Yorkshire Water: By Your Side

Our strategy for providing extra help, for those that need it the most.

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YorkshireWate

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How to view this document

Contents page

Our contents page links to every section within this document. Clicking on a specific section will instantly take you to it.

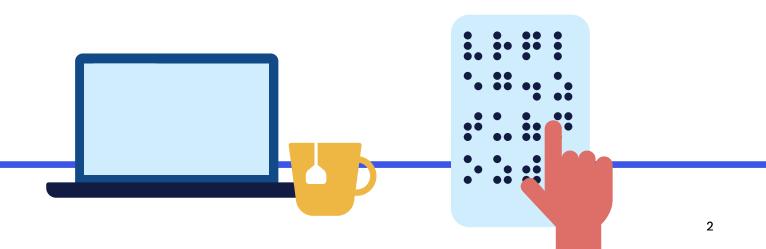
- Click on the contents button to return to the contents page.
- 2 This button takes you to the previous page.
- 3 This button takes you to the next page.

There are also many other clickable links within this document which we've made easy to spot by <u>underlining</u> and **highlighting** them in blue.

Accessibility matters. It's really important that everyone can navigate and understand our By Your Side strategy, and what it means for you.

To help with this, we've taken steps to make sure this document supports accessibility needs:

- Screen readers will recite content in a logical order, as well as spotting headers and using different text for images.
- Compatible with text-to-speech programmes and Braille displays.
- Easy navigation with contents table and bookmarked links.
- Simple text structure with clear headings, paragraphs and tables.
- Comfortable colour contrasts.



2

"At Yorkshire Water, providing excellent service to all our customers isn't just a goal — it's a promise. We understand that water is essential to daily life, and we're committed to delivering a service that's dependable, fair, and responsive to your needs. Whether it's making it easier to get in touch, offering extra support for those who need it, or ensuring our infrastructure is future-ready, we're here to make sure you feel supported every step of the way.

We understand that everyone's situation is different. Whether you're worried about making ends meet, living with a long-term health condition, or just going through a difficult patch, we're here to listen, understand, and help. You're never just a number to us — your story matters.

Living and working in a region as beautifully diverse as Yorkshire, our team is committed to making our services inclusive and easy to access for everyone. We're especially focused on supporting those who might need extra help – families struggling financially, older people who feel isolated, or those with disabilities and specific needs.

We're also working hand-in-hand with local organisations, charities, and community groups to better understand your needs and deliver help that's right for you. Whether it's offering payment support, improving mental health through access to outdoor spaces, or simply being a friendly voice when you need one — we're here to help.

As stewards of Yorkshire's stunning reservoirs and outdoor spaces, we believe in their power to support wellbeing. That's why we're committed to making these areas safe, welcoming, and open to all — so you can enjoy moments of calm, connection, and community.

My **personal commitment** to you is this: we will keep listening, keep learning, and keep improving. Your voice shapes what we do. And as life continues to evolve, so will our support — because your wellbeing isn't just our responsibility, it's our priority."

Imran Patel Director of Customer Experience





Contents

We've created colour-coded sections to help you to navigate this document easily. Just click on the section you're interested in on the contents page, and it will navigate you to that section.

This document is structured as follows:

About our strategy	5
Understanding our customers	10
Our Priority Services	16
Our strategy and commitments	20
1. High standards of service and support	22
2. Inclusive by design	27
3. Identifying customers	33
4. Recording needs	37
In the community	39
Get in touch with us	42

4

Yorkshire Water: By Your Side

This document sets out what it means to be 'by your side' at those times when you need extra help. It's our strategy to make sure that we're with you every step of the way, trusting us to always meet your needs, whatever they may be and whenever you need us.

This is a part of our ambition to play an active role in helping Yorkshire thrive now and for future generations. As you read through, you'll learn about the good things we're already doing but we know there's lots more to do. We want to keep growing and evolving, with you and for you, by really understanding how best to meet your needs. We know society doesn't stand still, the world moves on, and new challenges arise for all of us, every day. With this in mind, we at Yorkshire Water will strive to stay ahead of changing needs and circumstances and be 'by your side' throughout your journey.

You won't always see us, but you can trust and have confidence that we'll be there when you need extra help.

To guide us in delivering our strategy, we have three core principles:



We've built this strategy together

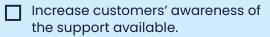
Our approach has been built collaboratively, with feedback and engagement from customers and organisations with expertise in supporting those with extra help needs. This includes the Consumer Council for Water (CCW), Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers subcommittee (YFfWC), our Customer Community, customer feedback, and Ofwat. Since 2020, we've had in the region of 58,000 quality interactions with customers through various channels, to understand their needs and priorities for our service. This has helped us better support them when they need it most.

Our extra help customers told us...

Areas of strength:

- Delivering bottled water during a supply outage for customers who are unable to leave the house.
- Good/strong range and quality of communication channels available, meeting different customers' needs and preferences.
- Simple online registration process for the Priority Services Register (PSR).
- Helpful, responsive and empathetic colleagues.

Areas of opportunity:



- Make it easier for customers to find the help they need.
- Continue working to develop our understanding of customers' needs.

Our extra help expert organisations told us...

Areas of strength:

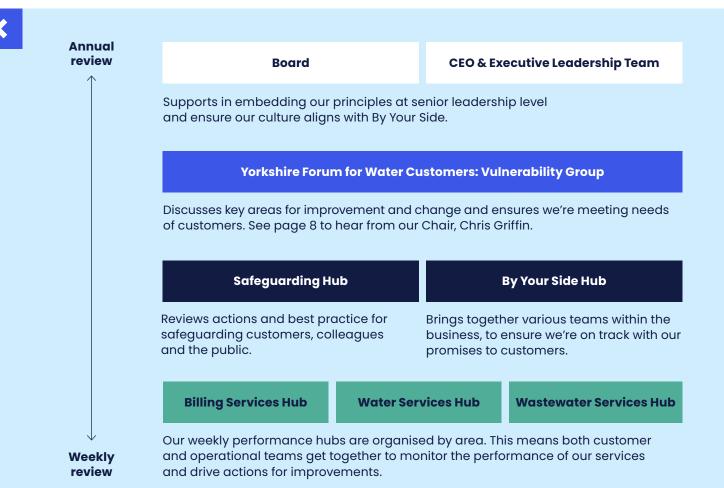
- Easy for customers to tell us about priority service needs.
- Identifying customers with extra help needs.
- Core services provided to support customers during water and wastewater issues.
- Range and quality of communication channels available.

