

Stakeholder mapping

In response to feedback on our last Stakeholder Report, we wanted to establish a complete view of stakeholder engagement across the business to enable action to be taken on priority areas. We also recognise that stakeholder engagement is essential for strategic direction and operational excellence. The overall effect of this will be to contribute to the kind of sustainable development from which our business, our stakeholders and wider society can benefit. We've undertaken extensive stakeholder research this year – a snapshot of which can be seen in the table below. This has enabled us to better integrate our stakeholders' concerns into this report and our broader strategy and decision-making.

Stakeholder	Research findings
Customers - domestic	<p>We regularly research our domestic customers as part of our customer satisfaction project. Some of the key drivers to customer satisfaction are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the confidence a customer has in the response from a customer advisor • the length of time we give for their query to be dealt with • the number of calls a customer has to make to get their problem resolved. <p>As a result we are identifying process and behaviour changes to improve current practice.</p>
Customers – business	<p>We have commissioned research from our 450 key customers to identify perceptions of the service they receive from key customer managers. Feedback said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that this service was valued as an expert on the inside • it could help them access the right people inside our organisation quickly resolving any issues. <p>We are now considering applying this approach elsewhere in terms of both definitions and how we interact with them. We have also agreed to run the monthly customer satisfaction research on commercial customers as well as domestic customers.</p>
Employees	<p>Our annual employee survey offers employees the opportunity to say what they think about our company, their part of the business, their job and their work life. We measure employee engagement because it has proven links to customer satisfaction and business performance. 93% of employees completed a survey this year which is up 6% on last year. Results are now cascading back into the business and will result in local action planning with a view to improving the working lives of all employees.</p>

Investors	We commission a comprehensive and independent investor survey each year to understand the views of our major shareholders and other investors on strategy, management, communications, financial position, dividends and valuation. The last survey was completed in May 2009 and interviewees represented 30 per cent of the equity in United Utilities, or 41% of the active equity base. It indicated that investors are generally supportive of our strategy and positive about our management team and the quality of our communications. We also proactively seek feedback (via our brokers) following investor roadshow meetings covering investors in the UK, Europe and North America.
Politicians	We carried out a perception audit of north west MPs in 2007. The main resulting issue was a very poor response to the survey. This informed the development of our public affairs strategy and we established the need to increase engagement with north west MPs. We wrote to every north west MP with a copy of our Strategic Direction Statement and this is being followed up with a meeting. Another perception audit is planned for 2008.
Media	We surveyed over 300 print, radio and TV journalists across the North West in Nov 2007. This told us that our press office is viewed as being largely reactive; United Utilities is associated with negative issues; there is a desire for quirky news stories; a desire for a speedier out of hours response. The press office now provides more proactive, informative, positive angles where possible. Public information press releases are accompanied by human interest stories. A new 24-hour press number is in place and a press officer now takes responsibility for media in different parts of the North West allowing consistent relationships to be developed.
Contractors and suppliers	Engagement (both internal and external) is at the heart of our current supply chain transformation project. We are focusing on moving towards a more integrated approach. This will be dependent on the nature of the relationship required with a supplier/contractor, e.g. whether the requirement involves partnering, or a simple commodity purchase. As part of a new standard operating model, the communications throughout a contract life cycle will have a framework. We are consulting with key suppliers where we anticipate there would be benefits to United Utilities, the partner and ultimately to the customer.
Strategic Direction Statement	<p>In December 2007, we published our Strategic Direction Statement (SDS) entitled 'Where we are heading'. It outlines the key issues facing the business over the next 25 years and includes the outcome of a survey into our customers' willingness to pay. Covering 2,000 households and 500 businesses, the survey found that key concerns include supply interruptions, sewer flooding, odour and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The SDS is part of our preparations for the forthcoming price review and we are already in active discussions with our regulators.</p> <p>We also hold quarterly feedback sessions with the MDs of all our capital programme partners, the directors of non-infrastructure capital delivery and infrastructure capital delivery. Monthly update meetings with our respective partners at the Integrated Alliance Board meetings and regular one to ones provide ample opportunity for feedback on issues. This is complemented by our partners being based within our offices at Lingley Mere.</p>