

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

OUR STRATEGY FOR SERVING CUSTOMERS
WHO NEED EXTRA HELP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Welsh Water, we are committed to supporting customers who need extra help — whether due to financial challenges, health conditions, age, disability, or other vulnerabilities. Our updated strategy outlines not only how we work collaboratively with customers, partners, and stakeholders to ensure our services are inclusive, responsive, and accessible to all but what we aim to achieve over the next five years to ensure that we can maintain record levels of support to our vulnerable customers.

Since the launch of our original strategy in 2018, we have made significant progress:

- 183,000 customers are now registered on our Priority Services Register (up from 80,000 in 2021).
- 145,000 customers have received financial assistance through tailored schemes (up from 101,000 in 2018).
- We achieved ISO 22458:2022 accreditation in January 2024, demonstrating excellence in supporting vulnerable customers.
- Our innovative Cymuned (Community) Support Scheme — the first of its kind in the sector addresses "targeted transient vulnerability" — supporting working households not traditionally eligible for help, but struggling due to sudden economic hardship.
- Our Specialist Support Team has grown, handling over 55,000 customer contacts per year, and offering a case-managed approach with signposting to further support.
- Our Community Hub and outreach efforts have expanded our face-to-face presence, attending over 1,400 events and building a partner network of over 300 organisations.

This has been made possible by the plethora of communication channels we provide — including telephone, webchat, face-to-face support, and a bilingual website — thereby ensuring accessibility for customers with varying needs. We also offer a nominee service, BSL video support, and assistive technologies like Recite Me.

We also seek to be visible in the community that we serve and our community engagement strategy is embedded in our award winning Water Resilient Communities approach. By working in areas of high deprivation and low engagement, we co-deliver targeted support and invest in education, efficiency, and trust-building activities across the relevant community.

CUSTOMER AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

In developing this updated strategy, we have undertaken stakeholder and customer research confirming that our current approach is effective but needs refinement in certain areas:

- Tailored communications during incidents for different vulnerability types.
- Ongoing promotion of awareness of available support.
- Enhanced digital tools such as eligibility checkers and online applications.
- Continued training for staff and third parties to better identify and support customers in need.

We have listened to feedback from customers, partners, government and regulators, and we will continue to evolve our support in response to rising needs, economic pressures, and societal change. We are committed to ensuring that all our customers, especially the most vulnerable, receive the support they need—whether financial, practical, or emotional. This strategy ensures that we remain agile, empathetic, and proactive—working at the heart of our communities, today and in the future.



Our strategy is built on four core pillars: Data and Insight, Accessible Support, Training and Awareness, and Community Partnerships. Through this approach, we aim to provide tailored, proactive support and continually improve our services using measurable outcomes.



DATA AND INSIGHT

We are enhancing how we use data to identify and support vulnerable customers.

This includes:

- Collaborating with partners (e.g. DWP, NHS, energy networks) to share data responsibly and identify those in need.
- Monitoring satisfaction and impact through customer feedback, speech analytics, deprivation indices, and arrears reviews.
- Continuing with our culture of continuous feedback from Welsh Govt constituents, our regulators and our Independent Challenger Group.
- Expanding data-sharing initiatives and launching new metrics to better track our strategy's effectiveness.
- With the rollout of smart meters from 2025, we aim to give customers actionable insight into their water use and affordability.

Key Metric Targets by 2030:

- 180,000 customers supported with financial tariffs
- 5% increase in uptake in high-deprivation areas
- 75% smart meter penetration
- 20% uplift in arrears reduction after support



ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT

Our long-standing Priority Services Register (PSR) and financial support offerings are being expanded to ensure inclusivity and flexibility for all customer needs, especially during transient periods of vulnerability such as illness, bereavement, or job loss.

Services include:

- Tailored communications and incident response
- Social tariffs, payment plans, and forbearance
- Accessibility support (e.g. Braille, audio, translation services, Easy Read formats)
- Dedicated customer support teams and partner referral networks

Planned enhancements include:

- Increasing financial aid through reinvested surpluses
- Expanding support for non-household critical service providers
- Improving digital accessibility and application processes
- Strengthening communication during service disruptions

Key Metric Targets by 2030:

- 25% of customers registered for PSR
- 90% contact attempts and 43% actual contact with PSR customers
- 100% contact with PSR customers during incidents
- AA+ website accessibility rating



TRAINING AND AWARENESS

All employees and partners are being equipped with the knowledge and confidence to identify and support vulnerable customers effectively.

Current and future initiatives include:

- Monthly Teach Talks and accredited vulnerability training
- Annual mandatory training for all employees and supply chain partners
- Enhanced internal and external communications and learning materials
- Online training for partner networks

Key Metric Targets by 2030:

- 100% of customer-facing employees and partners trained
- Employee confidence rated at +4.5/5
- 80%+ satisfaction among PSR customers post-incident
- Positive uplift in customer satisfaction and support scheme uptake



COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration is key to our success. We work with over 300 partner organisations who help us raise awareness, refer customers for support, and provide valuable insight into community needs.

Our Water Resilient Communities programme and community grants enable us to deliver long-lasting social value. We will grow these partnerships further, expand outreach campaigns, and gather structured partner feedback to enhance our services.

We will:

- Continue with current partnership activities and develop new 'clusters' to help target support
- Create more Water Resilient Community projects
- Collate and act on feedback from partners and research agencies to help drive improvements.

Key Metric Targets by 2030:

- Maintain active network of at least 150 partners
- 5% increase in take-up of social tariffs across targeted areas
- Host annual event to share best practice amongst partners

CONCLUSION

This strategy is a comprehensive, ambitious and values-driven plan. It provides a living framework that will evolve through innovation, feedback and shared learning. By 2030, we aim to transform our approach to vulnerability through smarter data use, tailored and inclusive services, and confident, empowered teams. This strategy ensures that no customer is left behind, no matter their circumstances.

We are committed to making every interaction count—and delivering the right support, at the right time, in the right way. It's about understanding that we have a clear understanding that our purpose extends beyond provider water and wastewater services but rather enhancing lives, communities and delivering public value.

