



## 7. The risk of sewer flooding for homes and businesses is reduced

### What do customers want?

Sewer flooding is one of the worst service failures that customers can experience and we understand the significant long-term effect flooding can have. Customers want us to reduce flooding. We are committed to reducing the number of sewer flooding incidents that happen, whether these are outside homes and businesses (external flooding) or inside them (internal flooding).

We have made six performance commitments about reducing the risk of flooding to homes and businesses. We have achieved five of these in year three.

### What have we done?

Sewer flooding incidents can happen inside or outside the home. We continue to develop and put into practice a wide variety of schemes and initiatives to reduce the number of sewer flooding incidents. Measures include increasing customer involvement and awareness campaigns, providing more protection for properties, managing surface water and developing and using dedicated blockage teams to respond to incidents faster.

Flooding can be caused by hydraulic issues, which is when the sewer network can't cope with the volume of water during heavy rainfall, or other things such as blockages or collapses. We aim to deal with incidents the first time they happen, limiting the number of repeat incidents and developing a greater understanding of the cause. Understanding what caused an incident helps our teams to take action to prevent future incidents. This has helped us to reduce the number of flooding incidents this year.

In year three, we recorded a total of 801 internal flooding incidents (which is equivalent to 2.32 per 10,000 connections). This is our best ever performance, but still

does not meet our performance commitment of 1.58 per 10,000 connections (or 559 incidents). For external flooding, we recorded 5,916 incidents and achieved our target of no more than 6,352 incidents.

This improvement in performance is largely due to improvements in the way we operate, most notably the continued use and development of our industry-leading dynamic network management (DNM) initiative. Under DNM, our in-sewer monitors tell us when issues are forming, allowing our teams to attend sites to deal with issues before customers experience a service interruption and need to contact us.

We have continued to promote messages to customers, such as through our 'stop the block' campaign which aims to educate customers about the problems that are caused through sewer misuse, such as flushing baby wipes down the toilet and pouring fat, oil and grease down the drain. We measure the effects of this work through performance targets which measure the level of customer awareness. For this performance commitment we achieved an increased awareness of 39.0% above our baseline, which beat our target of a 6.0% increase.

We have also completed a range of programmes of work which contribute to our performance against our two hydraulic flood-risk commitments. These include small and major capital schemes to increase the amount of wastewater the sewers can carry. These projects will help reduce the overall hydraulic risk, which means that fewer customers will experience flooding at their properties as a result of the sewers not being able to cope with the volume of water in them.

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measures  
achieved

