

SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION FOR ENERGY REGULATION IN RESPONSE TO THE WATER CHARGES PLAN CONSULTATION PAPER

1. Introduction

Focus Ireland is one of the leading organisations working in the area of housing and homelessness. For almost 30 years we have provided quality services to those who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

In addition to providing housing to individuals and families, Focus Ireland also supports people in managing their tenancy through tenancy sustainment support. Furthermore, Focus Ireland provides advice, information and advocacy services to help those who experience homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Given the breadth of work Focus Ireland does with our customers we see, on a daily basis, how important it is for individuals to have a manageable budget and to have access to vital utility services. If people's outgoings continue to increase to a level that is beyond their means they are at real risk of losing their homes.

In this context we welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Commission for Energy Regulation as part of the consultation process. In this we have two distinct roles. First as an advocate for people on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness and who will be domestic water customers. This role applies both to tenants of our own properties and other households in all housing tenures who are at risk of homelessness due to low income. Secondly, Focus Ireland itself, as provider of residential services, is a non domestic water customer. While we will attempt to address as many of the specific questions set out by the CER as is possible, we will attempt to address the issues that are outside the area of our expertise. We have included a table at the end of this document outlining our responses to the questions posed.

Focus Ireland commends the vision of Irish Water to build a utility that is safe, affordable and environmentally compliant in relation to Ireland's water. We are particularly concerned however in relation to the affordability issue for those households that are in receipt of low incomes. We acknowledged that the Commission for Energy Regulation does not have responsibility in relation to social welfare allowances or issues relevant to the Department of Social Protection. However access to water is essential to survival and is a basic right. This is recognised in the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 through the provision that water supply will not be discontinued to a dwelling in the event of non payment or arrears of water charges. We believe that these provisions give a clear indication that the affordability of water supply is a matter which both Irish Water and the Regulator should give due cognizance.

In addition to this, as a landlord, Focus Ireland wants to ensure that it can assist tenants in complying with any validation procedures to ensure their eligibility for the allowances and

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that its tenants are registered as domestic customers as some of our accommodation may fall into the 'mixed use' category.

Focus Ireland welcomes the Commission for Energy Regulation's work in developing a customer handbook and although not specifically related to the water charges plan it will impact on some of the concerns raised in this submission.

2. Domestic Customers

Focus Ireland has publicly stated its concern around the rising costs of living for individuals and families against a backdrop of austerity related cuts and reductions to essential income supports. These rising costs have resulted in a substantial increase arising primarily from economic factors.

The water charges that are now being implemented are another increase to the daily costs of living. Whilst, to date, customers have paid for water services through general taxation this situation will change and customers will now pay charges for their water consumption but it clear that they will not see a corresponding reduction in their contributions under the general taxation scheme or indeed any other financial relief.

Social Impact Analysis and the Review Period

The introduction of water charges is a totally new measure in Ireland. Beyond the obvious fact that these new charges will push some households further into financial difficulty and may in some cases be the trigger for homelessness, it is not possible to fully predict their impact on the living circumstances of low income families, or to recommend with certainty what measures will allieviate negative impacts. For these reasons we believe that it is vital that a social impact analysis on the introduction of water charges be initiated urgently and published during the interim/transition period, so that its outcomes can be taken into account in the subsequent period.

The social impact assessment should analyse the impact of the new charge on household budgets and whether the charges contribute to increases in the levels of people experiencing poverty (possibly using data indicators from the Survey of Income and Living Conditions). The SIA should also look at any changes in water useage patterns arising from the new charges and the social impacts of these. Focus Ireland is recommending that the data for the SIA would be gathered over a period of at least 12 months and that the analysis of the data would be taken into account at the end of the transitional/interim review period (2014-2017). If the analysis wasn't available at that time or if further data collection was required, Focus Ireland suggest that the interim review period be extended to complete this task. No reductions to water supply should be applied prior to such an impact assessment being carried out.

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Focus Ireland understands that in relation to the role of the Commission for Energy Regulation that some of the elements of the Water Charges Plan are set by legislation or have been set out by the Minister's Policy Direction and therefore are predetermined.

Given that the proposed costs of the service are to a large extent being used as a basis for the level of charges being levied, we welcome the reduction by the CER of the proposed costs of Irish Water on the basis of a more efficient spend of resources. We are however very concerned that the costs of Irish Water have received public criticism given the cost is reported as being twice as expensive as those of similar services in the UK.¹ While we are not experts in relation to the provision of water charges, as this does not lie within our area of practice, we were surprised to note in a paper produced by PublicPolicy.ie that it reports the European average cost as being €1.19 per 1000 litres² whereas the volumetric costs proposed are at a higher level of €2.44 per 1000 litres of both water and wastewater services. The difference therefore is striking and warrants further investigation. Public confidence in these changes is crucially dependent upon the capacity of the Regulator and Irish Water to clearly and effectively respond to such criticisms.

