaint about the website
To make a query or complaint about a customer service issue
Other (Please specify).....

GO TO Q10

Q8. **ONLINE** WATER RELATED QUERIES. Please pick the closest that applies.

About a faulty meter
About a meter installation
About finding the location of water equipment (incl. pipes/meter/stopcock)
About the taste or smell of the tap water (quality)
About the colour of the tap water
Because the tap water is/was making me feel ill
Because of a water leak/burst on the road
Because of a water leak/burst on my property
Regarding low pressure of tap water
No supply/water gone off
Asking for water supply to be turned on or off
About flooding with clean/drinking water
About a leak on my meter
About a connection to the water supply network
About the Lead and Common Supply Pipe Scheme
About defective/dangerous water equipment ie stop taps, manhole covers, hydrants, raised/sunken chambers
High pressure from my tap
About the hardness of the water
Other (Please specify).....

GO TO Q10

Q9. **ONLINE** WASTEWATER (SEWERAGE) RELATED QUERIES. Please pick the closest that applies.

About a blockage in the sewer/drains
About faulty wastewater equipment or sewer pipes
About flooding with sewerage or foul water
About smells from sewers and sewage treatment works
About finding the location of sewers, drains etc
About a connection to the sewer, wastewater network
Empty septic tank
Private sewer query
Regarding a poor reinstatement
Toilet query
Other (Please specify).....

Q10. **CATI:** Thank you, I can confirm you are in scope for the survey. The questionnaire will take about 5 minutes to complete.

CATI /ONLINE

Could you confirm how you had contact with [Water Company] on this occasion on [insert date]?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

I telephoned them
I wrote them a letter
I emailed them
I contacted them through a form on their website
I contacted them through 'live chat' on their website

- I contacted them by text
- I contacted them through social media (eg Twitter/Facebook/Instagram)
- I contacted them through an app
- I visited the water company in person
- I completed a transaction through my online account with the water company
- Other (Please specify) _____

Q11. Is the matter you wanted to be dealt with now fully resolved?

- Yes
- No

Q12. Taking everything into account how satisfied are you with your recent experience with [Water Company]? Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0 = extremely dissatisfied, 5 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 10 = extremely satisfied.

INSERT SCORE _____

Q13. **IF Q12=9 OR 10 ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q14):** What did they do well?

.....

GO TO Q16

Q14. **IF Q12=7 OR 8 ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q15):** What could they have done to improve this score?

.....

GO TO Q16

Q15. **IF Q12=0 TO 6 ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q16):** What could they have done better?

.....

Q16. If you could choose your water provider, based on your recent experience, how likely would you be to recommend [Water Company] to friends or family? Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0 = not at all likely and 10 = extremely likely.

INSERT SCORE _____

Q17. **CATI:** Whilst this survey is being carried out on behalf of Ofwat, we can share your feedback, including your name, contact details, and survey responses, and a recording of this phone call, with [Water Company] for it to improve its customer service and to make sure that we have accurately recorded your survey feedback. Please let us know if you object to us sharing your feedback for this purpose. If you would like more information about how [Water Company] processes your personal data, please refer to its privacy policy.

ONLINE: Whilst this survey is being carried out on behalf of Ofwat, [Water Company] may use your answers to improve its customer service. With this in mind do you object to us sharing your feedback with [Water Company]? If you would like more information about how [Water Company] processes your personal data, please refer to its privacy policy.

No, do not object **ONLINE GO TO THANK YOU. CATI GO TO Q18**

ONLINE: Yes, object to identifiable survey responses **GO TO Q19**

CATI: Yes, object to identifiable survey responses & recording **GO TO Q19**

CATI: Yes, object to call recording **GO TO Q19**

Q18. **CATI:** In some cases, [Water Company] may contact you to discuss any issues included in your feedback to improve its customer service. Do you object to being contacted by [Water Company] for this purpose?

- Object
- Do not object

Q19. **IF Q17 = 2 OR 3 SAY:** In that case your responses will only be passed on to [Water Company] in anonymised form and will not be linked to you personally.

IF Q17 = 4 SAY: In that case your name, contact details, and responses will be passed on to [Water Company], but we will not pass on a recording of this call.

ALL CATI: Please can I take a note of your name and where we can contact you for quality control purposes?

Name: [CATI: DP, IMPORT FROM ID]
Telephone: [CATI: DP, IMPORT FROM TELNUMBER]

CATI: Thank you for your time and co-operation in this survey. On behalf of Ofwat I would like to thank you for your time and feedback, and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day/evening.

ONLINE: Thank you for your time and co-operation in completing this survey. On behalf of Ofwat we would like to thank you for your time and feedback.

Interviewer Confirmation

I confirm that this interview was properly conducted and is completely confidential

- Yes
- No

SYSTEM INFORMATION

Time interview completed:

SYSTEM INFORMATION:

Interviewer number:

Interviewer name:

Date:

Time interview started:

C-MeX CES

CATI Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is and I am calling from Accent on behalf of Ofwat, the economic regulator for the water sector in England and Wales.

