

Welcome!

Thank you for joining early!

We'll be starting the event at 6pm. In the meantime, please make sure that you:

- Are on mute, for the time being
- If it isn't already, please change your username to your first name followed by the first two letters of your surname

Once that is done and everything is working fine, you can turn off your camera until 6pm.

Please stay logged in and ready to turn your camera back on for when we kick off!

Who is this research for?



The regulator for water services in England and Wales – overseeing water company performance to protect the interests of consumers, society and the environment



The independent voice for water consumers in England and Wales. They help consumers resolve complaints against their water company and use research to champion the interests of consumers.

Ground rules

- The research findings will be anonymised and treated with total confidence.
 - The only exception to this is if you say something that gives us reason to think you or someone else is at risk of harm. In the unlikely event that this happens, we may be legally obliged to pass this information on to the relevant authorities.
- You can opt out of the research at any time.
- We'll be talking for 120 minutes – finishing up at 8pm.
- Incentives will be paid by bank transfer after the session.

Introductions

Please tell us:

- Your name
- Where you live
- Something you like about your home or where you live



2 What we've learned so far



The impact of a sewer flooding event or incident can be hugely distressing, with responses from water companies playing a key role in this

- The impact of the flood varies hugely, depending on:
 - The type of flooding (e.g., if it happens once or more, if it's inside or outside the home)
 - The severity of flooding
- When flooding is more severe, people describe feeling anxious about future events, as well as upset about damaged items and health and safety concerns about water and air quality.
- Feeling that the water company has not properly responded can be as distressing as the event itself
 - For some, this even overshadowed the flooding itself.

For most, water companies are understood to be the first and main point of contact in a sewer flooding event/incident. However, some people are _____ (or have been) unclear on where responsibility lies

- For most experiencing sewage flooding, water companies are the 'go to' and so seen as the first point of contact.
- However, some say they feel some personal responsibility – for example, assuming they have done something to cause the incident and/or should resolve it themselves.
 - In these cases, common contacts are local plumbers or Dyno-rod.
 - If the cause of the issue is found to be outside of the individual's control, doing this can lead to questions about who is responsible for footing the bill.
- Other companies, such as insurance companies or Ofwat and the CCW, are only contacted in specific circumstances.
 - One example is if there has been property damage or if there is a need to escalate the issue.

In general, people are satisfied with early-stage services from their water companies. However, many are less satisfied with follow up contact and responses

- People often describe having positive experiences during in their initial contact with water companies.
 - This includes companies being easy to get in touch with, and customer service agents who are professional and empathetic.
 - Call-out agents are also praised for being sent out in a timely manner and continuing this high level of service.
- However, this good customer service is seen to drop off relatively quickly, with negative experiences including:
 - A lack of updates on progress or next steps;
 - Call-out staff not showing up when promised; and
 - A lack of a joined-up response between different members of staff.

Furthermore, people are eager to see water companies implement more preventative measures – especially customers who have experienced sewage flooding more than once

- People would like to see water companies do more to prevent future events – fixing the source problem, rather than fixing the symptoms.
- This is seen to be particularly key for homeowners, some of whom are very concerned about the impact on the resale value of their property.

