

Customer service



What is customer service?



Key term: Customer service means taking care of the customer's needs by providing professional, good quality service and assistance at the time of sale and thereafter and satisfying the customer's needs.



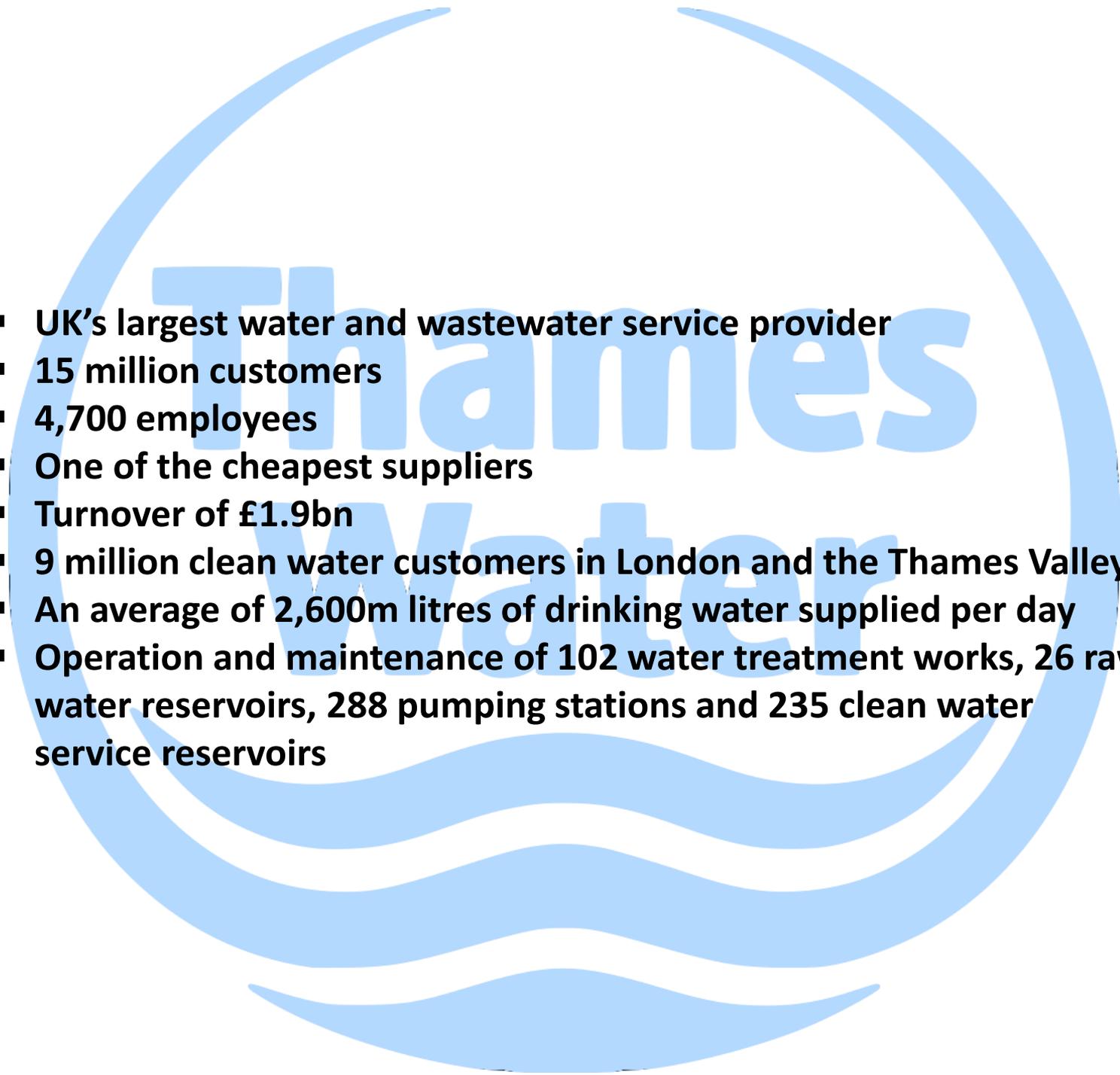
Question

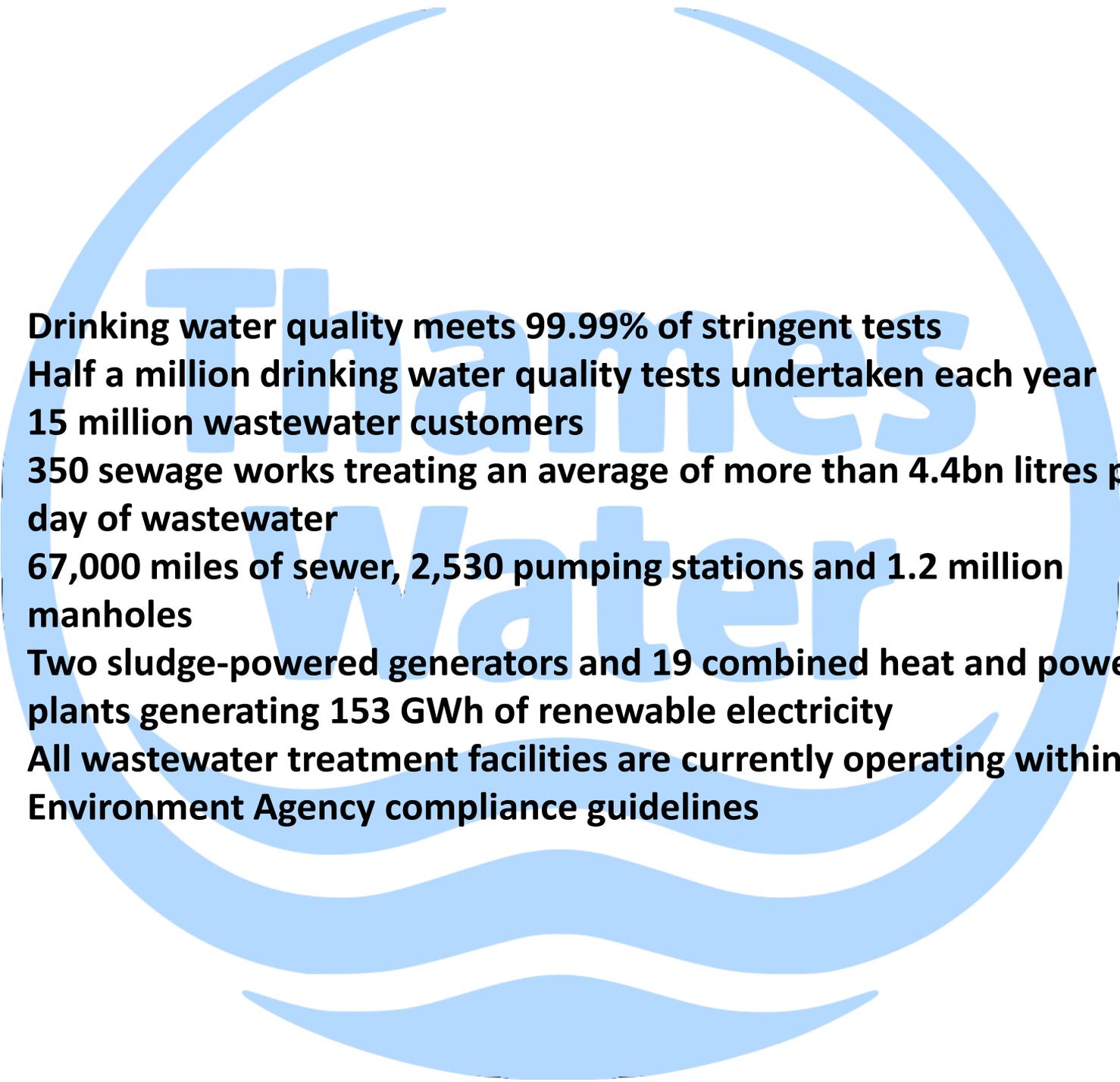


Question:

Can you give any examples of good customer service you have recently experienced or witnessed?



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- The logo for Thames Water is a large, light blue circular emblem. It features a stylized wave pattern at the bottom and the words "Thames Water" in a bold, sans-serif font across the center. The text is semi-transparent, allowing the background elements to be seen through it.
- **UK's largest water and wastewater service provider**
 - **15 million customers**
 - **4,700 employees**
 - **One of the cheapest suppliers**
 - **Turnover of £1.9bn**
 - **9 million clean water customers in London and the Thames Valley**
 - **An average of 2,600m litres of drinking water supplied per day**
 - **Operation and maintenance of 102 water treatment works, 26 raw water reservoirs, 288 pumping stations and 235 clean water service reservoirs**

