

9438_YWAT
WaterSupport Enhancement Research
Follow up Depth Discussion Guide (30 mins)



(I) Introduction		7 mins
Brief explanation of the purpose of the research	<p><i>Moderator to explain the nature of the research.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I work for a company called DJS Research, we are an independent market research company and today we are working on behalf of Yorkshire Water. • Following on from your participation in a survey you did recently about Yorkshire Water's plans for supporting customers through their social tariff, WaterSupport, in the period 2025-2030, we would like to conduct some follow up research with customers to understand more about your current circumstances, associated opinions and attitudes towards social tariffs for water customers. • <i>Moderator to reassure respondents about confidentiality / GDPR compliance.</i> • Feedback will be summarised into a report along with other research, we won't pass names/specific details of who we have spoken to back to our client without your permission. • There are no right and wrong answers; we are just interested in your views, opinions and ideas. • Brief explanation about audio/video recording information – we may use anonymised quotes &/or video clips in our report to illustrate the research findings for our client, but these will not be attributed to you personally. 	
Introductions	<p><i>Moderator to invite respondent(s) to introduce themselves.</i></p> <p><i>I'd first of all like to spend some time understanding more about you...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me a bit about yourself; who you live with; working status; hobbies • What are your main priorities and concerns in life at the moment? • How are you feeling about your household finances currently [MODERATOR: refer to response from quant in relation to affordability of water bills, e.g. in the survey you took part in you mentioned that you [never/sometimes/often struggle] to afford your water bills. Is that still the case?] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How has your outlook of your finances changed over the past 6 to 12 months or so? Better? Worse? How so? ◦ [IF CUSTOMER HAS CONCERNS] Which bills or expenses are of most concern/have impacted you most? What impact has this had on your household? • How do you feel about your bills going forward? Do you think it will change? In what way and why? 	

(II) Re-cap on social tariffs	8 mins
Re-cap on social tariffs	<p>Thank you for your responses so far. I'd now like to move on to talk about cross-subsidies and social tariffs. In your own words, could you briefly tell me a bit about your understanding of cross-subsidies? And what about social tariffs? (MODERATOR: If necessary, stress that there are no right or wrong answers)</p> <p>MODERATOR, IF REQUIRED, READ OUT:</p> <p><i>In lots of areas of life, customers pay a little more for a service than it actually costs to provide. The extra money is used to provide services to other customers at a cheaper rate or for free. This is called a cross-subsidy. Some examples of cross-subsidies include discounted prices for students on some goods/services and free bus travel for older people.</i></p> <p><i>All water companies operate a cross-subsidy, known as a social tariff schemes, to help customers who are struggling to afford their water bills. Social tariff schemes are funded through a small cross-subsidy on all customers' water bills and in some instances through direct contributions from water companies also.</i></p> <p>What are your thoughts on social tariffs? Positive? Negative? Why?</p> <p>Generally speaking, to what extent do you support the principle of social tariffs and cross-subsidies? Are there any areas / aspects of life where you think social tariffs are not appropriate? (PROBE ON WHAT AND WHY). And, any areas where you think social tariffs and cross-subsidies are particularly beneficial? (PROBE ON WHAT AND WHY)</p> <p>Before you took part in the survey on behalf of Yorkshire Water, were you aware of the support available to customers who are struggling to pay their bills? IF SO: what were you aware of? How did you become aware of it?</p> <p>I'd now like to spend a minute or so going over some of the information you were presented with in the online survey you completed.</p> <p>MODERATOR: If conducting over Zoom/Teams show slide 2. If conducting over the phone read out info on slide.</p> <p>MODERATOR: Show or read out from slide (examples of support schemes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [IF UNAWARE OF SCHEMES PRIOR TO TAKING SURVEY] Thinking back, how did you feel when you took the survey and learned about these schemes for the first time? • [IF AWARE OF SCHEMES PRIOR TO TAKING SURVEY] How did you first become aware of these support schemes? • Having reviewed this information again, what is the first word that comes to mind when you think of these support schemes? <p>Now I'd like to focus in particular on the social tariff schemes. SHOW SLIDE 3 & 4 OR READ OUT INFORMATION ON SLIDE 3 & 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about the cross-subsidy that is currently in place for Yorkshire Water which funds its social tariff scheme, WaterSupport? • What, if any, changes would you make to this social-tariff scheme? Why? PROBE ON: the eligibility criteria, what might make people more likely to apply if eligible etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ REPEAT FOR EACH CHANGE MENTIONED: What impact do you think this change would have? Why is this change important to you? How would these changes make you feel? Why?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IF NOT MENTIONED PROMPT ON: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of customers supported (is it too many, not enough or about right?). Why? ○ Eligibility criteria (does it include the right people? Are there any groups that are included but shouldn't be? Any groups that aren't included but should be?) ○ Amount paid by customers (is it too much, not enough or about right?). Why? ○ Level of support for customers in receipt of support schemes (is it too much, not enough or about right?). Why? ○ IF NOT ON SUPPORT SCHEME [CHECK SAMPLE]: If your circumstances changed in the future and you were eligible for one of these support schemes, would you apply? Why/why not? If no, what would encourage you to apply should you need this support?
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(III) Social tariffs 2025-2030		12 mins
Social tariffs 2025-2030	<p>Still thinking about social tariffs, I'd like to spend some time now thinking about Yorkshire Water's future plans for supporting customers who are struggling to afford their water bills through a social tariff.</p> <p>MODERATOR: For next section refer to WtP figure from sample</p> <p>To help expand the support offered to customers who need help, Yorkshire Water wanted to know if you would be willing to contribute anything extra in order to help expand this support starting in 2025. To help with this, Yorkshire Water is proposing to increase its current shareholder contribution to WaterSupport by a further £500,000 per year and providing at least £12.5million for the period 2025-2030 .</p> <p>When responding to the survey, you said you [IF WtP is £0: would not be willing to contribute anything extra to expand the number of customers Yorkshire Water can help through WaterSupport] / [IF WtP =>£0.01: would be willing to contribute WtP amount from sample per month extra to expand the number of customers Yorkshire Water can help through WaterSupport]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IF WTP is £0: why wouldn't you be willing to contribute anything to expand the number of customers Yorkshire Water can help through WaterSupport? PROBE ON: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent do your own financial circumstances affect your response? ○ Are there any circumstances in which you would be willing to contribute? IF SO; What/when? ○ IF MENTIONED CHANGES TO SCHEMES EARLIER: Before we talked about changes that you suggested Yorkshire Water could make to their support schemes for vulnerable customers. If Yorkshire Water made these changes, would it change the amount you are willing to contribute towards WaterSupport? IF YES: by how much? ○ More generally, is there anything that Yorkshire Water could do that would encourage you to contribute extra towards WaterSupport? IF YES: by how much? PROBE FULLY BEFORE MOVNG ON. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IF NOT MENTIONED PROMPT ON: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of service Yorkshire Water provides (e.g. water quality, customer service etc) • Extent to which customers trust Yorkshire Water to administer 	

