

## Anglian Water use data to improve customer journey and increase take-up of social tariffs

### Better Off Calculator case study

#### Challenge

Anglian Water wanted to provide seamless support to households struggling financially through the cost of living crisis

#### Solution

After partnering with Northumbrian Water, a company with overlapping water areas, Anglian Water worked with Policy in Practice to build an API so that social tariff customers can apply seamlessly across both organisations

Similarly, an 'apply once' process via the Better Off Calculator on GOV.UK helps Anglian customers to apply for social tariffs with just one application

#### Impact

Customers now enjoy a streamlined process for applying for social tariffs, removing stress for those experiencing financial difficulties

Anglian Water is paving the way in the utilities sector for the use of APIs and integrated processes that simplify the customer journey and reduce administrative time and resource

#### The impact of the cost of living crisis on struggling households

With the cost of living crisis hitting people's finances at an unprecedented level, many utility companies are looking to find ways to support customers who are struggling financially.

Anglian Water has been proactive in their approach to customers in financial hardship. It is the largest water and water recycling company in England and Wales by geographic area, supplying water and water recycling services to almost seven million people in the East of England.

The technological innovations produced by working with Policy in Practice, has helped Anglian Water to identify and reach out to those in-need households. Making the application for social tariffs straightforward is key for people facing financial difficulties.

#### Anglian Water's partnerships provide support to financially vulnerable customers

One step in Anglian Water's innovative journey has been their partnership with Northumbrian Water. The two companies have overlapping water areas in Essex and Suffolk. Northumbrian Water carries out the water provision and Anglian Water carries out the sewerage services. Both organisations offer their own social tariffs in addition to the national WaterSure scheme.

Previously, an eligible customer had to contact both Anglian Water and Northumbrian Water and complete similar yet separate applications to both companies to change their water and sewerage tariffs.

A new API built by Policy in Practice means that customers only need to apply to one organisation and, with consent, their submitted data will be shared with the other organisation. As a result both the customer's sewerage and water bills will automatically be on the right tariff without the customer needing to duplicate applications, improving the experience for customers and customer service teams in both organisations alike.

Before, two customer advisors would need to have the same conversation with the same customer but now only one advisor does in order to apply the tariff, freeing up time for each customer service team.

“The Better Off Calculator is an essential tool to navigate customers through the cost of living crisis.

“Being able to provide a seamless 'apply once' service via the calculator on gov.uk makes life easier for our customers and helps them access benefits they might not have realised they were entitled to.”

**Spencer Hough,**  
Head of Billing and  
Collections, Anglian  
Water

The new joint approach yields other customer benefits too. Anglian has brought benefit eligibility checks in house to improve the processing time. The new joint process to apply for social tariffs once means that Northumbrian Water's customers will also get a benefit eligibility check too.

This is an innovative approach to joint working between water companies which puts the customer at the forefront and removes friction in the customer journey. It's a cost effective approach, freeing up valuable time for advisors, and is easily replicable by other organisations

### **'Apply once' process helps customers quickly access support**

Another step Anglian Water has taken to improve the application process for social tariffs is the creation of its 'apply once' process via the Better Off Calculator on the GOV.UK website.

This new process allows a Better Off Calculator user on GOV.UK to seamlessly apply directly to Anglian Water's social tariff scheme at the same time as completing a benefits check, removing the need to answer more application questions on the Anglian Water website. The integrated journey can be completed by customers with two clicks and only a few extra questions within the Better Off Calculator.

The feature is available to all Better Off Calculator users who enter a postcode that falls within an Anglian Water area. These users will see the option to apply for a social tariff and give their consent to share their data. The calculator automatically calculates their eligibility for a social tariff and tells Anglian Water which tariff they should get. Anglian Water then updates their billing system instantly.

The process is seamless, saving customers time and signing them up to an appropriate tariff with no extra paperwork. This works for both new and existing customers and gives support to everyone in an Anglian Water region.

Anglian Water is ahead of the curve in their sector, having built bringing environmental and social prosperity to the local area into the organisation's purpose.

They are demonstrating how technology and data can be successfully implemented to benefit both the customer and the organisation. Putting the welfare of customers, particularly those struggling financially, at the heart of their developmental decisions highlights Anglian Water's commitment to using data for good.