

## United Utilities 7609 Climate Change Research

### Zoom Focus Group Discussion Guide (1.5 to 1.75 hours) Future Bill Payers

**Stimulus required:**

- Zoom account set up
- Stimulus displayed on screen

<b>Background Information for Moderator</b>	
<b>Research Objectives</b>	<p>United Utilities has commissioned a two staged research project to understand customer views on potential climate change in the UU region/UK in relation to water and wastewater services and what this may mean for UU/the water company.</p> <p>This guide will be used for the up-front focus groups. The qualitative stage will be followed by a robust and representative online survey.</p> <p>The research objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand customer priorities when it comes to climate challenges</li> <li>• Understanding what customers expect from UU in terms of resilience and climate change and what role UU is expected to play</li> <li>• Understanding customers expectation of their role in tackling climate change as it pertains to water and wastewater</li> <li>• Understanding if customers want to engage more frequently/in more detail about United Utilities’ climate change initiatives</li> </ul> <p>The focus groups will explore all of these objectives. They will also be used to inform the design and wording of the stimulus for the survey. The survey will measure customer priorities and the extent to which they want to engage with UU on this topic.</p>

<b>(I) Introduction</b>		<b>5-10 mins</b>
<b>Brief explanation of the purpose of the research</b>	<p><i>Moderator to explain the nature of the research;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hello everyone! Thanks for agreeing to take part in tonight’s discussion.</li> <li>• Tonight, we’re going to be talking about climate change - what you know about climate change, any concerns you have and how you think it could impact you and your family in the future. The research is on behalf of United Utilities so we’ll be discussing some of the challenges it might face too. We’ll be chatting on here for the next hour and a half to hour and three quarters.</li> </ul> <p><i>Moderator to reassure respondents about confidentiality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will feedback the findings to United Utilities in a report format.</li> <li>• Brief explanation about audio/video recordings</li> </ul>	<b>6.15-6.25</b>
<b>Introductions</b>	<p><i>Moderator to invite respondent(s) to introduce themselves;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First, let’s do some introductions! I’m (MODERATOR NAME) from DJS Research and I’ll be leading tonight’s discussion.</li> <li>• Introduce client observers</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please could you now introduce yourselves, giving your name, if you are working what you do or if you are studying what are you studying, who you live with and who pays your water bill at the moment? Parents? Accommodation fees at university?</li> </ul>
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<b>(II) Group Discussion: Climate change and its potential impact</b>	<b>10 mins</b> <b>6.25-6.35</b>
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<b>Climate Change Word Association</b>	<p>Now moving on to talk about climate change...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is climate change? What words or phrases do you associate with climate change? <b>DISCUSS WORDS AND PHRASES USED</b></li> </ul>
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<b>Potential impact of climate change on the North West of England</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using a scale of 1-10 where 1 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned, how concerned are you about the potential impact of climate change in the North West region? <b>GO ROUND EACH PARTICIPANT AND ASK WHY THEY HAVE GIVEN THE SCORE THEY HAVE</b></li> <li><b>TO THOSE CONCERNED:</b> What are you specifically concerned about when it comes to climate change in a broader sense? What issues would you focus on if you were in charge of tackling it?</li> <li>Does this score change if I ask you how concerned you are for the UK? Why is that</li> <li>Would these scores have been any different before the Covid pandemic? Why is that?</li> <li>bills?</li> <li>How do you think climate change will impact you and your family? In the next 5 years? What about the next 20 years? <b>WRITE LIST.</b></li> <li><b>SHOW LIST:</b> you've identified these impacts, is there anything else?</li> <li>If you had to rank these in terms of how important it is that these risks are acted on, which would you say are the most important and why? What can be done to act on each one? Whose responsibility is it? How quickly does UU need to focus on the impacts of climate change?</li> <li><b>SHOW SLIDE 2: Climate Change in the UK.</b> Discuss</li> </ul>
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<b>(III) Group discussion: Climate change in the context of the water industry</b>	<b>15 mins</b> <b>6.35-6.50</b>
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<p><b>Intro to UU and how climate change might affect what UU does</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving on to talk about United Utilities. Can anyone tell me what does United Utilities do? <b>WRITE LIST</b> Can anyone tell me how water reaches our homes and what happens to wastewater when it leaves your house?? <b>SHOW SLIDE 3 (MAP), SLIDE 4 (WHAT UNITED UTILITIES DOES) AND SLIDE 5 (WATER CYCLE)).</b></li> <li>• Bearing this in mind, how do you think that climate change might affect what United Utilities’ does?</li> <li>• What do you think United Utilities does to focus on the impacts of climate change? <b>WRITE LIST</b></li> </ul> <p>OK, so thinking about what we’ve discussed so far tonight, what would you say are the biggest climate challenges for United Utilities?</p>
