

1. A written apology should be sent to all residents and businesses affected by the water outages in early March 2018

We contacted all affected residents apologising for the issues arising from the problems with our network. Businesses were given a written apology from Thames Water through their water retailer. The letter (example attached) also contained information about compensation payments that residents and businesses would receive. Customers who were out of water for 4-12 hours will receive £30, 12-24 hours £50, 24-48 hours £100 and 48+ hours will receive £150.

2. Much better communication is needed directly with individual local authorities (not just via the London Resilience Forum) when major incidents occur, particularly in relation to the sharing of information regarding vulnerable people in order that appropriate support can be provided to them in a coordinated manner

We acknowledge that better communication is needed with the individual Local Authorities when major incidents occur. We are proactively engaging with Local Authorities, including with the emergency planning teams, to share our learning and assess how we can strengthen collaborative working during a major event.

We did liaise with the London Resilience Forum and updated councillors and officers during the event but we know that there is room for improvement, particularly liaising with Emergency Planning teams.

During the event we proactively contacted the London Resilience Partnership (LRP) early in the morning of Sunday 4 March. The LRP then contacted the local Fire Brigades across London.

We continued to provide updates through the LRP two or three times a day throughout the event for its duration, enabling fire crews to ensure they had greater resources in areas where we knew supplies were affected. We also updated local councillors by email and/or by telephone.

Regarding vulnerable customers, we did contact vulnerable customers on our priority services register and sought to provide the necessary support they required, including the delivery of bottled water to them. We used social media proactively to help identify additional vulnerable people and we also worked with Age UK, who contacted people they thought might need water and in turn they let us know where there was a need we weren't aware of so we could take water to people.

Our priority service register does not yet however have a complete picture of those who need help in this sort of situation. This is a priority in our published draft business plan, in which we have been consulting on over the last 12 weeks. Our intention to significantly increase the number of customers on the register, from 60,000 today up to 75,000 by 2020 and more than 400,000 by 2025. We are actively liaising with Local Authorities, including the LB of Lambeth, to help us update our register of vulnerable customers so that we can prioritise those who need assistance quickly during a major incident.

It may be helpful to explain that we met with Lambeth's Emergency Planning team on 17 April to discuss how we can strengthen our collaboration during major events. A further meeting between our Emergency Risk Specialist and the Head of Emergency Planning is scheduled for the 15 May. This meeting will be a more detailed focus on what more we can do in partnership to help vulnerable

customers, the setting up and running of bottled water stations and strengthening communications between Thames Water and the Borough during a major event.

3. Communications put out by Thames Water updating customers on the progress of incidents need to be consistent and accurate, with realistic (i.e. not over-optimistic) timescales for resolution

We agree that communications put out during a major event should be as accurate and consistent as practicable. Where we could give timeframes we did, but in many cases it wasn't possible to say with any confidence how long it would take to restore supplies. This was because the situation at a local and regional level was complex, with multiple high priority leaks and bursts impacting our strategic water main network.

By 6 March, we had repaired the vast majority of the high priority leaks and bursts in London, and storage levels in our network were increasing. The remaining problems, particularly in SW16, were mostly due to air that had become trapped in the system. We worked to find and remove these airlocks as fast as possible. This involved opening fire hydrant valves to release air and get water flowing properly, but we needed to do this very carefully to avoid creating additional bursts or other problems.

We used social media as our main communication point to keep people up to date with what was happening, as well as our website. However, we understand for some people that this isn't where they would go to find out their information. We will look as part of our review of the incident at how we approach our communications with customers, including what more we can do to provide them with fuller details about the timescales of our response.

We will, as part of our work to review what we could do more effectively in the future, talk to our stakeholders to seek their feedback on our communications with them. This will include exploring earlier discussions with key agencies about potential impacts on water supplies.

4. Water stations set up to provide emergency water when an incident occurs need to be conveniently located and stocks need to be replenished appropriately so that they do not run out of supplies

We took the decision that we would be able to meet our customers' needs most effectively by setting up a smaller number of larger, more central distribution points that could be resupplied by articulated lorries, rather than more numerous smaller points that would have required a more complex logistical operation. Our primary aim was to put in place a system that meant we were able, above all else, to restock supplies as they were used up.

We had 7 HGVs with access to 500 pallets of water (1,100-1,200 litres each) at the start of the event. By the end of the first day we had increased that to 35 vehicles and 3,000 more pallets and 50 vehicles by the following morning, in operation 24/7.

Of the 3,000 pallets, 1,400 were needed in total. We had articulated lorries strategically placed around the capital with pallets of water ready to restock the distribution sites. We will be reviewing how we can improve on the distribution and replenishing of bottled water stations.

