



NI Water celebrated International Women's Day highlighting the importance of females in construction and leadership within the water sector.

**Strategic areas of focus**

Powered by talent

Safe, happy and healthy workplace

Creating a legacy for our communities

**Sustainable development goals**



**Principal threats/opportunities**



Page 84 Read more about principal threats and opportunities.

**Strategic performance indicators**

People	Unit of measurement	Target 2023/24	Actual 2023/24	Pass/Fail	Target 2024/25
Employee engagement	Number (out of 5)	n/a	3.73	n/a	n/a
Employee attendance	%	96.5	96.6	Pass	96.5
Health and safety incidents	Number	<6	4	Pass	<6



**Powered by talent**

We want to create a great place to work and ensure that NI Water is fit for the future by attracting, developing, and retaining top talent. Our people strategy is focused on driving performance for our customers through building capability, ensuring we have the right people with the right skills performing their roles to the best of their ability. Our plans support the provision of a safe and healthy workplace, helping to make NI Water an organisation in which we are all proud to work.

Whilst many organisations are experiencing the 'great resignation', our staff turnover remained consistently low at around 5%, while average tenure has remained high at over 16 years. 7% of our workforce were promoted in 2023/24. Our employer brand remains strong in the marketplace, with over 300 new recruits in the last two years to maintain our talent pipeline.

Over 2023/24, we engaged an expert partner to support the delivery of a comprehensive management development framework that will develop world class management capabilities at all levels. This is a major investment in our leaders and managers over PC21 and continues NI Water's journey in developing leadership skills, competencies, and behaviours to create a high-performance culture and role model our values.

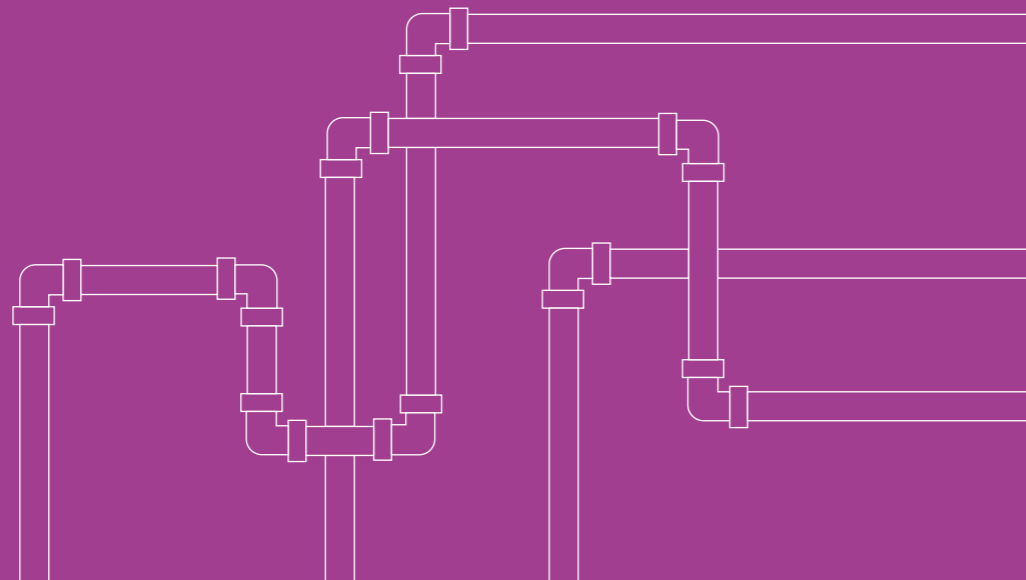
NI Water was named Employer of the Year at the Belfast Telegraph Business Awards. We were also highly commended in the Corporate Community Champion category, which recognises our commitment to making a positive difference in our local communities.