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- **Drinking water quality meets 99.99% of stringent tests**
 - **Half a million drinking water quality tests undertaken each year**
 - **15 million wastewater customers**
 - **350 sewage works treating an average of more than 4.4bn litres per day of wastewater**
 - **67,000 miles of sewer, 2,530 pumping stations and 1.2 million manholes**
 - **Two sludge-powered generators and 19 combined heat and power plants generating 153 GWh of renewable electricity**
 - **All wastewater treatment facilities are currently operating within Environment Agency compliance guidelines**

Providing good customer service

Know the product or service being sold

Staff attitude and behaviour

Meeting specific customer needs



Providing good customer service

Working effectively under pressure

Confirming the product or service meets the customer's needs

Dealing effectively with any problems



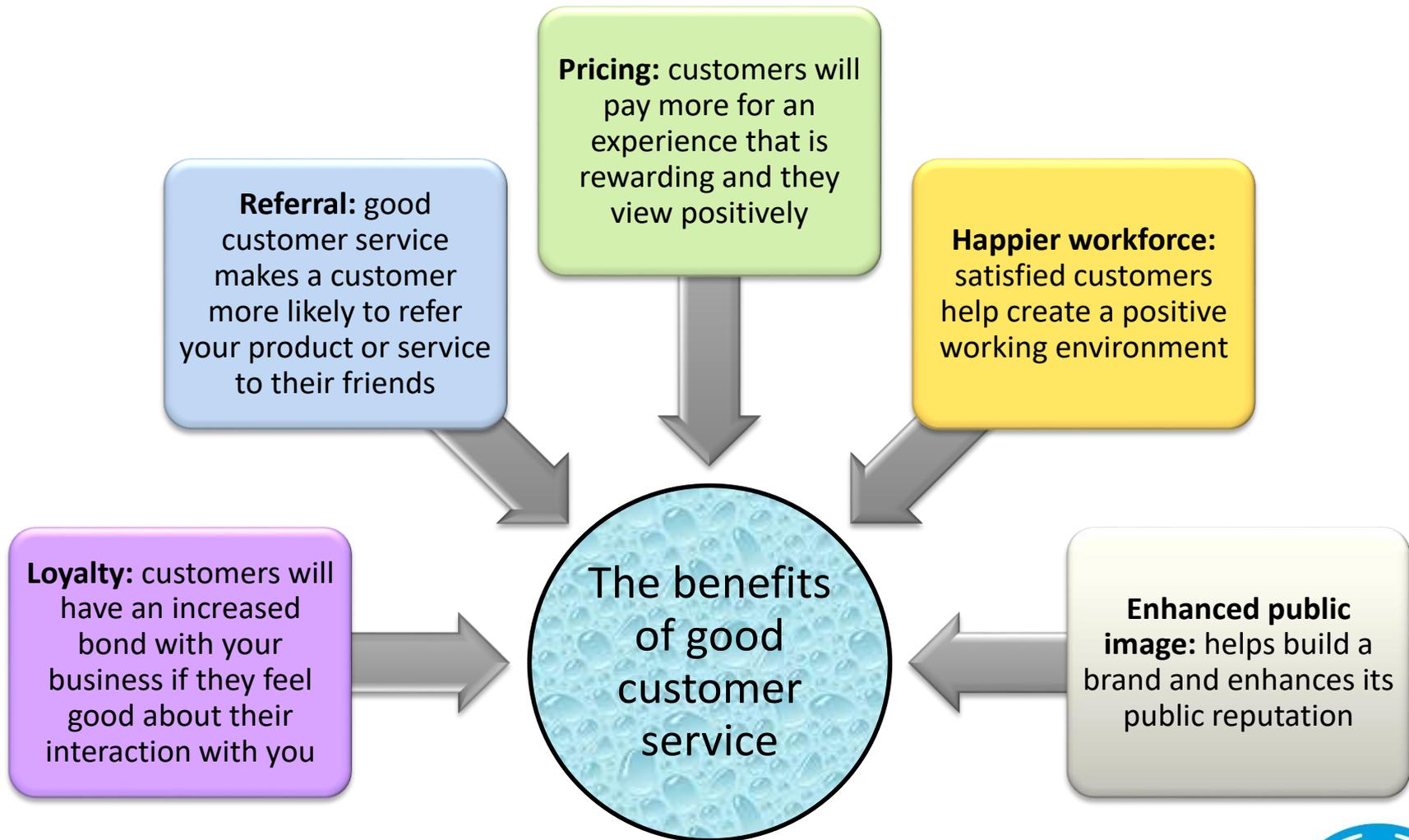
Question



Question:

What are the benefits to a company of providing good customer service?