Areas of opportunity:

- More services to support customers with billing queries.
- Strive to maintain the quality of the information we gather about extra help needs.
- More effective, targeted support when delivering services to those with extra help needs.
- Enhanced approach for extra help customers who may have raised complaints.

How we get the right assurance and challenge for our approach

Supporting customers, and ensuring we're providing extra help and delivering on our promises, is embedded into how we operate. We monitor how we're doing for customers through our performance hubs and these work in parallel with our By Your Side hub to help coordinate improvement activity in the right areas. Our approach is reviewed externally by the Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers, an independent challenge group of organisations representing different customer groups in the region. Internally, governance is provided through our executive leadership team and Board. Two of our Board members also act as advisors for our strategy, bringing expertise from other sectors and challenge to make sure we're focused on the right areas.



7

By Your Side in action: Our partnership with Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers (YFfWC)

Chris Griffin is the interim chairperson of the Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers (YFfWC), and the chair of the Vulnerability and Affordability Subcommittee. YFfWC plays a key role by scrutinising business plans.

"The Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers (YFfWC) scrutinises business plans, challenges customer involvement processes, assesses outcomes and incentives to reflect customer views, monitors performance commitments, and provides independent evaluations to Ofwat.

The YFfWC has been consulted throughout the creation of the By Your Side strategy. As bills rise and the needs of our communities change, customer expectations increase and Yorkshire Water's strategy shows a clear understanding of customer priorities, adopting a local approach which has been refined with Yorkshire customers at the forefront.

Vulnerability is difficult to define and often temporary, such as during chemotherapy or being a new parent, bereavement or illness. We are delighted that Yorkshire Water's inclusive document addresses the needs of customers requiring extra help, for both long term and short term needs. It is clear that extensive customer consultation has ensured a thorough plan to embed this ambition throughout the company.

Yorkshire Water has set clear targets and ambitious markers for the strategy's success and we know the strategy will evolve as we learn more and with ongoing customer feedback. The YFfWC will continue to work closely on the strategy, offering constructive feedback and ensuring the ambitions are realised. We are confident that Yorkshire Water's challenging goals will be an effective benchmark for the strategy's success, and we look forward to the first appraisal."

Chris Griffin

Interim Chairperson of the Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers (YFfWC)

Chair of the YFfWC Vulnerability and Affordability Subcommittee

To learn more about our Yorkshire Forum for Water Customers, including our Affordability & Vulnerability Subcommittee, please visit our webpage <u>here</u>.

Some of our Partnerships

We work with partners across the region to develop and deliver strategies to identify and support customers with extra help needs.







Understanding our customers



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Our region, our customers



£2.3m

We supply over 2.3 million homes, with over 5.4 million people



1.3 billion

Litres of water we collect, treat and supply every day



1.9 billion

Litres of wastewater we collect, treat and safely return to the environment every day



4,000 jobs

We employ 4,000 colleagues across Yorkshire



£950m

Contributed to the wider economy, on goods and services from 1,200 suppliers each year



£1.3 billion

Worth of bills managed every year

Who might benefit from extra help?

We understand that there are many times and ways in which our customers need extra help from us. Some customers may have a sustained or permanent, long-term support need, which may be obvious, for example loss of mobility or sight, or a hidden need such as dementia or diabetes.

Customers may also need extra help in accessing our services due to a life circumstance which is temporary or short-term. We need to understand the impact of those circumstances and provide the service for as long as they're needed by the customer.

Again, these can be hidden, such as redundancy and having to find a new job, or more obvious, i.e. someone who is recovering from an operation and is left temporarily immobile.





We also appreciate the complexity of extra help needs – where people may be facing more than one challenge. For example, together with a physical health problem, whether temporary or permanent, they may also be dealing with financial challenges, anxiety or stress.

When issues with services occur, for example a water outage, customers' circumstances and needs can be constantly changing. The impact of living in a rural area, living alone, or not having access to support can all mean a customer can need extra help some of the time but not all.

Physical and mental health

- Restricted physical mobility
- Medically dependent
 on water
- Restricted smell or taste
- Speech impairment
- Cognitive needs/ dementia

Life events/ location

- Temporary health needs
- New parent/young children under 5 at home
- Age e.g. young adult or frail elderly
- Bereavement
- Divorce
- Religious practices dependent on water
- Isolated communities

Service access

- English not first language
- Reading and numeracy ability
- Vision access needs e.g. dyslexia, vision impairment, colour blindness
- Neurodivergence
- Impaired vision or hearing

Understanding our customers

Our Insight to Action model is designed to turn rich data on customer demographics and behaviours into meaningful, practical improvements that directly benefit our customers. By focusing on what matters most to the people we serve – understanding their needs, their communities, and their expectations – we're able to prioritise and deliver support that truly makes a difference.



1. We're committed to inclusive data collection by regularly gathering insights from a wide range of sources — including industry and local

research, demographic studies, water usage patterns, billing data, our own research, and direct customer interactions. This comprehensive approach helps ensure that any changes we make are informed, inclusive, and considerate of those who may need extra support. By reflecting the diversity and unique needs of our communities, we aim to design services and solutions that work better for everyone.

2. We use data analysis to better understand our customers, by utilising demographics and

regional insights. This helps ensure we stay on top of evolving customer needs and help uncover trends and patterns to inform how we deliver services and support. Looking ahead, we're exploring opportunities in predictive analytics and forecasting to anticipate customer needs, enabling us to be more proactive and efficient in how we serve our communities.

3. We turn data analysis into targeted, actionable insights that directly address the specific needs and challenges of our customers.

These insights guide our strategies and lead to real, positive outcomes — such as reshaping our billing support to be more accessible, and enhancing our response to water and sewage incidents. 4. We're working towards using adaptive prioritisation to ensure support is delivered where and when it's needed most. By establishing clear criteria — such as medical vulnerability or financial circumstances — we can adapt our response to each customer's situation. We also use data to identify which communities would benefit most from targeted partnerships and engagement, ensuring our efforts are aligned with localised needs and delivering the greatest impact. This approach helps us provide fair, responsive, and effective support to all members of our community.