We do encourage customers to register for a range of priority services, including deliveries of bottled water when water supplies are interrupted, and we took water to the door steps of those properties that had registered for this service.

With what we have learned from the incident we accept that in a future incident on this scale we could better support our customers by increasing the number of distribution points, with each one operating on a smaller scale. We did in the latter part of the incident use smaller vehicles to drive slowly around neighbourhoods to get the water into communities.

We will also as a result of the incident focus on enhancing our database of potential distribution points for bottled water. This process was already underway, but it is clear that it needs to be accelerated. In our engagement with London Borough emergency planning teams, we are asking for their help in identifying these points so that we are better able to quickly set up effective distribution points in any future incidents. The location and running of bottled water stations was one of the key subjects that we discussed during our meeting with officers from Lambeth Council on the 17 April, and will be an area that we will continue to focus upon.

5. Can water tankers be part of the response (instead of or in addition to bottled water stations) when customers are without water supplies?

Water tankers are usually used in the event of a loss of supply to buildings such as care homes, prisons, schools and hospitals. In addition to the ten bottled water stations that we ran, we had up to five water tankers that supported key customers – primarily hospitals – by making sure they had water while supplies were interrupted. We also had up to ten transit vans taking water to care homes, schools and nurseries, as well as areas where supplies were temporarily shut off while we repaired burst mains.

As part of our review we will look at opportunities to increase the number of water tankers during major events.

6. What engagement will take place with elected members regarding Thames Water's strategic plans?

We have been proactively engaging with stakeholders including elected members making them aware of the consultation on our draft Business Plan and draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). We have held a number of Local Engagement Forums across the London and the Thames Valley area and attended a number of community meetings in collaboration with Local Councils. These are attended by both elected members and customers in the wider community.

We have presented our draft Business Plan and WRMP to the London Councils and have been in contact with local councillors and Council Officers to promote these consultations.

7. Thames Water's live mapping information needs to be more accurate; this should include the use of analytical tools to track social media tags

We are investing in our Digital Media Capability and have a 24/7 team on point so we can keep our customers informed during events. Our work is ongoing and will improve our live mapping information. We have recently implemented Lithium, a social listening tool that will bring non @thameswater mentions into our inbox and allow us to respond with enhanced proactivity during a major event.

We recognise there is more to do utilising social media analytics and will consider these as part of our review.

8. Appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that all tenants who were without water receive the same compensation being offered to homeowners. There should be a particular focus on social housing tenants

Letters are now being sent to residents based on the customer information we have recorded for each property and payments will follow by cheque. In the case of Housing Association properties we are working with the relevant Local Authorities to establish whether we will be able to make the payments directly to householders. If the customer lives in a Local Authority or Housing Association property and pay their bill to us directly to us then we will make that payment to them. Where water is included within the rent then we will write to the property owner to gain correct customer details to pay the cheque.

9. Subsequent to the meeting, correspondence received via local councillors suggests there is still considerable confusion with respect to the amount of compensation residents can expect to be paid [see *attached emails*]. It is requested that this be clarified as soon as possible

Firstly we apologise for any confusion that this has caused. On 27 March, a letter was sent to all local councillors who got in touch expressing concerns regarding the amount of compensation residents will receive. The letter is attached. This stated how we identified affected properties and how much each customer would receive for the time that they were out of supply. We also included a list of frequently asked questions for Councillors who have been engaging with their constituents.

10. Clarification is requested on the compensation offer to businesses who were left without water during the March 2018 incidents; specifically the committee believes that the reported figure of £25 needs to be significantly increased, and that Thames Water should liaise with Castle Water and Business Improvement Districts to ensure the process and arrangements for claiming compensation are clear and simple

We can confirm that businesses are receiving the same compensation payments for loss of water as household customers. For example, if a business was out of water for 48 hours they would receive £150. We have been working with the water retailers to make the appropriate payments to businesses affected.

We have been liaising with Business Improvement Districts to answer any queries that they may have regarding compensation, and passing on the details of businesses affected by loss of water to the relevant water retailer. For example, we have been in regular contact with Streatham Business Improvement District on the scope of compensation and how this will be paid.

11. Further information is requested on how schools can take up the offer of an educational package of visits to Thames Water sites and talks by staff on STEM subjects

We recognise that a number of schools needed to close for one or more days because they could not be confident of their water supply. We are very sorry for the disruption this caused to the teaching staff, parents and pupils. For that reason we are making discretionary payments of £2,500 to each school and offering an education package of visits to Thames Water sites and talks by staff on STEM subjects.

We are working with Lambeth Council officers to gather a list of schools that were affected by the incident. We will then write to the schools directly with information on their compensation and STEM educational packages.