Different customer service roles

Most businesses have customer facing and non customer facing roles. Examples of these roles at Thames Water are:

- roles dealing directly with customers: receptionists, call centre staff, call-out engineers, sales force
- roles that do not involve dealing directly with customers: cleaners, treatment plant staff, admin personnel



Staff that interact with customers

Engineers: responding face-to-face to customer call-outs

Call operators: dealing with customers' questions over the phone

Meter readers: face-to-face interaction with customers

Receptionist staff: engage with business customers at head office

Social media team: engage with customers via Facebook, Twitter and email

Education team: supporting school visits to treatment works



Communicating with customers

Social media: Facebook and Twitter engagement with customers

Website: Thames Water website for customers to access relevant information

Customer emails: Billing and updates to customers

Postal mailings: Billing and Direct Mail communicating new initiatives to customers



Communicating with customers

Face-to-face: Face-to-face engagement at events and roadshows

Telephone: Call centre contact with customers

Text messaging: 24-hour emergency text messaging service for deaf or hard of hearing customers



Thames Water customer service



'We are committed to putting our 15 million customers at the heart of everything we do. Whether it's helping our customers pay their bill in a way that suits them or responding to enquiries about our water and wastewater services, our customer contact teams are always here for our customers and happy to help.'

With over 2,000 people working in our Retail team, including our partners, we support residential customers and businesses of all sizes with a 24/7 service.'



Benefits to customers

Flexible bill payments

- Bill payments in instalments or over the phone to make it easier and more flexible for the customer

Bills explained

- Online interactive explanation to help customers understand their bill

Benefits to customers

Water saving freebies

- A range of water (and money)-saving freebies (such as save-a-flush devices, tap inserts and showerheads) for residential supply customers

Online meter reading submission

- Online submission of customer meter readings

Benefits to customers

Online information and advice

- A range of information online concerning how to save water and further signposting to useful information such as 'finding a local plumber'

Password scheme

- To help protect against bogus callers pretending to be from a utility company to gain access to your home, Thames Water operate a doorstep password scheme to help protect customers

Extra care services

Customers with sight problems

- Large print letters, bills and literature
- Bills produced in Braille
- Talking bill service
- Text format bills and letters for users of screen reading software

Customers who are deaf or hard of hearing

- 24-hour Textphone and Text Relay service for customers, who have a Textphone at home or use the Text Relay service



Extra care services

Customers with foreign language requirements

- Telephone language interpreter for customers requiring this service
- Website information provided in different languages

Customers with mobility concerns

- Priority Services Register for customers with mobility issues so that they are fast-tracked in the event of a problem

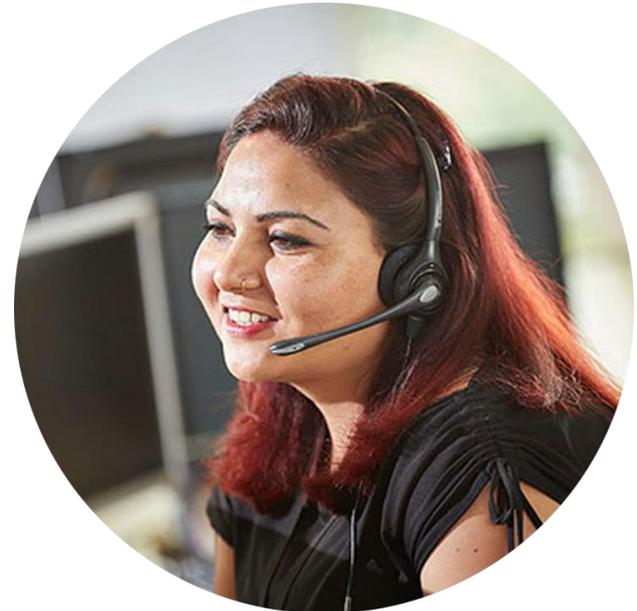


Measuring performance

Customer feedback

Every day Thames Water receives feedback from customers regarding a specific service they have been provided.

This feedback is used to make sure customers were fully satisfied with what they received and to improve the service offered for customers in the future.



Measuring performance

Ongoing monitoring at Thames Water

A process of ongoing monitoring ensures continued customer satisfaction. The following elements are monitored on a regular basis:

- The speed and quality of response to customers
- The speed of call answering
- The regularity of meter reading
- The quality of water provided to customers
- Reducing leakage from our mains and customers' own pipes
- Treatment of sewage and wastewater from drains and sewers
- The number of properties at risk of sewer flooding
- Reducing pollution
- Renewable electricity generation
- Health and safety

