

Smart Metering Delivery

Contract No: C-04093

PQQ October 2023

## 11. Customer Experience

Please provide a summary of your customer care approach in providing an end-to-end new service connection.

Include in your response:

- How do you keep the customer informed, manage expectations, and reduce unwanted contact?
- How you proactively manage works to minimise disruption and inconvenience to customers and members of the public.
- Your approach to Service Recovery, articulating how you would manage when things go wrong.
- An overview of how you measure customer satisfaction and processes you have in place to deliver improvements driven by actionable insights.
- How you monitor and maintain customer interaction standards in field and contact
- An overview of training and understanding of customer centricity within the organisation, ongoing reviews, and development of training programmes.

Our 2 page response is overleaf.



At Morrison Water Services (MWS), customer care and safety are our top priorities when planning our approach to delivering all our schemes and projects; especially end-to-end new service connections and meters. We fully understand the potential impact that a smart metering programme can have on C-Mex performance due to the immense volume of customer interactions required. We would work closely with Affinity Water to help all parties mitigate risk and deliver an enhanced service throughout the programme; and maximise C-Mex performance.

We fully understand the elements and drivers of C-MeX (derived from CSS-CSAT and CES-CSAT surveys) and align our approach to our clients' strategy and agreed customer journey. We are a trusted partner with Thames Water on their Smart Metering programme where we manage the customer journey from appointments to installation delivering a high-quality, customer focussed service.

**Maintaining customer focus** Proactive and timely communications are key to managing customer expectations and reducing additional and 'unwanted' contact from customers; good customer service starts with the engagement and appointment making process – 'right first time' from the first contact. On metering contracts, we develop plans to ensure all customers are informed of what will be happening in their community, street and household – and when it will be happening. We ensure that when appointments are made, we honour our commitment – appreciating that some customers may have to remain at the premises to provide access. We have recently introduced innovative technology that allows customers to track the journey of our operatives on their way to appointments via the 'Where's my Engineer?' app.

Our approach to ensuring we get internal installations 'right first time' and continually reviewing and improving our processes (e.g. using stop tap adaptors and introducing crimp innovation/technology to jointing) reduces the risk of future issues, such as leaking joints and the need to revisit customers to rectify problems. We also use the innovative Blicker system for meter asset data and meter readings, which improves accuracy by recording readings and meter serial number photographically – again minimising the need for revisits.

Our 'right first time' approach ensures we resolve all issues during that one visit and return the supply when promised. We ensure vulnerable customers have water/support during installation and provide support and call-back to customer queries – swiftly resolving any complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction.

On our Thames Water Smart Metering contract, we set up a bespoke call centre on our main site with a primary aim to book appointments, answer queries and handle first contact complaints from customers. The customer service agents are responsible for accurately recording information on every customer interaction, which is then used for the regulatory data provided to Ofwat.

**Managing works to minimise disruption and inconvenience** Our proven customer care strategy ensures disruption to customers is minimised to the greatest extent possible via our contract-specific communication plans, developed to ensure we identify, liaise and continuously engage with all third-party stakeholders, customers and community organisations effectively.

On our metering contracts, we adopt a range of measures to ensure disruption to customers and the public is minimised, such as:

- Delivering customer letter drops in advance of works and speaking with each customer before job starts.
- Providing continual training and guidance for operatives, including doorstep protocol and complaint resolution.
- Providing focused inductions and toolbox talks explaining the need for same-day reinstatement and maintaining driveway access etc.
- Establishing dedicated website / call centre to allow customers to easily check/make appointments and progress – thus avoiding common complaints regarding communication e.g. booking difficulty, availability or missed appointments.
- Final check inside customer premises following installation to ensure supply is connected and operating at correct pressure and no leaks; and speaking to the customer to explain any discolouration and ensure they are happy with the completed work – avoiding the need for return visits.
- Taking video footage to capture of running supply and meter readings.

We plan in all activities with each customer via a site visit from the supervisor to organise the time and date and determine whether any special considerations associated with Priority Service Customers (Priority Service Register) are required.

Our commitment to 'right-first-time' ensures all teams execute every job perfectly with clear communication to satisfy or exceed expectations. However, where we encounter surprises on-site, or where a change is necessary as the job develops; our priority is to ensure the unforeseen issues do not affect the customer's experience. We therefore have a comprehensive "Request for Assistance" processes where our teams can proactively request support to achieve right-first-time resolution. Customers are carefully considered throughout the planning process, and we work hard to minimise impacts in terms of the duration of the works, traffic management and customer needs. We adhere to all permit conditions with regards to traffic orders and parking bays.

