

Customer

Delivering an exceptional customer experience



NI Water's Intelligent Operations Centre.

Customer

Delivering an exceptional customer experience

Strategic areas of focus

Right place,
right time,
right channel

Caring
for you

Getting
smarter

Protecting
you

Sustainable development goals



Principal threats/opportunities



Page 84 Read more about principal threats and opportunities.

Strategic performance indicators

Customer	Unit of measurement	Target 2023/24	Actual 2023/24	Pass/Fail	Target 2024/25
Reduction in customers reporting service failures	Number	65,200	50,400	Pass	64,300
First point of contact resolution	%	84	86	Pass	84
More customers singing our praises (Net Promoter Score)	Number	42	46	Pass	42

Right place, right time, right channel

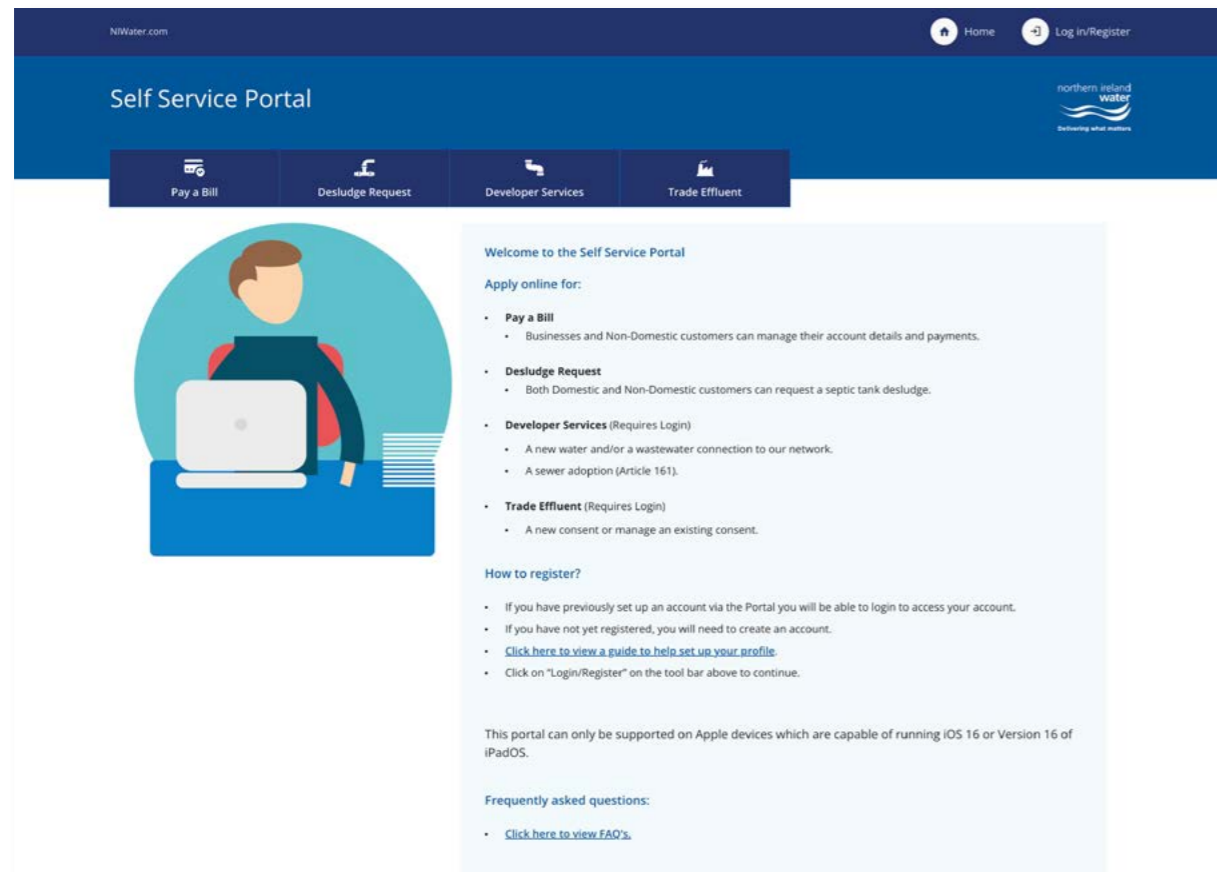
Our social media and digital channels provide us with fantastic platforms to keep our customers informed of the challenges we face delivering great tasting, clean drinking water and recycling wastewater safely back to the natural environment. Our Website, Facebook and X accounts allow us to reach out to our customers when there is an incident impacting the services we provide and to change how they think about water to help reduce the pressure on our infrastructure and nature.

