

Chapter 6

Key outputs

Customer service standards

Covering:

Statutory Guaranteed Standards Scheme
Enhanced Guaranteed Standards Scheme
Companies' Customer Charters

Chapter 6

Key outputs

Customer service standards

Note: This table and the following guidance are issued in AIR09 for information only and as a guide to potential future reporting requirements when reporting on guaranteed standards becomes relevant. This guidance mirrors what Ofwat currently request. No company return or reporter commentary is required for AIR09.

Aim

To report non-compliance with the minimum standards set out in Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) Regulations and companies own enhancements to these standards or other service areas.

To report payments made to customers for failure to meet GSS standard, enhanced GSS or company charters.

Common definitions

GSS Event: failure to meet the standards as set out in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. NB: These standards are not the same as the levels of service performance criteria.

GSS Payment: payments made following a GSS Event including where company enhances payment level.

Enhanced Guaranteed Standards Scheme (EGSS) Event: failure to meet standards set by the company that, whilst based on the statutory GSS, go beyond the provisions of that scheme; for example,

- a reduction in the qualifying period triggering a payment; or
- automatic payment made where the GSS requires the customer to make a claim for a penalty payment.

Company Customer Service Standards/Charters: failure to meet company standards that fall outside of the provisions of the statutory GSS or go beyond an enhanced GSS. Also includes ex gratia payments.

Payments: these include the following:

- any cheques made payable to the customer and sent directly to him/her, or to a third party acting on behalf of the customer; and
- any credits made to customers' accounts.

Penalty payments: If the company fails to pay the required statutory GSS payment within timescale specified, the customer is entitled to a further payment except for regulation 10 Pressure standard.

Guidance

Table 6 records GSS Events due to failures against the GSS Regulations. Each Regulation is included in the table along with the breakdown of the different elements of the Regulations.

The aim of the table is to show non-compliance with the GSS Regulations, plus where companies have elected to enhance GSS criteria, EGSS Events and the number of value of payments made by companies. Companies should record in their commentaries any differences between the number of GSS Events and the number of payments made.

As noted above levels of service performance criteria does not match the GSS criteria and should not be relied on in the completion of GSS lines. Nevertheless companies should reconcile all numbers where possible to those in previous tables. However where there is a large discrepancy between related service areas please provide a brief commentary by way of explanation.

GSS Events: Companies should record all GSS Events of failures of the GSS standards in the appropriate lines. Events triggered by Statutory GSS should be recorded in the GSS line. Events triggered by companies EGSS criteria e.g. warning for a period more than 1 hour but less than 4 hours should be recorded in the EGSS line.,.

Section J Lines 22-25

Penalty payments: Events relating to-penalty payments should be recorded in lines 22, 23 or 24. Events relating to automatic penalty payments for regulations 8 – Notice of interruption of supply, 9 – Supply not restored 11 – Flooding from sewers – internal flooding and 12 – Flooding from sewer – external flooding should be recorded in line 22. Events relating to claimed penalty payments for regulations 6 – Keeping appointments, and 7 Complaints account queries and requests about payment arrangements should be recorded in line 23. Where companies offer enhanced criteria e.g. claimed penalty payments are made automatically, these should be recorded in line 24.

Section K Lines 26-33

Payments: Companies should record payments made under the statutory GSS, enhanced GSS or their own customer service standards schemes/charters in the appropriate lines in section J. These headings are mutually exclusive; companies are not required to apportion costs except where a joint payment is made in respect of distinct service standards.

Guaranteed Standards Scheme

- This should include only payments made in compliance with the GSS Regulations.
- Where a standard GSS payment is made within a larger unrelated payment, **only** the GSS payment should be recorded in the GSS line. For example, a GSS payment may be included within a cheque for a rebate of charges;
- Where a standard GSS payment is made together with an amount related to a different service standard, the payments should be recorded separately in the appropriate GSS lines. For example, a customer may receive both a GSS payment for a failure to respond within ten working days to a complaint about a contractor's vehicles being parked across a customer's driveway, and an ex-gratia payment in recognition of the inconvenience caused by the contractor.

Enhanced Guaranteed Standards Scheme

- Lines 30 and 31 should include payments made which are based on the GSS criteria but enhance the standards stated in the regulations.
- Where a company makes a payment of a greater monetary value than required under the GSS, but does not enhance the standards, the whole of this payment should be recorded in lines 27 and 28.

Company Customer Charter

- Where a company makes a payment in respect of a standard that falls outside the scope of the GSS Regulations, this should be recorded in lines 32 and 33. For example, “failure to provide a receipt if requested by a customer” may be a standard that the company has added to its charter.

Details of the company’s own standards should be recorded in the commentary.

Incidents: Companies should use the commentary to report where they have made a significant number of payments relating to a single incident (e.g. supply interruption, water quality incident, sewer flooding etc.)