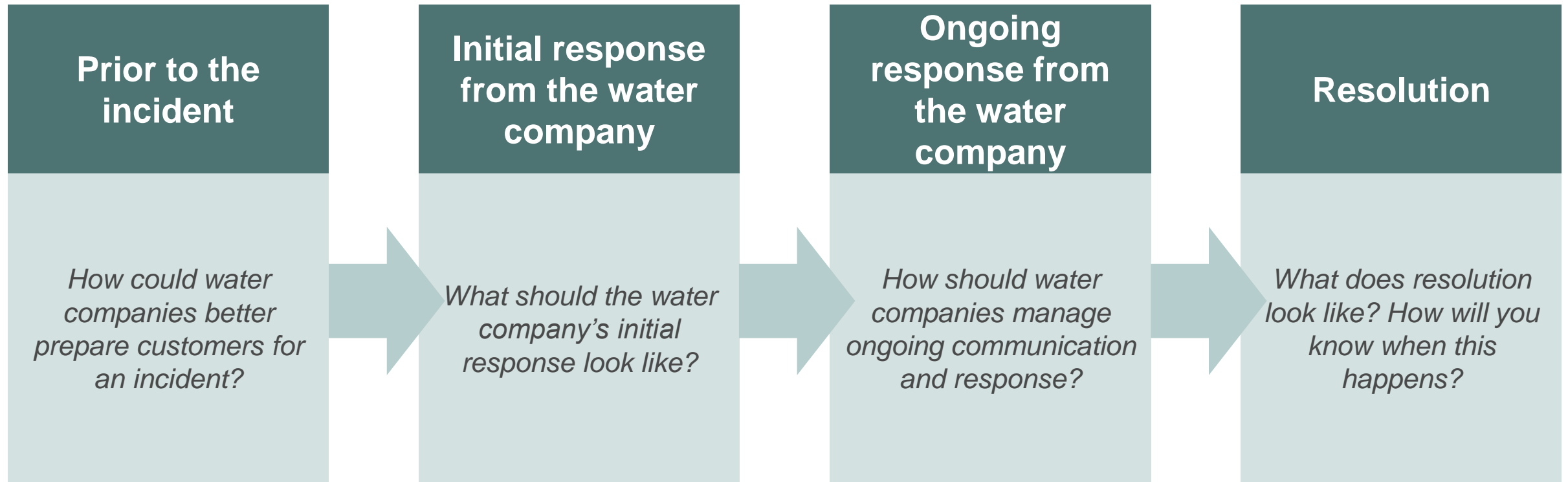
Summary of our findings

- 1** The impact of a flooding event or incident can be hugely distressing for people, with responses from water companies playing a key role in this
- 2** For most, water companies are understood to be the first and main point of contact in a flooding event/incident. However, some people are (or have been) unclear on where responsibility lies
- 3** In general, people are satisfied with early-stage services from their water companies. However, they are less satisfied with follow up contact and responses
- 4** People are eager to see water companies implement more preventative measures – especially those who have experienced sewage flooding more than once

3 A sewage flooding journey



Overview of journey stages



Prior to the incident

What should the water company do?

Ideal response:

Minimum acceptable response:

What would the impact be on the customer? What should their role be?

Impact:

Customer role:

Initial response from the water company

What should the water company do?

Ideal response:

Minimum acceptable response:

What would the impact be on the customer? What should their role be?

Impact:

Customer role:

Ongoing response from the water company

What should the water company do?

Ideal response:

Minimum acceptable response:

What would the impact be on the customer? What should their role be?

Impact:

Customer role:

Resolution

What should the water company do?

Ideal response:

Minimum acceptable response:

What would the impact be on the customer? What should their role be?

Impact:

Customer role:

4 Thinking about additional needs



Case study 1: Hannah and Mark

This is Hannah and Mark, and their 12 month old baby. Last summer, when their baby was just a few months old, their only bathroom flooded when sewage water started to come up their bath's plug hole. This is the only time they have experienced sewage flooding.



Case study 2: Simon

This is Simon.

Two years ago, he bought and moved into his first home by himself. Not long after, his garden was flooded with sewage water, a problem which has since happened once every few months.

He wasn't told about any history of sewage flooding when he was buying or moving into his house.



Case study 3: Mark

This is Daniel. He lives with his long term partner. He needs to use a wheelchair to get around, and his home is specially adapted for this.

A few months ago, his kitchen was flooded when sewage water started coming up out of the drain. This is the only time he has experienced sewage flooding.



Case study 4: Louisa

This is Louisa. She is currently renting a home through her local council. She lives by herself

In 2017, her front path was flooded with sewage water from an outdoor drain. This now happens a few times a year.



Case study 5: Ralph

This is Ralph. He's a pensioner over 80, who lives alone. His close family members all now live abroad.

His basement recently flooded, with sewage water coming up through the toilet in the bathroom. This is the only time he has experienced sewage flooding.



Case study 6: Yasmin, Sam, Lucy and Jen

This is Yasmin, Sam, Lucy and Jen. They're all in their early 20s, and decided to rent a house together after meeting at a table tennis sports club.

Their back garden recently flooded, and the sewage water cut them off from their shed, so no one could get to their bikes to cycle to work (which they normally do). This is the second time it's happened, since they moved in just over a year ago.



Case study summaries

<p>This is Hannah and Mark, and their 6 month old baby.</p> <p>Their only bathroom flooded when sewage water started to come up their bath's plug hole. This is the only time they have experienced sewage flooding.</p>	<p>This is Simon, who lives alone.</p> <p>His garden was flooded with sewage water. Since buying and moving into his house 2 years ago, this has happened once every few months. He wasn't told about any history of sewage flooding when he was buying or moving into his house.</p>	<p>This is Daniel, who lives with his partner. He needs to use a wheelchair to get around, and his home is specially adapted for this.</p> <p>His kitchen was flooded when sewage water started coming up out of the drain. This is the only time he has experienced sewage flooding.</p>
<p>This is Louisa, who lives alone. She is currently renting a home through her local council.</p> <p>Her front path was flooded with sewage water from an outdoor drain. This happens a few times a year.</p>	<p>This is Ralph. He's a pensioner over 80, who lives alone. His close family members all now live abroad.</p> <p>His basement recently flooded, with sewage water coming up through the toilet in the bathroom. This is the only time he has experienced sewage flooding.</p>	<p>This is Yasmin, Sam, Lucy and Jen. They're all in their early 20s, and decided to rent a house together after meeting at a table tennis sports club.</p> <p>Their back garden recently flooded, and the sewage water cut them off from their shed, so no one could get to their bikes to cycle to work (which they normally do). This is the second time it's happened, since they moved in just over a year ago.</p>



5 Compensation for sewage flooding



The Guaranteed Standards Scheme:

Payment guidelines for internal sewage flooding

Internal flooding (*when sewage water, from a water company's sewer or drain, enters a customer's home*):

- The water company must make an automatic payment to the customer each time there is an incident, equal to their annual sewerage charge (average is £225)
 - This payment must be at least £150 and will be a maximum of £1000 (even if the annual sewerage charge is more/less than this).
- There are exceptions, including:
 - If the flooding was caused by exceptional weather, industrial action by company employees, the actions of the customer or a defect / inadequacy / blockage in the customer's drains.
 - Or, if it is impractical for the company to identify the customer affected, and that customer doesn't make a claim within 3 months.