*NI Water staff accepting the Employer of the Year award.*



*Our CEO won Belfast Chamber of Commerce's Business Leader of the Year Award at the Belfast Chamber Business Awards.*

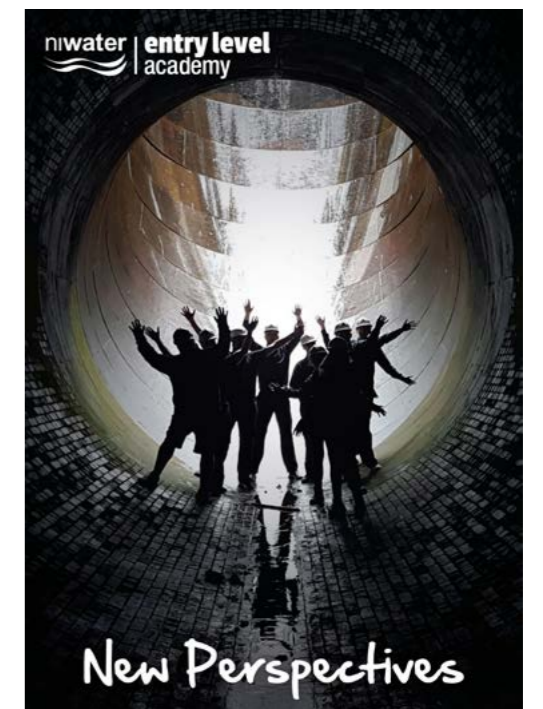


NI Water won the highly coveted Best Apprentice Programme (Large Business) at the prestigious Irish News Workplace and Employment Awards held at Titanic Belfast. The awards celebrate exceptional companies and organisations focused on their people by recognising excellence in the workplace. The judges commended NI Water for its strategic use of apprenticeships to address skills shortages, whilst attracting top talent and building their employer brand in an increasingly tight labour market.



*NI Water's CEO and Head of Culture, Engagement and Learning collects the award alongside two of NI Water's third year Water Utility Apprentices.*

Over the last three years, our Academy has gone from strength-to-strength, growing, and diversifying into new business areas to support NI Water's strategic ambitions, whilst adapting to evolving business needs. The Academy has provided important employment opportunities for over 100 people and has also supported NI Water's diversity, inclusion, and levelling-up ambitions, creating significant positive cultural change in the organisation. In 2024/25, we will continue to develop strategic partnerships with regional colleges, building relationships in new disciplines such as net zero and GIS, as we diversify our academy to tackle skills shortages.



*NI Water welcomed our 2023 Entry Level intake of apprentices.*





**Safe, happy, and healthy workplace**

It is only with a motivated, safe, and healthy workforce that we can deliver exceptional standards of customer service. We do this by placing care for our people front and centre in how we do business, looking after them through all of life's events and providing the conditions for them to perform their role to the best of their ability.

**Zero harm**

Health and safety is an integral part of NI Water's day-to-day business. NI Water's vision for health and safety for employees, contractors and customers is the 'pursuit of zero harm by raising standards and performance through the identification and adoption of industry best practice and the development of an empowered, valued, engaged, accountable and competent workforce'.

NI Water has a dedicated Health and Safety team, which is key to ensuring that NI Water complies with relevant legislation and best practice. The Health and Safety Focus Group, made up of representatives from across NI Water, examines NI Water and contractor incidents, reviews health and safety training needs, and general promotion of health and safety. Driver awareness was one of the areas of focus for 2023/24.

NI Water has a Health, Safety and Facilities Transformation Programme (2021–2025) which sets out several priorities for health and safety. Significant investment continues to be made in our facilities and above ground buildings and related assets.

The Assure health and safety software enables all employees and our supply chain to report incidents, unsafe and good observations and safety suggestions via App or Source homepage using a mobile phone, Toughbook, or laptop. The system provides real time, accurate and meaningful data that enables us to appropriately target and resource both our short and long-term health and safety priorities.

In 2024/25, a delivery programme for mandatory health and safety training will commence with this training integrated into employee learning paths. As the necessary compliance levels are achieved and planned improvements are realised, greater focus will be turned towards behavioural and culturally based projects with the zero harm concept being refreshed and reinvigorated.



**Prioritising Health**

In recent years, our work on employee wellbeing has been widely recognised as a programme of best practice in Northern Ireland and has earned us several prestigious business awards, including the 2023 CIPD award for Most Impactful Health and Wellbeing at work.

The programme has proven to have been successful in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of many of our employees. We have had positive feedback from employees who have benefited from the various programmes, including a few notable cases where early identification of health issues prevented more serious consequences.

