



ccw

The voice for water consumers  
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

# Strategy

INCLUDING DRAFT FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME  
2025-26

# What does CCW do?

CCW is the voice for water consumers. One of our main priorities is to help consumers resolve complaints against their water company or retailer, and to provide free advice and support. Because household customers in England and Wales cannot change their supplier, it is absolutely crucial that their voice is heard in how the sector delivers their water services and protects their environment.

## We resolve tough complaints

CCW helps individual customers resolve complaints and enquiries about their water providers. In 2023-24, CCW received 10,760 complaints. This is a 26% increase on the 8,530 complaints we received in 2022-23. We also got back over a million pounds in redress for household and business customers.

In December 2023, we became the provider of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) for water customers in England and Wales, making it quicker and easier for them to resolve complaints against their service provider.

## We save money for consumers

CCW helps people find out whether they can save money on their water bill with the helpful online tools on our website.

In 2023-24, 4,861 people used CCW's [benefits calculator](#) to work out that they may be eligible for support totalling almost £31 million. And over 2,000 people used our [grants search tool](#).

Last year, 350,000 people used the [water meter calculator](#) on CCW's website. This tool helps people work out whether they could save water and money by switching to a meter. In 2023-24 it identified about £25 million of potential savings for bill payers.

Our [Get Water Fit](#) page shows people where they can get hold of free water-saving products from their water company.

## **We work with water companies to better serve customers**

The [Water Industry Act 1991](#) gives CCW a wide remit to act on behalf of customers.

During 2023-24, CCW completed five complaint assessments. These assessments involve teams from CCW spending two full days with a water company's customer services team. They carry out deep-dive assessments of a random selection of customer complaints. As well as discussing them in detail while onsite, afterwards, CCW sends the companies detailed reports about what they found and gives them a list of clear action points. Then there are follow-up sessions to make sure improvements are being made. Water companies have told us they find these assessments really useful and we have seen them lead to change within companies and improvements to the way complaints are handled.

## **We understand consumers**

CCW carries out [extensive research](#) to keep our finger on the pulse of consumers' experiences and views.






## **We shape the policy landscape**

We use this solid evidence base to influence specific water company policies as well as those of water regulators and we provide advice about what consumers want to Defra and Welsh government.

# How we work

People are at the heart of everything we do, whether that's influencing policy change or handling each complaint with respect.

Our values define what we stand for as an organisation. They guide us in our day-to-day work and decisions.

<b>P</b>	<b>Positive energy</b> Energy, enthusiastic, active, 'can-do'	
<b>R</b>	<b>Respect for all</b> Inclusivity, uniqueness, celebrate, valuing	
<b>I</b>	<b>Innovative spirit</b> Bravery, creative-thinking, seeking, collaborative	
<b>D</b>	<b>Deliver our promises</b> Commitment, responsibility, accountability, integrity	
<b>E</b>	<b>Engaged as one</b> Team, together, clear goals	

# Strategic priorities

CCW believes that the three things that most urgently need fixing for the water consumers of England and Wales – which CCW can proactively help with, given our remit and unique position in the water industry – are:



## Trust in the water sector



## Fair and affordable bills



## Resilient water services

CCW's research during 2023-24 – including our annual [Water Matters](#) tracker survey; our [Customer Spotlight](#) joint research with Ofwat; the deep-dive [Environmental Index](#); and our [testing of the acceptability and affordability of Ofwat's July 2024 draft determinations](#) – demonstrates that:

- Falling trust in the water sector is a greater issue than ever before.
- Satisfaction with customers' contact with their water company is also falling.
- The affordability of water bills is a growing concern in the current context of economic uncertainty.
- Customers want to see more action being taken to protect the environment.



## Our mission

Ensure people are well-informed, treated fairly and have confidence in their water service.

## Our purpose

We are passionate about championing the best interests of everyone who uses water, now and in the future.

## Our vision

A water sector that listens to people and delivers exceptional, sustainable services that are accessible to all.



# Our Forward Work Programme 2025-26

To meet our overall strategic objectives, CCW's Forward Work Programme contains the deliverables we will focus on achieving in 2025-26. These are over and above our business-as-usual activities – dealing with complaints, challenging companies, generating insights and communicating with customers.

CCW's day-to-day work helping customers resolve disputes and save money is regularly measured and scrutinised by our Board.

CCW's customer targets for 2025-26:

- All complaints to CCW will be acknowledged and allocated for review to a case advisor within two working days.
- 80% of cases will be resolved by 20 working days.
- 95% of cases will be resolved at 40 working days.



**To help increase trust in the water sector, in 2025-26 CCW will:**

- Prepare for and respond to any CMA appeals following Ofwat's December 2024 Final Determinations
- Contribute to the joint Defra/Welsh government's Water Commission
- Set up and run customer panels for each of the water companies in England and Wales to hold water company executives to account
- Build on lessons learned from the 2024 price review to influence the 2029 price review
- Carry out at least 5 incident assessments with water companies
- Carry out at least 5 debt assessments with water companies
- Establish CCW's Customer Relations department as a Centre of Excellence:
- Carry out at least 8 complaint assessments with household water companies and at least 2 with retailers
- Work with all parties to create a mediation and adjudication scheme for business customers
- Carry out at least one formal investigation – either into services for households or business customers - as per CCW's powers in the [Water Industry Act 1991](#)

- Publish a follow-up report on whether low water-use businesses (using up to 0.5Ml/yr) should be in the water retail market in England
- Publish a 2-years-on progress report of CCW's [Five Year Review](#) recommendations



## **In our commitment to fair and affordable bills, CCW will:**

- Continue to campaign for a single social tariff
- Develop a new water poverty model to accurately measure water poverty across all water companies in England and Wales, and use that model to hold water companies to account on their pledge to end water poverty by 2030
- Facilitate the delivery of the [WaterSure](#) recommendations
- Evaluate the implementation of vulnerability strategies, including vulnerable customers' experience of water companies' priority services registers
- Raise public awareness of affordability support – as measured by CCW's Water Matters research. All companies should aim to achieve at least 53% by summer 2026. Any companies who achieve this score or higher by summer 2025 should aim to improve their summer 2025 score by 3% as a minimum.



## **To play our part in ensuring resilient water services for customers, CCW will:**

- Ensure the design and communication of Defra's new water efficiency label works for customers and provide evidence of public awareness of it
- On smart meters, ensure water companies provide the necessary information so households and businesses can save water and money, and make sure the customer journey meets their expectations
- Revisit our [End Sewer Flooding Misery](#) campaign and work with companies to help them adopt best practice, particularly for vulnerable customers



## **CCW's costs**

CCW's costs for 2025-26 will be at least 29.3p per bill payer. Further increases may be confirmed before April 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 to enable CCW to take on additional responsibilities.

## **We want to hear from you**

**To give your views on our Strategy and Forward Work Programme for 2025-26, please email Ali Bell at [ali.bell@ccw.org.uk](mailto:ali.bell@ccw.org.uk) by Tuesday 13 February 2025.**

# CCW

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