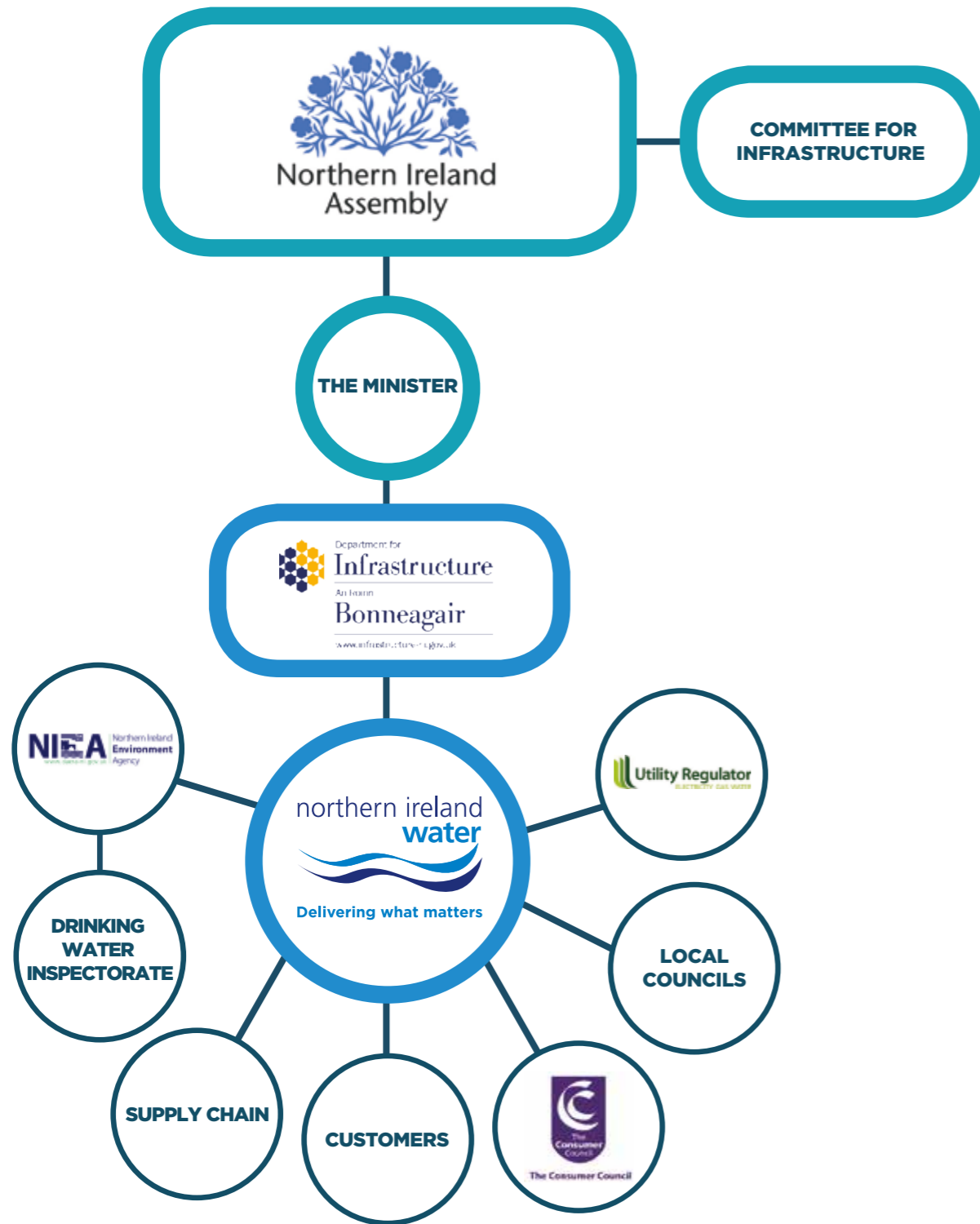


External environment

The water industry structure in Northern Ireland is shown below:



Role of Government

The Northern Ireland Assembly is the devolved legislature for Northern Ireland. It is responsible for making laws on transferred matters in Northern Ireland and for scrutinising the work of Ministers and Government Departments. NI Water is wholly owned by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), which operates under the direction and control of the Minister for Infrastructure. Water and Drainage Policy Division in the DfI is responsible for setting water policy, for our funding through customer subsidies and lending the funds to support our investment programme. The Committee for Infrastructure undertakes a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the DfI and plays a key role in the consideration and development of legislation.

