

September 2023

# Guidance on SUP14 Data Table Submissions

# Guidance on SUP14 Data Table Submissions

## Table SUP14 line definitions

### *Customer engagement SUP14.1 and SUP 14.2*

1. The purpose of this table is to provide information on the number of customers engaged by companies during development of the PR24 business plan. We are collecting this information because we were asked about the extent of customer engagement at PR14 and PR19 and we want to have these figures available at PR24.
2. We propose to use these figures for engagement and briefing purposes rather than for assessment of PR24 submissions.
3. Customer engagement is through all forms of customer engagement such as focus groups, surveys, Your Water Your Say, etc over the period from January 2020 up to September 2023. Only include research that your company has conducted, commissioned or directly paid for, including in the latter any of your customers included in the ODI Rates Research.
4. We recognise that the raw number of customers engaged with is a simple metric and does not reflect the depth of engagement that occurred. We also understand that the numbers reported in the PR24 data tables may not be directly comparable with earlier price reviews due to the introduction of the collaborative research approach.

### *Affordability and acceptability of business plans (SUP14.3 to SUP14.32)*

5. The purpose of these tables is to provide a quick summary of key results from the affordability and acceptability testing of company business plans with customers, which is required to be conducted by each company under the PR24 collaborative cross-sector customer research approach. A more in-depth analysis of results will be available to Ofwat through the full submission of the research.
6. These tables will be populated from findings from the quantitative phase of customer research, based on the most recent version of guidance first issued by Ofwat and CCW on 12 December 2022, '*Guidance for water companies: testing customers' views of the acceptability and affordability of PR24 plans*' (referred to subsequently as A&A Guidance). References to questions are from 'Appendix F: Survey questionnaire' of this A&A Guidance.

7. The results reported should relate to the most recent round of quantitative survey results in accordance with the A&A Guidance. In some cases, this might not relate to the final submitted business plan. In others, it might be based on a different survey methodology as allowed for under the A&A Guidance (see 'Minimum requirements for testing', A&A Guidance).
8. The five columns describe which customer responses (to the relevant question for that row) should be reported in that column:
  - 'Household customers' – all household respondents
  - 'Household with vulnerable customer' – only include household customer respondents for which their household has at least one person recorded as having 'Any vulnerability' (recoded dummy variable 4 from Q13).
  - 'Households struggling financially' – only include customers answering codes 4 or 5 to Q2
  - 'Non-household customers' – all non-household customers
  - 'Household and non-household customers' – all household and non-household customers. For weighted data these should be weighted together by the proportion of overall water usage of household and non-household customers respectively.
9. All 'unweighted base' rows should report the number of survey participants asked the relevant question (and falling within the column category definition), including 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses.
10. All percentages should be based on weighted data and reported with two decimal places (rounded up from 0.005). The row definitions are as follows:
  - 'Customers who have struggled to pay at least one of their household or non-household bills' – defined as Q1 = 1,2,3 (All of the time, most of the time, sometimes) as a percentage of Q1 = 1,2,3,4,5, 96
  - 'Customers expecting to find it difficult to afford to pay their proposed water and sewerage bill for the years 2025-30' – defined as Q5 = 4, 5 (fairly difficult, very difficult) as a percentage of Q5 = 1,2,3,4,5, 97
  - 'Customers expecting to find it easy to afford to pay their proposed water and sewerage bill for the years 2025-30' – defined as Q5 = 1,2 (Very easy, fairly easy) as a percentage of Q5 – 1,2,3,4,5, 97

- 'Customers responding that the proposed business plan is unacceptable' – defined as Q8 = 3,4 (Unacceptable, completely unacceptable) as a percentage of Q8 = 1,2,3,4, 97
- 'Customers responding that the proposed business plan is acceptable' – defined as Q8 = 1,2 (Completely acceptable, acceptable) as a percentage of Q8 = 1,2,3,4, 97

11. Data for each individual survey should be weighted to be appropriate for the relevant geographical population for that survey. The guidance is not fully prescriptive on how this is done (see last paragraph of page 30).

12. There are five sets of tables from SUP14.3 to SUP14.27. Survey responses should be recorded in these tables as follows:

- 'Water only customers (water bill only and water only business plan)' – this should include customers for which your company only provides water services and for which:
  - Affordability – include results of customers who are billed for water services separately (and water only bill impact has been tested with these customers)
  - Acceptability – include results of customers for whom acceptability scores of water only business plans have been tested.
- 'Water only customer (whole bill and both business plans)' – this should include customers for which your company only provides water services and for which:
  - Affordability – include results of the whole bill impact (except where water only bill results has been reported for customers billed separately)
  - Acceptability – include results of customers for whom acceptability scores are not available for the water only business plan, but are available for the combined water and wastewater business plans
- 'Water and wastewater customer (whole bill and whole business plan) – this should include customers for which your company provides water and wastewater services:
  - Affordability – include results of the whole bill impact

