

# Core Customer Information – Ofwat’s draft guidance on core information companies should clearly provide their customers

Hafren Dyfrdwy

29 January 2024

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## Executive summary

### **Hafren Dyfrdwy response to Ofwat’s Consultation paper on core customer information companies should clearly provide to their customers.**

We continue to support the introduction of the customer focused licence condition and agree that the information set out within the Core Customer Information guidance is the minimum customers should be made aware of, and be able to access easily in different formats.

We agree with the decision to remove the current requirements relating to the charges levied for the services, and the payment methods that are available to customers in respect of those charges. At Hafren Dyfrdwy, we fully embraced Ofwat’s Paying Fair guidelines and Ofwat judged us to be “exemplary” in July 2023 in how we responded to the 143 requirements. We support Ofwat’s vulnerability guidance, *Service for All*, which aligns with our current customer plans and provides the flexibility for us to continue improving the service we provide to customers who need extra help.

In the remainder of this response, we address the specific questions raised in your consultation document.

## Our response to the consultation questions

### **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 believe companies should determine how and where this information is displayed. In 2021, during our last Code of Practice update we moved away from having a single Code of Practice. We learnt from feedback from our customers that finding the information they specifically needed was difficult in the single Code of Practice. We therefore split our Code of Practice into six categories and these are displayed in our policy library. The categories are:

- Help when you need it
- Water supply
- Wastewater services
- Billing, metering and supporting you
- Laying in private pipework
- Guaranteed service standards.

Whilst our Codes of Practice covers these six categories, these are not limited, and through continuous improvement we can and will create specific ‘codes of practice’ where necessary.

### **2. Do you agree with the proposed changes as summarized in Table 1?**

We agree with the proposed changes summarised in Table 1. We are encouraged to see that we are already aligned with many of these changes, particularly the *Paying Fair Guidelines* and the *Service for All* vulnerability guidance.

We are currently undertaking a bill redesign. This will see Core Customer Information continue to be available in a clear and accessible way, including how customers can (i) access the Core Customer Information hub – which will be clearly displayed on our website – and (ii) request this via other formats, such as a letter, if needed.

Within our Core Customer Information, we set out where customers can find information on how they can identify genuine staff members. Given the challenges with bogus callers and door knockers, we have a 'door step password scheme' to protect our customers. We are updating our Social Media policy, so that we can help make sure customers know how to identify genuine staff members via our social media pages during incidents.

Our bills clearly display our complaint-handling procedure and how customers can make a complaint. The wording we use was agreed and signed off by CCW through the recent changes to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process, and the inclusion of the roles of CCW and DRO (Dispute Resolution Ombudsman).

We agree with the removal of the charges levied for services as this is clearly displayed within our Scheme of Charges.

We agree with the removal of the payment methods that are available to customers in respect of their charges, as part of the Paying Fair Guidelines. This is clearly outlined in both our Scheme of Charges and our 'Billing, Metering and Supporting You' code of practice.

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

We agree with the proposed scope for the Core Customer Information, we feel the seven bullet points fully represent the core information a customer could ever need. We are pleased that we align with many of these expectations already.

We are currently in the process of updating our website and policy library to make sure all this information is accessible and visible in one place – known as the Core Customer Information Hub. This hub will include all our Codes of Practice, as well as other useful information such as policies and leaflets to ensure we are meeting all required expectations.

We do not consider anything is missing at this moment in time.

### **4. Do you agree with the proposed approach for companies reviewing their Core Customer Information?**

We agree with the proposed approach to reviewing the Core Customer Information. Our Codes of Practice are reviewed on a three yearly cycle to ensure the information is still reliable and accurate.

We also continually review on a more frequent basis to ensure the information displayed is in a format that is easy and accessible for all our customers. We regularly consult with other customer groups to gather feedback and research on our information, this includes consulting with CCW, and this helps make informed decisions and changes where applicable.

### **5. Do you agree on 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 agree with the proposed areas on which companies should consult with CCW, and we are pleased that we have already been consulting with CCW throughout the years. We have found that consulting with CCW and gathering their thoughts and feedback has helped develop integral customer communication campaigns.