5. We define clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact and effectiveness of our strategies, ensuring we stay focused

of our strategies, ensuring we stay focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for our customers. With strong governance and accountability in place, we've built a robust feedback loop that allows us to collect data, refine our actions, and continuously improve our services. Culture and training are central to this process – empowering both colleagues and customers to share feedback, which we actively use to adapt and enhance the support we provide.

We're constantly building a deeper and richer understanding of our communities...

Yorkshire has a population of over 5.4 million. We really care about taking everyone's needs seriously, so it's important that we use data to understand the diverse needs of our customers and communities.

We understand that customer circumstances can be permanent or temporary, and even impacted by the work we do, so we continuously seek to understand our regional data and respond to evolving customer and community needs. We've recently updated our company induction to include key information about customer needs within our region. All colleagues receive this information, alongside exercises covering how we can best support customers needing extra help. Customer-facing roles then go on to continue their bespoke training which includes more indepth training on identifying and supporting customer needs.

Disabilities & access to services: Yorkshire and The Humber represent the third highest proportion of disabled people in England. This equates to 18.9%, or 1 million people. Additionally, a substantial portion of disabled individuals in West Yorkshire reported that their daily activities were significantly limited (2021 census).

When considering this alongside the rural areas of Yorkshire, we need to be mindful of the impact of access to services for disabled customers, especially during supply interruptions or other emergencies. In the establishment of our new bottled water delivery partnership, we've paid specific attention to ensuring we have appropriate resources for rural areas, to ensure an efficient response to customer needs. We're always reviewing data and performance, to continuously look for ways to improve. Mental health: Mental health is a critical concern in Yorkshire and the Humber, where we have the third-highest suicide rate in England — 12.3 suicides per 100,000 people (Zero Suicide Alliance). Additionally, 17.7% of children and young people in Yorkshire are living with one or more mental health problems (Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Network).

We understand the profound impact these challenges have on individuals, families, and communities. As an organisation committed to safeguarding, we take our responsibility seriously — especially when it comes to supporting customers needing extra help. We've introduced a dedicated **Safeguarding Procedure**, alongside comprehensive **training for our colleagues**, to ensure they can recognise indicators of concern and respond with care and confidence. We are also improving how we **signpost customers to trusted external support services**, making it easier for those in need to access the help they deserve.

Looking ahead, our goal is to establish a **Safeguarding Resource Bank** – a central hub of tools, guidance, and referral pathways developed in collaboration with our partners. This will enable our teams to provide timely, appropriate support to those who need it most.

We're committed to playing our part in supporting positive mental health across Yorkshire. One way we can do this is by increasing awareness of our outdoor spaces, through "green prescribing" partnerships with local care networks and continuing our engagement within the community. See our "In the Community" section to learn more about our work and what's on offer.

14

Dementia: Across Yorkshire, there are 76,000 people living with dementia. On the East Coast of Yorkshire, there are higher than average numbers of people aged 65+ living with dementia (dementia Statistics Hub).

All colleagues undertake an online training module, developed in partnership with Alzheimer's UK, to increase their awareness and understanding of what it's like living with dementia. Additionally, our Priority Services Register gives customers the option to nominate a trusted friend or family member to manage their account for them, to help when things are more challenging.

Cost of living: Employment within our region is below national average. Our communities also have the second average lowest income in England. These factors mean that our customers are more likely to struggle paying their bills and have concerns about their money.

That's why we've commissioned several insights projects to understand the affordability challenges of our customers. In 2023, we carried out a sector leading "Affordability & Vulnerability" study, exploring the challenges our customers face in today's cost of living crisis.

The research told us that, overall, our customers have a high satisfaction with the financial support schemes that we offer. However, only 40% of customers are likely to contact us if they are struggling to pay for their water. We've been working on proactive engagement campaigns and partnerships to break down barriers and help customers who need it most. To find out if these schemes can help you, click here. Struggling with your money can also create more challenges when things go wrong with your water supply. For example, electricity costs for boiling water, or purchasing water from the shop. Our Priority Services Register (PSR) can support these customers too, alongside guidance and advice from our trained colleagues.

Religion and water supply: Islam is the third most popular religion in Yorkshire, representing around 8% of inhabitants of Yorkshire and the Humber (2021 census). In West Yorkshire in particular, the proportion of Muslims is higher than the country's average, representing 14% of the population. Practicing Muslims pray five times a day, and ablution (Wudu) is an essential step for purification before prayer. Access to water for this practice is vital.

We're always mindful of the impact of unexpected supply interruptions in areas with a religious reliance on water supply, and know from customer feedback and experiences that there's opportunity for us to do more. We're working on more ways we can engage with these communities to help increase proactive efforts to be prepared for unexpected incidents and minimise impacts to customers.

Future opportunities: Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance our understanding of customer needs

As customer needs evolve and technology advances, we're committed to finding new ways to improve our support. We're exploring innovative AI tools to enhance customer experience — whether that's through smarter, real-time support for our agents or deeper insights that help us understand and serve our communities more effectively.

We're also looking beyond our own industry — learning from leading businesses to adopt proven practices that can make a real difference for our customers. This could include tools like voice analytics and agent assistance, all designed to help us respond faster, more personally, and more effectively to customer needs.

Our Priority Services

Signing up to our Priority Services Register (PSR) is one way that we can offer support for customers.

We offer a range of free services specially designed to support customers who might need a bit of extra help. Whether it's getting bills in different formats or getting help if your water goes off – we're here to make things easier.

This section will explain a little more about our priority services. This includes what services we currently provide and what customers can expect when they register with us.

Who is most likely to benefit from the Priority Services Register?

The following criteria (temporary or permanent) are examples of customer's who may benefit most from signing up to our free Priority Services Register.



17

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Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register is one of our primary ways to provide extra help to customers. It makes things easier and we can make sure we provide the right support, at the right time, and in a way that customers trust.



Communication needs:

Multi-channel – phone, online account, call-back.

Large print bill

Braille bill

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Audio bills: 'talking bills' or CDs.

BSL Interpretation through 'Interpreters Live!'.

Language Interpretation service for telephone calls and doorstep visits.

ReciteMe available on key areas of our website to aid accessibility.



Supply/ Operational needs:

Bottled water delivery for interruptions to supply over 5 hours, where customers are not able to visit a water station.

Free leak repairs for financially vulnerable customers.

