

A network diagram background consisting of a complex web of interconnected nodes and lines. The nodes are represented by small circles, some of which are larger and have concentric circles around them, suggesting a central or more significant node. The lines are thin and grey, creating a dense, interconnected structure. The background is split horizontally into a white top half and a dark grey bottom half.

Britainthinks

Insight & Strategy

United Utilities Customer Research

Stimulus

Ideas to help UU customers with paying bills

New methods for United Utilities to engage with customers

- Video calls
- Pop-up or permanent hubs

New methods for customers to pay United Utilities

- Seasonal payment plans
- Monthly billing
- Payment plan rounding

New methods for customers to access support services for paying bills

- Open banking
- QR codes
- Priority services advisor
- Simplified application process

New methods for United Utilities to engage with customers



Video calls

- The option for a virtual face-to-face call with a United Utilities Advisor to discuss your payment plan, instead of a phone call
- Offers a more personable conversation
- You may feel more comfortable discussing sensitive issues when speaking to someone face-to-face than over the phone



Pop-up or permanent hubs

- Temporary or permanent hubs placed in areas where customers might be in most need of financial support
- The hub would be in the local area e.g. a stall in a shopping or job centre
- You can come talk to United Utilities staff about your finances in person at the hub, which may feel more comfortable than over the phone
- The staff member will be able to access your account live during the conversation to ensure they have all the information needed
- United Utilities would look to help get customers on the lowest tariff possible and on a payment plan that suits their circumstances

New methods for customers to pay United Utilities



Seasonal payment plans

- Flexible payment schemes give you the option to plan payments in a way that suits you
- Tailor made payment plans to suit your specific income pattern so you pay more when you're more able, and less when you're less able
- Pay as you go options, so you can pay as much as you want when you want e.g. for people on zero hour contracts



Monthly billing

- The option for monthly billing instead of 6 monthly or yearly
- Means the payments you need to make are smaller, which may make it easier to pay
- No more intimidating 6 monthly or yearly bills



Payment plan rounding

- Payment plans would be automatically rounded up to whole numbers, the extra goes towards credit
- For example, if the payment plan is £23.38, this could be rounded to £24
- Over time the extra credit adds up to create a buffer which can be used in difficult times
- There would be a small impact on the amount paid but over time could add up to build credit

New methods for customers to access support services for paying bills



Open banking

- With your consent, United Utilities are allowed access to your financial records, saving you from having to gather this information yourself, potentially multiple times
- United Utilities would get a 'snapshot' of your income and any benefits or pensions to build a better idea of your financial situation
- This would help them to understand your situation, build a payment plan that works for you, and get you on the right scheme



QR codes

- Electronic QR codes attached to letters and bills from United Utilities which take you straight through to a payment page or a page to communicate with staff
- Saves you time and effort by making it easier to pay bills or communicate with United Utilities



Priority services advisor

- Applying to Priority Services (United Utilities services to help people in vulnerable situations) can put you in touch with an advisor
- The advisor is there to discuss your needs and direct you to resources
- Saves you time seeking out support and resources



Simplified application process

- A single simplified application process for support schemes, rather than different ones for different schemes
- United Utilities assess which of their schemes would be most suitable for you
- A quick and easy one-stop-shop for customers to apply to schemes



Thank you

info@britainthinks.com

T: +44 (0)20 7845 5880

www.britainthinks.com

BritainThinks
West Wing
Somerset House
London
WC2R 1LA
United Kingdom