Our health and wellbeing strategy is focused around four key pillars of health (mental, physical, social, and financial). Over 2023/24, we hosted a range of guest speakers, attracting record audience numbers and continued our health promotion and awareness campaigns via the use of storytelling to support Men's Health Week,

Mental Health Awareness Week, Carers Week and Smoking Cessation.

Our hugely popular live well roadshow is now offered twice a year in each hub office, offering a range of services including one-to-one health checks, vaccinations and seminars from expert providers on a range of health issues.



NI Water staff collecting the award for 'Most Impactful Health and Wellbeing at work' at the CIPD NI Awards.

**Involving people in the decisions that affect them**

We engaged a new expert culture and engagement partner to help design and deliver a new holistic listening strategy across NI Water to gather the voice of the employee and develop our ability to measure the health of our corporate culture.



In partnership with the expert culture and engagement partner we conducted a cultural analysis of NI Water involving a range of employees across the business. The findings were used to deliver a company-wide employee survey (NI Water Unplugged) in 2023/24. Survey results reported higher than average engagement levels across all functions, a supportive and inclusive culture, a strong emphasis on safety and an agile and empowered organisation. The survey also identified clear areas for improvement which will form the basis for action planning in 2024/25.

**Celebrating and promoting diversity**

As a major employer delivering an essential service, we recognise both the business and personal benefits of creating a diverse and inclusive environment and the importance of diversity in attracting and retaining the best talent. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone feels valued and able to contribute fully to their full potential. Significant work has been undertaken in the last three years to lay the foundations for a new culture of diversity and inclusion.

Building on our success in achieving the Bronze Charter Mark for Diversity in 2020/21, NI Water became the second public sector organisation in Northern Ireland to achieve the challenging standard of the Silver Diversity Charter Mark in 2022/23. In 2024/25, all managers across NI Water will receive Inclusive Leadership Training to enable them to fulfil their commitments in this area and act as role models.



Find out more about diversity and inclusion at page 150.



## Creating a legacy for our communities

### Helping hands

Our 'Cares Challenge' volunteering programme has been running for over a decade and demonstrates continued, ongoing, and exceptional commitment to our communities. The programme is one of the largest volunteering schemes in Northern Ireland, supported by hundreds of our employees and contributing around 12,000 volunteering hours since inception. We aim to support our customers in their own community helping them with the projects

that matter most to them. Supported by Business in the Community, the programme identifies organisations and charities within the local community who need a helping hand with physical tasks. This has allowed our staff to help a wide range of charities including, Southern Area Hospice, Horatio's Garden (Musgrave Hospital), The National Trust, Simon Community, Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary and many more.



NI Water staff volunteering with Cares Challenge at Horatio's Garden (Musgrave Hospital), Belfast, County Antrim.

## Making a difference in Malawi

NI Water supports WaterAid's vision of a world where everyone, everywhere has access to clean water, decent sanitation, and good hygiene. We are proud to lead the local WaterAid NI Committee, which raises over £70,000 each year. Recent fundraising has been dedicated to WaterAid's Deliver Life project in Malawi, which aims to improve the health of women, girls, and

children by providing access to clean water, decent sanitation, and good hygiene in their communities. These funds will support health centres in Machinga and Zomba districts of Malawi, by helping to introduce a variety of facilities such as solar-powered piped water supply systems, inclusive bathrooms, and other sanitary facilities.



Deliver Life project in Malawi. Photo credit Dennis Lupenga.



Water tank installed to ease water challenges, Kawinga Health Centre, Machinga, Malawi. Photo credit WaterAid/Francis Chipanda.

## Creating a water saving culture

NI Water is committed to creating a water saving culture for communities. Our Education Programme delivers NI Water's key environmental messages on water efficiency to schools, community, and youth groups with a strong emphasis on the link between saving water and saving energy. Pupils are encouraged to take the four minute shower challenge using timers to save water,

energy and protect the environment. These messages are further promoted through the free water audit and water efficiency project supported by an online platform 'Get Water Fit', which involves distributing save-a-flush, four-minute shower timers, leaky loo strips and toothy timers directly to the customer. Over 2023/24, we completed 219 school visits and 78 community visits.



Key Stage 2 pupils who were finalists in NI Water's school's water saving poster competition along with their parents and teachers joined NI Water's CEO and Outreach and Learning Officer.