



# Specification of Requirement

## Improving information and signposting for users and managers of private water supplies

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## 1. Introduction

### Citizens Advice Service in Scotland

The Consumer Futures Unit seeks to put consumers at the heart of policy and regulation in the regulated industries of energy, post and water. Part of Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS), it gathers, develops and acts on evidence, advocating and empowering to improve consumer outcomes. It develops practical policy solutions that lead to consumers being informed, engaged and protected.

The Consumer Futures Unit is part of a Scottish Government working group on Rural Provision, that has been set up to develop a strategy for Scottish Ministers to improve the quality of private water and private sewerage supplies<sup>1</sup> in Scotland. Stakeholders include the Drinking Water Quality Regulator, Scottish Government, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water and Citizens Advice Scotland.

The group has acknowledged the need for standardised, informative resources for individuals and communities that use and care for private water and wastewater services. Information should include both their rights in terms of access to safe drinking water, as well as their responsibilities to maintain drinking water and wastewater to an acceptable standard.

The working group has recognised the need to conduct desk based research to establish the range of information available to communities, where this information can be accessed and how easy it is to access in terms of both location and simple language. As the recognised representative body for water consumers, the Scottish Government has asked the Consumer Futures Unit to progress this research to inform the work of the Rural Provisions working group, and any future communications strategy.

## 2. Research question

The Consumer Futures Unit would like to identify in relation to the above:

*What information is available to users and managers of private water and wastewater supplies in Scotland? To what degree does it clearly set out rights and responsibilities? How accessible is information in terms of location and language? Where should information be held so that it is most accessible to users and managers of private water supplies?*

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<sup>1</sup> A private water supply is a supply of water which does not come from a public water supply. Private supplies may come from a variety of sources, including wells, springs, boreholes and streams (Defra). A private wastewater supply is one that is not connected to the public sewerage network e.g. septic tank.



*What information is available to users and managers of private water and wastewater supplies in other European countries? Could European information formats be useful to provide information to Scottish consumers?*

### **3. Why research is necessary**

Many agencies, including those mentioned above and Scottish local authorities have produced information for users and managers of private water and wastewater supplies. Information has sought to provide insight, instruction and signposting on a range of issues including legislation and regulations, technical guidance, types of private water supplies, instructions in caring for private water and wastewater services, and private water equipment supplies.

Whilst information resources are aimed at equipping users and managers of private water and wastewater supplies with what they need to ensure a safe supply of drinking water, and appropriate treatment of wastewater, the working group is aware of the potential for the following:

- Duplication of information
- Gaps in information
- Conflicting instructions
- Information being difficult to understand e.g. too technical
- Inadequate or incomplete signposting to relevant information.

It is important that users and managers of private water and wastewater supplies can access and receive the information they need, in an appropriate and accessible format, in order to clearly understand their rights as well as their responsibilities regarding using and caring for these services.

Consumer principles related to information may include:

- Access – can people easily get the information they need or want?
- Choice – is there any?
- Safety – are the goods or services dangerous to health or welfare?
- Information – is it available, accurate, useful, written in simple language?
- Redress – if things go wrong, is there a way of putting them right?

This research is essential to identify what exists, and what more is required to meet consumers' needs.



## 4. Research objectives

Research should map out:

- What information exists
- What information is duplicated
- Where information is stored
- Instances where sources of information provide conflicting instructions
- How accessible information is in terms of location and easy to understand language
- Examples from Europe (or other countries) of good practice in terms of format, language, accessibility, etc.

## 5. Anticipated approach

A suggested approach to this work is to initially conduct desk based analysis to ascertain what is held, by whom and where. This work will also ascertain whether or not instructions for users and managers of private water and wastewater from different sources contradict one another.

This work should map the journey to information from the source / homepage, and how easy / challenging this is e.g. number of clicks, word searches, etc. It should also explore non-digital information provision and access.

Future research could include testing information and location on consumers to form a view on how accessible it is in terms of location and language.

The budget for this research is £12,000 inclusive of VAT.

## 6. Deliverables

Deliverables from research should include:

- Draft copies of all key documents, such as analysis of findings, and final reports. These should be submitted in sufficient time for comments to be incorporated and for our approval to be given before producing final versions.
- Initially, weekly telephone updates with CAS staff to report on progress.
- Top line findings (upon completion of the fieldwork) or an interim report as requested by CAS.
- A full written high quality report (with any specific subheadings and recommendations agreed with CAS), written in accessible language, in Microsoft Word setting out the findings with an executive summary and relevant appendices.



- A presentation of results at CAS offices in Edinburgh with accompanying PowerPoint slides. A brief on the type of evidence collected and how the findings have been used.

## 7. Nature of the report

The research report will be used by a wide range of stakeholders, as previously mentioned within this document, within and outside of the Consumer Futures Unit, not just the team involved in commissioning the work.

Along with all of our research reports, this research is intended to contribute to the wider knowledge of issues related to those using and caring for private water and wastewater supplies, and not just to the immediate research problem. As such, it must be capable of being used as a secondary source for a reasonable period of time after the research is completed. For these reasons it is essential that the report:

- Uses language accessible to readers with varying experience of research and consumer behaviour.
- Contains a comprehensive description of the research method, so that the reader understands what was done and the robustness and/or limitations of the data.
- Organises and, where appropriate, reduces the data so as to lead the reader either to clear conclusions or to a discussion of the implications of the findings.
- Avoids over-summarising or over-simplifying the findings.
- Contains clearly labelled charts, diagrams and tables (if appropriate) summarising and illustrating the results, with a narrative description of what the chart, diagram or table shows – do not leave it to the reader to interpret these.
- Contains a stand-alone Executive Summary, containing a brief description of the background, objectives, method, main findings and conclusions along with, if necessary a separate briefing-style paper.