**Approach to service recovery** Complaints received by our operatives when still in the vicinity of the premises, such as internal and external leaks, general damage, or no/low water pressure, are dealt with immediately, wherever possible, by the relevant operatives. Customers experiencing problems or wishing to make a complaint when our

operatives have left the area, are invited to contact our dedicated call centre, where our team will aim to resolve the issue swiftly. Emergency complaints, such as flooding of customer properties, are dealt with immediately by our response teams – lower priority complaints are resolved within two days maximum. On receiving a complaint, our Customer Service Team aims to resolve the issue on initial contact, adding the resolution details to our complaints log for later investigation and review.

On our metering contracts, we establish a service relationship with local repair teams and plumbers to investigate and resolve any issues resulting from our works. This is managed via an escalation process, which monitors agreed attendance times based on incident severity, and a dedicated call centre to ensure repairs are completed and closed out to customer satisfaction.

For complaints requiring further investigation/input, the issue is passed to our Complaints and Escalation Team who then provide customers with the contact details of the team member dealing with their complaint who will later provide a detailed response. The Complaints and Escalation Team then liaise with operations to agree on the action to take and ensure the customer is kept informed of progress until the matter is resolved. Customers not fully satisfied with outcome can ask for their complaint to be raised for a formal review by our Contract Director to reach an agreeable settlement. All complaints are logged and reviewed, together with feedback from WOW cards, to identify trends and identify areas of improvement – learning from lessons and reducing potential recurrence.

Customer needs are typically resolved over the phone or through a site visit from one of our operational staff members. 95% of customer contacts are closed within 1 to 2 days.

**Measuring customer satisfaction** As part of our approach to delivering excellent customer satisfaction, we have established a range of measures to monitor our performance, learn lessons and strive for continual improvement.

All customers contacting our call centre are requested to rate us on a scale of 0 to 10 to describe their experience of our work or interaction. They are also able to explain the reasons behind the ratings they have given, providing valuable insight into how we are deemed to be performing from a customer perspective. The rating system also enables us to break the feedback down to identify trends, such as disciplines involved, operatives completing the work and use of subcontractors. Where customers are dissatisfied with our approach, we can then use this feedback to identify root causes and implement improvement actions, such as additional training, review of subcontractors or changes to our communication processes etc. These ratings then feed into our CSAT scores (Customer Satisfaction Survey) to track our overall success in ensuring our customers remain fully satisfied with our services.

**Monitoring and maintaining customer interaction** We have developed rigorous standards to ensure our interaction with customers is maintained to the highest level. Our call centre standards specify the levels of performance we expect of our agents and apply to a variety of metrics including; how quickly calls are answered, the duration and quality of the call and whether or not the issue was resolved. Performance against these standards is continually monitored and the subject of regular audits.

Data monitoring ensures the data our agents record for regulatory purposes is accurate and provides the information we need. Our call centre solution, Vonage CC, provides granular reporting of our fully trained agents' performance and call data/monitoring. Agents are also subject to productivity reports to ensure they are providing the required level of support to enable us to meet our SLAs etc. – for call centre response times and operational/contract targets.

Out in the field, our operatives present customers with a WOW card to gather additional feedback having finished the work. The cards ask customers to describe their experience of how the work was completed and rate our service by contacting our website or calling an 0800 number. Information received is fed back to the operatives concerned and allows us to celebrate work well done, or, alternatively, arrange for improvement measures such as additional coaching.

**MWS as a customer centric organisation** In 2019, we worked with the Institute of Customer Service to benchmark our performance against other leading companies – this led to the development of our Every Customer Counts (ECC) strategy See attached: **(Appendix I1.A)**). ECC is fully aligned to the needs of regulatory clients and designed to deliver consistent, high levels of customer experience. It provides tangible tools and benefits to proactively support/influence our clients' overall customer satisfaction/perception by delivering a superior and consistent customer experience. ECC has been adopted by Yorkshire Water, and we are now working to integrate the strategy into other clients' working practices including Welsh Water and United Utilities.

We support our contracts with the latest in best practise and guidance, together with key initiatives such as ECC Brilliant Basics customer training, EUSR Customer Training and Accreditation, WOW! Awards and our TrainWithUs competency management system.

We use feedback gathered from our customer call centre rating system, our overall CSAT scores and our WOW card initiative to identify any additional training needs and generate required personal development plans or new/modified training programmes. We also discuss performance and training requirements with our clients as part of our scheduled project review meetings and use any feedback they may provide to enhance the content and/or delivery of our training programmes and coaching. This drives continual improvement and ensures we continue to deliver to the highest levels of customer satisfaction – thereby fulfilling our clients' expectations.