Calling before visits





Welfare needs:

Password: a Yorkshire Water colleague at the address uses an agreed password to guard against bogus callers.

Nominee: family, carer or support agency added to account to help manage bills, and support in emergencies.

Customer visits during significant incident.

Signposting internal and external financial support.

Tailored debt strategies for customers experiencing financial difficulty.

Coming in the future...

Enhanced sign-up approach: Customers can already select the services they'd like to use alongside their needs. This helps us prioritise our extra help for them. Coming soon, we intend to also help customers to sign up for support from other regional providers at the same time, which includes explaining how their data is shared and used.

Flexible systems: Our new and improved customer management system will enable colleagues to identify new customers with extra help needs, saving customers vital time and effort in contacting us.

Tailored engagement: Using PSR data intelligently to inform and preplan tailored communications to effectively engage with customers, when an incident or major situation occurs.

By Your Side in action: The PSR Journey

1. Identifying your needs

We've trained colleagues to be able to identify customer needs during each of their interactions with us. This means we can help signpost customers to our Priority Services Register and the extra help available, without them needing to ask. Or, customers can self-sign up via online and telephone channels any time they like.

2. The sign up process



Customers tell us about their circumstances (often referred to as their "needs"), and then select which services they'd like to receive from us, to help them support their needs.

Some services are also automatically allocated, based on our understanding of needs, to help customers access the right services for them. We also automatically enrol certain groups of customers, where we believe they'd benefit based on insights and industry best practice. Sign up doesn't require any evidence or payment.

4. Checking in

We want to make sure customer needs and services are up-to-date, and continue to meet their requirements.

To see if there's anything else we can do to support, we'll check in every 2 years.

3. Welcome to the PSR



Customers who've been automatically enrolled, or have asked to sign up to the PSR online, will receive a personalised welcome letter.

The welcome letter will include details of the services customers have been enrolled on, and what they can expect.

5. Receiving your service

Some services are automatic, like delivering bills in a specific format, others are available as customers need them, such as requesting a password during a home visit.

We've developed a process to capture how customers feel about the service they've received, during interruptions to their water supply. Going forward, we're looking for ways to capture this for every PSR service, to make sure we're delivering what customers need from us.

We always strive to provide the best service possible, however if we fail to meet our high expectations, we'll make it easy for customers to receive the right compensation. For more information, please see our **Customer Charter**. Our Charter also includes information on the "Guaranteed Service Standards" (GSS), which follows the industry standard approach for compensating customers when things go wrong.

Our strategy and commitments

Over the following pages we set out what it means to be 'By Your Side' now, and what we plan to do in the future.

When we refer to customers, we mean you, our valued customers, who sometimes need extra help with your water services.



Our strategy is built around four commitments:

1. High standards of service & support

Focusing on how we adapt our services to make sure our extra help customers receive the right support which is easy to understand. This includes during interruptions to water supply. We also talk through our commitment to continuously improve our approach.

2. Inclusive by design

Focusing on our commitment to use insights to ensure that our services and interactions are suitable for a diverse range of customer needs. We also look to demonstrate this through accreditation with appropriate bodies.

3. Identifying customers

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Focusing on how we train our colleagues and develop processes to proactively identify customers who need extra help. This also includes how we raise awareness and partner with other organisations to reach those who need support.

4. Recording needs

Providing information on how we record customer data and how often this is reviewed and checked with customers, to make sure you know how we use your personal data and how you can make sure it's up-to-date with your needs.

1. High standards of service & support

Principles	Our goals	Our short-term measures	Our future measures
We'll make it easy for you	 Every extra help customer will understand what support is available to them. Every extra help customer will be engaged to understand their needs during any work we do. 	 PSR reach: 11% of customers by 2026. Dialysis customers receive personal contract during service interruptions: 100%. 	 PSR Reach: evolving target determined by data- driven insight. Proactive communication to reduce repeat contacts regarding extra help to less than 10%.
We'll deliver our services with care	 Every extra help customer will receive the support they need, when they need it. Every extra help customer will be signposted to the right external support when appropriate. 	 Customers registered for bottled water delivery service will receive this for incidents over 5 hours: 100%. Customers signposted to external organisations: 10,000. 	 We'll implement a structured approach to incident response, to prioritise faster response times for critical water needs. Customers signposted to external organisations: 50,000 by 2030.
We'll listen, learn and improve	 Every extra help customer will get a service that is right for their current needs. 	 Satisfaction score of at least 4.5 out of 5 for extra help customers who've received bottled water deliveries. 	• We'll understand and set measures for customer satisfaction across the range of our extra help services.

By Your Side now: How we're delivering on this

Helping customers understand the support available.

One of the easiest ways to support customers is by registering for our Priority Services, which customers can do over the phone or via our **yorkshirewater.com/priority**. Through this, we provide a wide range of support across a number of core service needs, as listed in the table (as listed on page 17). Through information on our website and dedicated training for all colleagues in our call centre, we aim to make it really easy for customers to understand what's available to them.

Once customers have signed up to the Priority Services Register, they'll receive a letter confirming their registration and the extra help services they need.

Delivering a rapid responsive service during incidents.

During major incidents, our skilled Customer Incident Team work hard to provide extra help to customers, making sure they receive the appropriate level of service and onsite support. The team ensures prompt delivery of bottled water, communicates accurate and timely updates, and provides face-to-face support, particularly for customers with the most urgent needs.

We also deploy our dedicated Customer Centre during complex, large-scale incidents, which offers a safe space for customers requiring more support during an incident. This includes providing extra bottled water and information on external support organisations.

An adaptive approach:

With over 160,000 customers now registered on our Priority Services Register (PSR) for bottled water, we're proud to deliver emergency supplies within five hours in over 90% of cases. But we know that for many of our customers — especially those with medical conditions or additional needs being without water isn't just inconvenient, it can be life-affecting.

That's why we're developing a new, more thoughtful approach to how we respond during large-scale supply interruptions. We're working to better understand which customers would be most severely impacted by a loss of water, so we can prioritise them and make sure that they receive support first.

We've also reviewed our services to understand how we can better support customers when things go wrong. We've heard customer feedback, and guidance from industry experts, and have begun prioritising response for sewage incidents as well as water supply incidents. To do this, we've worked to understand the criticality of customer needs and have trained colleagues to identify where prioritised response is needed. This is being rolled out throughout 2025 and will be continuously reviewed in line with customer needs and feedback.

