



BRISTOL
WATER

Social Contract Forward Programme 2022/23

April 2022



[bristolwater.co.uk](https://www.bristolwater.co.uk)



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Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to share with you our social contract programme for its fourth year. We have seen a great deal of change in society even in this short time, and in response we have adapted our activities to continue to deliver public value in the areas which matter most to our customers, stakeholders and employees.

We face a number of challenges together within the communities we serve. As the impact of the pandemic continues and is met by the most significant cost of living rise in decades, we recognise that these impacts will be disproportionately felt by our customers. Unfortunately, those who are already the most disadvantaged are likely to be affected most. At the same time, alongside our local councils and many of our partners, we make our commitment to a net zero future and work to reduce the carbon impact of our combined activities.

To respond to these challenges, we have again prioritised support for vulnerable customers, education, and resource-efficiency activities within our social contract programme. We have included 34 initiatives, each with a stakeholder partnership to ensure we use our resources and skills in collaboration to deliver public value.

Through setting out our programme in advance, we aim to ensure that our work is transparent and measurable. We have also put financial mechanisms in place to ensure that there is a consequence for us if we fail to meet the expectations of our local communities. Through this bespoke local accountability framework, we aim to retain the trust of our customers and stakeholders whilst providing opportunities for

employees to contribute to societal challenges which they are passionate about.

Following the recent acquisition of Bristol Water by the Pennon Group, customers will also benefit from the WaterShare + mechanism, which not only shares the benefits of outperformance with customers, but also provides the opportunity to take a share in the business and take part in public meetings across the region on our performance.

Our social contract reflects the culture and values of our organisation and is overseen by the company Board. This ensures that customer and stakeholder views are taken into consideration in our key decisions.

The Board has clearly set out the role it expects the company to play in society, with the company's social purpose included within our [Corporate Governance Statement](#).

Our social contract continues to evolve as we take on key learnings and feedback from stakeholders through our shared journey. Our employees continue to tell us how important our community work is to their level of pride in their job and in our company. We estimate that around 100 (around one sixth) of our employees will be directly involved in delivering our social contract this year, through volunteering in support of one or more of the initiatives.

We hope you enjoy reading about our plans for the future and please do continue to let us know what you think.



Our social purpose

Our purpose is to have a positive impact on the lives of our customers, our communities, our colleagues, and on the environment beyond the delivery of pure and reliable water.

The history of Bristol Water is a story about how a safe water supply came to the city of Bristol. It is also a story about a social purpose. We have been providing an essential public water service to the communities within and surrounding the city of Bristol since 1846. We were founded by philanthropists – who realised that wellbeing mattered and that if you wanted happy and productive workforce in a growing city, then you could not neglect public health and their lives as citizens. The founders had their first meeting in a pub – the White Lion, as at the time it was far safer to drink beer than water. They had a mad plan to bring water from outside of the city through a carbon neutral feed by gravity. They were passionate about supplying the whole of the city, not just the wealthy few, to solve a public health crisis at the time.

Bristol Water celebrated its 175th birthday in 2021. It is fair to say that we have been around for some time. A strong social purpose in an organisation is an important part of the planning for the future. It is the key to unlocking the trust of employees and citizens. We have to look after society, and the wellbeing of the citizens within it. To be effective this should, as it did in Victorian times, start with the local issues where people feel they can make a difference, especially for national or global crises.

As a provider of an essential public service, we recognise the responsibility that we have to society. We feel this responsibility through our culture and our values, and we are passionate about making a real difference to our local communities. We have reflected our role in society in our social purpose.

Our social contract sets out how we will engage employees, customers, and stakeholders in the delivery of our social purpose and how we will reflect their views to the Board. This framework, together with the connected programme of activities, is supporting the achievement of our social purpose.

This document provides an overview of our social contract approach and detail of the programme of activities which we plan to deliver throughout 2022/23.

Overview of our social contract approach



Delivering public value

Our programmes of initiatives deliver a range of benefits to our communities and the environment.