## 8. Performance and quality requirements

The Consumer Futures Unit is leading this work, and will require regular updates, including a project initiation meeting, to be held between the supplier and ourselves to ensure progress is on track and any difficulties are resolved promptly. Any anticipated shortfall in quality or similar failing shall be brought to the attention of the Consumer Futures Unit immediately. We advise suppliers to show how they adhere to a relevant Social Research Code of Conduct or, where appropriate, any other professional code of conduct, or quality systems that they have in place.



Final sign off on all research will be undertaken by the Consumer Futures Unit; ownership of all research outcomes, including the final report and all data produced as a result of the research also lies with the Consumer Futures Unit. The project will be managed by Gail Walker on behalf of the Consumer Futures Unit.

In addition, suppliers should not discuss study findings in public without prior, written agreement from CAS. Suppliers must also obtain CAS's prior, written approval to use data or findings from this study for any proposed presentation or publication.

## 9. Form of proposal

We require proposals to be submitted electronically, in PDF format. All clarification questions must be made in writing and sent by email to [gail.walker@cas.org.uk](mailto:gail.walker@cas.org.uk) no later than 12 p.m. on 16 September 2016. A response to all clarification questions of a substantive nature shall be issued to all bidders by 4p.m. on 20 September 2016.

Tenders must be sent to the project lead (Gail Walker) no later than 12 p.m. on Monday 30 September 2016.

Bidders should complete tenders in the format indicated below. All questions must be answered in full.

### **Company overview and previous experience:**

- Please provide a brief overview of your organisation. This must include a brief history, and detail of your capability and capacity.
- Please detail two case studies that evidence your ability to deliver the services required. This must include details of the brief, how you delivered the project and the objectives that were achieved.
- Please provide the names, addresses and contact details of two referees that could be contracted to provide a reference of your ability to deliver the services.
- Please declare if there is a conflict of interest in carrying out this work.

### **Key personnel:**

- Please provide a copy of the organisation chart.
- Please provide details of the personnel who shall be responsible for the delivery of the services. This must include a CV for these individuals that highlight their relevant skills and experience.



**Methodology and delivery of the services:**

- Please provide detail of your understanding of the requirement, and evidence your skills and experience for carrying out the services.
- Please provide a detailed methodology of how you propose to deliver the services and objectives detailed in the Specification of Requirements.
- Please provide a detailed project plan for the delivery of the proposed methodology. This must clearly define who shall carry out the tasks in the plan and the number of days for completion.
- Please provide an outline of any ethical or data protection considerations you believe are relevant to the services
- Please indicate how you adhere to any professional code of conduct, such as the Market Research or Social Research Codes.

**Commercial offer:**

- Prices shall be quoted in pounds sterling and presented alongside discrete tasks and/or individual personnel (e.g. in a similar format to the project plan requested above) in a separate document to the rest of the tender and summarised in the accompanying pricing schedule. VAT, when applicable, should be shown separately as a strictly net extra charge. Please detail all costs associated with the provision of the services as any costs not detailed will be deemed to have been waived.



## 10. Evaluation criteria

Citizens Advice Scotland will make its selection on the basis of that proposal which represents the best value for money. The following criteria will apply:

Evaluation criterion	Description	Weighting
Methodology / Approach	<p>Details and suitability of suggested approach, sampling strategy and data collection method</p> <p>Plans for dealing with any risks and contingencies</p> <p>Statement of ethical considerations and data handling/storage procedures where relevant</p>	20%
Technical experience	<p>Evidence of providing similar services to other organisations and particular skills/experience relevant to the problem</p> <p>Also include your performance on any previous projects for CAS</p>	20%
Implementation plan	Details of your implementation plan to meet the timescales, including staffing and resources (including costs) assigned to each	10%
Understanding our business needs	Indication of a clear understanding of the problem and the research objectives	10%
Quality	Details of how you ensure that a high quality service is maintained throughout the contract period	10%
Added value	Details of what your company can bring to the research	5%
Price	A full breakdown of all costs should be given	25%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>





Tenders are evaluated by scoring against each of the above criteria using a 'zero to ten' scale, where zero equates to 'Clearly fails to meet the requirement' and ten equates to 'Excellent standard with no reservation at all about acceptability'. The supplier with the highest overall score will be awarded the contract.

Please note that on completion of all contracts, suppliers are evaluated against these same criteria based on their performance. This post-project evaluation will be considered in future tendering processes.



## 11. Procurement timetable

Citizens Advice Scotland will be working towards the following procurement timetable:

Activity	Date
Issue Invitation to Tender	12 September 2016
Closing date for clarifications questions	16 September 2016
Date for responses to clarification questions	20 September 2016
Tenders received by	30 September 2016
Evaluation of tenders/quotes	6 October 2016
Contract awarded	7 October 2016
Contract commences	10 October 2016
Draft report due	17 November 2016
Final report due	30 November 2016

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Draft Report</b>	The 'draft report' should not be a rough version of the report, but the full report (proof-read, spell-checked and sense-checked) for review by the client project team
<b>Final Report</b>	The final report is intended to have resolved all queries and comments
<b>Briefing Report</b>	A summary of key findings for presentation to a general audience