We're also making it easier for customers to tell us about their needs, and we're proactively identifying those who may need extra help. By working closely with health and care partners, we're making sure our response is not only fast but fair, inclusive, and focused on what matters most to you.

Because we believe that great service means more than just resolving the issue – it means showing we care, making things easier, and always putting your wellbeing first.

Providing a personal service for those on dialysis during supply interruptions.

We contact customers individually to understand their dialysis needs and collaborate with them to lessen the impact of planned or unplanned interruptions. This may involve rescheduling planned work or providing an alternative water supply during unplanned interruptions and interventions. We also actively track the experience and number of dialysis patients to make sure they receive a prompt and coordinated response during any event.

Giving live updates through neighbourhood texting.

To improve confidence in receiving bottled water during supply interruptions, we've developed a bespoke 'Neighbourhood Texting' service for registered customers. This service provides live updates, confirming bottled water deliveries, incident updates, and estimated delivery times.

To deliver this initiative, we have equipped our incident response team with new skills and enhanced processes. This ensures they can effectively identify and support customers who need this vital assistance.





Prioritising customer safeguarding.

To be truly by their side, effective safeguarding of our customers is one of our key focus areas.

In emergency situations, our colleagues will contact emergency services or appropriate local authorities to ensure customer wellbeing and safety. For non-emergency concerns about a customer's wellbeing, our trained colleagues will compassionately engage customers about the extra help options available to them, including a secure referral through to relevant organisations.

Underpinning this, our Customer Vulnerability & Safeguarding Manager handles specific escalated safeguarding concerns. As well as this, our teams review and maintain processes, training, and audits to ensure effective customer safeguarding.

Monitoring and improving the effectiveness of our services:

- Driving improvement through call listening: Our customer contact centre uses regular call listening to spot areas for improvement in customer service or colleague training. We're working on enhancing our audit process to include specific monitoring criteria for customer support and signposting, to increase consistency and identification of areas of improvement.
- Enhancing development through Colleague Coaching: We use feedback from call listening and learning reviews to tailor the coaching for colleagues. This includes our ambition to embed a 'monthly focus' to target improvement in our processes and ensure those improvements are sustainably embedded.
- Targeting improvement by Talking Performance: We're enhancing our performance frameworks to set clear goals for customer-facing staff, integrating an understanding of customers who need extra help across all our teams. This ensures customers and their extra help needs are a part of our continuous improvement practices.



- Open collaboration through Industry benchmarking: As you'd expect, we participate in industry seminars and working sessions, including those with regulators and customer support organisations, such as the CCW Vulnerability and Affordability Forums, The Debt Network and the Collaboration Network. Through these groups and broader networks outside our own industry, we keep close to new innovations and approaches to customer service. This helps us to ensure our customers and our teams benefit from open collaboration, learning and development.
- Acting on customer surveys: Requesting feedback helps us to understand how customers feel about the services we provide and where we can improve. This includes:
 - Our monthly tracker asks about overall levels of satisfaction and other areas such as general perceptions and value for money.
 - Our 'Customer Voice' survey, sent via SMS, collects feedback from recent customer interactions to help us understand specific areas of improvement.

Supporting customers when our service falls below expectations.

Our Customer Charter sets out a wide range of commitments to customers with compensation available when we fail to deliver on these. As well as specific commitments around water supply and sewerage incidents, our Charter covers inconvenience experienced by customers and a commitment that all PSR applications will be reviewed within 5 working days, with a payment made to customers if we fail to do this.

We're working towards updating our Charter, to include more compensation for not meeting PSR service standards in line with regulatory requirements. We aim to have this done by the end of 2025.

High standards of service & support: Our plans to do more	When we'll have done this by
We're implementing a dedicated support service for customers who require extra help with sewerage issues such as sewer flooding and restricted toilet access.	End of 2025
We'll deliver faster response times for those with the most urgent needs, by improving how we prioritise extra help support based on impact and needs.	2026
We'll roll out our collaboratively designed streetworks training to increase colleague and contract partner awareness of the challenges blind customers face, and how we can create an inclusive and accessible space when putting street works in place. This includes broader accessibility considerations such as mobility vehicle and pram users.	2028
We'll collaborate with our service partners to embed an enhanced response to customer needs during planned repair work.	2028

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To find out more information on our plans to deliver, please visit: <u>yorkshirewater.com/by-your-side-supporting-information</u>

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By Your Side in action: Customer Wellbeing



Case Study: **TellJo:** Digital wellbeing for customers:

Following our successful pilot in 2024, we've embedded the TellJo wellbeing questionnaire into our customer journeys. This will provide additional support to over 35,000 customers in 2025-26, offering them wellbeing, health and financial help.

TellJo is a digital wellbeing questionnaire which we provide freely to customers where there is indication they may need additional help. Once completed, the questionnaire gives personalised advice about such subjects as health support, income maximisation, debt help, amongst others. There is no obligation to customers to share any of this information with Yorkshire Water, but where they do we will also utilise this as an additional channel of engagement to provide bill support.



In the first year over 12,000 customers were sent the questionnaire. Of those that completed and shared their information with us we were able to provide:

- Priority services to almost 1,000 customers.
- Around 1,000 customers received water bill reductions via one of our bill reduction schemes.
- 30% of customers referred to self-help.

Coming in the future...

We plan to further enhance this fantastic tool for customers this year by exploring new customer segments who may benefit from this support. We're also looking to improve the initial communication to reach more customers.

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2. Inclusive by design

Principles	Our goals	Our short-term measures	Our future measures
We'll make it easy for you	• Every extra help customer can get the support they need through a channel that works for them.	 Score of at least 4 out of 5 for ease of using extra help services. 	 We'll develop more metrics to understand accessibility of channels for customers.
	• Every extra help customer finds our services simple to access and use.		
We'll deliver our services with care	• Every extra help customer can have their say on big changes to the services that affect them.	 Increase number of customers engaged in service design via our online community and customer feedback. 	 We will have an active extra help community of 1,000 customers.
We'll listen, learn and improve	 Every extra help support is evidenced in insight and has appropriate accreditation. Every interested stakeholder will be engaged in the development of services. 	 ISO22458 Inclusive Customer Service accreditation. Increase number of stakeholders engaged in service design. 	 ISO 22458 Inclusive Customer Service accreditation. We will have an active extra help community of 20 organisations.

