

Note of PR24 collaborative customer research steering group meeting

13 February 2023

1. Actions from last meeting

The group noted there remains an open action for companies to approach CCW and Ofwat if ad-hoc meetings or advice is required.

There are no other open actions.

2. ODI rates research update

The team are currently finalising the sensitivity analysis, analysis of sub-populations and reporting. The work has been slightly delayed due to the amount of time it is taking to run the analysis through the software. A full updated is expected by the next steering group meeting.

4. Affordability and Acceptability guidance: clarification questions

CCW and Ofwat gave a summary of clarification questions which had been asked and the responses which will be published on the CCW and Ofwat websites shortly. These included:

- The single water affordability scheme.
- The cost of the research.
- Using indicative bill amounts in the qualitative research.
- Phasing options for the qualitative research.
- Aligning letters to the billing phase for the quantitative research.
- Asking prescribed questions for least cost/must do plans as well as proposed plans.
- WOCs and WASCs working in collaboration.

The latter point has led to a revision to the guidance which will be published later this week.

Action: CCW/Ofwat to issue revised guidance and circulate to SG members, signposting them to the changes.

SG were also reminded of the process for raising queries about the affordability and acceptability guidance. In the first instance, these should be emailed to Liz Cotton (liz.cotton@ccwater.org.uk) and Paul Casey (Paul.Casey@ofwat.gov.uk) who will respond to companies directly. If the query is likely to be relevant to other companies, an anonymised record will be published, along with the response on the CCW and Ofwat websites for reference for all companies.

Question	Response
Comparative data: Where can companies find information on company targets?	Company targets for 2020-25 can be found in Ofwat's 'Water company performance report: 2021-22' (previously known as the Service Delivery Report) which covers 12 of

<p>Should water quality contacts be based on per 10,000 or per 1,000?</p> <p>Should WASCs show all companies comparative information for water measures?</p> <p>Should companies be using supply interruptions for 3-6 hours, or anything over 3 hours?</p>	<p>the common Performance Commitments. Report and data available at: Water Company Performance Report 2021-22 - Ofwat</p> <p>Targets for the additional PCs can be gathered from company APRs. We are currently exploring if these can be collated centrally for companies to use.</p> <p>Drinking water quality contacts should be based on per 1,000.</p> <p>Yes, this will ensure consistency across all of the companies testing these areas.</p> <p>The PC measure for water supply interruptions is any interruption, without warning, that is longer for 3 hours).</p>
<p>Affordability:</p> <p>Should the NHH survey include a question on the financial situation, or is this just for the HH survey?</p>	<p>The survey questionnaire (Appendix F of the Guidance) has financial situation questions (Q1, Q2 and Q3) which should be asked of household and non-household customers. In regard to including these questions in the NHH customer survey, we have identified an error which only directs Q1 and Q2 to HH customers. This has now been amended in the Guidance (Appendix F) to the following:</p> <p>Q1. Thinking about your [if HH: household's/if NHH: organisation's] finances over the last year, how often, if at all, [if HH: have you/ if NHH: has your organisation] have you struggled to pay at least one of [HH: your household bills/NHH: its bills]?</p> <p>Q2. Overall, how well would you say [HH: you are/NHH: your organisation is] managing financially now?</p> <p>The first response code will need to be changed to reflect response options for HH and NHH customer respectively: [HH: Living comfortably/NHH: Doing well]</p>
<p>Inclusivity and accessibility:</p>	<p>Companies need to demonstrate how this has been considered. Their own customer intelligence and evidence may suggest</p>

<p>What is the expectation for sending out invites to take part in the research in other languages?</p>	<p>some areas where it could be appropriate to send out translated invites, although the approach should be proportionate. Another option could be to add a sentence to the invites, offering the survey in other languages if people request it.</p>
<p>Affordability:</p> <p>Recently published SUP15 tables have removed the requirement for specific information on the single water affordability scheme. Why is this still required for the affordability and acceptability testing guidance?</p> <p>Is the only difference in the testing of the single water affordability scheme the price that people will see? So if the company scheme costs the same as the proposed figure for the single scheme, customers would only see one bill profile?</p>	<p>We expect the approach to testing views on bills, which reflect affordability schemes (on P.14 of the guidance), to be reissued shortly in an updated version of the A&A Guidance.</p> <p>Yes, the published guidance sets out that one version of the costs with the single water affordability scheme and one without will be shown to respondents. If a company scheme costs £20, the whole sample will be shown the same amount. However, please see the answer directly above, an updated version of the Guidance is to issued shortly.</p>
<p>Prescribed content for phasing:</p> <p>The guidance says that phasing for up to six enhancements should be tested. This may not cover all of the options for longer term phasing. Can a handful of indicative enhancements be used to guide the recommendations?</p>	<p>We can see the sentiment behind this suggestion, for example, in principle do people want to pay for enhancements or defer given current cost of living. However this approach may mean that people do not have sight of service choices that would be important to them, and that they may wish to prioritise.</p> <p>We suggest that a prioritisation across different service enhancements is established to understand how different principles would apply to them.</p>

Most companies in attendance confirmed that they were now working with research agencies to develop the research based on the guidance.

5. Next steps

Affordability and acceptability

- Revised A&A guidance (V 1.1) which was originally meant to be issued by 17th February will now be issued week commencing 27 February 2023 to allow us to address multiple queries in one version
- Next Steering Group Meeting – 13th March 2023

Customer engagement

- Meeting today (2pm) on 'Your water, your say' sessions.

PR24 Data Tables

- Online meeting on 2 March (13:00 to 14:30) for company input into a new supplementary table on Affordability support measures (SUP15).
 - Purpose: An opportunity to provide comments or suggestions before the table is finalised in April 2023.
 - Further details: stanislav.petrov@ofwat.gov.uk

ODI Mapping

- Outcomes Working Group meeting on 28 February (10:00 to 12:00)
 - Purpose: to update on batch one of marginal benefits rates