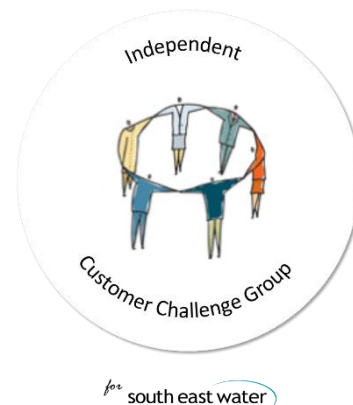


Notes of Meeting No.1 of the South East Water CCG
Consumer Vulnerability Sub-Group held on
30th June 2017, at Snodland Head Office



Present:

- Zoe McLeod (Chair)
- Penny Shepherd (PS) (CCW)
- Janet Hill (JH) (Swale Borough Council)
- Caroline Farquhar (CF) (Citizens Advice)
- Steve George (SEW)
- Simon Mullan (SEW)
- Shelia Bowdery (SEW)
- Kathy Dunn (SEW)
- Nicola Blake (NB) (SEW)

Agenda Item no.	Notes and Actions	Action	Timescale
1. Terms of reference	<p>The Chair opened the meeting by discussing the draft terms of reference for The Sub-Group. Members gave feedback on key items – including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There will be no separate report to be collated, the overall CCG report will cover thoughts and comments from The Group. ▪ Meetings will go ahead with a minimum of 3 CCG members in attendance. ▪ Sub-Group papers should be issued 5 days in advance of any meeting <p>PS discussed her thoughts on how water wholesales communicate with vulnerable customers needed to be looked at, gave an example of planned interruptions not be communicated to carers who go into care homes. The Company informed the Sub-Group that it is now working on improving this.</p> <p>Action raised from this discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair to circulate a picture of the vulnerability risk factors diagram that was drawn on the white board at the start of the meeting. <p>Challenges raised from this discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What does The Company know about the characteristics of its customers that are listed in the risk factor diagram. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the customer journeys and can The Company map these to the risk factors for each scenario. ▪ Use public information, e.g. kent council website, etc. The Sub-Group thought that it would be good to use some energy companies as they are encouraged to share with other utilities. 		
2. Company's current approach	<p>SM presented paper 2 to the Sub-Group which explained what The company is currently doing in regards to Vulnerability.</p> <p>The Sub-Group discussed one of The Company's values of 'we will deliver Highest Service at the Low Possible Cost'. The Sub-Group thought that this could be seen as a trade-off.</p> <p>The Company explained about the Code of Practice Document that has recently been re-written, items including, flexibility of payments methods and best practice of debt pathways are included in this document. The Company also informed the Sub-Group that all payment methods were now free to customers, the company was able to take payment in many different ways and is only restricted where system constraints are in place.</p> <p>The Chair informed the Sub-Group that Ofwat were currently thinking about setting Outcomes in PR19 for measures around vulnerability, this would become clearer once the Draft Methodology for PR19 was published in July.</p> <p>The Sub-Group discussed how The Company was working with neighbouring companies to align the rules and set up of social tariffs. The Company informed the Sub-Group that an agreement had been made with Southern and Thames that customers in SEWs patch would be on the SEW social tariff. The Chair would like to have a separate meeting to discuss the differences between Southern Water and South East Water's social tariffs.</p> <p>The Chair asked The Company if its staff were incentivised to put customers on a social tariff or on the amount of debt that is collected. The Company responded by telling The Sub-Group that staff are not incentivised. The Company also informed the Group</p>		

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	<p>that customers who have recently had a meter installed and had a bill increase due to this are put on to a 'phase in tariff' so the increase is not felt all in one year.</p> <p>CF expressed how pleased she was that The Company are undertaking preventative work and not just reactive work, i.e. spotting people who are struggling to pay earlier and not letting the debt build up.</p> <p>Actions raised from this discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Company is to re-think the wording for its highest service lowest cost value. ▪ The Chair and Company to have a meeting to discuss Southern Water's social tariff ▪ The Company to circulate its list of third party partnerships. ▪ The Company to circulate its list of community events the team has attended. ▪ List of ways SEW is trying to improve access to information and contact. ▪ The Chair to put the Company into contact with Barclays to discuss its training tool. <p>Challenges raised from this discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is there an area that The Company can try to take the lead in the industry on vulnerability to try and show the rest of the industry all the good work that the company is doing. ▪ The Company to think about getting Samaritans training like the CAB did for its new starters. 		
3. Engagement	<p>SM presented paper 3 to The Sub-Group.</p> <p>CF asked The Company how much horizon scanning they have done. The Company responded that it had not completed any horizon scanning.</p> <p>Challenges raised from this discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Company should look into completing horizon scanning. 		
5. AOB	<p>Challenges raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Company should think about appointing a consumer champion on the Board. 		
6. Private session	[text to be added]		