Companies should explain all differences between numbers of failures and payments, for example, by describing where payments are for failures in the previous year, or are to be paid in the following year.

Company commentary

The company should:

- ensure that all Events are reported in the correct lines regardless of how they are paid;
- report where it has made a significant number of payments relating to a single incident;
- where possible, reconcile GSS Events to Events reported in tables 2-5 and provide an explanation where the number of failures differs to the number of payments;
- provide details of enhanced standards (EGSS) including details of payment level, and value of payments;
- provide details of company’s own standards including a summary of payments made under company’s own standards;
- state any assumptions made in reporting figures in the balance sheets;
- comment on significant year on year changes in reported figures;
- provide justification for the confidence grade assigned to each line including an explanation for any changes in confidence grades from previous years. Confidence grades should take account of any areas where the companies does not meet the reporting requirements;
- provide an update on any remaining actions identified in the MD220 review and at JR07; JR08; and
- confirm methodology statement for GSS compliance is up to date outlining any changes (including external sewer flooding where appropriate) (Methodology statements are not required to be submitted with the June return, but should be made available to the reporter and Ofwat on request).

Guidance to Reporters

The Reporter should comment on:

- confirm or otherwise that all methods used by the company are as company has described;
- confirm company has disclosed all assumptions;
- confirm confidence grade assigned by company reflect the methods that they apply;
- comment on delivery of MD220 action plan or other actions identified at JR07; JR08; and
- describe in detail the checks that the reporter has carried out in order to be able to confirm and comment on each of the points set out above. Including for example how the reporter has selected any samples for audit from the full sample; quantity sampled; robustness of sample; materiality of assumptions and any weaknesses; discussions held with company staff.

Table 6 line definitions
A GSS - APPOINTMENTS

1	Failure to specify am/pm or provide 2 hour slot (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 6. Total number of GSS Events where the company have failed to specify to the customer when making an appointment whether it will be am/pm or failure to offer the customer a 2 hour time slot when requested.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00001		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

2	Failure to keep appointment (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 6. The total number of GSS Events where the company has failed to keep the appointment with the customer.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00002		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

3	Failure to correctly cancel an appointment (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 6. The total number of GSS Events where the company have not given the customer 24 hours notice of cancelling the appointment.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00003		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

4	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for appointments. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. company offers a 2 hour slot automatically.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00004		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

B GSS – WRITTEN ACCOUNT QUERIES
ACCOUNT QUERIES

5	Failure to despatch a substantive reply within 10 working days (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989' (SI 1989:1159) as amended by 2008. Regulation 7. Number of GSS Events where a substantive reply was not despatched to the customer within ten working days from the date of receipt of a written account query regarding the correctness of the account.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00005		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

6	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for written account queries. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. company states it will provide a response within 5 working days.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00006		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

7	Failure to despatch a substantive reply within 5 working days where request cannot be met (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 7. Number of GSS Events where a substantive reply was not despatched to the customer within five working days from the date of receipt of a request from the customer to change payment arrangements where the request for a payment arrangement could not be met.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00007		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

8	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for payment arrangements. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. company states it will provide a response in all cases.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00008		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

C GSS – WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

9	Failure to despatch a substantive reply within 10 working days (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 7. Number of GSS Events where a substantive reply was not despatched to the customer within ten working days from the date of receipt of a written complaint.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN207		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

10	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for payment arrangements. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. company states it will provide a response in 5 days.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00009		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

D GSS – NOTICE OF INTERRUPTIONS TO SUPPLY

11	Failure to warn for planned interruptions of more than 4 hours (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 8. The total number of GSS Events where the company has failed to warn customers of interruptions of more than 4 hours.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00010		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

12	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for notice of supply interruptions. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. company states it will notify customer of interruptions of more than 1 hour.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00011		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

E GSS – SUPPLY NOT DULY RESTORED

PLANNED INTERRUPTIONS

13	Failure to restore supply within period specified in notice (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 9. (Planned Interruptions): The total number of GSS Events where the company has failed to restore the supply within the period specified in the notice.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00012		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

UNPLANNED INTERRUPTIONS

14	Failure to restore supply within 48 hours for emergency works – strategic main (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 9 (Unplanned interruptions). The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed to restore the supply within 48 hours for emergency works when there is a leak or burst on a strategic main.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00013		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

15	Failure to restore supply within 12 hours for emergency works – non strategic main (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 9 (Unplanned interruptions) The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed to restore the supply within 12 hours for emergency works when there is a leak or burst which is not on a strategic main.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00014		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

16	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for notice of supply interruptions. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. working to a 10 hour standard for all mains.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00015		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

F GSS – PRESSURE STANDARD

17	Failure to maintain minimum pressure standard (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 10. The total number of GSS Events where the company has failed to maintain the minimum pressure standard of seven meters static head on two occasions, each lasting not less than one hour, in any period of 28 days.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00016		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

