

**Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**15 July 2021**  
**Teams call**

**Attendees:**

Andrea Cook	Chair
Chris Griffin	Independent Member
Dave Merrett	Independent Member
Janine Shackleton	Consumer Council for Water
James Copeland	National Farmers Union
Melissa Lockwood	Environment Agency
Pam Warhurst	Independent Member
Steve Foers	Citizens Advice
Sumayya Mahmood	Yorkshire Water
Wendy Kimpton	Yorkshire Water

**Guests:**

Laura Crook	Yorkshire Water
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**Apologies:**

Tom Keatley	Natural England
Kirstin Hutchinson	Yorkshire Water

**1) Welcome**

- a) Members were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

**2) Minutes and actions of the last meeting**

- a) Any comments on the minutes were requested by 23 July 2021.
- b) The actions from June are as follows:
- Action 1: complete - due dates to be added at the time of the meeting
  - Action 2: complete
  - Action 3: complete
  - Action 4: ongoing
  - Action 5: complete

- Action 6: complete
- Action 7: complete

### 3) Environmental subgroup update

- a) The company has responded to the subgroup's suggestions from previous meetings and have updated the company website to provide further information on storm overflows. They are launching a GSI plotting of the overflow locations as suggested by the subgroup. The subgroup expressed their appreciation.
- b) The company already has GSI plots of information relating to their drainage and wastewater management plans, vast amounts of open data is available and links to the Water UK site. The company will test it with stakeholders first prior to advertising more widely to the public and it is expected to be live by the end of the year.
- c) Some of the modelling of the future position and the standard in terms of storm overflows is with a 40 per annum target limit, whereas the modelling suggests that by 2050 there could be more incidents. Internal discussions are ongoing in the company regarding the potential PR implications when the information becomes fully accessible. The information does now show the actual sewer systems but there is a concern about the security implications of releasing where the sewer overflows are located. The subgroup will review this further with the company.
- d) A report on the Length of River Improved (LORI) was discussed at the subgroup and two schemes with suggestions of improvements were discussed. Written updates on water resources and low carbon solutions were also discussed, along with brief updates on WINEP.
- e) The Forum contributed that the work the company have completed is impressive and suggested showing this data to the wider Forum.

**Action 1:** GIS data/maps to be shared at a future Forum meeting

- f) The Forum commented that what is becoming increasingly apparent is the Forum's role as the interface on communications between the company and the customer. The observation was made that the comms subgroup needs to be more proactive rather than issues simply picked up as part of the Forum. The Forum asked to see a comms plan from the company.

**Action 2:** Strategic communication plan for the company to be shared with the Forum

The company suggested sharing the map of who communicates what in the business, and then the company can present to the Forum who is responsible for which areas and the Forum can subsequently decide who to engage with.

The Forum discussed the benefits of better communication with customers and stakeholders, referencing the opportunities that a visual system of information has to customers and messages from the water company to customers explaining the benefit of seeing water blockages. This will provide customers with insight into which areas are affected but also present a different dimension to customer behaviours in regard to blockages and how they may be contributing to them.

- g) The subgroup discussed an event which was attended by the NFU representative, noting the Forum did not have knowledge of this and therefore missed the opportunity to attend. It was suggested that the company should keep Forum members up to date on events. .

#### **4) The Future of CCGs (Customer Challenges Groups)**

- a) Forum members had sight of a paper prior to the meeting by CCW regarding Ofwat's thinking regarding CCGs and their future. The paper suggests the inclusion of CCGs in the future and the Forum expressed hope on the back of this that it would continue to be central to Yorkshire Water's thinking. The Forum concern that they are currently marginalised regarding future plans. .
- b) At the meeting attended by an Independent Forum member, Ofwat discussed strengthening CCGs at a national level, as did CCW, who discussed strengthening and funding CCGs, and a potential 'super Forum' where CCGs collaborate. South West Water CCG will continue, and most companies saw a future for CCGs.
- c) CCW recognised there are various successes of Forums, and the value of their local voice for customers is important. Ofwat have given an option to the companies; CCW are hoping companies consider their views in their decision making.