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<p><b>(IV) Group Discussion: UU’s response to climate change</b></p>	<p><b>60 mins</b> <b>6.50-7.50</b></p>
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<p><b>Drought (12 mins)</b></p>	<p>We’re now going to discuss some of the climate risks United Utilities has identified. Some you have already mentioned and some you haven’t. The first one is <b>drought</b>.</p> <p><b>SHOW SLIDE 6: What is a drought?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you think a drought affects United Utilities’ ability to do its job? <b>UNPROMPTED</b></li> </ul> <p><b>SHOW SLIDE 7: How droughts affect United Utilities’ Services</b></p> <p><b>CHECK UNDERSTANDING AND DISCUSS BRIEFLY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you think back to the recent droughts of 2018 and 2020 and tell me how they affected you? <b>MODERATOR ASK GROUP TO VISUALISE ALL IMPACTS THEY HAD</b></li> <li>• How do you think they affected United Utilities ability to serve you? <b>UNPROMPTED</b></li> </ul> <p><b>SHOW SLIDE 8: How a Drought May Affect You</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Poor water pressure</li> <li>○ Loss of supply</li> <li>○ Water quality issues</li> <li>○ Taste/odour/discolouration issues</li> <li>○ Increased frequency of temporary use bans, hosepipe ban</li> <li>○ Moorland fire, fire risk</li> <li>○ Pressure on fire services</li> <li>○ Customer service disruptions (busy phones)</li> <li>○ Mental health &amp; wellbeing</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything else?</li> <li>• What, if anything, could you do to help lessen the impact of drought? What do you expect United Utilities to do?</li> </ul> <p><b>SHOW SLIDES 9 &amp; 10: What is United Utilities Doing About it?</b></p> <p><b>CHECK UNDERSTANDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your views on the actions United Utilities is taking? Do you think it is doing enough? Is there anything else you’d expect it to be doing? Do you have any questions? How comfortable are you with its response to this issue (scale 1-10)</li> <li>• Is this something you’d be interested in hearing more about from United Utilities?</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you want to hear about it?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sewer flooding (12 mins)</b></p>	<p>Another climate risk is <b>sewer flooding</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has anyone here experienced this?</li> <li>• Can anyone tell me how this is linked to climate change?</li> </ul> <p><b>SHOW SLIDE 11 &amp; SLIDE 12: What is sewer flooding?</b></p> <p><b>CHECK UNDERSTANDING: MODERATOR TO ADD THAT IN THIS INSTANCE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SEWER FLOODING AS A RESULT OF EXCESS RAINFALL AND NOT SEWER MISUSE.</b></p> <p><i>Moderator note: Please note that sewer flooding is different to more general flooding. General flooding can often be caused by extreme weather conditions that cause sea levels to rise, river to burst their banks. Sewer flooding may result from a failure of the sewerage system. It may also happen when the sewer system does not have enough capacity to take water entering the system from heavy rainfall or river or highway flooding. Protecting communities from river flooding is Environment Agency responsibility. Highway drainage is local authority.</i></p> <p><b>SHOW SLIDE 13: How climate change is linked to sewer flooding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm going to split you into two groups and I'd like one group to imagine you have sewer flooding into your home, tell me what it's like. The other group has sewer flooding on the road outside your home, tell me what it's like? <b>PROMPT WITH.</b> How about the disruption to your household? Evacuation? Cleaning up? Insurance?</li> </ul> <p><b>THEN SHOW SLIDE 14: How sewer flooding may affect you</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sewage flooding in the home or in gardens</li> <li>○ Sewage flooding into driveways, roads, footpaths, rail services</li> <li>○ Customer service disruptions (busy phones, all of these)</li> <li>○ Mental health &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>• Anything else?</li> <li>• Is it United Utilities responsibility to deal with this? What can United Utilities do about this? <b>UNPROMPTED</b></li> </ul> <p><b>SHOW SLIDE 15 &amp; SLIDE 16: How is United Utilities tackling sewer flooding?</b></p> <p><b>CHECK UNDERSTANDING. IF REQUIRED GIVE EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SOLUTIONS - natural spaces which hold water longer or slow water down before it enters the sewers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your views on the actions United Utilities is taking? Do you think it is doing enough? Is there anything else you'd expect it to be doing? Is there anything, you the customer can do about it? Do you have any questions? How comfortable are you with their response to this issue? (scale 1-10)</li> <li>• Is this something you'd be interested in hearing more about from United Utilities?</li> <li>• How would you want to hear about it?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asset Flooding (12 mins)</b></p>	<p>I'd now like to move onto another type of flooding, <b>asset flooding</b>.</p>