By Your Side now: How we're delivering on this

We strive to make sure that whenever our customers need help, our services are easy to access and understand, regardless of their needs. This makes sure that all our services and communication is accessible.

We've tailored our digital services to make them more accessible and easier to understand. For customers requiring extra help, we offer a number of different resources to help. These include: ReciteMe facilities on our website, subtitled resources, British Sign Language communication services, interpreters for phone and face to face interactions.

Our bills are also available in various formats, including large print, braille, listen to formats (available digitally and on CD-rom), spoken over the phone and black print for customers who are colour blind.

Helping customers access extra help as simply and quickly as possible.

Customers tell us that our application process for support is straightforward, leading to increased satisfaction and engagement, particularly around bill support. This registration process is consistent across all contact channels, including online, over the phone, via traditional paper forms, and through external organisations that can apply on behalf of customers.

For customers who contact us directly, or through our partner organisations, we aim to confirm the support provided immediately. This approach eliminates barriers, such as delays, to accessing the right support and importantly provides those who may feel vulnerable with instant reassurance.

However, we aim to build on this success. In our plan, we'll review and update our online registration process for extra help service, including Priority Services and Financial Support. Using learnings from our customer research, we've evolved our online registration forms for Priority Services and bill support. Customers told us they wanted to get help from us as simply as possible. In response we have:

- · Simplified our online web forms.
- Enabled our billing contact centre to register customers for bill help over the phone to remove barriers to engagement.
- Updated literature, both physical and digital, to more clearly explain the help available.

We've also transitioned to a new Customer Management System (CRM) to improve the coordination and management of our extra help services. This new single system offers greater visibility to all colleagues across the organisation of which services extra help customers are registered for. This system is already available to our contact centre colleagues and will extend to operational and field colleagues in the near future.

Inclusive Service BSI Kitemark[™]

We strive to make sure that whenever our customers need help, our services are easy to access and understand, regardless of their needs.

bsi Service Water Services Provision KITEMARKTM

Making all our services and communication accessible.

Yorkshire Water is accredited with the BSI Kitemark[™] for Inclusive Service, which is awarded to companies who've met strict criteria for protecting customers when they're in vulnerable situations. In achieving the Kitemark[™], Yorkshire Water has shown that our services are accessible to all, that our colleagues are trained to identify and support customers in vulnerable situations and that we put inclusivity at the heart of our business. It includes accreditation with the British Standard for consumer vulnerability, BS ISO 22458.

Linked to this, we've demonstrated that our website conforms to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2 Level AA.

Engaging with stakeholders in the design and deployment of our extra help services

We're committed to increasing our visibility and community engagement to better support customers, especially those who need extra help.

In 2022-23 we supported over 12,000 customers with additional support via external organisations. We made a commitment to double this by 2030 to ensure customers could access our help as easily as possible.

In 2024-25, we've already met over 65% of this target by increasing the number of customers accessing help via external organisations to over 20,000 customers. We expect this number to continue to grow in the coming financial year and to meet our original commitment ahead of 2030.

As part of the expansion, we'll continue to use data mapping to identify under-represented communities, places and groups to target collective efforts more effectively. To better our response during incidents, we proactively partner with Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). These partnerships help us to provide essential resources such as setting up warm hubs and supplying warm food during large-scale events. We regularly participate in exercises with LRFs and other community groups, including faith groups, to improve our support for customers with extra help needs.

In the next strategic period, we'll focus on building partnerships with organisations such as care homes, the fire service and the NHS to reach new customers who may not be aware of our services.

services

We have a range of ways to interact and communicate with our customers

	ÎA E		
Website	Online Account	Email	Paper Forms
	We're working on improvements to our online account, to make it easier for customers to view and manage their PSR services.		
Ell S	Solution	•	
British Sign Language and interpreter	Telephone	Text Messaging	Social Media

This also includes providing customers with the option to choose another company to handle their payments for them (also known as "third party billing"). Here's a few ways customers can do this:

- Through our Priority Services Register, where customers can add a nominee onto their account.
- Arrangement through another recognised/approved organisation, such as a housing association.
- Agreeing a repayment plan via a financial support organisation.

We know that 7% of the Yorkshire population speak no English, or isn't their first language. That's why we've created 4 key informative videos in the 6 most spoken languages in Yorkshire (plus BSL). We'll be sharing these videos at community groups and on our website, to help support customer awareness on blockages, water saving, PSR and financial support. >

To help us be by their side, we offer customers a variety of additional support. This includes...

Customer accounts

- We're providing online accounts for more customers to view their bills digitally and access online services quicker and easier.
- We can add a nominee to your account. This could be a family member, a carer or a support agency to help manage a customer's bills and support them in emergencies.

Collecting payments

 We're sensitive to how we collect outstanding payments from customers, where we recognise they may need some extra help. This includes how we proactively communicate with our customers and, given permission, we can visit them to offer help schemes.

Support services outside of Yorkshire Water

 We show customers where they can get support outside of Yorkshire Water, such as financial and mental health services. These services support many of our customers, even those who aren't signed up for extra help from us.

Saving water

- We provide customers with water efficiency devices and advice, to help them save water and money.
- We offer free leak repairs for customers struggling to pay their bills.

Visiting customers

- We call customers before visiting them, to make sure we never turn up unannounced.
- When we visit a customer's address, we'll use an agreed password to make sure customers know it's us and we're not a bogus caller.
- We visit customers' homes during significant incidents, to make sure they're okay and they have everything they need.

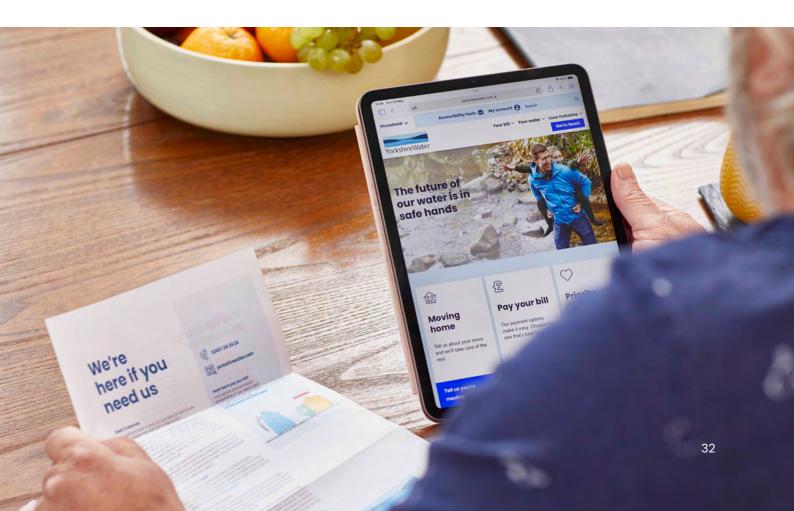
Accessibility

• ReciteMe and British Sign Language are available on our website. We're adding 'translation services' to our Priority Services Register, to help customers who speak English as a second language.