Reporting transparently on impact

We report on progress, learnings and impact in our annual benefit and transparency report.



Working in partnership

Working with others enables us to amplify our positive impact on communities. The learning we get from working together helps us to plan better for the future.



Being held to account

Our social contract framework and voluntary sharing mechanism provide governance and accountability for the delivery of wider benefits to society.



A local approach

Our social contract approach builds on the close connection we have with our local communities. It is an approach which is unique to the water industry.





BRISTOL
WATER

Our Social contract in action

Our social purpose is to have a positive impact on our customers, our communities, our colleagues and the environment

1 Conservation & Community Engagement
Working collaboratively with community groups to address issues that impact wellbeing.

Highlight: HRH The Duke of Gloucester planting the first of our 1,200 trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy.



2 Community Engagement
Supporting and engaging with our communities with initiatives such as our water fountains and water bar.

Highlight: Supporting a different community group every month with our Together For Good initiative.



3 Resource West
Working with local partners to deliver a joined up approach to resource efficiency across different sectors.

Highlight: Planning our local community trial - the first of it's kind ever.



4 Health & Wellbeing
Facilitating the enjoyment of recreational activities such as fishing, sailing, walking, cycling and birdwatching.

Highlight: Working with our partners on our new trail around Chew Valley Lake.



7 Education - citizens for the future
Building a shared connection between our people, the organisations we work with and young people. Bringing mindfulness to water consumption.

Highlight: Continuing to build 'Bristol Water the Foundation' including our 'decorate your butt' competition.



5 Vulnerability
Using technology and data to respond to the specific needs of individuals - building a shared connection with the communities we serve together.

Highlight: Finding new ways to reach our vulnerable customers in response to the pandemic.



6 Education - employees for the future
Inspiring the next generation to work in the water sector, building skills, improving social mobility and becoming a diverse organisation.

Highlight: Getting our mentoring programme restarted once it was safe to return to schools.



8 Local and regional strategies
Supporting local and regional plans to progress towards an equitable, biodiverse and carbon-neutral region.

Highlight: Publishing our carbon net zero strategy in response to the One City Climate Strategy.



9 Academic Partnerships
Working with our academic partners to find innovative ways to respond to social challenges, tackling key issues such as resource efficiency.

Highlight: Working with eight students from UWE on a range of different projects.