In the same way that people have cars that they need to maintain, a water company has a number of assets that it needs to maintain in order to provide water and wastewater services. Can anyone think of any examples?

**MODERATOR LIST OUT ASSETS MENTIONED**

I would like to now show you some examples of things that water companies own that need to be maintained over time...

**SHOW SLIDE 17: Water company assets**

**SHOW SLIDE 18: How climate change may cause asset flooding**

**CHECK UNDERSTANDING**

- Imagine that the water treatment works which treats the water supplied to your home has flooded. How is this going to affect you? **UNPROMPTED**

**SHOW SLIDE 19: How asset flooding might affect you**

- Localised lack of supply
- Supply interruptions
- River pollution
- Discolouration
- Customer service disruption (busy phones)
- Mental health & wellbeing
- Anything else?
  
- What can United Utilities do about this?

**SHOW SLIDE 20: How United Utilities is tackling asset flooding**

**CHECK UNDERSTANDING**

- What are your views on the actions United Utilities is taking? Do you think it is doing enough? Is there anything else you'd expect it to be doing? Do you have any questions? How comfortable are you with its response to this issue? (scale 1-10)
- Is this something you'd be interested in hearing more about from United Utilities?
- How would you want to hear about it?

**Power Outages (12 mins)**

**It's not only flooding which can affect United Utilities assets, it's also the impact of power cuts**

- How do you think these pose a risk to the running of United Utilities' services?

**SHOW SLIDE 21: Power Outages and SLIDE 22: Case Study: Lancaster**

- Is this something you've considered before?
- Imagine the power has gone off in your area and this includes the Water Treatment Works. It's a long power cut which is going to last 6 hours. How might this affect you/customers? **UNPROMPTED**

**SHOW SLIDE 23: How power outages may affect United Utilities' services**

- Loss of supply
- Low water pressure
- Customer service disruption (phone lines busier)

- Phone lines could be down
- No internet, electricity, payment issues
- Delayed fixes to power cuts and restoring supply

**SHOW SLIDE 24: How United Utilities is tackling the impacts of power outages**  
**CHECK UNDERSTANDING**

- What are your views on the actions United Utilities is taking? Do you think it is doing enough? Is there anything else you'd expect it to be doing? Do you have any questions? How comfortable are you with its response to this issue? (scale 1-10)
- Is this something you'd be interested in hearing more about from United Utilities?
- How would you want to hear about it?

