



Service
recovery
policy.

Version 1.2

Publish date: 13 January 2017

Effective from: 1 April 2017

Public

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1. Background

The Water Act 2014 includes provisions for market opening for the non-household market on 1 April 2017. This is one of a number of policies that are being developed specifically for TWUL Wholesale Wastewater to adopt post April 2017.

We are committed to provide consistently high quality services. To achieve and maintain high quality service at times when a blockage, odour from the sewer (not a site), pollution, internal flooding and/or defective manhole cover incident occurs and prevent such incidents from occurring in the future we have developed our Service Recovery Policy. This policy sets out the framework and principles for how we will recover a disruption to our wastewater services.

2. Scope

This policy covers the following:

- general statements for service recovery
- blockages, odours and external flooding
- pollution incidents
- defective covers
- internal flooding
- internal flood mitigation
- call en-route
- cancelling visits
- updating the customer
- promises and appointments
- clean ups
- notification to retailer(s)
- follow on work.

This policy applies to all Thames Water employees, the retailers market, and third party contractors engaged in returning our waste water services to 'normal state'.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to both household and non-household customers, within our Wholesale Operational Area.

3. Definition of terms

Customer - household or non-household customer (where applies to one specific group, it will be referred appropriately)

Flood mitigation services - Include installation of flood barriers, flood doors, non - return valves, and/or other devices which may provide flood mitigation

GSS - Guaranteed Standards Scheme

Operational area - the geographical area where we provide waste networks services

Retailer - the organisation responsible for providing retail services

Third parties - other authorities such as highways authority or Environment Agency

TWUL - Thames Water Utilities Limited

4.Principles

We are committed to:

- restoring service
- explaining to our customers what we're going to do before we carry out any work
- being available for customers to contact us 24/7, 365 days a year
- minimising disruption caused by noise, and nuisance when restoring services
- striving to resolve, if possible, any issue on our first visit to the property
- recording and learning from instances of service failure to improve our services to customers
- in any instance of failure, restoring service as quickly as reasonably practical.

To achieve this, we will:

- meet our statutory and regulatory obligations relating to the provision of waste networks services
- act in line with all applicable legislation and our corporate policies.

5.Policy

a. General statements for service recovery

- We aim to attend and investigate within an agreed customer promise based on the customers' circumstances.
- We will aim to send the appropriately trained persons with the right equipment and tools to attempt to restore service on initial visit.
- After initial investigation, we will keep in touch with the customer to ask for additional information and/or gather feedback.

b. Blockages, odours and external flooding

- When onsite, we will investigate the cause of the issue. We may need to liaise directly with the customer to discuss the problem in more detail and gain access to manhole covers inside the property boundary.
- Where the issue is as a result of a blockage within our sewer, we will attempt to clear this upon initial visit.
- If the location of the problem is beyond the customer's property, we may need access to neighbouring properties. Where we discover other properties impacted, or need access to a neighbouring property to resolve the issue, we will capture this detail.
- Where the issue is within a third party asset, like a road side gully, we will not attempt to clear this. Instead we will advise the customer to contact the appropriate third party, such as highways authority.
- Where the issue is within the customer's private drain, we may offer a service to clear this. Please refer to our Private Blockages Policy.
- We intend to inform and educate customers in order to prevent blockages reoccurring.

c. Pollution

- If other agencies are also involved, overseeing the pollution incident (eg the Environment Agency), we will liaise with the interested parties on site and work to make sure they are satisfied with our approach.
- If a private blockage is causing a pollution to another premises, we may clear the blockage (without prior warning). For more information, please refer to the Private Blockages Policy.

d. Defective covers

- When we become aware of a defective manhole cover, we'll determine the nature of the problem and the urgency of repair.
- We'll visit the site to make the area safe and make sure any defective covers we're responsible for are repaired or replaced.
 - (If a visit is necessary), we will determine whether the issue is urgent or non-urgent in nature. Where the issue is deemed to be urgent, an immediate response will be arranged to investigate and make the asset safe; this will not initially be offered as an appointment due to the urgent nature of the issue.
 - If the issue is non urgent, we will contact the customer. If access is needed or the customer wants to meet us, an appointment will be agreed. This appointment will be made directly by us in agreement with the customer.
- If the manhole doesn't belong to us, we will identify and inform the owner of that manhole so that they can rectify the situation.

