

Customer Challenge Group Vulnerability sub-group

Meeting 5, Agenda item 6

Priority Services Register Deep Dive

3 January 2018



Overview

- Background and requirements
- Current customer code of practice
- Priority Services Register
 - How it works
 - Support Areas
 - Registered customers
 - Services Provided
- Issues and Opportunities

Background and requirements

- Initially driven by requirements of companies' formal licences to operate
- Companies' licences (conditions G, H and I) set out their obligations to provide information on services available to household customers, covering:
- the nature of the services to customers, including:
 - services to be provided;
 - tariffs;
 - payment options;
 - complaints handling;
 - what to do in an emergency;
 - meter accuracy and liability for charges; and
 - the Consumer Council for Water's contact details;
- guidance to customers who have difficulty paying their bills; and
- advising customers of their options and rights about the help available when they have a leaking supply pipe.

Approach reviewed in 2014

- Information principles established
 - **Accurate**
each company should make sure the information it provides is correct by regularly reviewing it – for example, to make sure it is consistent with its charges scheme. Any updates should be shared with customers directly and with advice providers.
 - **Transparent**
information should not be misleading. It needs to be unbiased and enable individual customers to make informed decisions.
 - **Clear**
information should highlight key messages and direct customers to more detailed information.
 - **Accessible**
each company should provide different information and use different communication channels to meet the needs and preferences of particular customer groups ('customer segmentation').
 - **Timely**
companies should design and deliver information in a way that makes sure customers get the right information at the right time – for example, when a customer moves house.
 - **Customer-led**
each company should actively seek its customers' views and representatives' views and feedback on the information it provides and how it provides it. It should respond to customer and customer representatives' information needs.

