



NI Water staff member using smart metering technology.

# Customer

delivering an exceptional customer experience

Changing customer expectations, the digital revolution and demographic and lifestyle changes are all leading NI Water to embrace new ways to meet our customer needs, now and in the future. Our ambition is to exceed our customers' expectations.

Right place,  
right time,  
right  
channel

Caring  
for you

Getting  
smarter

Protecting  
you

## Right place, right time, right channel

Our customer satisfaction surveys tell us we are improving but we can't stop there in our vision to be world class. Customer service expectations have been transformed in recent years and are constantly evolving. Customers want to be more in control of how they interact with us, driving the need to be at the right place, at the right time, on the right channel and serving customers to a standard provided by leading service providers.

Future developments in artificial intelligence and machines will enable us to spend less time on low value-added tasks and instead focus on customer care and improving customer journeys. More customers are using self-service options such as web and mobile self-service, interactive voice response or chatbots as their preferred point of contact. Social customer communities, multichannel knowledge management, mobile virtual agents, artificial intelligence and natural language processing will fundamentally change the customer service experience in the coming years.

We will measure how we are performing by seeking representative customer feedback against customer led and digitally focussed key performance indicators, seeking to exceed expectations, and outperform customer service provider benchmarks.

## Caring for you

We offer a range of free additional services if you have a disability, are an older consumer, have a serious medical condition or need extra help for any other reason. The demand for these services will likely increase given the rise in the over 65 age group by the 2040's - making up 25% of the population. We will identify our customers who need additional support and grow our Customer Care Register to meet these changing needs.

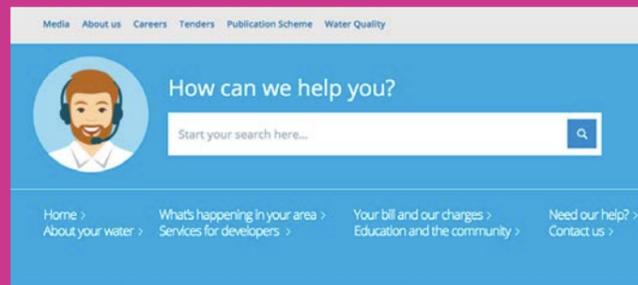


NI Water Customer Service Centre.

## Getting smarter

We collect a wealth of data on the operation of our assets. Automated, semi-automated or human-assisted channels will enable us to detect issues that may affect our service before customers are even aware, so our skilled operatives can intervene early and prevent the service failure. If a service failure cannot be prevented, we will use our data to issue updates to affected customers removing the need for our customers to contact us. We will also explore the sharing of data with stakeholders, including councils, to enhance the customer experience and contribute to service improvement.

Our 'Knowledge Base' tool uses chatbot technology and artificial intelligence to help guide customers through a structured dialogue, providing answers to a wide range of their questions across all our service areas. Similarly, an interactive voice response for a number of transactions such as bill payment provides another choice of contact channel, and improves customer service by offering convenience and the potential to save time.



NI Water chatbot technology.



NI Water staff member on Rathlin Island configuring a smart meter.

Our smart metering pilot scheme has been introduced at Rathlin Island, County Antrim. The scheme allows 13 smart meters on Rathlin Island to automatically report back to a base in mainland Northern Ireland, with the information being used to read customer meters and alert NI Water to any potential water leaks or tampering on the island. The new wireless scheme enables NI Water to access the data remotely for the first time.

## Protecting you

Cyber crimes are increasing in both frequency and disruptive potential; leading to disruption to services, interruption to computer control systems and impact on data integrity. We are continually working to improve cyber resilience through updating of system controls, compliance with IT system supplier updates and through training

and awareness programmes. Opportunities exist to learn from world class research in the area of cyber security being led by seven UK Innovation and Knowledge Centres, one of which is based at the Centre for Secure Information Technologies in Queen's University Belfast.

## Summary actions

- Embrace more personalised customer engagement through a variety of channels to better understand our customers' needs and be customer-led in redesigning our services.
- Respond quickly and resolve issues first time, keeping customers informed along the way.
- Enable our customers to contact us 24 hours a day in a way that suits them.
- Excel in customer satisfaction, competing with the best customer service providers in the UK water industry and across wider sectors.
- Identify our customers who need additional support and grow our Customer Care Register.
- Use our data to drive improvement across all our services.
- Improve cyber resilience and learn from world class research.
- Live by our values to deliver an exceptional customer experience.

## How will we measure progress?

We will measure progress by tracking delivery of the summary actions and the strategic performance indicators:



<sup>7</sup>Customer advocacy score.