

Vulnerability strategy

1. Introduction

At Water Plus, we take pride in serving over 360,000 customers across the UK. Ensuring our customers feel secure and confident in the services we provide is paramount to us. We are committed to doing the right thing and providing peace of mind through our reliable services.

To uphold this commitment, we strictly follow the Customer Code of Practice requirements established by water industry regulators. This adherence is a cornerstone of our promise to deliver exceptional service to our customers. As a result, you benefit from the protections offered by the Code of Practice in Scotland and the Customer Protection Code of Practice in England.

Vulnerability in the non-household sector is materially different from vulnerability in the domestic sector; however, we recognise that in some circumstances, some business customers can still benefit from additional support beyond the required protections. Water Plus is committed to ensuring our customers have access to support and have their accessibility needs met regardless of vulnerability status.

2. Understanding why customers may need additional support

We recognise that among non-household customers, the need for additional support can arise from a variety of factors. It is likely that in many cases these needs will be identified via our debt process, unless the customer proactively contacts us.

Personal circumstances of key individuals

This includes health issues, financial difficulties, or other personal challenges that may impact their ability to manage water services effectively. We understand that these circumstances can vary widely and may require tailored support to ensure these individuals can access our services without undue stress or hardship.

Business circumstances

Factors such as economic instability, operational challenges, or changes in business structure can affect a customer's ability to manage their water services.

Inclusive service provision

We believe that providing an inclusive service is crucial to preventing detriment to the performance of businesses and the well-being of key individuals.

By recognising and addressing the diverse drivers of vulnerability, Water Plus aims to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all our non-household customers.

3. Changing customer needs

Conditions may occur that can affect a customer's ability to manage their water services. These conditions can arise from sudden changes in personal or business circumstances, such as:

- **Health crises:** Illness or injury of key individuals within a business can temporarily impact their capacity to handle water-related issues.
- **Economic fluctuations:** Short-term financial difficulties, such as cash flow problems or unexpected expenses, can create temporary vulnerabilities.
- **Operational disruptions:** Events like equipment failures, supply chain interruptions, or natural disasters can disrupt business operations and create immediate needs for additional support.

By recognising and addressing the transient and dynamic nature of customer needs, Water Plus ensures that our non-household customers receive the necessary support to manage their water services effectively, regardless of changing circumstances.

4. Current support offered to customers

We are dedicated to providing comprehensive support to all our customers. Our current offerings include:

- **Accessible communications:** Our website follows accessibility guidelines, and our MyAccount platform offers features for monitoring water usage, managing bills, and accessing support, such as large print, braille, talking bill options, and translation services. We use various channels, including our website, welcome packs, bills, and social media, to keep customers informed.
- **Flexible payment plans:** We offer flexible payment plans to help customers manage their finances more effectively. This includes options for spreading payments over a longer period to ease financial pressure.
- **Breathing space:** We provide breathing space for customers facing temporary financial difficulties, allowing them time to recover without the immediate pressure of payments.

5. Plans for the development of future support for customers

Continuous improvement

Water Plus will adopt a continuous improvement approach to our vulnerability strategy. This means regularly reviewing and updating our plans based on the latest data, customer feedback, and industry best practices. By staying agile and responsive, we can ensure that our incident management strategy remains effective and delivers the highest level of support to our customers.

Technological innovations

We will be exploring and implementing new technologies to improve our service delivery. This includes the use of smart metering and other innovative solutions to help businesses track and optimise their water consumption.