e. Internal flooding

- When onsite, we will investigate the cause of internal flooding. We will need to liaise directly with the customer to discuss the problem in more detail and gain access to manhole covers inside the property boundary.
- Where the internal flood is caused by an issue within our sewer and we are unable to restore service because the issue is more severe (eg a collapsed pipe), we will take mitigating action to address the flooding and restore service.
- In order to assist with long-term planning, we will ask the customers to provide specific information that will help us develop our knowledge and understanding of the situation.

f. Internal flood mitigation

- In order to assess the suitability of a customer's property for providing flood mitigation services against incidences of hydraulic flooding we may need to carry out a survey.
- Surveys will be carried out Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm (excluding bank holidays and public holidays).
- Following the survey, we will review the information collected and contact the customer again within 2 months to communicate our findings.
- We will not carry out any works unless the customer signs a precondition survey which records the condition of the land/premises where the works are to be carried out.

- We may decide that installing a flood relief device is not suitable for the customer's property. In that case, our conclusion will not affect any other investigations that we possibly carry out in the customer's area with regard to flooding.
- If we conclude that we could install a device at the customer's property, we will let them know by sending a form to complete, sign and return it to us.
- While carrying out the work we will make all reasonable efforts to keep disturbance to a minimum.
- After installation, we will be in touch to confirm the customer's satisfaction with the work and ask for feedback on the overall service provided. The customer will then be asked to complete a short questionnaire enclosed and return it to us in the pre-paid envelop provided.

g. Cancelling visits

- We may cancel our visit where we're already investigating or aware of the issue, alternatively where we have found the issue to be a third party or private asset. This applies to blockages, odours, external flooding, pollution, defective covers.

h. Call en-route

- While we are on our way to attend an incident, we will attempt to contact the customer and advise that we are en-route. This applies to blockages, odours, external flooding, pollution and internal flooding.
- We will attempt to contact the customer if we cannot meet the agreed customer promise.

i. Updating the customer

- Following investigation, we will endeavour to share the outcome of the visit with the customer. This applies to blockages, odours, internal flooding, defective covers and internal flooding.

j. Rainfall

- It's not always possible to restore the service or stop flooding caused by hydraulic overload attributed to high rainfall levels within the sewer network.
- We usually have to wait for levels to decrease, before cleaning up and considering next steps. More information on that can be found in our carrying out wastewater network follow on work service

k. Clean up

- We will offer a basic clean-up service if the customer has flooded as a direct result of a blockage or defect within our sewer. We aim to begin the clean up on the same day, but may need to wait for the water to recede or debris to solidify. The clean-up will include a basic litter pick of solid items, washing down of hard standing areas, disinfecting of hard standing areas, and pump out of a basements, where necessary.
- Where the customer has experienced damage or loss as a result of flooding, we will strongly recommend them to contact their insurer to discuss the problem and any further clean-up required, or loss/damage caused.
- We will not provide more substantive clean ups, valets, or the removal and replacement of soil, turf or gravel.

I. Promises and appointments

- We deem reported incidents (blockages, odours, external flooding, pollution and internal flooding) as requiring immediate attention. As such, we provide the services on a non-appointment basis. However, we may offer an appointment where an initial visit is unsuccessful, and access is needed for a second visit to restore service or clean up a flooded area. Any appointment will be made directly by us, in agreement with the customer. Appointment slots offered are:
 - 9am – 1pm or
 - 1pm – 5pm or
 - two-hour appointments where the customer has requested a more specific time slot.

These appointments can be made 7 days a week.

m. Notification to retailer(s)

- If an appointment is booked we will notify the retailer within 2 business days of this being made. If this appointment date or time is changed, or cancelled, we will notify the retailer of this change.
- Within 2 days of our visit to investigate, we will notify the retailer of the visit.
- Where we have identified that additional customers are impacted or we need access to neighbouring customer properties, we will notify the additional retailers.

n. Follow on work

- In planning follow on work, we will contact the customer if we need access to their property and book an appointment, where appropriate.
- Where we cannot use manholes to complete work, and instead we need to excavate, the area will be reinstated on a like for like basis. Full reinstatement may be completed on follow on visits to allow ground time to settle.
- We will liaise with any third parties or neighboring properties that may need to be aware or support our work.

6.Changes to policy

This policy will be reviewed on a twelve month basis and updated periodically as required.

7.References

- Water Industry Act 1991
- Wholesale Contract/Wholesale – Retail Code
- Private Blockages Policy

8.Appendices

There are no appendices to this document.