Facebook and Web Chat boost

In our ambition to deliver an exceptional customer experience, we are embracing new ways to meet rising customer expectations. Since increasing the operational hours of our social media platforms and introducing a web chat to our service update page, our social media base has continued to grow, now surpassing 35,000 followers and regularly handle more than 2,000 customer web chats per month. Feedback from customers for these channels has been very positive with both web chat and social media registering high consumer advocacy scores.

We expanded our customer base for web self-serve in 2022/23 by launching the web self-serve for developers, providing them with a service to submit applications,

track progress and pay online. This was a major step change for the business and transformed the way we interact with our customers. In 2023/24, we refreshed the website, including changes to the landing page architecture and a reduction in process steps. These improvements will enhance the overall customer experience and provide better clarity and simplification on each step. Analysis of our range of social media offerings in comparison to other utilities is encouraging with around a quarter of our customers now choosing to contact us through a digital channel.



During 2023/24, we created a new dedicated Customer Team for Developer Services. The team has been specifically trained to deal with all development-related queries, which can be more complex than standard operational customer calls.

Developer Services Customer Team Contact Details:
 Developer Services Dedicated Phone Line - **03458 770003**
 Email - **customerengagementteam@niwater.com**



NI Water new dedicated Customer Team members for Developer Services.

In 2024/25, we will focus on finalising the design of the new customer, billing, and contact contract. This will include the delivery of new automated telephony, texting, and online chat customer channels.

Right first time

We have introduced a comprehensive programme of initiatives to minimise the need for customers to contact us and for those customers that do make contact, ensure we resolve their issue first time.

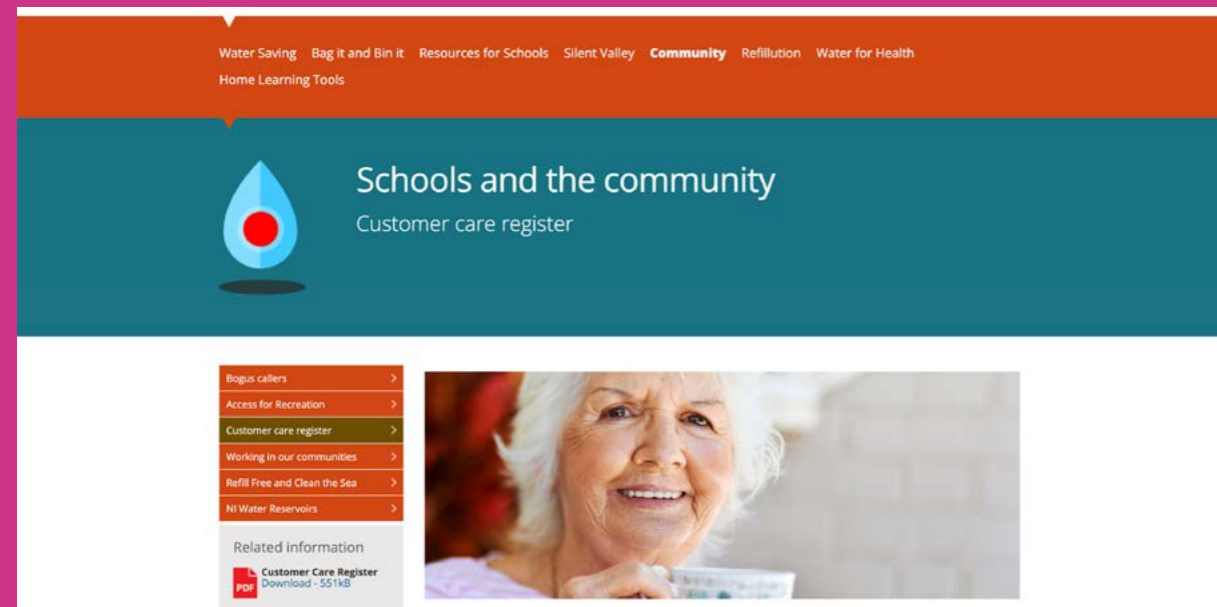
Over 2023/24, we delivered against our target of 65,200 for unwanted customer contacts, our First Point of Contact Resolution target of 84% and our Net Promoter Score of 42. We also introduced early warning text notifications for metered non-domestic customers experiencing high water consumption.

We expanded the use of robotics to automate manual processes, focusing on how we manage leakage defects that are identified by our contractors and continued with our programme of improvement initiatives focusing on septic tank and billing journey improvements.