- Acceptability – include results of the combined water and wastewater business plan
  - 'Wastewater only customers (wastewater bill only and wastewater only business plan)' – this should include customers for which your company only provides wastewater services and for which:
    - Affordability – include results of customers who are billed for wastewater services separately (and wastewater only bill impact has been tested with these customers)
    - Acceptability – include results of customers for whom acceptability scores of wastewater only business plans have been tested.
  - 'Wastewater only customer (whole bill and both business plans)' - this should include customers for which your company only provides wastewater services and for which:
    - Affordability – include results of the whole bill impact (except where wastewater bill results have been reported for customers who are billed separately)
    - Acceptability – include results of customers for whom acceptability scores are not available for the wastewater only business plan, but are available for the combined water and wastewater business plans
13. If more than one survey contributes to one of these tables, for example Company A (a WaSC) receives whole bill affordability survey results from Companies B, C and D (all WoCs whose water customers are provided with wastewater services by Company A), these should be weighted together by numbers of customers served.
14. The last table (SUP14.28 to SUP14.32) should be a weighted combination of the 5 tables above, weighted by number of customers served.

## **SUP14 Commentary requirement**

15. Accompanying the metrics should be a statement identifying: any testing that has not been conducted in accordance with the full methodology (ie. that which requires at least one round of testing with customers as per the A&A Guidance); or if the reporting of findings are not based on the final submitted business plan. Details of geographical coverage should also be set out if it doesn't cover the whole of the relevant area or if different testing has been carried out for different areas (covering different water and wastewater provider combinations). The commentary

should also set out in summary any other key information important to the interpretation of the data.

16. Full details of the research should be included in the submissions accompanying business submissions, as set out in [PR24 and beyond: Customer engagement policy – a position paper](#), February 2022.

# Appendix 1

# ~~SUP14—Customer engagement and affordability/acceptability of plans~~ Guidance on SUP14 Data Table Submissions

## Table SUP14 line definitions

*Customer engagement* SUP14.1 and SUP14.2

- 1.1 The purpose of this table is to provide information on the number of customers engaged by companies during development of the PR24 business plan. We are collecting this information because we were asked about the extent of customer engagement at PR14 and PR19 and we want to have these figures available at PR24.
- 1.2 We propose to use these figures for engagement and briefing purposes rather than for assessment of PR24 submissions.

Line	Title	Definition	RAG 4.10 line reference
<del>SUP14.1</del>	<del>Number of household customers engaged with on the business plan</del>	<del>The actual number of household (water and wastewater residential retail) customers engaged with in developing the company's business plan up to submission i.e. in years 2019–2020 up to October 2023. The engagement is through all forms of customer engagement such as focus groups, surveys etc.</del>	
<del>SUP14.2</del>	<del>Number of non-household customers engaged with on the business plan</del>	<del>The actual number of non-household (water and wastewater) customers engaged with in developing the company's business plan up to submission i.e. submission in years 2019–2020 up to October 2023. The engagement is through all forms of customer engagement such as focus groups, surveys etc.</del>	

## ~~SUP14 Additional guidance~~

*Customer engagement*

- 1.3 Customer engagement is through all forms of customer engagement such as focus groups, surveys, Your Water Your Say, etc over the period from January 2019–2020 up to September/October 2023. Only include research that your company has conducted, commissioned or directly paid for, including in the latter any of your customers included in the ODI Rates Research.

1.4 We recognise that the raw number of customers engaged with is a simple metric and does not reflect the depth of engagement that occurred. We also understand that the numbers reported in the PR24 data tables may not be directly comparable with earlier price reviews due to the introduction of the collaborative research approach.

*Affordability and acceptability of business plans (SUP14.3 to SUP14.32)*

1.5 The purpose of ~~these~~ tables is to provide a quick summary of key data results from the affordability and acceptability testing of company business plans with customers, which is required to be conducted by each company under the PR24 collaborative cross-sector customer research approach. A more in-depth analysis of results will be available to Ofwat through the full submission of the research.

1.6 ~~These~~ tables will be populated from findings from the quantitative phase of customer research, based on the most recent version of guidance first issued by Ofwat and CCW on 12 December 2022, 'Guidance for water companies: testing customers' views of the acceptability and affordability of PR24 plans' (referred to subsequently as A&A Guidance). References to questions are from 'Appendix F: Survey questionnaire' of this A&A Guidance.

1.7 The results reported ~~data~~ should relate to the most recent round of quantitative survey results in accordance with the A&A Guidance. In some cases, this might not relate to the final submitted business plan. In others, it might be based on a different survey methodology as allowed for under the A&A Guidance (see 'Minimum requirements for testing', A&A Guidance).

