

YourVoice statement | 2025/26



We, the YourVoice Independent Challenge Group, have been operating since 2014. Our aim is to make sure that United Utilities Water (the company) consults its customers and stakeholders to understand and take account of their views and priorities.

We make sure that engagement activities, such as customer workshops, focus groups, surveys and research carried out by the company are clear and understandable to those taking part, and that the results are reflected in the company's business plans and in its day-to-day operations.

We monitor the company's actual performance against its published performance targets. We receive reports on the company's ongoing improvement plans and continually review and challenge areas where its performance falls short of these targets.

We are totally independent of the company, and our members include customers, stakeholders, large and small businesses, developers, environmental regulators, the Consumer Council for Water, the voluntary, charitable and environmental sectors, disability charities, vulnerable-customer representatives, future bill payers, and money and community advice services. We are not all industry experts but act as informed customers and challenge the company on that basis.

So that we can have meaningful discussions and monitor the company's work at an appropriate level of detail, we have four subgroups.

- Customer research and engagement
- Environment and social capital
- Affordability and vulnerability
- Stakeholder engagement

The company's directors and senior staff attend subgroup meetings, and we have regular access to the company's Chief Executive and board members.

We monitored the company's research and engagement with customers and stakeholders while it prepared the current business plan, which covers the five-year period from 2025 to 2030. The business plan was widely discussed and was the subject of extensive research and consultation with customers and stakeholders. In fact, around 95,000 household and business customers from across the North West were consulted on the proposed plan.

We also continue to act as a reference point for Ofwat (the water regulator), demonstrating that United Utilities is engaging meaningfully with its customers and stakeholders in shaping its priorities and investment plans, and achieving its performance commitments.

The company's four outcomes describe what it will deliver for customers and communities in the North West. Each outcome contains performance commitments, which show the measures the company needs to achieve to provide reliable services, protect the environment and support customers. In the 2025–30 business plan there are 25 performance commitments. This is fewer than in previous years as Ofwat has reduced the number of performance commitments in order to move to a more focused regulatory framework that is driven by results. This will also help us compare United Utilities' performance with that of other water companies, as most water companies use the same performance commitments.



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United Utilities achieved 10 (47%) of its performance targets in 2025/26 but missed 11 (53%). Four performance commitments are industry comparison measures or do not have a target for 2025/26.

The first year of the business plan is now complete. Our views on the company's performance in 2025/26 are as follows.

- Having a reliable and high-quality water supply is a major priority for customers in the North West. All water companies use the Compliance Risk Index (CRI) to monitor water-quality standards, as required by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. The challenging target is a score of zero, but in 2025 the company scored 2.11, which was a significant improvement on last year (10.29) but still did not meet the target. This is an area for improvement and is the subject of a continuing water-improvement programme, which we will keep monitoring. However, customers can be assured their water supply is safe for drinking, cooking and washing, and the quality is good.
- The number of complaints the company received (1.33 contacts per 1,000 people) about the taste, smell and appearance of the water coming from customers' taps marginally failed to meet its target of 1.12 contacts per 1,000 people.

- Customers expect a reliable and constant water supply, and this performance commitment was not met. The time customers were without water averaged 13 minutes and 2 seconds, against a target of 5 minutes. The company has in place a supply-interruption plan which aims to reduce the effect this has on customers. The company's 'water on wheels' tankers were used when the water supply was disrupted, and customers on its Priority Services Register were given extra help during these incidents. Feedback from customers following incidents was, on the whole, positive in terms of how well the company communicated with customers about the problem and the expected time before water supply would be restored.
- The company's performance on pollution incidents was 42.15 incidents per 10,000 kilometres of sewer, against a target of 25.02. This is an improvement on the previous year but the company failed to meet the target, mainly due to a severe storm in January 2025. Plans are in place to help prevent further issues, including initiatives to reduce power failures during storms, and increased staff training and maintenance. The company's performance includes no category-1 pollution incidents but two category-2 incidents – these two categories are considered the most serious in terms of the environment.
- Of the 389 treatment works in the North West, 98.2% met the conditions of their Environment Agency permits, against a target of 100%. Seven treatment works failed to meet the conditions of their permits. The company has carried out detailed investigations on each failure to identify the causes and has put in place action plans (and reported to us) to reduce the risk of failures in the future.

- In 2025/26, United Utilities delivered its best in-year improvement in its performance against targets relating to leaks (but did not quite meet its performance target), reducing the amount of water lost each year due to leaks by 16.4 megalitres per day (ML/d). It achieved this reduction by improving techniques to detect leaks and the way repairs and water pressure are managed. The company's performance was 404.9 ML/d against a target of 385ML/d. It has worked hard to advertise ways customers and employees can report leaks.
- The average amount of water used each day by each person in the region is called 'per capita consumption'. In 2025/26, the amount of water used per person reduced to 126.3 litres per person per day against a target of 126.8 litres per day. This was a very good result. United Utilities has had strong engagement with customers to achieve this performance, along with continuing to fit smart meters, detecting and repairing more leaks, introducing rainwater-management initiatives and providing tailored help to vulnerable customers. Saving water, saving energy and helping the environment have been continuing campaign themes, particularly in light of the current economic situation and the challenges of climate change. The company has found that its campaigning is now having a positive impact on how much water is used. Work to continue this trend is vital and we will be monitoring this important area on behalf of customers.