18	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events where the company has failed its enhanced standard for pressure. This line only relates to enhanced criteria not enhanced payments e.g. company states it will maintain pressure at 15 meters static head.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00017		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

G GSS – SEWER FLOODING - Internal

19	Flooding from sewers entering properties (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulation 11. The total number of GSS Events where flooding from sewer has entered a customer's property. All events and any payments made in the event of exceptional weather should be recorded in lines 19, 26, 27, 28. Where a company, under its own customer charter, makes ex-gratia payments in addition to the refund of sewerage charges these should be recorded in lines 32 and 33.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00018		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

H GSS – SEWER FLOODING – External

20	Flooding from sewers entering customers land (Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	<p>As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008, Regulation 12.</p> <p>The total number of GSS Events where flooding from sewer has entered a customer's external property/land.</p> <p>All events and any payments made in the event of exceptional weather should be recorded in lines 20, 26, 27, 28.</p> <p>Where a company, under its own customer charter, makes ex-gratia payments in addition to the refund of sewerage charges these should be recorded in lines 32 and 33.</p>		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00019		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

I ALL REGULATIONS

21	Number of Events where payment has not been made as allowed by exclusions in regulations e.g. severe weather or 3 rd party action	nr	Odp
Definition	<p>As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Regulations 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12..</p> <p>The total number of events included in rows 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19 & 20 where a payment has not been made by the company following a GSS Event as company have used an exclusion as stated in the Regulation.</p>		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00020		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

J GSS – PENALTY PAYMENTS MADE – ALL CATEGORIES

22	Penalty payments made under regulations 8, 9, 11 or 12 (Automatic Events)	nr	Odp
Definition	<p>As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Service (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008' the total number of penalty payments made for late payment of required GSS payments under Regulations 13(4).</p>		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00021		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

23	Penalty payments made under regulations 6 and 7 (Claimed Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	As defined in the 'Water Supply and Sewerage Service (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008' the total number of penalty payments made for late payment of required GSS payments under Regulation 13(2)		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00022		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

24	Enhanced GSS criteria (Events)	nr	0dp
Definition	The total number of Enhanced GSS Events for penalty payments e.g. automatic payment for claimed penalties.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00023		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

25	Total penalty payments made (value)	£	0dp
Definition	The total value of penalty payments made.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	GSS00024		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

K STATUTORY, ENHANCED GSS & COMPANY CUSTOMER CHARTERS

26	Statutory GSS – total events (number)	nr	0dp
Definition	The number of GSS Events for failure to meet statutory GSS standards.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Calculated: sum of lines 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17 19 & 20		
Reference	GSS00025		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

27	Statutory GSS – payments made (number)	nr	0dp
Definition	The number of payments made for failure to meet statutory GSS standards.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN1156		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

28	Statutory GSS – payments made (value)	£	0dp
Definition	The value of payments made for failure to meet statutory GSS standards excluding penalty payments. This should include enhanced amounts.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN1157		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

29	Enhanced GSS – total events (number)	nr	0dp
Definition	The number of enhanced GSS Events for failure to meet companies enhanced GSS standards.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Calculated: sum of lines 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16 & 18		
Reference	GSS00026		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

30	Enhanced GSS – payments made (number)	nr	0dp
Definition	The number of payments made for standards that, whilst based on the statutory GSS, go beyond the provisions of that scheme i.e. payments for events reported in row 29.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN1181		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

31	Enhanced GSS – payments made (value)	£	0dp
Definition	The value of payments made for standards that, whilst based on the statutory GSS, go beyond the provisions of that scheme i.e. as reported in line 30.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN1183		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

32	Company Customer Charter - payments made (number)	nr	0dp
Definition	The number of payments made for a company's customer service standards that fall outside the provisions of the statutory GSS (lines 1 to 20) and are not enhanced GSS (lines 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 18, 20 and 28-30).		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN1179		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

33	Company Customer Charter - payments made (value)	£	0dp
Definition	The value of payments made for a company's customer service standards as reported in row 32.		
Primary Purpose	Checking compliance with statutory and Licence requirements.		
Processing rule	Input		
Reference	BN1177		
Responsibility	Service and Performance Team		

CHANGE CONTROL SHEET

CHAPTER 6

2006/1.0	First issue of chapter for the AMP4 period
2006/1.1	No changes
2007/1.0	Amendments to guidance
2007/1.1	No changes
2008/1.0	New lines for GSS Events and revisions to guidance
2008/1.1	No changes as 2008/1.0
2008/1.2	References allocated to new lines Amended units for lines 20 and 21 to nr
2009/1.0	Changes to guidance to reflect GSS Regulations that took effect on 1 April 2008. Line 20 revised and moved into H. Changes made to line definitions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21. Description and definition changes made to lines 22 & 23. Processing rule changes made to 26, 29 and 30.