~~1.8 All percentages should be reported with zero decimal places and rounded up from 0.5.~~

~~1.9 'Household with vulnerable customer' is defined as the combination of 'Any vulnerability', which is derived from Q13 [recoded dummy variable 4], Appendix F of the A&A Guidance.~~

~~1.10 'Households struggling to pay at least one bill' is defined as the combination of 'All of the time', 'Most of the time' and 'Sometimes' which is derived from Q1, Appendix F of the A&A Guidance. Data should be reported as the number of responses Q1=1,2,3 and Q1=1,2,3 (weighted to the population of interest) as a percentage of Q1=1,2,3,4,5,96.~~

~~1.11 For 'Household with vulnerable customer' and 'Households struggling to pay at least one bill', data is required to be inputted on the total number of unweighted~~

responses (n) to the relevant survey question and the percentage of responses (weighted to the population of interest) for the metric.

- ~~1.12~~ 'Affordability—customers expecting to find it difficult to pay their proposed bill' should be derived from Q5, Appendix F: Survey questionnaire (A&A Guidance). Data should be reported as the number of responses Q5=4,5 and Q5=4,5 (weighted to the population of interest) as a percentage of Q5=1,2,3,4,5,97. Customers who are only presented with the bill impact of the water or wastewater part of their bill are those that are separately billed for the two services, or customers who have been asked about the affordability of one part of the bill as an additional question after the prescribed questionnaire questions (in which case the question number will be different to Q5).
- ~~1.13~~ 'Affordability—customers expecting to find it easy to pay their proposed bill' should be derived from Q5, Appendix F: Survey questionnaire (A&A Guidance). Data should be reported as the number of responses Q5=1,2 and Q5=1,2 (weighted to the population of interest) as a percentage of Q5=1,2,3,4,5,97. Customers who are only presented with the bill impact of the water or wastewater part of their bill are those that are separately billed for the two services, or customers who have been asked about the affordability of one part of the bill as an additional question after the prescribed questionnaire questions (in which case the question number will be different to Q5).
- ~~1.14~~ 'Acceptability—customers responding that the proposed business plan is unacceptable' should be derived from Q8, Appendix F: Survey questionnaire (A&A Guidance). Data should be reported as the number of responses Q8=3,4 and Q8=3,4 (weighted to the population of interest) as a percentage of Q8=1,2,3,4,97.
- ~~1.15~~ 'Acceptability—customers responding that the proposed business plan is acceptable' should be derived from Q8, Appendix F: Survey questionnaire (A&A Guidance). Data should be reported as the number of responses Q8=1,2 and Q8=1,2 (weighted to the population of interest) as a percentage of Q8=1,2,3,4,97.
- ~~1.16~~ Data should be reported according to the appropriate category of customers, applicable to companies. Only those cells should be completed for which research has been conducted. Some companies will be reporting under more than one customer type so data should be completed in the relevant sections applicable. The final category, 'All customers (weighted combination)', should be completed by all companies.
- 1.8 The five columns describe which customer responses (to the relevant question for that row) should be reported for that column:

- 'Household customers' – all household customers
- 'Household with vulnerable customer' – only include household customer respondents for which their household has at least one person recorded as having 'Any vulnerability' (recoded dummy variable 4 from Q13)
- 'Households struggling financially' – only include customers answering codes 4 or 5 to Q2
- 'Non-household customers' – all non-household customers
- 'Household and non-household customers' – all household and non-household customers. For weighted data these should be weighted by the proportion of overall water usage of household and non-household customers respectively.

1.9 All 'unweighted base' rows should report the number of survey participants asked the relevant question (and falling within the column category definition), including 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses.

1.10 All percentages should be based on weighted data and reported to two decimal places (rounded up from 0.005). The row definitions are as follows:

- 'Customers who have struggled to pay at least one of their household or non-household bills' – defined as Q1 = 1,2,3 (All of the time, most of the time, sometimes) as a percentage of Q1 = 1,2,3,4,5, 96
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  - Acceptability – include results of customers for whom acceptability scores are not available for the wastewater only business plan, but are available for the combined water and wastewater plans.

1.13 If more than one survey contributes to one of these tables, for example Company A (a WaSC) receives whole bill affordability survey results from Companies B, C and D (all WoCs whose water customers are provided with wastewater services by Company A) these should be weighted together by numbers of customers served.

1.14 The last table (SUP14.28 to SUP14.32) should be a weighted combination of the 5 tables above, weighted together by number of customers served.

## **SUP14 Commentary requirement**

1.171.15 Accompanying the metrics should be a statement identifying: any testing that has not been conducted in accordance with the full methodology (ie. that which requires at least one round of testing with customers as per the A&A Guidance); or if the reporting of findings are not based on the final submitted business plan. Details of geographical coverage should also be set out if it doesn't cover the whole of the relevant area or if different testing has been carried out for different areas (covering different water and wastewater provider combinations). The commentary should also set out in summary any other key information important to the interpretation of the data.

1.181.16 Full details of the research should be included in the submissions accompanying business submissions, as set out in [PR24 and beyond: Customer engagement policy – a position paper](#), February 2022.



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