

By Email to:

28th December 2022

Dear Sirs,

Paying Fair Guidelines

This letter is DCWW's formal response to the request for Water Companies to respond to the Paying Fair guidelines.

We welcome the guidelines, as we believe the seven principles outlined meet with DCWW's aspirations for dealing with our customers and the service we provide. We also welcome Ofwat's acknowledgement that where there is a clear need to move away from the guidelines, supported by evidence, that Water Companies may do so, providing their actions remain fair, proportionate and reasonable. This is extremely important in relation to debt recovery where a small minority of customers do not accept their obligations to pay charges and it is necessary to act in the interests of our wider customer base.

Our approach to the guidelines has been to complete an assessment of each requirement, briefly documenting how we meet that requirement, or where we see opportunities for improvement, indicating next steps or actions required. Our assessment concludes that we are broadly compliant with 131 of the 145 principles, with 14 requiring further consideration or action.

The assessment is enclosed with this letter, the last tab (Actions) contains the next steps, where practical with delivery dates. A number are quite simple or already in hand, such as improving our bereavement process, whilst others would benefit from further discussions with yourselves, such as 1.28 & 1.29. These requirements appear particularly challenging to deliver in the debt landscape, partly because these customers are by nature difficult to engage, but also because willingness to pay and engage depends on more than just whether customers have money or not. To formulate plans to address these we are proposing to consult more widely to understand what is practical and feasible.

We have consulted CCW with regard to our updated Code of Practice and received confirmation on the 12th December 2022 that the changes they suggested have all been adopted to their satisfaction. The revised version is enclosed, and we are in the process of updating this on our website. This will be available in early January.

These documents, and guidance on the support and help available can be accessed from a single page on our website headed support with bills, at the following link:

<https://www.dwrcymru.com/en/support-with-bills>

We have also enclosed a copy of the reverse side of our bills and lets which set out how customers can pay. This can also be found on our website at:

<https://www.dwrcymru.com/en/my-account/paying-your-bill>

We would be very happy to answer any questions on our responses, would welcome further discussion on the points raised.

Yours sincerely

Richard Vennard

Head of Customer Revenue.