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- Good customer service has been reflected in the company's performance against Ofwat's measure of customer service and experience (C-MeX). The company is expecting to be ranked seventh out of the 17 water and wastewater companies in 2025/26. The company offers 10 ways for customers to contact it, so customers can choose the method that suits them, including social media and live chat alongside more traditional contact methods such as post or phone. The company aims to be able to deal with customers' issues after the first contact and gives customers the opportunity to give it feedback on how well it handled contacts – both of which are popular with customers. Through the WOW awards, an acknowledgement of good service, the company continues to receive many nominations from customers.
- In AMP8 United Utilities increased its sector-leading affordability support to provide £525 million of support (including £200 million from shareholders) to customers who have difficulty paying their water bills. Following feedback from customers, the company improved its customer affordability schemes to make it easier for people to apply. Last year 422,483 customers received affordability support, including 18,399 customers benefiting from the company's payment-matching scheme, where every pound the customer pays towards their water bill arrears is matched by the company. Also, 40,497 customers used the 'Help to Pay' scheme, 28,064 vulnerable customers accessed the 'Water Sure' scheme, and 111,132 customers were on the 'Back on Track' scheme. Through a new initiative, 180,000 customers have been moved to better tariffs following work with partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions, without them needing to contact the company.
- The company was the first in the sector to achieve the prestigious Martin Lewis Money and Mental Health accreditation.
- The company's Priority Services scheme, which over 597,000 customers have signed up for, continues to help those who need extra support. The company successfully works with other utility companies and trusted partners to share information so that vulnerable customers can be enrolled onto each organisation's priority services scheme. This service has retained the ISO 22458 kitemark accreditation to recognise its work in supporting vulnerable customers. We review how this scheme is operating and, following incidents, we ask customers how effective they think it is.
- Preventing flooding continues to be a priority for the company and customers, as sewer flooding is one of the worst service failures customers can experience. United Utilities achieved its strongest performance to date in reducing both internal and external flooding. In 2025/26 there were 708 flooding incidents inside homes and businesses (internal flooding), down from 1,218 in the previous year, and an achievement of the target of 2.44 sewer flooding incidents per 10,000 sewer connections. In terms of external flooding (flooding outside homes and businesses), the company's performance of 15.86 incidents per 10,000 sewer connections beat the performance target of 17.21. The company has made excellent progress in reducing flooding incidents in 2025/26. The majority of flooding incidents are due to blocked or collapsed sewers, and the Dynamic Network Management system's ability to monitor water flow and prevent these has been very successful alongside ongoing 'Stop the Block' and 'What not to flush' campaigns, which aim to educate customers on what they shouldn't pour down the drain or flush down the toilet.
- Over the last few years, the performance of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) has understandably been of considerable interest to customers, stakeholders, environmentalists and the media. The company met its target of monitoring 100% of storm overflows before the end of 2023. The 2025 to 2030 business plan includes £2.4 billion of investment to improve storm overflows. This investment is the UK's biggest spill-reduction plan, targeting a 60% reduction in spills over the 10-year period from 2020 to 2030. The scale of work is challenging for the company, its contractors, its partners and customers, but must be achieved. Along with regulators, we will be monitoring all aspects of this plan, including how it is delivered, the company's performance against it, and its cost and effect. In 2025/26, United Utilities narrowly missed the target for reducing spills from storm overflows, with a performance of 29.6 spills per overflow against a target of 26.35. Through the year, there were 60,843 spills from storm overflows – a 21.8% reduction from the previous year.



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We receive reports on United Utilities' capital programme delivery plan and price control deliverables (promises that water companies make to deliver specific improvements to their services). We review its capital spending against timelines and budget, and its progress against key milestones, key risks and outcomes delivered. We do this by reviewing reports the company sends to Ofwat. We also ask the company for updates on customer complaints, which often relate to large and potentially disruptive schemes which will deliver benefits in the future but can cause uncertainty and concerns to communities initially. This is a new task, but we feel the company is open to our review and is willing to provide any information we need.

This year, the company has again produced an easy-to-read performance summary, which is available online and is accessible on mobile phones.

It has received Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark, showing it has been approved for clarity. The company continues to use social media to share key performance messages with more customers. We are pleased to report that, in our opinion, the United Utilities Annual Performance Report accurately reflects the company's performance for 2025/26. As ever, during the coming year we will continue to monitor and challenge the company on behalf of customers and stakeholders. If you would like to contact us about the company's performance or our work, please email us at contactus@yourvoiceicg.co.uk

Bernice Law

Independent Chair, YourVoice
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You can read the Annual Performance Report at

annualperformancereport2026.unitedutilities.com