12. In addition to fair compensation to individual residential and business customers, including those in rented accommodation, the committee recommends Thames Water does something that benefits the whole community. Lambeth's Director of Public Health suggested a network of water fountains which would provide healthy, free drinks and help reduce plastic waste. The committee endorses this suggestion

We are looking into a number of goodwill gestures that will benefit local communities. We encourage communities to come forward with suggestions and will soon be looking to meet with Council Officers to discuss where goodwill gestures will best benefit the local area.

In regards to water fountains and helping to reduce plastic waste, we have recently piloted a scheme for shops and businesses around London that offers people free tap water 'refills' as part of the Mayor of London's plans to reduce single-use plastic bottles in the capital.

The Mayor is supporting the Refill London scheme which is run by Thames Water and City to Sea, a campaign group that aims to help stop ocean pollution. If this proves a success the Mayor plans to help roll the scheme out across the capital over the summer.

More than 65 businesses and shops which include Costa Coffee, Tate Modern, BFI Imax and Leon have already joined the Refill scheme in the five areas, and will also be listed on a free Refill app and website (www.refill.org.uk) that lists all the locations in London and more than 5,700 refill locations across the UK.

13. The committee lacks confidence in Thames Water's capacity to respond appropriately to major incidents and as such wishes to see recommendation 6 from the joint scrutiny on trunk mains (that the Fire Brigade Union becomes the statutory Emergency Response Service for flooding, as recommended by the Pitt Review in 2008) progressed

In response to making the Fire Brigade Union statutory responders for major incidents, we already work closely with the London Fire Brigade during major events, most specifically through the London Resilience Forum (LRF). This is an approach that has worked well historically and that the London Fire Brigade has been happy to use.

It may be helpful to explain that through our Trunk Mains Strategic Review we have a number of commitments that address how we respond to major incidents. These will develop and strengthen our incident and emergency management capability, including the operational response to containing the burst, repairing trunk mains, customer communications and care and stakeholder engagement.

14. Is Commitment 5.2 from Thames Water's Trunk Main Strategic Review (to instigate a trunk mains event response improvement programme) now in place and, if so, why did it not work in this case?

As part of our Trunk Main Strategic Review we instigated a trunk mains event response improvement programme. This programme of activity focused on improving our response and recovery capabilities, by making changes to the way we are organised, our processes and our capacity to respond to major events.

We are now 6 months into an 18-month implementation phase of our commitments. We have made good progress against our commitments. For example, Our Customer Representative Team is now fully operational, providing a 24/7 response and we have signed up more than 220 people from across the business who volunteer as Thames Water Customer Ambassadors and are sent out during events. We will be continuing to work hard over the next 12 months to complete the implementation phase and make good on our Strategic Trunk Main Review commitments.

We will be providing Lambeth officers with regular updates on the progress of our trunk main event response improvement programme over the next 12 months.

It may be helpful to explain that the major event at the end of February/ beginning of March related to the severity of the frost and rapidity of the thaw causing a sudden spike in water main leakage. The challenges we faced were widespread, and not particular to Thames Water, with companies across the Midlands and the South also affected to a similar extent.

Pipes at our customers' homes, and at businesses across the capital, were affected in the same way. We know from the data we receive from smart meters in London that leakage from our customers' pipes increased significantly. At the same time, commercial properties repaired leaks on their pipes and drew large volumes of water from the network to refill private storage systems.

This combination of leaks and bursts on the public supply network and private pipes created an additional demand for water of approximately 500 million of litres a day, which we met by increasing the water produced by our treatment works by 20-25% in less than 48 hours.

This was mainly through our works at Ashford, Hampton, Walton and Coppermills. Using the London Ring Main we were able to move additional supplies through our network to keep as many people as possible in supply.

We took action across several areas to prepare for and manage the impacts of the freeze and thaw. This included:

- Making 3,000 pallets of bottled water available – six times as many as normal; with a seven-fold increase in the numbers of vehicles and drivers to distribute them.
- We did make many more staff available to handle calls, shutting our dedicated revenue call centre to free up staff over to take operational calls, and bringing in more staff from our partners including Wipro and Capita. We had 367 FTE staff handling customer contacts at our peak (07 March) compared to a daily average of 45 FTE the week after the event (12-19 March).
- We fielded more than 200 network technicians, and 150 repair teams (15% more than normal) to find and fix leaks, partly by cancelling staff leave.

We are committed to learning and acting on the lessons of this event. An Ofwat independent review is also underway. This is due to be completed in June. We are fully supporting Ofwat's review and look forward to incorporating lessons learned into our response plans. Once the review has completed, we would be happy to come back and present an update to the Committee.