Utility Regulator

The majority of NI Water's activities are not undertaken in competitive markets and are therefore subject to economic regulation by the Utility Regulator. NI Water Limited provides water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland under the conditions in its Licence granted by the Utility Regulator. Our revenue requirements, the amounts charged to our customers and our performance outputs are set by the Utility Regulator through a Price Control process.

Local Councils

We liaise closely with the 11 Local Councils in a range of areas including their Local Development Plans.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) aims to protect, conserve and promote the natural environment and built heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. The NIEA has regulatory powers and responsibilities to ensure environmental compliance by NI Water.

Drinking Water Inspectorate

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) is an expert unit within the NIEA. DWI is responsible for monitoring and regulating the quality of drinking water, in consultation with health and environmental authorities.

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland is a statutory body which represents the interests of water consumers. Its functions include providing our customers with advice and information; investigating complaints and undertaking research such as surveys of consumers' views.

Supply Chain

We cooperate with our wider supply chain, water industry research bodies and other utilities to implement new technologies that will help us to continue to deliver more for less.

Customers

We provide water services to around 893,000 households and businesses and wastewater services to around 727,000 households and businesses.

Listening to you

Listening to our customers' and stakeholders' views and building these into our strategy is essential for us to ensure that our customers' needs are at the heart of our service delivery.

We are all ears

200

Domestic customers surveyed bi-annually to gauge NI Water's reputation.

PC21* (2019) Customer Research **200+**

In-depth qualitative research using focus groups of domestic and business customers. 1-1 sessions with developers and those on our Customer Care Register.

Customer Research/ Annual Omnibus Survey (2020)

1,500

Domestic customers (face to face) Business customers (computer assisted telephone interviewing).

9,000+

Twitter followers.

18,000+

Facebook fans.

200

Large business customers surveyed bi-annually to gauge NI Water's reputation.

7,500

Customers who have contacted NI Water surveyed annually (telephone/sms/on-line).

190,000

Conversations with our Customer Relations Centre annually.

1.1m+

NI Water website views.

150+

Elected representatives surveyed on a regular basis.

Stakeholder groups

Taking part in a range of stakeholder groups helps us to report what is most important to them.

Water Stakeholder Steering Group

Provides a forum for discussion on strategic issues relating to the price control and Ministerial guidance; discussion of major water and sewerage cross-cutting issues; discussion of policy development; keeping under review the governance and regulation of the water industry; and discussion of strategic communications issues.

Output Review Group

Provides a forum for stakeholders to discuss progress on key outputs and issues of common concern in the water industry.

Stakeholder subgroups

Working groups for coordinating the delivery of the price control process and related matters.



Customer priorities**

High

Internal sewer flooding

Supply interruptions

External sewer flooding

Low water pressure

Medium

Odour and noise

Sewer blockages

Taste, smell and appearance

Pollution incidents

Low

Water abstraction

Quality of river waters

Quality of coastal waters

Summary

From our ongoing engagement, we understand that our customers:

- value water services which are reliable and resilient;
- expect problems to be fixed quickly and to be kept informed of progress;
- wish to see investment to reduce flooding from sewer 'hot-spots' and target interruptions to water supplies;
- want us to invest in infrastructure to meet the economic demands of Northern Ireland;
- expect strategic improvements rather than short term fixes;
- desire to understand how they can help with water conservation and out of sewer flooding; and
- expect a range of contact channels when they need to get in touch.

*Price Control 2021 (PC21) is the six year business plan period (2021-2027)

**https://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/original/Connecting_with_Consumers_Report.pdf