

8942/United Utilities
Cognitive testing feedback

Approach

Cognitive testing completed with nine people living in the United Utilities region. The cognitive tests were undertaken to confirm understanding and to identify any areas of the discussion guide (or associated materials) that might be problematic in live sessions.

Overview

Overall, respondents found that the materials were clear and understandable, and the flow of the discussions was logical. Most were very happy to talk around the subject from beginning to end.

All tests ran to time, and the questions and materials (pre-task, post-task, stimulus – including video) and questions from the discussion guide were all well-understood.

Outcomes

Material	Comment	Actions
Overall comments / intro	DJS and UU overall main concerns ahead of cog testing were about the scale of reading materials and length of the video. Also as format is very much prescribed, there were concerns that it wouldn't flow. DJS were pleasantly surprised on the outcome, and people were well engaged and easy to converse with.	No amendments needed.
CCW Comparison graphs	Some found the tables much easier to interpret than the charts, especially as they expected a higher number to be an indicator of better performance. On balance, we'd recommend keeping both the charts and the tables in place, as those who naturally 'got' them found them a useful way of evaluating performance.	Agreement from all to keep both charts and tables.
	We recommend adding a prompt to the guide for the supply interruption slide, to make sure everyone understands. The definition that CCW gives us is correct, but unclear to some without further explanation.	Agreement from all to add prompt as suggested.
	On the vulnerable support services comparison slides, it is unclear where the data refers to a total and where it refers to an	DJS confirmed that the most useful figure for customers was the average, so all agreed to

	average at the bottom of each – we need to be clearer here.	use this in amended table.
In-depth service improvement slides	In the latest update of the performance figures, external flooding figures have been changed to measure events per 10,000 properties – flooding inside properties is measured per 1,000 properties, which is confusing. Can we change both to 10,000?	Agreement from all to change figure to 10,000.
	The 'how-to' boxes on the right of these slides are very top-level and are similar across many of the service improvement approaches. We should be prepared for people to have questions looking for more detail – we don't need to add this to the slides, but it would be useful for the moderators to have a crib sheet on-hand with greater detail, if available.	DJS to provide UU with questions which were asked and UU to draft a crib sheet for moderator. Agreement from all on next steps.
	We'd recommend adding an indicator of whether UU is below/above target for each of the 6 core service improvement slides. We had some who wanted to look at this information as they made their decisions, which involved flicking between screens.	Agreement from all to add indicator.
	Something that has been discussed before – due to time constraints, we'd recommend doing a deep dive review of only the PSR, Affordability, Support, and Smart Meter service improvements for vulnerable customers. We will still present them with an overview of all ten standard service improvements and will include all aspects as the sum up of the overall acceptability of the plan.	Agreement from all to limit to suggested areas and to provide wording on the reasons behind this.

Bill impact	We would like to revisit the possibility of including the combined bill impact amount on the charts. This was a point of confusion for a number of participants, who struggled to do the maths in their heads.	Agreement from all to add overall bill impacts (impact and inflation) below Y axis to aid customer understanding. Bernice agreed with decision and will finalise at the next subgroup.
	NHH – Bill impacts as a percentage are hard for people to get their heads around. Especially as they have to calculate both the bill increase and inflationary increase. We’re happy to still include a slide with percentages, but would like to progress onto the individualised bill impacts (in £) before asking for reactions (printed out in pack and sealed in envelope).	Agreement from all to keep slide in, but moderator to focus on bespoke bill impacts provided in envelope. If no bill provided, NHH will receive a £500 and £1000 bill impact for context and moderator to attempt to provide approximate costs based on estimated bill within the focus group.
	For FBP and HH, we recommend including a slide for average single occupancy bill impact (£297).	Agreement from all on approach.
	The detail on WINEP, etc, is too much to read out. It is included in the pre-task and we can print out for people to refer to on the day, if they need that level of detail. Otherwise, it’s not adding much benefit and taking a long time out of the discussion.	Agreement from all to use this approach and remove from session stimulus, however to keep it available when discussing must do vs proposed and bill impacts.
	It would be good to have some information on-hand for the moderators to give a brief explanation as to why the bill amount dips in the first year, rather than rises.	UU to provide DJS with explanation for moderator crib sheet.
Other slides	We recommend reordering the keys on the first map slide, so that it prioritises the core water providers.	Agreement from all with amendment.

	<p>People found the prescribed CCW text about the consultation and performance measurement a bit dull, even if they understood it. There's not much we can do here, however.</p>	<p>Agreement from all that no actions needed, as customers do understand the content but feedback is based on attention/engagement. Agreement from Bernice.</p>
<p>The guides</p>	<p>The recited introduction to the Long Term Plan section is long and doesn't add much after a point. We recommend removing the content starting with 'For example' and ending with 'next five years and beyond'. The last of these paragraphs caused confusion as there is no reference to financial support in the long term plan itself.</p>	<p>Agreement from all to remove section.</p>
	<p>Similarly, we'd recommend cutting down the initial overview of phasing – it can be covered in just one paragraph.</p>	<p>Agreement from all to cut to one paragraph.</p>
	<p>We didn't have any issue with the 'must-do' and 'proposed' terminology. The 'must-do' is only covered in the session itself not the pre-task materials, so there is an opportunity for a fuller explanation.</p>	<p>Decided that no amendments needed. There was a concern from Bernice that customers wouldn't understand the difference between 'proposed' and 'must do'. The cog testing confirmed that participants did understand this concept and therefore it was decided to keep wording as is, with Bernice's agreement.</p>