Inclusive by design: Our plans to do more	When we'll have done this by
We're enhancing engagement by proactively enrolling customers in our Priority Services Register (PSR), extending support to over 230,000 customers. Services will include bottled water delivery, bills and communications in alternative formats (such as audio and braille), and account passwords for added security and reassurance when interacting with Yorkshire Water.	Achieved in 2025
We'll build an extra help customer community to help with the testing of new support services.	2026
We'll include customer literacy requirements within updates to our customer communications documents, utilising customer insights and best practice.	2026
We'll build partnerships with organisations such as care homes and the NHS to reach new customers who may not be aware of our services.	2028
We aim to double the number of customers receiving our support through partner organisations.	2030

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To find out more information on our plans to deliver, please visit: yorkshirewater.com/by-your-side-supporting-information



3. Identifying customers

Principles	Our goals	Our short-term measures	Our future measures
We'll make it easy for you	 Every extra help customer will be encouraged to sign up for Priority Services. Every extra help customer will find it easy to sign up for Priority Services. 	 Extra help awareness: 60%. We'll increase the number of teams with the ability to sign customers up to PSR. We'll add 10,000 customers to our PSR through data-sharing with energy providers. 	 Extra help awareness: 75%. We'll improve our online PSR sign-up journey to increase % successful completions. We'll continue engagement with industry data sharing programmes to align with industry best practice.
We'll deliver our services with care	• Every extra help customer will receive support from colleagues who are trained to spot and support their needs.	 Colleagues are trained on identifying and supporting individual customer needs. We have a dedicated team to support customers dealing with bereavement. 	• Extra help goals embedded into colleague performance framework.
We'll listen, learn and improve	• We'll use root-cause analysis of complaints to understand systemic issues and drive improvement.	 No targets for average handling time (AHT), to keep the focus on quality service interactions and not speed. 	 We'll develop a process to track and respond to root cause trends in complaints surrounding extra help services.

By Your Side now: How we're delivering on this

Being visible and inclusive to all customers.

We're always striving to help more customers find out what's available to them. This means we're able to offer the right extra help to both those we already know about, and those customers we don't but who may benefit from it. As a result, we need to be visible and accessible to all customers.

Despite various awareness campaigns since 2020, research shows that only approximately one third of customers know about bill support and our Priority Services Register (PSR). Also, many of those customers who are aware think the help offered does not apply to them.

To tackle these challenges, we're improving engagement by being much more proactive when registering customers for Priority Services. A good example of this is that we now automatically include all households with residents over the age of 85 for bottled water delivery in the event of a water outage.

Helping colleagues to be by the side of customers from the start.

Our colleagues receive ongoing training to recognise and identify customers' additional support needs. This begins with their induction, which includes exploring real life scenarios for Priority Service needs, accessibility support and bill assistance.

After induction, training continues with masterclasses on topics like Dementia, offering additional Priority Services, bill support and bereavement support, alongside ongoing coaching focused on always delivering inclusive services.

In 2023, we reviewed and relaunched our 'Recognising Customer Needs' training programme for customer-facing roles. ISO accreditation highlighted the need to better monitor training effectiveness, so we're integrating this into team and individual performance goals. We're always working to embed extra help needs into our customer service culture, empowering all colleagues to take ownership of customer needs and provide additional support where it's needed.

Caring for customers experiencing bereavement.

In January 2025, we introduced our new bereavement process for customers needing to update account details following a loss. We heard our customer and colleague feedback, and responded to industry best practice and guidance, to undertake a full end-to-end review of our processes, structure and training.

We're proud to say that our new, dedicated bereavement team is live and we've already expanded the number of colleagues with this specialist training based on demand. Dedicated team members handling bereavement conversations means that customers can trust that colleagues are trained to respond to specific needs and make the journey as easy as possible for them. Upon calling our contact number, customers have the option to select bereavement to be automatically directed to our team, making sure they are in the right hands, straight away.

In future, we're looking to add an online form for account changes due to bereavement. This will make it even easier for customers to get in touch with us. We'll continue to review customer satisfaction and feedback and colleague feedback whilst we embed and reflect on our new team and processes to continually make things better for customers.

Identifying customers: Our plans to do more	When we'll have done this by
We'll continue to use text message responses from our neighbourhood communications to identify customers' additional needs. This will trigger a phone call to confirm if a customer needs support. We'll monitor and record the actions taken following responses and the number of PSR sign-ups completed with customers.	2025
We'll use our full range of communication channels to continually drive awareness and explain eligibility for our extra support. We'll personalise messaging to customers with targeted communications and visibility in online accounts. We'll also look for opportunities to raise awareness within other customer campaigns, to make sure we're reaching as many customers as possible.	2028

To find out more information on our plans to deliver, please visit: yorkshirewater.com/by-your-side-supporting-information

By Your Side in action: Proactive engagement

Understanding our data

We leverage a combination of external data from credit agencies and our own billing data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the financial landscape and likely customer challenges across different areas within our region. This allows us to identify areas with lower incomes, relative to their water charges, and those already benefitting from our support schemes.

Closing the gap

By analysing this data, we can pinpoint low-income areas where customers aren't yet enrolled in our support schemes. This insight helps us proactively identify the top 20 areas of opportunity each financial year, helping us to focus our efforts where they're needed most. We use a "heat map" approach to visually represent these opportunities, making sure that our initiatives are targeted and effective in bridging the gap.



Adapting to change

In 2025, we've noticed some changes. Some areas with HX and HU postcodes are no longer in our top 20 focus areas. Instead, we're seeing more lowincome families and support scheme sign-ups in YO postcodes. This shows how our customer needs can change over time.