Current Code of Practice

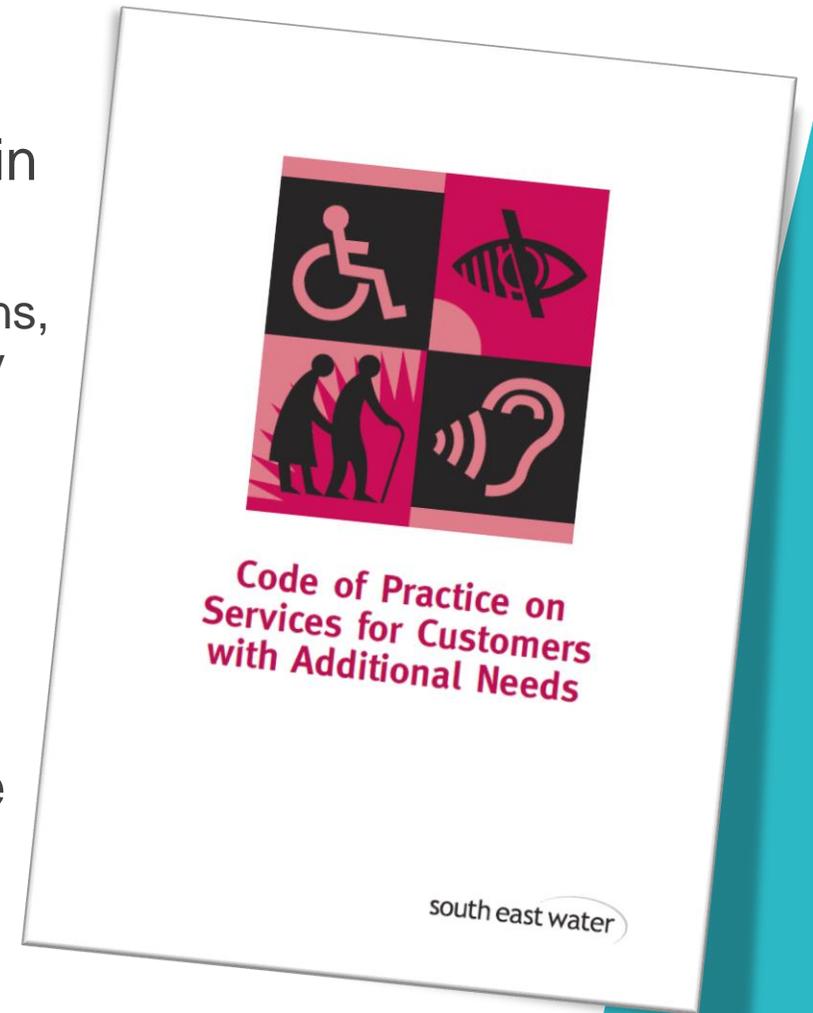


Principles have been reflected in Code of practice developments since then.

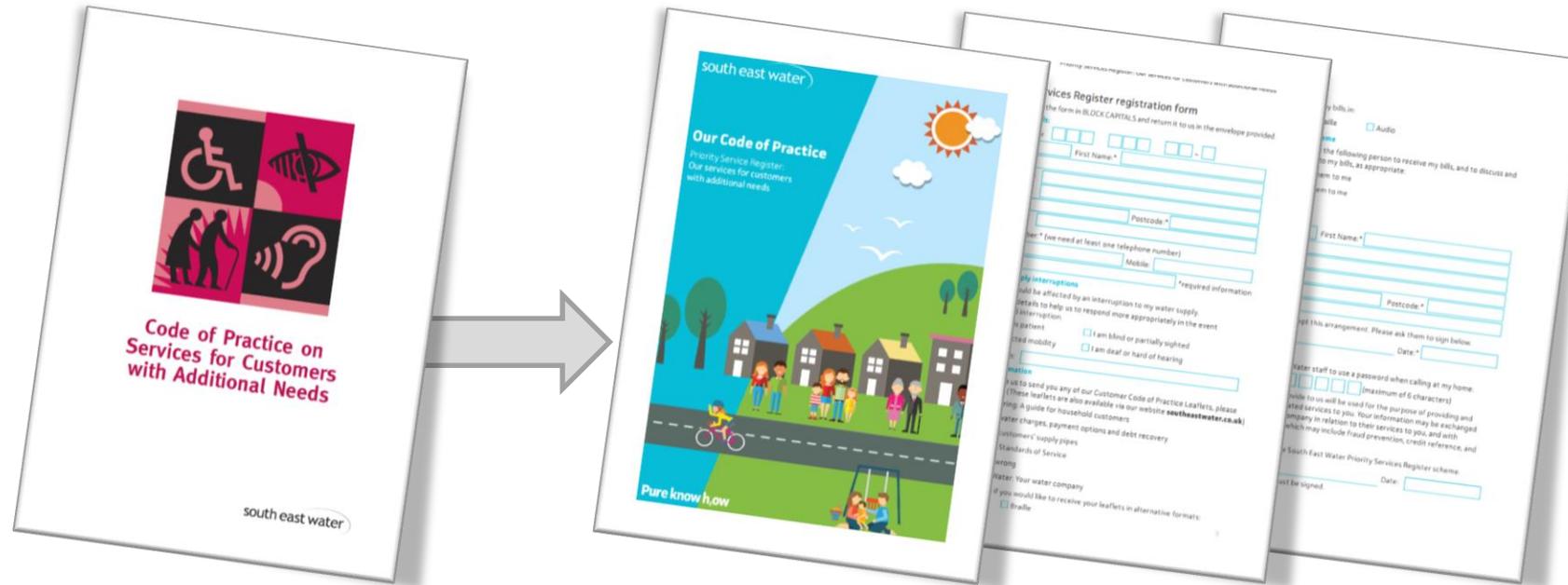
Format now more flexible, driven by customer needs and demand, e.g. Household Water Charges leaflet is now a combination of two previous documents, making it more accessible to customers.