During 2023/24, we continued to offer our social media and web chat services until 11pm, seven days a week. We offer a range of

telephony and self-service channels to suit our customers' needs, including our waterline service, which is available 24 hours a day. In 2024/25, we will be introducing new channels and customer systems as part of the new customer, billing, and contact contract.

Voice of the Customer packs are circulated monthly to business areas to provide an understanding of what is working well and to highlight areas for improvement. Over 2023/24, we have continued to undertake several customer journey reviews based upon customer feedback, along with our annual omnibus survey to gain the opinions and thoughts of the 'silent majority' of customers that use our services. Our focus on customers was recognised in the UK Customer Satisfaction Index Results for the first six months of 2023. NI Water was listed as the second highest performing water company for overall customer satisfaction and the third highest performer in the Utilities Sector Report.



Caring for you

Our Customer Care Register offers a range of free additional services for those customers who need extra help, such as an alternative water supply when supplies have been interrupted for a prolonged period. We continue to work with the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, Health Trusts, Councils, and other Utilities to promote our Customer Care Register. A further 177 customers have been added to the register over 2023/24, with a total of 2,798 customers/organisations registered. We continue to engage with the Utility Regulator, CCNI and other utilities on the Best Practice Framework: Code of Practice for consumers in vulnerable circumstances, which will standardise the approach to consumer vulnerability across the Northern Ireland utility sector.

In 2024/25, we will continue working towards BS ISO 22458 Consumer Vulnerability accreditation, which is to be achieved by the end of PC21. By taking a proactive and inclusive approach NI Water can mitigate against exacerbating consumer vulnerability.

The Utility Regulator published a 'Consumer Protection Programme 2024-2029 Final Decisions Paper' in March 2024, which contains a suite of bespoke projects aimed at enhancing consumer protection for all consumers including both domestic and non-domestic, consumers in vulnerable circumstances and 'future' consumers across all utilities. Going into 2024/25, NI Water will work with the Utility Regulator and other utilities to help deliver the future outputs as outlined in the Final Decisions Paper.

During 2023/24, we introduced the JAM (Just a Minute) card across the entire organisation. The JAM card allows anyone with a hidden disability or communication barriers to discreetly ask for 'Just A Minute' of patience when they need it. The JAM card accreditation demonstrates NI Water's ongoing commitment to its customers and its priority to advance equality, diversity, and inclusion across the award-winning organisation, with over 1,300 colleagues undertaking the bespoke training programme.



NI Water CEO and staff members with NOW Group CEO at the launch of the JAM partnership with NOW Group.

You can find out more about our Customer Care Register at www.niwater.com/customer-care-register/ Alternatively, telephone Waterline on 03457 440088.

Getting smarter

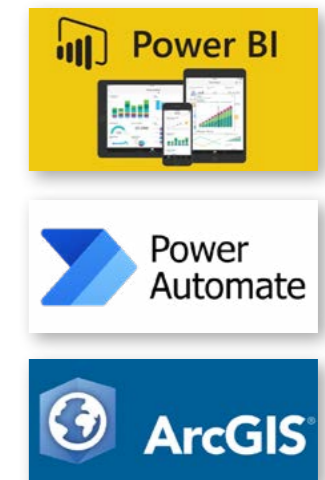
Our customers tell us that they want a modern, interactive web-based platform where they can submit applications for our services, track progress, make payments and digitally sign documents without the need for paper or telephone contact. In response, we launched a digital application process for new connections to our network, wastewater adoptions and applications for trade effluent.

Using Robotics to enhance customer experience

In 2023/24, we extended the use of robotics to automate processes resulting in improved service delivery for both internal and external customers using technology such as Power BI, Power Automate and ArcGIS. This technology means we have more time to focus on activities that make the most difference to our customer experience.



NI Water staff in our Intelligent Operations Centre.



Protecting you

Cyber security is a key priority for NI Water as we face increasing and evolving cyber threats that could harm our service delivery and business performance. We are committed to improving our information governance and cyber resilience by investing in technology, training, and awareness. We have a Cyber Resilience Programme in place to protect our operational technology and we work closely with the National Cyber Security Centre and other stakeholders to stay ahead of the cyber risk landscape. We also monitor and test our cyber security through simulated phishing campaigns, independent penetration testing and audits. We collaborate across the business to ensure that any new or upgraded technology is assessed for cyber risks and complies with our standards and policies.



Help NI Water be Cyber Watertight