



MINUTES of the Customer Challenge Group

Walnut Court, Swindon

On 19 May 2022, 10am – 3pm

Present:

Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs	Chair of Customer Challenge Group	SK-S
Nisha Arora	Financial Conduct Authority	NA
David Brindle	Ambient Support	DB
Jeremy Crook OBE	Action for Race Equality	JC
Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE, DL	ukactive	BGT
Doug Taylor	CCW	DT
Sarah Powell	Environment Agency	SP
Monica Wilson	HM Treasury	MW

Thames Water:

Warren Buckley	Retail Director	WB
Chris Pollard	Director of Customer Services	CP
Nina White	Director of Financial Customer Care	NW
Andrew Burton	Customer Research and Insight Manager	AB
Tracy Vella	Metering Service Delivery Lead	TV
Peter Cork	Billing and Collection Agent	PC
Charlotte Williams	Customer Service Agent	CW
Darren Cuthbert	Customer Service Team Manager	DC
Sam Warren	Vulnerability Operations Lead	SW
Nicole Lewis	Team Manager	NL
Sandra Davie	Extra Care Team Leader	SD
Mariana Simpson	Stakeholder Relationship Engagement Manager	MS

Apologies:

Councillor Adam Jogee	Haringey Local Authority	AJ
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury	Oxfordshire County Council	PS
Tiger de Souza MBE	National Trust	TDS
Peter Daw	Greater London Authority	PD
Dr Charlotte Duke	London Economics	CD

Agenda Item No.		Action
1.	Apologies / Declaration of interests	
	Apologies were noted. There were no additional declarations of interest recorded.	
	The Chair provided an update on her attendance at multi-industry event hosted by INDEPEN, focussing on the broad knowledge CCG brings and how it can add value. The key question	

	discussed was evidence approach which companies use to show understanding of their customers. The Chair also shared key questions which CCG can explore.	
2.	Minutes and matters arising from previous meetings	
	<p>Minutes from the previous meeting on 21 April 2022 were approved.</p> <p>CP provided an update on actions regarding complaints' journey and complaints' definitions from the CCG Meeting on 24 Feb which are now closed.</p> <p>DB provided feedback on the search of local catchment partnerships that brought back multiple options. MS will follow up with the Smarter Water Catchments Team.</p>	
3.	Complaints journeys and complaints definitions	
	<p>WB introduced the Customer Services and Financial Customer Care structure, noting recent changes in resources and reiterated that TW have recently brought back in –house all voice customer contact, with the aim to be a local and regional company that offers employment to the local population. To achieve this TW is introducing annual hours contracts that will provide bigger flexibility.</p> <p>CP shared the summary of FY22 performance and objectives for FY23 highlighting priorities for Q1, including reducing backlog. CP then went through the complaints journey with various touchpoints noting current focus is on real time complaints reporting, rather than just written complaints.</p> <p>The discussion focused on complaints channels, noting that 40% of the written complaints directed at the CEO, have not been through any other channel before this contact. It was recognised that search engine optimisation could help direct customer to the right teams at the first contact. Further discussion focused on formal complaints processes including CCW and WATRS escalations and C-MeX.</p>	
4.	First Contact Resolution (FCR) walkabout	
	No minutes recorded.	
5.	FCR Call listening	
	No minutes recorded.	
6.	Extra Care overview	
	<p>NW introduced Collection and Extra Care teams, including the teams' structure and overall process. NW then shared the affordability support available highlighting current levels, overall ambitions, and the new improved journey for PSR customers.</p> <p>The discussion focused on the challenge of how the industry can help to limit indebtedness, TW collection strategy as well as customers' eligibility and offerings.</p> <p>Action: TW to organise briefing on Single Social Tariff as part of 22 July meeting.</p> <p>Action: TW to share information on how they work with debt agencies.</p>	
7.	Extra Care / collection walkabout	
	No minutes recorded.	
8.	Extra care call listening	

	No minutes recorded.	
9.	CCG reflections / discussion	
	<p>The CCG reflected on the day focusing on customers' calls. The CCG recognised the importance of staff training and the agents' range of skills and wider business knowledge. The CCG praised CW and PC for their skills, highlighting their politeness and patience. Reflecting on the calls, the CCG suggested reviewing closing questions which agents are required to use to provide more appropriate calls closure.</p> <p>Relating to the affordability, the discussion focused on challenges related to the eligibility, data collection, the importance of the data sharing and opportunities to make process simpler for a wider purpose e.g. multisector.</p> <p>Further discussion followed on trade-offs, potential tariffs changes and competing priorities with the ongoing recognition that the trade-offs are not only within company priorities but also across the sector.</p> <p>Action: TW to share outcome of the customer call with Mr Malik as a case study at a future CCG.</p>	
10.	Customer Engagement update	
	<p>AB provided an update on Customer Engagement to date, including its purpose and explained that there will be a series of papers shared with the CCG ahead of 16 June CCG meeting. AB invited CCG challenge on what TW have done so far for the PR24 Plan and whether it reflects best practice.</p> <p>The discussion focused on customer segmentation, timing of insight gathering in relation to the recent increase to the cost of living, Customer Voices online community and potential methodologies for customer research for trade-offs.</p> <p>Action: TW to share customer segmentation and customer research sampling approach, including explanation on how it aligns to demographics and allows for silent majorities.</p>	
11.	AOB	
	No AOB raised.	