Services for Customers with Additional Needs

- Legislation and licences are focused on provision of main regulated services
 - e.g. what companies will do to minimise water supply interruptions, how they will advise customers, and what they should pay if they fail to meet these obligations
- What companies should do to provide alternative water supplies in the event of prolonged interruptions is driven by length of interruption, and limited to delivery to community locations.
- Companies themselves have primarily been responsible for the development of services for customers with additional needs



Creating the Priority Services Register



At South East Water we want to ensure that all our customers can access our services, including those who may have additional needs.

Priority Services Register is our package of free services for customers with mobility restrictions; who may be deaf, blind or partially sighted; suffering a long / short term sickness or illness, as well as our elderly customers. Additionally, if your first language is not English we may be able to help you with our interpretation service.

Our Priority Services Register scheme will not reduce your bills, but it can help ensure we provide the right services to meet the additional needs of our customers, or family members who may be caring for them.

PSR Services

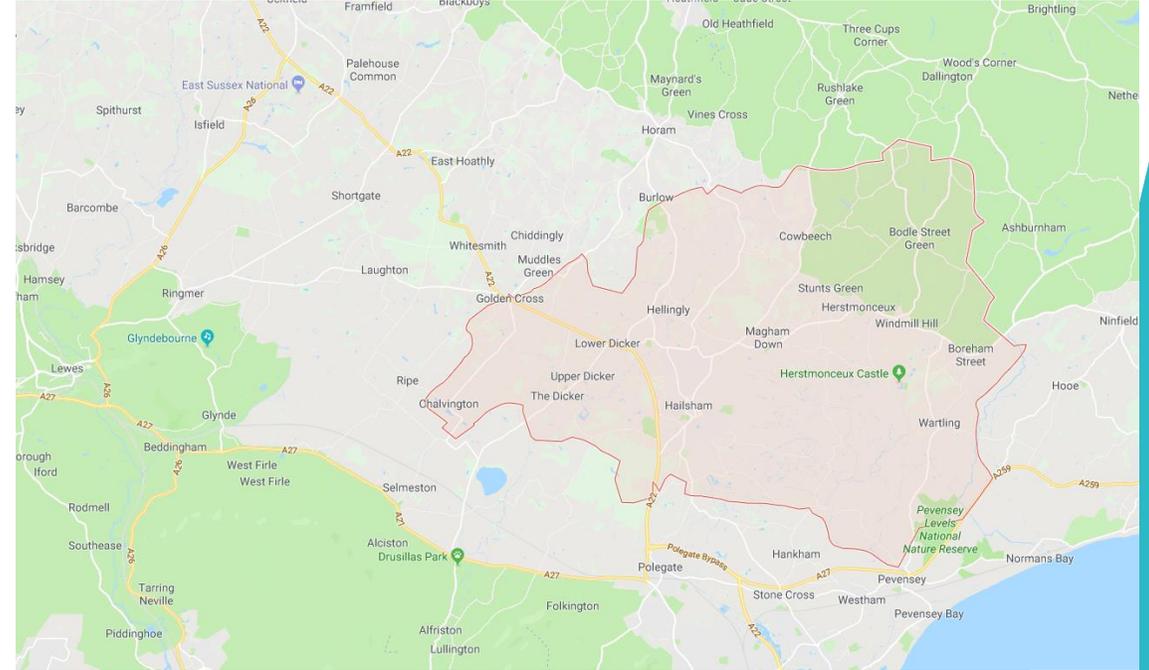
Customers registering with SEW's Priority Services Register can choose to:

- Receive **prior warning of planned work** which may mean interrupting your water supply
- **Receive information**, including bills, **in a more convenient format**, such as large print or the spoken word
- **Register a spoken or written password** for our staff to use if we need to call at your home
- **Nominate somebody else to receive your water bill** on your behalf, or someone we should contact if it remains unpaid.
- **Receive information** about specialist organisations that are able to provide advice **on possible adaptations to water fittings** and appliances around the home

How it works...

