



# PORTSMOUTH WATER LIMITED

Vulnerability Strategy 2026 Summary

# SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS WHO NEED US MOST

We believe all our customers should be supported, understood and treated with care.

We also know some of our customers need extra help to manage their water and pay their bills.

This could be because of age, disability, health conditions, accessibility, financial difficulties or any unexpected impact on your life.

As a community company, Portsmouth Water is proud of the extra support we already give thousands of our customers. We're planning to keep supporting more customers in the most appropriate way for them.

## Reasons for needing extra help



### Health

long-term illness, disability, mental health



### Life events

bereavement, loss of job, relationship breakdown



### Accessing services

hearing, sight, other languages, unable to use websites, emails or apps



### Struggling with money

in debt, low income, cost-of-living



### Short-term needs

surgery, caring for someone

## What do we know about our communities?



Any one of us may experience some form of vulnerability at some point. We recognise that vulnerability can affect anyone, often in hidden or unexpected ways. That is why we are committed to ensuring every part of our service is designed with care, from how we communicate and respond during an incident to how we shape future services.

That's why we want to:

- improve how customers can contact us and how we contact them
- make sure everyone can understand and afford our bills
- make it easier to take up the support we offer and tailor it for the individual.

## We're supporting customers in four ways:



These four areas make up our Vulnerability Strategy for 2025-30, based on conversations with thousands of our customers and partners.

### 1. Making sure water supply bills are affordable

We have the lowest average water bill in England and Wales. But more than half our customers live in deprived areas, with some in severe deprivation, it can be a struggle to pay these bills.

#### ✓ We already..

- Support more than 15,000 households who have an income of less than £21,000 a year on our Social Tariff
- Reduce bills for customers with a water meter who have medical conditions or disabilities which mean they need to use more water on our WaterSure Tariff
- Look out for customers who avoid essential water use to save money such as for toilet flushing or washing, so we can offer support
- Work with trusted organisations such as the Department for Work and Pensions, councils and energy networks to reach those who may need extra support.

#### 🕒 We're going to..

- Create a range of tariffs that work for everyone
- Double the number of customers on our Social Tariff by 2030
- Increase households on our WaterSure Tariff to 500. Many customers eligible for WaterSure also qualify for our Social Tariff. We will always place customers on the lowest-cost tariff they are eligible for.
- Work with social housing providers to identify customers who need extra support.

### 2. Making it easier to access our services

We're committed to making our services accessible to everyone. We want to bring our services to customers, rather than them having to find us.

#### ✓ We already..

- Provide different ways to contact us – online, by phone, by letter or face-to-face
- Use Recite Me on our website, for help with translations, colours, text size and being able to listen to information
- Braille and large print formats for those that require them.

#### 🕒 We're going to..

- Develop accessible digital channels, suitable for those with visual, physical and processing challenges – while keeping in person channels
- Provide British Sign Language services
- Offer translators for those who may struggle to read or speak English
- Gain accreditation for inclusion by reaching the highest standards.

### 3. Protecting the most vulnerable during incidents

Interruptions to our water supply or other incidents are rare, but they can sometimes happen unexpectedly. This can happen if there's a burst water pipe, extreme weather or events like a cyber-attack.

