



7. The risk of sewer flooding for homes and businesses is reduced

What do customers want?

Sewer flooding is one of the worst service failures that customers can experience and we understand the significant long-term effect flooding can have. Customers want us to reduce flooding. We are committed to reducing the number of sewer flooding incidents that happen, whether these are outside homes and businesses (external flooding) or inside them (internal flooding).

We have made six performance commitments about reducing the risk of flooding to homes and businesses. We have achieved four of these in year four.

What have we done?

We know from our extensive customer research that internal flooding is one of the worst service failures customers can experience. This research, along with conversations we've had with organisations from other industries, has led us to prioritise reducing internal flooding and this continues to be a key area of focus. Sewer flooding incidents can happen inside or outside the home. We continue to develop and put into practice a wide variety of schemes and initiatives to reduce the number of sewer flooding incidents. Measures include increasing customer involvement and awareness campaigns, providing more protection for properties, managing surface water and developing and using dedicated blockage teams to respond to incidents faster.

Flooding can be caused by hydraulic issues, which is when the sewer network can't cope with the volume of water during heavy rainfall, or other things such as blockages or collapses. We aim to deal with incidents the first time they happen, limiting the number of repeat incidents and developing a greater understanding of the cause. Understanding what caused an incident helps our teams to take action to prevent future incidents.

In year four, we recorded a total of 1,509 internal flooding incidents, which is equivalent to 4.35 per 10,000 connections and above our performance commitment of

1.44 per 10,000 connections (or 500 incidents). For external flooding, we recorded 7,063 incidents, which is above our target of no more than 6,106 incidents.

In year four we experienced long periods of wet weather, alongside a high number of Met Office named storms. This led to an extremely challenging year for our network. Despite the negative effects of the weather, we continue to develop and put into practice a wide variety of schemes and initiatives to improve our performance against our flooding commitment, including our Dynamic Network Management (DNM) programme, our successful customer-involvement campaigns and schemes to target and manage surface water incidents.

We have continued to promote messages to customers, such as through our 'stop the block' campaign which aims to educate customers about the problems that are caused through sewer misuse, such as flushing baby wipes down the toilet and pouring fat, oil and grease down the drain. We measure the effects of this work through performance targets which measure the level of customer awareness. For this performance commitment we achieved an increased awareness of 48.1% above our baseline, which beat our target of an 8% increase.

We have also completed a range of programmes of work which contribute to our performance against our two hydraulic flood-risk commitments. These include small and major capital schemes to increase the amount of wastewater the sewers can carry. These projects will help reduce the overall hydraulic risk, which means that fewer customers will experience flooding at their properties as a result of the sewers not being able to cope with the volume of water in them.

4/6

measures achieved