e.g. Blind customer

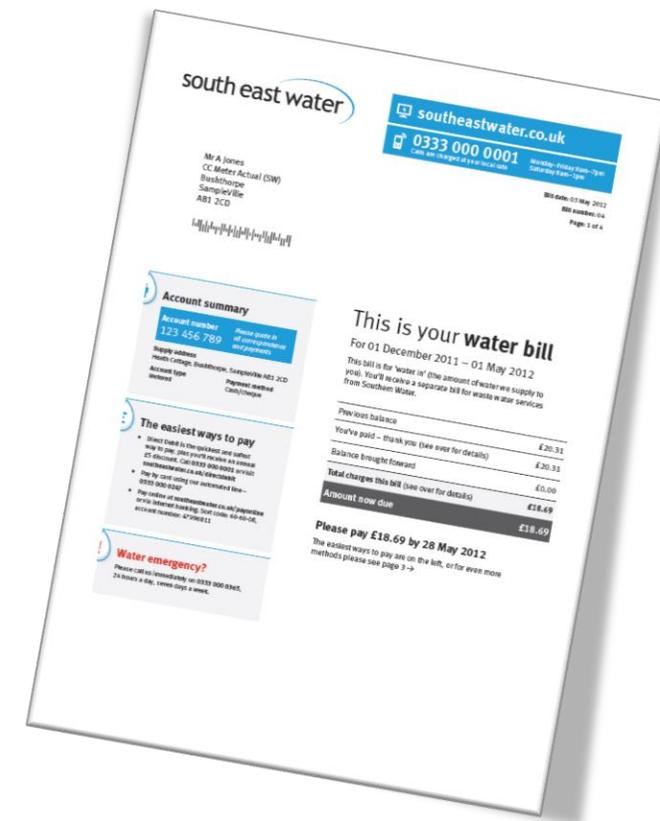
- Unplanned Water Supply Interruption...
- Operational team will identify potential areas affected
- Information provided to Customer Care Team
- Customer Care Team identifies all registered customers within potential area
- Customers are contacted in priority order (e.g. Dialysis patients first)
- Blind customer will be contacted based on registered preferences
- Additional needs recorded and prioritised, e.g. bottled water delivery



How it works...

e.g. Blind customer

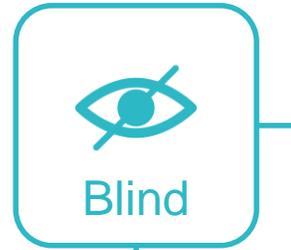
- Standard Bill Delivery
- Customer's account is flagged and standard print Bill is returned to office on production.
- Customer's preferences is for Large Print Bill
- Customer Care Team enlarges Standard Bill and despatches to customer.
- Same procedures is followed in the event of follow up communications, such as payment reminders.



Priority Services Register – Vulnerabilities recorded

- Communication Needs
 - Blind
 - Deaf
 - Blind and Deaf
- Medical dependency
- Restricted Mobility
- Safety concerns





350
customers

Standard Business Process

- 📄 Large Print Bills
- 🎧 Audio CD
- 🗨️ Braille
- ☎️ Telephone
- 🚩 Account flagged as vulnerable

The information we provide is intended to be accessible to all our customers. If customers prefer our leaflets in an alternative format, such as large print, braille or audio, this allows them to receive this. We have just 34 customers registered for Braille communications.

We can also offer an appointment with a member of RNIB if appropriate.

Process during incident/works

Customers are contacted by Customer Care team and updated, and offered delivery of bottled water if required. In a small incident, the delivery would be made by a tech. If a larger incident, Customer Care would step in to help.



421
customers

Standard Business Process

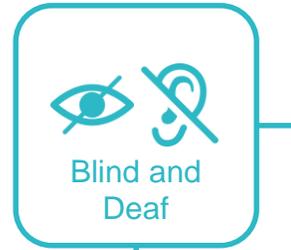
- Account flagged as vulnerable
- Textlocal
- Sign language appointments made, if necessary
- Planned works communicated via the Customer Care team

Customer accounts are flagged so that contact is only made via email. A Text Local service is being developed and piloted to enable our deaf customers to contact with standard business enquiries and incident queries.

