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26 January 2024

Consultation on Core Customer information

Thank you for providing opportunity for us to respond to your consultation on the proposed guidance. We welcome and support the aim to improve outcomes for our customers, setting clear expectations on required standards whilst providing flexibility for companies to adapt to the needs of the diverse range of customers throughout the sector.

Question 1: Should this guidance set an expectation for a single Code of Practice (or other form), or should companies determine how and where to display this information?

We agree with your proposal in that it should be for companies to decide where and when to communicate the core customer information, and to ensure relevance and ease of access, this could be through one or more codes of practice documents. Your guidance is clear on expected outcomes whilst providing the flexibility for individual companies to determine the most appropriate channel and medium to suit their customer needs. It will be for us companies to assess effectiveness, adapting and developing new and more engaging means of ensuring our customers are aware of, and have access to the Core Customer Information.

Question 2: Do you agree with our proposed changes as summarised in Table 1?

Whilst we don't disagree with the proposed changes in Table 1 we would request clarity around the 3rd proposed new expectation. This new expectation states that we should set out the whole complaints process in the water sector, including the role of CCW and alternate dispute resolution (ADR). This requirement however contradicts the instruction from CCW themselves to remove any ADR narrative from customer facing channels. We would therefore request that clarity on expectations in this regard are set in conjunction with CCW.

Question 3: Do you agree with the proposed scope for the Core Customer Information? In your view, is anything missing or should be excluded?

The draft guidance document is clear on expectations and provides clarity on the guiding principles of making information accessible and easy to understand and we do not believe anything is missing. It is noted that consideration should be given to further documents and guidance which as a whole, provides detailed holistic expectations and standards of customer service.

Question 4: Do you agree with the proposed approach for companies reviewing their Core Customer Information?

We acknowledge that regular reviews of our Core Customer Information including how we publicise and promote it should take place, and we support your request that it should be done at least every three years. Consultation with CCW, other stakeholders and customer groups will help shape, enhance and develop it on a continual basis in recognition of changing customer needs and service expectations.

Question 5: Do you agree on the proposed areas on which companies should consult CCW? Are there any other areas on which CCW should be consulted in relation to Core Customer Information and the customer focused licence condition?

We have been engaged in and support the work of CCW in challenging companies to do more for customers when incidents occur. Following feedback from them in recent years we have adapted and updated our current Core Customer Information and we see this relationship as key to continuing improvements for our customers.

It is thankfully noted that your draft guidance includes the reference to 'significant changes' which will allow companies to quickly adapt with small scale changes in an agile manner in order to respond to pressing customer topics or concerns. More significant changes will inevitably take longer and as such consultation with CCW will take place, where their input will help shape the final outcomes.

We believe the draft guidance sets out clear expected standards that are essential for water companies in their aim of delivering high levels of customer service and support whilst providing the flexibility to adapt, change and improve in line with our customer needs and service requirements.

Yours sincerely

Anglian Water