	<p>these social tariff schemes / spend the money well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge levels of social tariff schemes (more information on the impact of social tariff schemes) / what bills contribute towards. • Eligibility criteria of the social tariff schemes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IF WTP is =>£0.01: why would you be willing to contribute up to WtP amount from sample per month to expand the number of customers Yorkshire Water can help through WaterSupport? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you support the principle of social tariffs generally? IF SO; why do you support social tariffs in principle? Any circumstances which haven't been mentioned previously when you wouldn't be willing to contribute? (MODERATOR PROBE FULLY) ○ To what extent do your own financial circumstances affect your response? ○ IF MENTIONED CHANGES TO SCHEMES EARLIER: Before we talked about some changes that you suggested Yorkshire Water could make to their support schemes for vulnerable customers. If Yorkshire Water made these changes, would it change the amount you are willing to contribute towards the social tariff? IF YES: by how much? ○ More generally, is there anything that Yorkshire Water could do that would encourage you to contribute extra towards the social tariff scheme? IF YES: by how much? PROBE FULLY BEFORE MOVING ON. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IF NOT MENTIONED PROMPT ON: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of service Yorkshire Water provides (e.g. water quality, customer service etc) • Extent to which customers trust Yorkshire Water to administer these social tariff schemes / spend the money well. • Knowledge levels of social tariff schemes (more information on the impact of social tariff schemes) / what bills contribute towards. • Eligibility criteria of the social tariff schemes.
	<p>As a customer, how important is it for you to know / be aware of the amount you are contributing to social tariffs such as WaterSupport in your water bills? Please answer on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not important at all and 5 is extremely important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why do you say that? <p>What else, if anything, would you like to hear / know from Yorkshire Water in relation to WaterSupport? Where / how should they deliver this information?</p>

(IV) Experience and perceptions of water supplier.		5 mins
Experience and perceptions of water supplier	<p>For the final section, I'd like to spend a bit of time talking about your experience and perception of Yorkshire Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your main expectations of Yorkshire Water as your water provider? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IF NEEDED: e.g., Service, reliability, value for money, environment • Do you ever see or hear news/information about the work Yorkshire Water is doing? If yes, explore the impact of this 'news' on perceptions and willingness to contribute to social tariffs. How do you hear about this? How often? Would you like to hear more/less? • What experience do you have of them? • Is there anything about the service Yorkshire Water provides that you would like to see them improve? • And how would you rate the value for money you receive for your water services provided by Yorkshire Water? Please do this on a scale from 1-10 with 1 being the 	

	<p>lowest value for money and 10 the highest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why did you give this rating? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We've come to the end of the interview now. Yorkshire Water would like to be able to use a small selection of quotes from these interviews in promotional communications about their WaterSupport scheme. Would you be happy for a quote from you in this interview to be used for this purpose? The quote would attribute you at name and city/regional level only e.g. John Smith, Leeds
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Any final questions

Thank & Close. Remind participant they will receive their 'thank you' for taking part within 1 working week (£35 giftpay voucher to be sent via email)