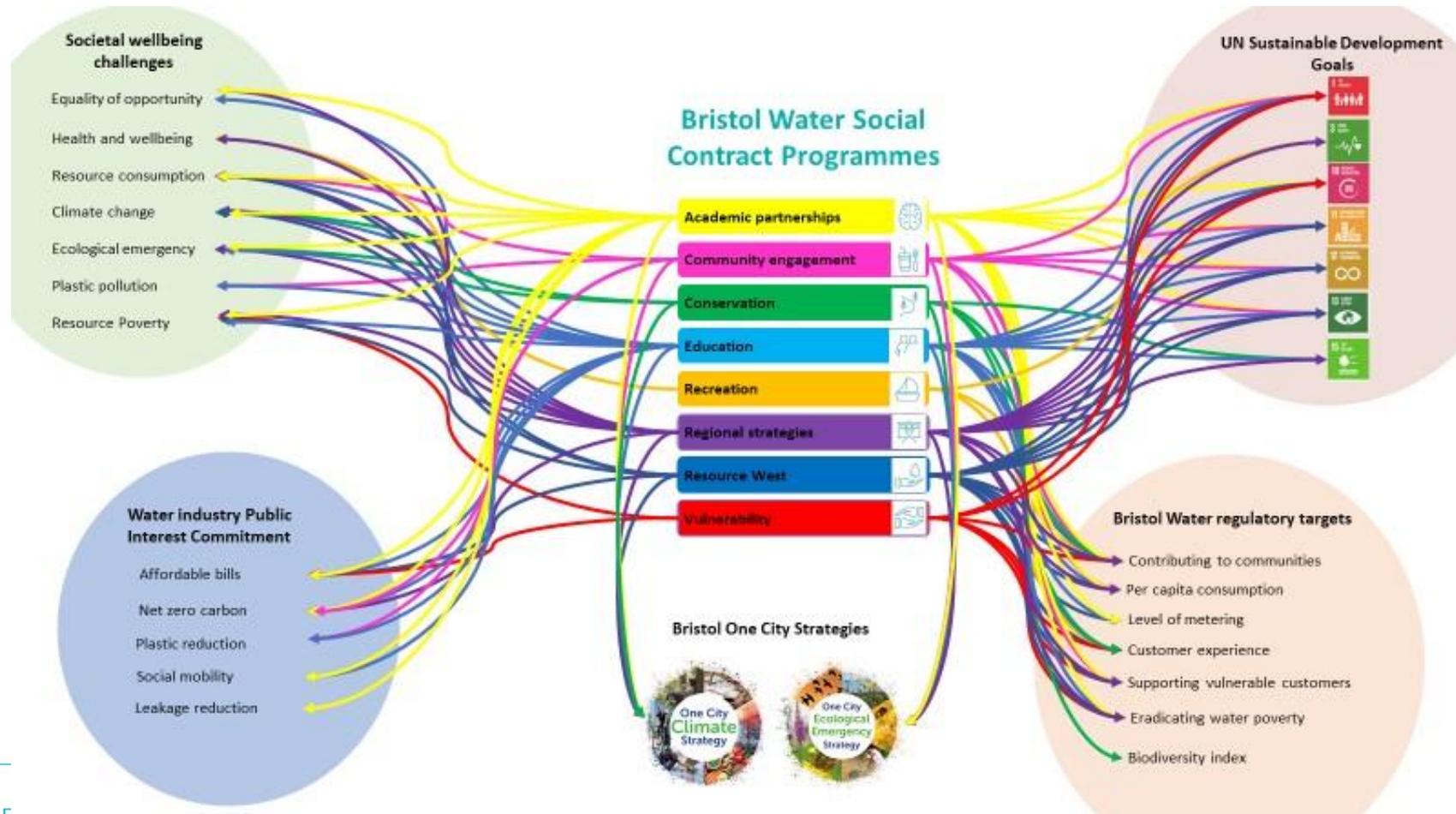


Linking our social contract to public value

The diagram below illustrates the multiple links between our social contract programmes and societal challenges, Public Interest Commitments and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

It also illustrates the link between our social contract and the delivery of business regulatory targets.

Our regional strategies approach is built around the Bristol One City Plan. This includes a series of targets to help achieve a fair and sustainable Bristol by 2030.





Our 2022/23 Social Contract Programme

An overview

To deliver wider benefits to societal and environmental wellbeing in a structured and transparent way, we have developed a range of initiatives. Each initiative delivers a benefit to communities in partnership with stakeholders. As in previous years, these initiatives have been grouped into eight programmes, reflecting the key partnerships involved.



Academic Partnerships

Sharing our history and heritage through public access to our resources.



Community Engagement Programme

Providing free public access to drinking water and helping to reduce the use of single use plastics.



Conservation Programme

Conserving and enhancing our natural environment with a focus on enhancing biodiversity.



Education Programme

Educating future generations about the efficient use of resources to minimise environmental harm and to meet the needs of future generations. Providing mentoring and skills to the workforce of the future. Supporting social mobility and diversity in the workplace.



Lakeside Leisure Programme

Providing recreation facilities to share enjoyment of our lakes to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.



Regional Strategies Programme

Contributing to local and regional strategies for long term environmental and social wellbeing with a focus on a net zero future.



Resource West Programme

Building a partnership of local stakeholders to promote shifts in consumer behaviour to reduce household consumption and waste.



Vulnerability Programme

Addressing water poverty and vulnerability, reaching those customers who are not aware of the help we offer.



SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

COVID-19 has changed the way we live and do business. It has affected every part of society and the economy, locally, nationally and globally. Water has again played a key role in public health. Last year we needed to pause some of our social contract activities which required face to face interaction with our communities. We have reinstated these initiatives in our 2022/23 programme and continue to use new, digital ways to deliver our public value outcomes where these were found to work well.

Although the pandemic may have changed the way we do things, such as embracing virtual knowledge sharing with our local partnerships, it has not changed who we are. Our purpose continues to be to have a positive impact on the lives of our customers, our communities, our colleagues, and on the environment beyond the delivery of pure and reliable water.

We will report on progress in December 2022 in our next Transparency & Benefits Report. The current report can be found [here](#).

The remainder of this report sets out the initiatives planned for our 2022/23 programme.





Academic Partnerships Programme

Linking academic research to help us with social challenges, tackling the key issues such as resource efficiency. Innovating through learning and providing opportunities for student projects.

The aim of this programme is to link academic research to business challenges and experience to tackle key issues such as resource efficiency and raw water quality. It also provides opportunities for learning through PhD and MSc projects and other partnerships.

By doing so, we will be providing learning opportunities and workplace experience for students, as well as contribute to ongoing research and innovation related to water use and societal wellbeing.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within our Academic Partnerships programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Student Research	Providing research and learning opportunities for university students.	UWE and University of Bristol	Students will be engaged in a number of different areas of the business to collaborate on real business challenges.
Didcot competitive water supply innovation	Delivery of successful Ofwat innovation fund 'Flexible local supply schemes' project with UWE as our strategic academic partner.	UWE, RWE, Binnies, Castle Water	The first project of its kind which could be a game changer for the water industry by opening the water resource market to third party supplies which are flexible and lower carbon than regional alternatives.



Community Engagement Programme

We are part of the communities we serve, with initiatives such as the Bristol Water Bar and Refill Bristol.

The aim of this programme is to work collaboratively with community groups to address issues that impact the wellbeing of the community.

By doing so, we will provide public access to free drinking water, encourage reductions in consumption of single use plastic and provide education on the value of water.

We will also be working to reduce our own single-use plastic consumption too and we have already made some big changes.

The very nature of this programme requires face to face contact with customers and so the majority of this programme is on hold while we wait for it to be safe to continue.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within our Community Engagement programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Water bar	To provide free drinking water refills at community events to keep local residents hydrated and to reduce plastic bottle use.	Local festival and event organisers	We are not currently taking applications due to COVID-19 restrictions but we plan to be back when it is safe to do so.
Community volunteering	Establish key community partners to deliver community benefit through our employees' two paid days volunteering days per year.	To be confirmed as initiative develops	Our employees supporting community wellbeing through key stakeholder partnerships
Water fountains	To fill our supply area with water points for everyone to use for free. We will continue to provide maintenance for them.	TBC depending on location of new installations	Installation of new fountains to add to the 10 already within Bristol city centre.
Together for Good	To continue funding a monthly competition – a different charity or community scheme wins £500 towards a project that will benefit the community that links to our social purpose.	Local charities and schools	This monthly prize draw provides winning community projects with £500 to spend on projects which benefit our customers.
Employee vegetable patch	Establish employee vegetable patch and share learnings with other businesses. Target: Share with 5 businesses.	BGCP and others as partnerships develop	Shared learnings on growing food at work



Conservation Programme

Protecting natural resources through measuring and improving biodiversity.

As a water company, we rely heavily on the environment to provide us with plentiful and good quality tap water. We also own and manage some unique habitats at our operational sites. We recognise that we face an ecological emergency at a global scale. In response, we are developing an ambitious environment programme with our regulators which will protect and improve our local environment.

As part of this programme, we have committed to developing a company-wide biodiversity action plan which will underpin the delivery of habitat improvements. This plan will quantify the baseline conservation value of our land and identify a range of projects which will restore and enhance the natural environment. The improved conservation value of our land will be measured by our new and innovative biodiversity performance commitment.