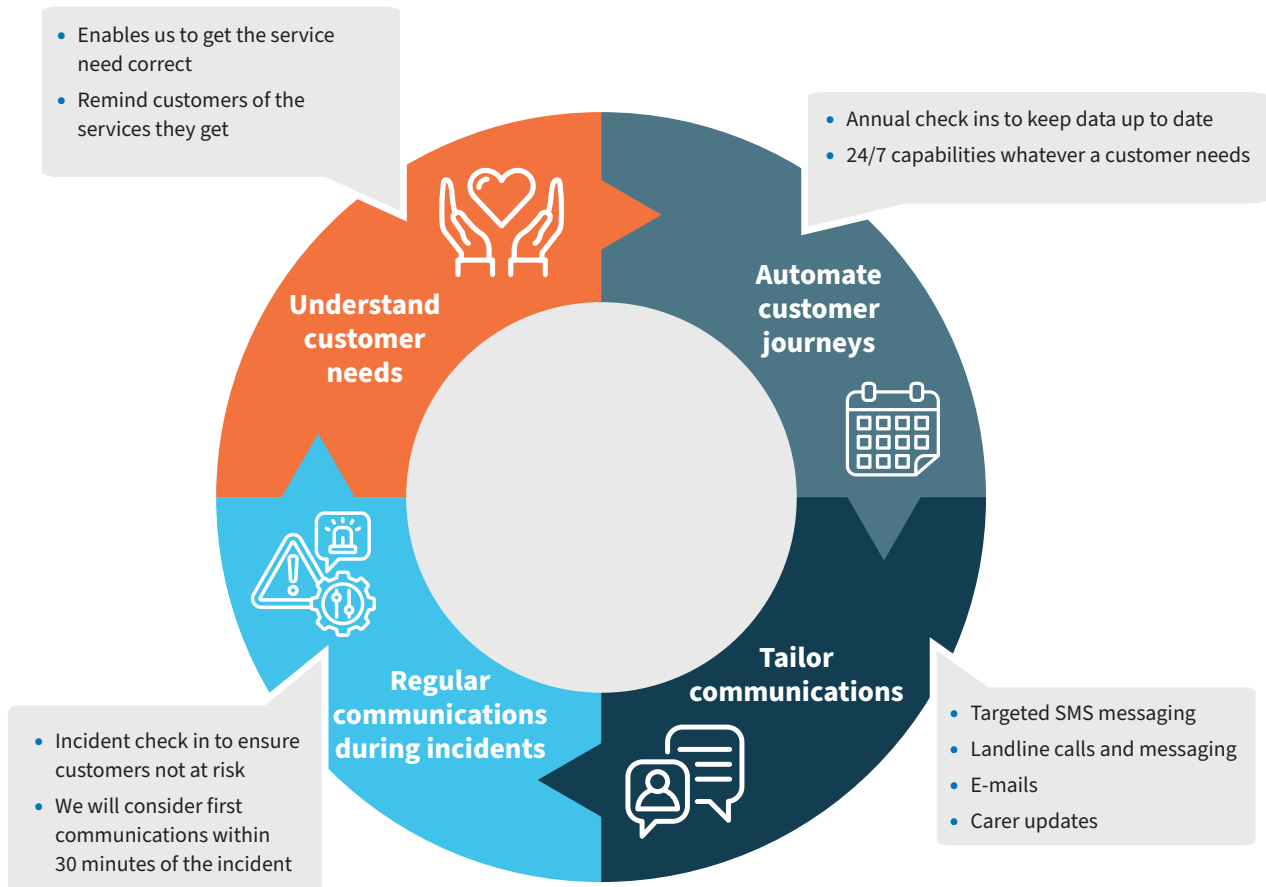
We prioritise our vulnerable customers in these situations. Our goal is to make things as easy as possible by giving clear updates, practical help and guidance.

#### ✓ We already..

- Support over 15% of customers on our Priority Services Register, who receive extra support
- Prioritise customers on the register for bottled water deliveries if they have no water, particularly people who would struggle to collect it themselves.

#### 🔄 We're going to..

- Increase awareness of the Priority Services Register and the help we offer, and sign customers up automatically where we can. Our target is to have 50,000 households on the Priority Services Register by 2030, but we want to go further and reach 80,000.
- Identify customers who may need support at night if there's an incident
- Increase our digital alerts – with hourly updates by email or text when there's a problem
- Make it easier for customers on the Priority Services Register to let us know they need help
- Share updates with carers and families
- Learn more about the risks our communities face in different areas and keep this up to date so we can always offer support where and when it matters most.



## 4. Working with partners to be more effective

We know we can help more people if we work in partnership with existing organisations and communities.

### ✓ We already..

- Partner with more than 100 organisations so we can understand how well we're supporting you. Partners include charities, councils, food banks, health teams, community and faith groups.
- Have a dedicated team spending time in our communities, getting to know people and making sure we reach those who might otherwise be missed.

### 🕒 We're going to..

- Work with more partners so we can reach more customers to support
- Focus on harder-to-reach groups, through warm spaces, food banks and community support networks
- Grow our relationships with trusted local services, such as GPs, health centres, faith groups and local council teams, so we can support more people.

In the latest survey of the vulnerability partners we work with, 87% were satisfied or very satisfied with our services – our highest score.

## Vulnerability Strategy

Access our Vulnerability Strategy online at [portsmouthwater.co.uk/policies-reports](https://portsmouthwater.co.uk/policies-reports)



Do you know a community organisation we could partner with?  
Let us know at [hi@portsmouthwater.co.uk](mailto:hi@portsmouthwater.co.uk)

We always want to hear more on how we can improve. If you have any feedback or want to find out more about our support, please get in touch through our website at [portsmouthwater.co.uk](https://portsmouthwater.co.uk).