**The final subject I want to discuss with you relates to the natural environment**

**READ OUT:** United Utilities owns and is responsible for 56,000 hectares of land in the North West. This is the equivalent of 75,000 football pitches. The next slide shows examples of the different environments United Utilities is responsible for

**: Natural habitats**

- How will climate change potentially impact these environments? **UNPROMPTED**

**SHOW SLIDE 25: The impact of climate change on our natural environment**

- What impact do you think damage to the natural environment will have on you? **UNPROMPTED**

**SHOW SLIDE 26: How climate change impacts on the environment may impact our customers:**

- Loss of recreational space
- Access and transport issues
- Fire associated issues (air quality, emergency service pressures)
- Loss of wildlife
- Damage to local scenic areas (Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Areas of Natural Beauty etc.)
- Discolouration of water, change of taste or odour issues
- Cause of flooding, and so the other risks
- Restriction of travel
- Landslips etc. causing health and safety risks, and supply interruption
- Customer service disruptions (phone lines busier)
- Mental health & wellbeing

- Anything else?

**SHOW SLIDE 27 How United Utilities is tackling the impacts of climate change on its natural environment**  
**CHECK UNDERSTANDING**

**Natural Environment (12 mins)**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your views on the actions United Utilities is taking? Do you think it is doing enough? Is there anything else you'd expect it to be doing? Do you have any questions? How comfortable are you with its response to this issue? (scale 1-10)</li> <li>• Is this something you'd be interested in hearing more about from United Utilities?</li> <li>• How would you want to hear about it?</li> </ul> <p>* Peatland restoration – the peatlands store a lot of water; 70% of the UK's drinking water come from this area. The area is also beneficial to the environment as it is a natural carbon store. This means it absorbs more carbon than the carbon dioxide it gives off. Unfortunately, this area has been degraded by things like wildfires, industrial pollution and overgrazing. We propose to restore more peatland by investing in sustainable ways to naturally hold more water in these upland areas. We will do this by creating fire breaks to protect against wildfires, protecting wildlife and fencing out livestock to protect the land from overgrazing.</p>
<p><b>Summing Up</b> (5 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SHOW SLIDE 28: United Utilities 5 Climate Change Challenges</b></li> <li>• When it comes to United Utilities and the challenges we've discussed today, if you had to pick one thing you would like the company to focus on, what would it be? <b>GO ROUND GROUP AND DISCUSS REASONS FOR SELECTING CHOICE, THEN RANK THE REST AS A GROUP. DISCUSS RESULTS</b></li> <li>• Is there anything outside of the 5 challenges that you think is really important for UU to address?</li> </ul>

<p><b>(V) Acting on climate change</b></p>	<p><b>5 mins</b> <b>7.35-7.40</b></p>
	<p><i>United Utilities needs to consider the present as well as the future when it comes to investing in managing climate change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your feelings around this investment? To what extent should United Utilities be adapting to climate change now as opposed to later?</li> <li>• Should the company be investing to improve everything for the future now?</li> <li>• Which of the 5 risk areas should United Utilities be prioritising investing in now to protect customers in the future?</li> <li>• Should they be investing now, spending a certain amount each year or spending as events happen? In other words, do you expect today's bill payers to be making a contribution now so United Utilities can adapt to climate change or given the uncertainty around how the climate is going to change, is it reasonable to wait and see?</li> <li>• Say for instance: United Utilities would like to invest in climate change so increase their bills a little now and bills would stay at this flat slightly higher rate for many years' to come or United Utilities would fluctuate their bills so may be cheaper for a while but in a few years to come they want to invest in climate change the bills might be much higher for a while then they might decrease at a later date again. Which of these would you prefer? Why?</li> <li>• How much do you want to be consulted on climate change investments and decisions? Do you want to be involved or do you think the decision is on United Utilities or the regulators etc.? <b>REALLY IMPORTANT TO COVER</b></li> </ul>

<b>(VI) Round up</b>	<b>5 mins</b> <b>7.40-45</b>
<b>Final comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any final comments</li></ul>

**Thank & Close**

**PLEASE GIVE UU OBSERVERS OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS AND THANK CUSTOMERS**