



Consultation Response

Ofwat's draft vulnerability guidance

Office of Water Services (Ofwat)

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important for suppliers to be mindful that many older people cannot access public transport in their area and do not have access to a car.

As part of its updated vulnerability guidance, Ofwat must be proactive in ensuring that customers with vulnerabilities are appropriately supported during an outage. It is our view that suppliers should be required to provide support in circumstances where they are unable to collect from a local centre. This must be a mandatory component of supplier vulnerability strategies moving forward. It also reinforces the importance of recording customer needs, instead of just looking at conditions. We also recommend that Ofwat mandate suppliers to provide compensation if they fail to support customers during an outage.

The importance of ensuring better identification of customers with vulnerabilities is tremendously important, but the regulator must recognise that many older people remain unaware of the PSR. As part of overhauling its vulnerability guidance Ofwat should work with suppliers to run a comprehensive PSR awareness campaign. The regulator should also reduce the burden on customers to come forward for PSR registration by putting in place automatic registration triggers. For example, Ofwat could work with DWP to ensure that when a customer reaches State Pension age they are automatically asked if they would like to enrol onto the PSR.

It is our view that it is essential for suppliers to record customer needs instead of just conditions when assessing vulnerabilities. S

¹ Ofwat, 2023. Service for all Ofwat's draft vulnerability guidance for water companies supporting customers who need extra help. Ofwat. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/consultation/service-for-all-ofwats-draft-vulnerability-guidance-for-water-companies-supporting-customers-who->