Our social contract initiatives build on these plans by sharing our approach with others so that it can be amplified beyond our sites. It also includes the work of our employee conservation volunteer group.

This programme aims to complement our plans to protect and enhance natural resources through the proactive management of our sites and through measuring and improving biodiversity. Our social contract initiatives target sharing our approach with others, offering our tools and expertise to help improve biodiversity beyond our sites too. By

doing so, we will be strengthening our community assets to become more resilient to different futures.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within our conservation programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Biodiversity Index	Sharing our innovative biodiversity index approach with businesses to expand its impact. It is a Natural Capital tool that has provided stakeholders with a practical method for assessing the value of their land.	Local businesses	Others adopting our approach and improving biodiversity at other sites in the Greater Bristol area
WildOnes	A group of Bristol Water staff who volunteer their knowledge and time to help local environmental projects	Local community groups (this will depend on the projects undertaken by Bristol Water staff)	Maintaining species, rich grassland, planting hedgerows and coppice in woodlands
Cheddar BioBlitz	Supporting local community groups to come and explore the niche habitats and species around Cheddar Reservoir	Somerset Wildlife Trust & Mendip Hills Area Group	Transferring our knowledge and skills to others



SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Ecological emergency action plan	Working with multiple stakeholders to deliver action which addresses the Ecological Emergency.	Bristol Green Capital Partnership	Translating the Bristol Ecological Emergency action plan into practice.
Tree Planting	Local community engagement where trees are planted with local groups. Health and wellbeing benefit of all who engage.	Local community groups (this will depend on the projects undertaken by Bristol Water staff)	Lots of lovely new trees at our sites.
Conservation partnership	Potential education and school's engagement on water wildlife and water efficiency.	Avon Wildlife Trust & Bristol Avon Rivers Trust	Getting school children engaged in conservation.



Education & Skills Programme – Citizens for the future

Building a shared connection between our people, the organisations we work with and our future citizens. Harnessing the concerns of the next generation to change the culture of the current.

The aim of this programme is to inspire a sense of collective responsibility through education on the value of water (and other resources) in our future citizens. We also hope to harness ‘pester power’ through school children influencing family members to be resource efficient.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within our Citizens for the Future programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Resources for schools, clubs, and other community groups	To provide schools and colleges with basic online recourses to educate and support the citizens for the future in water knowledge, hydration, and usage. We also plan to engage with schools through digital campaigns (whilst schools visits are not possible) and provide water butts to local schools to help them save water and promote the value of water to children.	All primary schools and colleges in our supply area	The Bristol Water Foundation provides lots of great resources on anything water related, whether that is the water cycle or birds you can find at our lakeside. It is mostly aimed at primary school children and is mapped to the national curriculum.
Hosting school visits	Hosting visits at Blagdon and at our lakes, inspired by our local's love of the lakes and how we want to get more people interested.	Schools in our supply area	Inviting school groups to use our lakeside facilities and to be inspired on nature and the value of water.
Bristol Music Trust events at Bristol Beacon	To inspire children on the value of water and the environment at the Bristol Beacon Education Centre. We are supporting the development of the centre which is due to open in autumn 2023	Bristol Music Trust	The Bristol Beacon taking shape!



Education & Skills Programme – Employees for the future

Inspiring the next generation to want to work in the water sector, improving social mobility by providing opportunities that build the skills we need deliver our social purpose.

The aim of this programme is to help young people, particularly those facing social disadvantage, to reach their potential by developing the knowledge and skills they need to make the transition into the jobs and society of the future.