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme:

Payment guidelines for external sewage flooding

External flooding (*when sewage water, from a water company's sewer or drain, enters a customer's land or outside property*):

- The water company must make an automatic payment to the customer each time there is an incident, equal to half their annual sewerage charge (average is £112)
 - This payment must be at least £75 and will be a maximum of £500 (even if the annual sewerage charge is more/less than this).
- The customer has to make a claim within 3 months of the incident
- There are exceptions, including:
 - If the flooding was caused by exceptional weather, industrial action by company employees, the actions of the customer or a defect / inadequacy / blockage in the customers drains or sewage.
 - If a customer is affected by internal and external flooding during the same incident, the water company will only pay them once, following the internal flooding terms of payment
 - Or, if the customer is not materially affected by the incident. To decide this, companies take into account: the areas of land/property sewage water entered, the duration of the flooding, if the flooding restricted access to or use of the land or property, and any other relevant considerations the company is aware of.

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme: Payment guidelines*

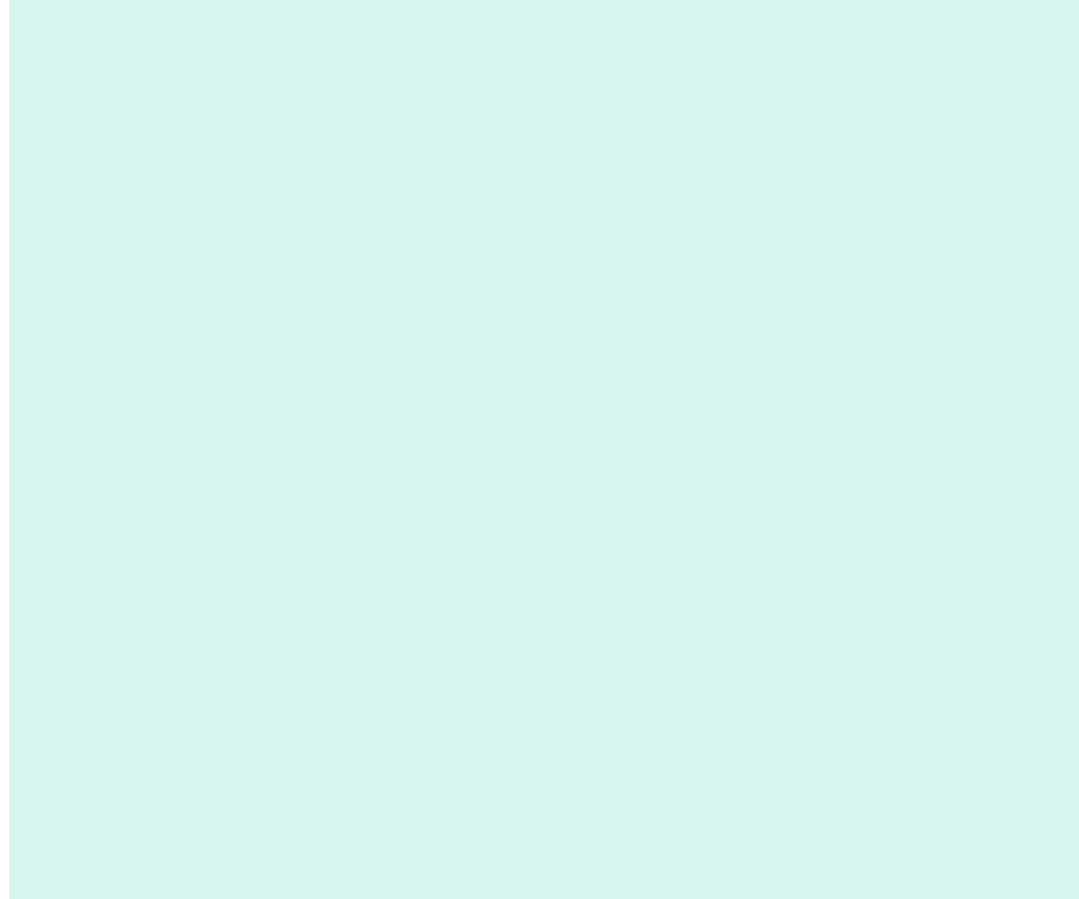
GSS regulation – flooding specific	GSS payment
Flooding from sewers: internal	Equal to annual sewerage charges (Between £150 and £1000)
Flooding from sewers: external	Equal of 50% of annual sewerage charges (Between £75 and £500)

GSS regulation – general	GSS payment
Appointments not made properly	£20
Appointments not kept	£20

*Please note this is not the full list of regulations

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme

Good?



Areas for improvements?



6 Thank you!