## 5) Complaints tracker

- a) The company were in attendance to discuss its written complaints tracker. The purpose is to establish the cause of the complaint, the area of Yorkshire the complaint is about, and to track internally who is responsible operationally. The company are looking at the detail behind each complaint at a granular level.

The tracker is updated manually but the company are looking at how they can automate this for more frequent updates.

- b) The tracker records how many complaints are made by PSR customers (customer service register) and whether the complaint is linked to their priority service's needs.
- c) The company is focusing on the age of complaints, and they have a measure in place for this and a target which has also been shared with operations. The aim is not to exceed 8 weeks, if a complaint does exceed this timeframe it is escalated to CCW.
- d) CCW queried if the tracker links to the customer experience dashboard; the company advised they aren't linked, and the company's tracker is for written formal complaints only.

CCW queried the priority service complaints, referring to Ofwat's requirement to focus on this by reviewing the data to see if the complaints are being resolved quick enough. Ofwat will be producing more information on this regarding what they want to measure in a future workshop.

- e) CCW advised they have been approached by a developer to meet with other developers to intervene regarding the service they are receiving from the company. They noted they will remain transparent with the company about the detail. The company advised they are aware of this and it is being handled at a high level.
- f) The Forum queried the percentage of complaints received by letter/email compared to complaints by other means; the company don't know the figure, but they advised when a complaint is closed, 60% are closed by telephone.

**Action 3:** Company to provide complaints statistics to the Forum (by 30 July 2021)

**Action 4:** Customer experience dashboard to be shared with the Forum at a future meeting

## 6) Internal Sewer Flooding - CCW update

- a) CCW have a campaign to end Sewer Flooding Misery and how this looks for water companies.
- b) They discussed what good would look like regarding compensation where they are aiming to achieve an industry standard. They will look to assist customers in the following ways:
  - More support and compensation for those who suffer repeat sewer flooding by 2023
  - Standard on site times by 2023 and a review of how compensation is offered
  - Get exceptional weather (EW) 'get out' removed from companies' policies by 2023

CCW discussed with the Forum the steps they will take to deliver this. They commented that Yorkshire Water have engaged early on this and discussions are taking place.

- c) Regarding compensation, there will be help for those who repeatedly get flooded with sewage. Scottish Water will refund the annual bill if the property is on the risk register and pay out for each incident up to max of £1000 per year.

Some water companies, including Yorkshire Water, consider uninsured losses if there is no insurance.

Compensation also covers temporary accommodation and extreme weather events (EW). Some water companies already assist with these.

- d) Regarding site response times, Wessex Water respond within 2 hours for internal sewer flooding, 4 hours for external sewer flooding and slightly longer for EW. Discussions have started with Yorkshire Water on this. The company commented that some significant thinking is needed by regulators and stakeholders on EW, if the expectation is that companies can resolve things that were previously classed as EW in their base costs it won't be possible, and secondly, EW is quite complex and will take work from others and not just water companies. (didn't understand last bit)

- e) Regarding clean up times, South West aim to start work to clean up within 4 hours and external flooding within 24 hours where possible
- f) The Forum queried extreme weather events and the classification as normal when it has had more than one occurrence, even when the event is extreme. They also questioned the flood risk granting aid, which is expected to be picked up by the water company, and the impasse within the regulators, querying how to protect vulnerable customers and the need for a solution. CCW took this on board.
- g) The Forum commented on the need to differentiate between the areas, considering some will be due to climate change. CCW advised a document on what is in scope and out of scope will be helpful and noted this down.

The Forum commented that water companies have done a lot of work with customers regarding water usage and their choices which can subsequently damage the network. When aspects of flooding and the impacts of climate change are being discussed they are discussing societal change in their practices and expressed their concern that some important water issues end up becoming 'diluted', questioning how to disassociate the activity of a water company without stressing the importance of customer decisions.