Our programme includes a range of activities - from mentoring programmes for smaller groups of children, to providing school career days for much larger groups. Our longer-term programme includes plans to provide career routes through works experience and apprenticeships. This is on top of the internship positions that we currently offer as part of our academic partnership programme.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within our Employees for the Future programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Work Experience	Invite applications from inner city schools. Offer five places on a week or two weeks work experience. The students will work a day in the life in each department to give them a good overview of all areas. To also include one day session on the 'working world' and to provide CV advice.	Inner city schools	The Bristol Water Foundation provides a summary of all the opportunities at Bristol Water and shares some great ways to get ahead in your career, write a CV and much more. This content is aimed at those in year 10 up to university age.
Group mentoring projects	Focus on existing relationship with Ablaze Bristol to deliver mentoring over a six-week period with 15 students from one school as well as working with South West Skills with nine schools within Bristol (10-12 students from each school) who will each attend a day session with Bristol Water. Build relationships with Empire Fighting Chance on two-way mentoring with employees which would then lead to apprentice opportunities within the organisation.	Ablaze, South Bristol Youth	Feedback from students on how they benefited from the programme.
Apprentice Scheme	Aim to offer three levels of schemes (intermediate, advanced, and higher). Opportunities would be offered to experience all areas of the business to develop a 'talent pipeline'. First year plans will be linked to establishing the scheme and creating access via the Foundation website.	Colleges in our supply area	The roll out of our new scheme.



SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Graduate placements	Aim to create partnerships with local universities to offer a graduate programme for two areas of the business initially. Long-term plan is to create a companywide graduate placement.	Bristol University, UWE	The roll out of our new scheme.
Visits to schools	Working with schools across the Bristol Water Area to offer career days within the schools. These will focus on what Bristol water does, environmental impacts, the world at work. This could be offered to both Junior and Senior schools with each programme being pitched at the right level	Schools in our supply area	Bristol Water staff at your local school
Internships	Providing summer internship opportunities, with a specific focus on improving workforce diversity.	Schools in our supply area	Internships supporting social mobility
Youth Board	To bring the views of young adults into our decision making as well as providing development opportunities and business experience for those involved.	Schools in our supply area	Student participation in a real business challenge.



Lakeside Leisure Programme

Facilitating the enjoyment of recreational activities such as fishing, sailing, walking, cycling and birdwatching.

The aim of this programme is to promote and facilitate the enjoyment of our sites through recreational activities such as fishing, sailing, walking, cycling and birdwatching. By doing so, we are supporting healthier and happier communities through the use of recreation facilities provided at our recreational sites.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within the Lakeside Leisure programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Improving lakeside community facilities	To continuously improve our lakeside facilities for the public to enjoy, supporting health and wellbeing	Salt n Malt, The Woodford, BRFFA (angling), Cheddar Watersports, Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club, Chew bird ringing station, bird wardens	These plans are in development
Chew Valley Recreational Trail	Encouraging visitors to use the new trail and taking the opportunity to provide education on the value of water	Local Authority (Bath & North East Somerset), Parish Councils, Salt n Malt, The Woodford, Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club,	Improved walking and cycling routes around Chew Valley Lake
Equality and access	Evaluate and prioritise potential improvements to allow access for all	Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club, Salt n Malt, The Woodford	New access gate to make it easier for disabled sailors to use our facilities .



Regional Strategies Programme

Supporting local and regional plans to address the challenges of society and progress towards a sustainable and carbon neutral Bristol.

The aim of this programme is to support the development of regional strategies through working with local government – for example, the West of England Combined Authority, or the Bristol One City Plan. By doing so, we will be contributing to wider plans for creating healthy and sustainable communities. In particular, our regional strategies seek to develop a local and coordinated response to the dual climate and ecological emergencies.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within the regional strategies programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Contributing to local strategies and plans	To support the delivery of Bristol City Council's One City Plan, through our partnership with local stakeholders, our support for Bristol Green Capital Partnership and our role in the Bristol City Environmental Sustainability Board. Linking specifically to the development of our carbon and ecological strategies BGCP, plus other city stakeholders. We will explore plans to broaden out these strategies to other areas	Bristol City Council, Bristol Green Capital Partnership. Other local Councils	Building on our plans to respond to the climate and ecological emergencies by working with local stakeholders.
Our WECA strategy	To actively contribute to the West of England Combined Authority's regional strategy and the delivery of regional plans, ensuring water sustainability is embedded into the region's future.	WECA	Working to ensure regional plans reflect our objectives.



SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Resource West Programme

Working with local partners to deliver a joined-up approach to resource efficiency across different sectors.

The aim of this programme is to work with local partners to deliver a joined-up approach to reducing consumption across different sectors – combining resources and amplifying messages to customers. By doing so, we will be encouraging reductions in public consumption of resources and increased local resilience. Our focus will be on preserving and enhancing natural capital and linking into a circular economy approach.



Initiatives within the Resource West programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Resource West partnerships	Taking lead to build a partnership of local stakeholders which facilitates transformational shifts in consumer behaviour to reduce consumer consumption and waste.	Wales and West Utilities, Bristol Pound, UWE, Bristol Green Capital Partnership, Western Power Distribution, Bristol City Council.	Local trial aimed at reducing consumption and waste.



Vulnerability Programme

Technology and data will help us to work with local stakeholders to deliver the specific needs of individuals – building a shared connection with the communities we serve together.

The aim of this programme is to work with local stakeholders to help provide extra support to those customers who need it, particularly those on our Priority Services Register (PSR), building on our existing programme of extra care services and social tariffs and debt advice. Our social contract programme directs our additional work with stakeholders to make sure our services are accessible to those most in need.





SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Initiatives within our vulnerability programme

Initiative	Objective	Community stakeholders	Highlights to look out for
Hard to reach projects with local charities	Working with current funded partners and new charities to promote our lower tariffs and PSR to customers who we find harder to get the messages to.	Debt advice partners	Increasing the number of customers on our social tariffs
Partnership work with debt charities	To ensure that customers receive full debt advice before receiving Assist, rather than just help on their water bill.	Debt advice partners	Increasing the number of customers on our social tariffs
PSR Outreach community events	Registering vulnerable customers on PSR and awareness of lower tariffs for those not asking for help	Various local charities	Increasing the number of customers on our Priority Services Register
Local data share	To make it easier for vulnerable customers to be registered for additional help with both their energy and water companies by the one contact.	Western Power Distribution, Wessex Water	Increasing the number of customers on our Priority Services Register
Partnership with Crimestoppers to drive awareness of our PSR	Raising awareness of PSR, specially preventing fraud to vulnerable customers	Crimestoppers	Increasing the number of customers on our Priority Services Register



SOCIAL CONTRACT 2022/23 FORWARD PROGRAMME

Where to go to find out more

Our social contract has evolved over the last few years, through ongoing conversation with customers, stakeholders and employees. As part of this journey, we have published a number of documents which provide information on our approach and learnings. All are available via our dedicated [webpages](#). Here are some of the key documents to look out for:



In January 2019 we launched our [Social Contract](#), the first of its kind published by a water company. The social contract sets out how we are accountable for the social promises we make as we deliver our purpose. It is a process, not an event and as such we continue to evolve our approach and report on progress.



We have also published a guide to our [social purpose](#), which sets out our approach and how it delivers our 2020-25 business outcomes. The guide explains the participants involved in our social contract and explains how we are held to account through our “voluntary sharing mechanism”.



In July 2021 we published our [Annual Performance Report](#), where we provided updates on how our social contract initiatives were helping us to achieve our some of our regulatory commitments.



In December 2021 we published our third [benefits and transparency report](#) on the progress we had made . We also considered the challenges to the wellbeing of our local communities. We have produced an interactive performance graphic on our progress to date, available on our [website](#)



We'd love to hear your views – get in touch!

We know that you know best when it comes to how we can enhance the public value which we provide to our communities. So, what do you think of our plans? We aim for our social contract to be agile in response to community needs, so please get in touch if you have an idea on how we can work together.

By involving customers, stakeholders and organisations, we can make sure our programme reflects the priorities of the people who live and work in our supply area.

Please contact us at: StrategyAndRegulation@bristolwater.co.uk.