We also continue to offer a Minicom service, although this is no longer a popular choice for our deaf customers, which is the main driver behind the development of the text local service.

Process during incident/works

Website is updated with information and text messages sent to all customers in affected area. Customers contacted by email in the event of bottled water stations being established. If bottled water delivery required, Customer Care team would step in to help.



93
customers

Business as Usual

-  Contact via braille or third party
-  Correspondence in requested format.
-  Planned works communicated via the Customer Care team
-  Hand deliver for clarity.
-  Account flagged as vulnerable

Process during incident/works

Process mirrors communications for blind customers. Contact is made to advise of the incident, and understand requirements, such as whether delivery of bottled water required. In a small incident, the delivery would be made by a tech. if a larger incident, Customer Care would step in to help.

Most customers in this category have been contacted and have partners living with them, or nominated carers contact details. We would ensure that we have details of a third party authority for these customers to correspond business as usual and during an incident.



11,072
customers

Business as Usual

- Account flagged as vulnerable
- Planned works communicated via the Customer Care team.
- Hand deliver for clarity.

Service is intended for Customers who are concerned about understanding or remembering to pay their water bill.

Bills are out-sorted for delivery to customers.

Total number includes all customers who may have requested, and requires sub-classification to improve visibility.

Process during incident/works

Customer contacted and updated, and assessment made on whether delivery of bottled water required. In a small incident, the delivery would be made by a tech. If a larger incident, Customer Care would step in to help.



164
customers

Business as Usual

- Account flagged as vulnerable
- Planned works communicated via the Customer Care team, or any recovery issues.

Process during incident/works

Dialysis customers are our only water-dependent category of vulnerability, We always contact these customer if we have planned work so that they can arrange alternative treatment facilities or, where possible, delay treatment until service has been restored. In an incident, bottled water is delivered as a priority, and updates provided on the incident, customer constantly keep informed, third part contact if requested. Customer will be advised to go to hospital if dialysis is due, and Customer Care team would step in to help.



12,841
customers

Business as Usual

- Account flagged as vulnerable
- Contact via the Customer Care team for billing, recovery, engineering or update issues.

Customers can request a free check reading service if they think that their meter reading is incorrect.
Class includes customers with temporary and short-term mobility restrictions, e.g. post-operative recovery, and customers whose mobility restrictions would limit their use of a watering can (rather than a hosepipe) during a drought.

Process during incident/works

During a water supply incident, these customers will have priority access to water which will be delivered where possible as we appreciate they may struggle to either carry or be able to get out and collect this. Customers are contacted and updated, and assessed as to whether delivery of bottled water is required. Customer Care team would step in to help.



1,048 customers

Business as Usual

- Account flagged as vulnerable
- Password held and used for contact by either, field techs or Customer Care team for safety concerns.

Customers can register a password for our representatives to use if we ever need to call at their home. This will help them to be sure of the identity of our personnel before opening the door to them. The password can be spoken or written.

Process during incident/works

Customer contacted and updated, delivery of bottled water if required. Customer Care team would step in to help.

Current Issues

- Focus is primarily on vulnerability risks associated with loss of drinking water supply – very little information held on financial vulnerability.
- Our information has been stored inefficiently, limiting the scope for proactive management and communications with categories of customers.
- Transient vulnerability is managed within an overall segment – e.g. temporary medical conditions cannot currently be separately identified.
- Changing social and cultural issues are not addressed by our current services – e.g. cultural barriers based on gender of SEW personnel.
- Approach is “home grown”, reflecting positively on the culture of the business, but limiting the scope and scale of data held.
- GDPR changes also need to be accommodated going forward
- A number of issues will be addressed through the current cross-sector joint working initiatives underway.

End