Strengthening partnerships

To help these new areas, we're checking our current partnerships. We want to make sure we're working with local, regional, and national organisations in these hotspot areas. This way, we can meet the different needs of our customers and make sure they get the support they need.

Case Study: 2025 Annual bill increase

Since 2021, the cost of living in the UK has increased, and we know that means some people are finding it harder to pay their water bills.

Before we increased bills in 2025, we used our data to find out which areas might need more help. We know that when people are struggling with money, they might also have other challenges, like health problems or need extra support.

Our goal is to make sure everyone gets the support they need, in a way that's easy and fair. So, we organised 11 events within key areas in Yorkshire, to raise **awareness** about our bill support schemes and Priority Services Register (PSR).

One family in Bradford was able to save £700 on their annual bill by registering for WaterSupport, another will save an estimated £600 by having a meter fitted, whilst one customer in Doncaster saved £400 by signing up to another one of our schemes.

Across the events, colleagues managed to support 170 customers save money on their bills, with an overall £43,491.80 reduction on customers' bills – that's an average saving of £255.83 per customer.

Each of these conversations involved signposting to additional support available, and we directly signed up 37 customers to our PSR.

By Your Side in action: Building Awareness

We have lots of different campaigns, designed with customers in mind, that generate awareness and help signpost customers to where they can access extra help. Here's a few examples...

PSR poster and press ad



PSR leaflet

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PSR social media posts



Coming in the future...

Enhanced awareness through more partners: Expanding our activities through a diverse range of partners who are better placed to help raise awareness of and access to our extra help, such as the NHS, schools, care homes or community groups like food banks.

Increased accessibility: Building on our success in using accessible formats for our bills and other materials, by firmly embedding them in all our campaigns, whether hosted by us or our partners.

4. Recording needs

Principles	Our goals	Our measures
We'll make it easy for you	• Every extra help customer will understand, have control and be consulted on how their data is used and stored.	 Check in with PSR customers to confirm their individual needs every two years – 90% (in line with industry best practice).
We'll deliver our services with care	 Every extra help customer will have their data recorded securely, accurately and kept up-to-date. 	 ISO27001 Data Security Protection accreditation.
We'll listen, learn and improve	• Every extra help customer can provide feedback in a way that works for them.	 Increase number of customers who have taken part in feedback surveys.

By Your Side now: How we're delivering on this

Actively protecting customer information.

We keep customer information around their extra support needs safe and secure, following data protection laws. We're currently upgrading our systems so all colleagues can see and focus on relevant customer care needs at the right time. This system will allow for easy Priority Service sign-ups and secure referrals to support services.



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Understanding customer satisfaction

We regularly monitor feedback from customers with additional support needs on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

We're developing a customer satisfaction tracker to understand how customers experience our extra help services. This makes sure we're meeting the needs of customers and identifies areas for improvement.

We track customer and colleague feedback, letting us tackle any issues and provide support to colleagues for their training and development. This information is also used to manage and improve our extra help services.

Recording needs: Our plans to do more	When we'll have done this by
We'll develop the use of prompting in the online account to help customers make sure their recorded needs are up to date.	2026
We'll expand the number of customers we request feedback from, following an event or incident, to enable us to receive as much feedback as possible.	2027

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In the community

Our 2025 "Regional Understanding" research highlighted that only 5% of people think we're doing something positive for their community. This tells us that there's still lots of work to do to raise awareness.

As the custodians of some of Yorkshire's incredible outdoor spaces, we do all we can to make these places as accessible to customers as possible. This includes ongoing partnerships with expert organisations, regular engagement with the community at our sites, and getting involved in local initiatives. We actively track and promote social value time, and we've shared some examples of these activities over the next few pages.



By Your Side in action: Community engagement

Our community engagement teams have dedicated strategies to make sure we're raising awareness about the extra support available.

We've made a conscious effort to support local charities and communities. For Christmas 2024, we supported a local Bradford food bank and lead a Christmas gift appeal. We've also given them billing and employability support, so they can advise their communities.

We now employ a team of Rangers, who move around our sites to take care of them and be a contact point for customers when they're visiting our sites.

We know how important supporting our communities with problems around mental health is. As part of Bradford's City of Culture activities, our Occupational Health team are providing 2 days' of Mental Health First Aid training for volunteers. We also host regular community engagement events at our sites. This can include things like Random Acts of Kindness days, where we join up with our ranger team to offer advice and get creative with the outdoors. We aim to continue these events throughout the year, aiming for 4 events every 12 months.



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By Your Side in action: Accessibility of the Outdoors

Research consistently highlights the positive link between spending time in outdoor spaces, and improved mental health. As one of the largest land owners in Yorkshire, we recognise the importance of ensuring our outdoor spaces are inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible.

Our website hosts details on the facilities available at each of our reservoir sites, so you can plan your visits to suit you. Our recreation teams are always looking for new ways to increase accessibility and work with partners to improve our sights. To learn more about the reservoirs near you, <u>visit our website</u>.

Case Study:

Community Trust:

Thanks to our partnership with Experience Community, we've hosted groups of visitors with disabilities at our Swinsty and Fewston reservoirs.

Experience Community specialises in providing inclusive outdoor activities and specialist equipment, such as mountain trikes, which allows people with disabilities to explore our reservoirs with ease. This experience significantly boosted the community interest groups' confidence in accessing our beautiful Yorkshire countryside.

We're delighted that our collaboration has facilitated greater access to our sites for individuals with disabilities. It's given us valuable insights on enhancing our facilities to ensure a more accessible and enjoyable experience for a broader range of visitors.



We've had some lovely feedback from Sue, who attended the ramble!

"I had a lot of fun at the ramble around Fewston and Swinsty reservoirs. The car park has plenty of disabled parking spaces and the paths around both reservoirs are fully accessible to Mountain Trikes – and where there were steps, an accessible route had been built around them. I liked that the route was not completely level and there were some quite steep parts that were challenging to descend – it was really enjoyable now that I am more confident in going downhill. I always feel I learn it a bit more about Mountain Triking with each ramble I take part in."

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Get in touch with us

If you or someone you know needs extra help, you can contact us in the ways below:



Call us 0345 1 24 24 24



<u>Visit our website</u>



<u>Sign up to our</u> <u>Priority Services Register</u>

Thank you for reading

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