CCW advised this is on their radar and told members about a recent study called 'kitchen sink behaviour' where they had cameras in people's homes for 45 days to record what they put down their sinks. CCW found it helped with the messaging rather than telling people what to do.

## **7) AOB**

- a) The company discussed the request to have some of the underperforming PC's discussed at upcoming meetings. It was confirmed that Mains Repairs and D-MeX will be discussed at the August Forum.

Priority services will be discussed at the Affordability and Vulnerability subgroup.

The company commented that Ofwat assumed most water companies would be in penalty in PR19. The company suggested sharing the comparison of how Yorkshire Water have performed in the wider context of other companies.

**Action 5:** Proforma slide pack to be created for the company to complete when presenting the PCs

### Next meeting

19 August 2021 via Microsoft Teams

### Actions

#### Summary of actions: 14 June 2018

No	Action	Comment
4	<p><b>Company</b> to project the level of investment and timescales to display how discolouration will be reviewed to help the Forum understand the plan and resources.</p> <p><b>Post meeting update 06/06/2019:</b> To be reviewed when received Final Determination (FD).</p>	Ongoing

#### Summary of actions: 13 November 2019

6	<b>Forum</b> member to work with the Company to review and update webpage as discussed	Ongoing
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#### Summary of actions: 21 January 2021

1	<p><b>Company</b> to circulate output from the Jury when complete</p> <p><b>Post meeting update</b> Updated expected in April 2021</p>	Ongoing
3	Affordability and Vulnerability subgroup to arrange a team meeting	Ongoing
5	<b>Company</b> to provide feedback	Ongoing
7	Additional feedback on how industry spend on communications compares across various companies to be shared with the Forum	Ongoing

8	End of project reports to be shared with the Forum at the end of the year	Ongoing
9	<a href="#">Company</a> to attend the July 2021 meeting to provide an update on the complaint's tracker  <b>Post meeting update</b> Added to the July future agenda	Ongoing

### Summary of actions: 18 February 2021

1	<a href="#">Forum</a> to provide the company with a statement of support regarding the Education PC	
2	<a href="#">Company</a> to share the Land Strategy programme with the Forum once developed.	

### Summary of actions: 18 March 2021

1	<a href="#">Company</a> to consider content and attendance from the Director of Customer Experience	Ongoing
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### Summary of actions: 17 May 2021

1	<a href="#">Company</a> to consider a partnership section on the YW website	
2	<a href="#">Company</a> to review communications updates with the Forum on a regular basis	
4	<a href="#">Forum</a> to provide letter of support regarding bathing water PC	
5	<a href="#">Company</a> to keep the Forum up to date and included in the CCG review process	Ongoing



### Summary of actions: 17 June 2021

No.	Action	Status	Due date
1	<a href="#">Company</a> to add a timeline/due date to actions		
2	<a href="#">Company</a> to amend paragraph E, item 6	<b>Complete</b>	24 June 2021
3	<a href="#">Forum</a> draft report to be circulated to members	<b>Complete</b>	17 June 2021
4	<a href="#">Company</a> to liaise with communications team regarding photos		
5	<a href="#">Company</a> to look at the comparable penalty position		15 July 2021
6	Agenda item regarding priority services, engagement, and affordability to be added to the next meeting	<b>Complete</b>	1 July 2021
7	Internal sewer flooding and mains repairs to be added to a future agenda		1 July 2021

### Summary of actions: 15 July 2021

No.	Action	Status	Due date
1	<a href="#">Company</a> to arrange GIS data/maps update at a future Forum meeting		
2	<a href="#">Company</a> to share strategic communication plan with the Forum		
3	<a href="#">Company</a> to provide complaints statistics to the Forum		<b>30 July 2021</b>

<b>4</b>	<b>Company</b> to share customer experience dashboard at a future meeting		
<b>5</b>	Proforma slide pack to be created for the company to complete when presenting the PCs		