We are carrying out a survey about your water company. We would like to ask you a few questions about your experience with your water company. INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY, SAY: You don't need to be the person responsible for paying the water bill.

This information will be used to help Ofwat understand how your water company is performing.

The survey will take around 5 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. Accent abides by data protection laws at all times.

You can find out more information about Ofwat's surveys and what is done with the information collected in the Privacy Notice on Ofwat's website.

INTERVIEWER TO DETERMINE IF PARTICIPANT WANTS WEBSITE ADDRESS BEFORE PROVIDING IT OR IF IT IS TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL

Please note that this call may be monitored or recorded for training purposes.

IF NECESSARY:

- You have been selected at random.
- Ofwat's privacy policy can be accessed using this link: www.ofwat.gov.uk/privacy-policy

Can I confirm that you are happy to participate in the survey?

Yes

No

INTCHECK. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ADVISED THE PARTICIPANT OF:

Calls being recorded

INTCHECK2. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CONFIRM YOU HAVE ASKED AND CHECKED THAT THE PARTICIPANT IS **NOT** TAKING THE INTERVIEW ON A MOBILE DEVICE WHILE DRIVING OR OPERATING EQUIPMENT

Yes, it is safe for the participant to proceed

No, it isn't safe – we need to call back later GO TO APPT SCREEN

FACE TO FACE: Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is from Accent, an independent research agency. We are conducting a survey on behalf of Ofwat, the economic regulator for the water sector in England and Wales. Ofwat would like to understand customer experience with their water company and I'd like to ask you a few questions about your water company.

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY, SAY: You don't need to be the person responsible for paying the water bill.

This information will be used to help Ofwat understand how your water company is performing. The survey will take around 5 minutes to complete.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. Accent abides by data protection laws at all times.

You can find out more information about Ofwat's surveys and what is done with the information collected in the Privacy Policy on Ofwat's website. You can find the details here: INTERVIEWER TO HIGHLIGHT RELEVANT INFORMATION ON LETTER OF AUTHORITY.

IF NECESSARY:

- You have been selected at random.
- Ofwat's privacy policy can be accessed using this link: www.ofwat.gov.uk/privacy-policy

Can I confirm that you are happy to participate in the survey?

Yes
No

Scoping questions

Q1. Please can I just check which water company supplies water to your home? DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Affinity Water
Anglian Water
Bournemouth Water
Bristol Water
Cambridge Water
Essex & Suffolk Water
Hafren Dyfrdwy
Hartlepool Water
Northumbrian Water
Portsmouth Water
Severn Trent Water
South East Water
Southern Water
South Staffs Water
South West Water
Sutton & East Surrey (SES) Water
Thames Water
United Utilities
Welsh Water/Dŵr Cymru
Wessex Water
Yorkshire Water
Don't know GO TO Q2

CHECK QUOTAS

Q2. ASK IF DON'T KNOW AT Q1 (OTHERS GO TO Q3). Please could I have your postcode and I will check who your supplier should be?

INTERVIEWER CHECK WATER COMPANY USING POSTCODE CHECKER. Based on your postcode area, I believe your water supply company should be [Water Company]. Is that correct?

Yes

No/don't know THANK & CLOSE

CHECK QUOTAS

Q3. We need to speak to a representative sample of customers of each water company, so before we start can I please check your age?

18-29

30-44

45-64

65+

CHECK QUOTAS

Q4. INTERVIEWER: RECORD GENDER

Male

Female

CHECK QUOTAS

Main Questionnaire

Q5. READ OUT: Throughout this survey, please only think about your domestic water services.

I would now like you to think about your experience of [Water Company]. Taking everything into account how satisfied are you with [Water Company]? Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0 = extremely dissatisfied, 5 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 10 = extremely satisfied.

INSERT SCORE _____

Q6. **IF Q5=9 OR 10 ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q7):** What did they do well?

.....

GO TO Q9

Q7. **IF Q5=7 OR 8 ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q8):** What could they have done to improve this score?

.....

GO TO Q9

Q8. **IF Q5=0 TO 6 ASK (OTHERS GO TO Q9):** What could they have done better?

.....

Q9. If you could choose your water provider, based on your recent experience, how likely would you be to recommend [Water Company] to friends and family? Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0=not at all likely and 10=extremely likely.

INSERT SCORE _____

Q10. Please can I take a note of your name and where we can contact you for quality control purposes?

Name:

Telephone:

End

Thank you for your time and co-operation in this survey. On behalf of Ofwat I would like to thank you for your time and feedback, and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day/evening.

FACE-TO-FACE: INTERVIEWER HAND OVER THANK YOU LEAFLET

Interviewer Confirmation

I confirm that this interview was properly conducted and is completely confidential

Yes

No

SYSTEM INFORMATION

Time interview completed:

Ofwat (The Water Services Regulation Authority)
is a non-ministerial government department.
We regulate the water sector in England and Wales.

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