Whilst the CER have admitted that the level of data available to them is quite limited, it is worrying nonetheless that households in Ireland (including those in receipt of low incomes) would appear to be paying significantly more than many of their European counterparts. We suggest that the initial 6 month period, where a cap on all metered customers to the assessed charge level, would be extended to a 12 month period to allow for annual reviews (which would take account of seasonal concerns as mentioned in the consultation document).

Focus Ireland is also concerned that there is no guarantee of the level of water charges after the review period (2016), and there is a widespread fear that water charges will increase significantly. Safeguards need to be in place and further consultation is needed over the course of the next two years around affordability. Finally, where there are rebates due to customers, customers should have an option of choosing whether to take the rebate in one lump sum or whether to spread it out across the annual charge.

Income supports for low income households.

Focus Ireland notes that there are proposals to supplement the cost of water charges for individuals who are in receipt of the household benefits package from the Department of Social Protection. However, those in receipt of this package only represent a portion of those who are in receipt of a low income and excludes many other low income groups who will struggle to meet these new charges. Focus Ireland believes that any such contributions should be paid in a more equitable manner whether that's through an increase in basic

¹ <http://www.thejournal.ie/fianna-fail/news/>, Sunday 10th August 2014.

² <http://www.publicpolicy.ie/domestic-water-charges-in-europe/>

welfare payments or, if this was not possible, through other allowances covering a broader category of people such as the fuel allowance. As stated above, Focus Ireland understands that the CER doesn't have responsibility or authority in relation to business dealt with by the Department of Social Protection however it is not in the interest of the Regulator or Irish Water to have large numbers of low income customers who are unable to afford their water bills. Affordability issues should be taken into consideration by the CER and CER should recommend that the current limited proposals should be revisited.

It is difficult from the data available to determine whether the reduction in the allowance for children within households from 38,000 litres to 21,000 litres is reasonable. Whilst the CER have committed to continue to monitor consumption data for children within the interim period they have not outlined a specific review procedure in the event that the allowance is underestimated in practice. This should be remedied. Furthermore, it is argued here that rather than using the classification of a child that a 'dependant' should be included as this would include those adult children (up until the age of 23) who are in further education and therefore still financially dependent on their household.

Force Majeure

We note that the CER has asked for feedback as to whether the proposed definition of a *force majeure* is appropriate. Irish Water have defined a *force majeure* as:

'Any individual or series of acts, events, omissions or non-events beyond a Party's reasonable control or which could not have been prevented or the consequences of which could not have been prevented and which has the effect of preventing a Party from complying with its obligations under Irish Water's standard Terms and Conditions, including (without limitation) an emergency, acts of God, riots, war, acts of terrorism, strikes, fire, flood, storm, data virus, utility failure, drought, sonic boom, radiation contamination or earthquake.'

While Focus Ireland doesn't have any major difficulties with the definition itself, it does however, strongly disagree with the proposal that discounts to customers will not be applied in such scenarios. The purpose of the current proposal appears to be to define the circumstances under which Irish Water can continue to charge for a service it is not providing. As a definition of circumstances under which Irish Water is not penalised for failure to provide a supply, it appears reasonable. However it should be a matter of principle that individuals and families should not have to pay for a water supply when, through no fault of their own, they can't access it or where the supply is compromised/unfit for consumption.

Charges for Additional Services and Billing

Focus Ireland understands that the CER is seeking further information regarding charges for additional services (such as site visits/investigations/pressure testing/meter testing etc) for

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domestic customers. While this research is underway no such charges should not be implemented and it is submitted here that such charges should only be considered after the initial transitional two year period has terminated. Even at that point, it is our position that any such charges for services should not be levied in circumstances where a leak is present or where any identified problems are caused by pre existing difficulties or other situations that are outside the control of the customer. If charges are levied for site visits for leaks, the costs may well prohibit people engaging services and the objectives around conservation etc will not be met. Charges for additional services should only be levied in situations where disruptions or problems with the water supply has been affected by acts of the customer. Also, the costs for any such services should be affordable. The proposed rates set out by Irish Water are, particularly in the context of households dependent on social welfare, extremely expensive. The proposed costs for a standard site visit/investigation for one hour (within working hours) equals the entire average weekly income for those in receipt of social welfare (€188). This is simply not affordable for those households on low incomes.

Focus Ireland understands that the billing arrangements proposed are to issue quarterly bills whereby payments can be made on a monthly basis. It is suggested here that the facility to allow customers to pay on a weekly basis should also be offered. Particular regard should be given to allowing water charges to be considered under the Household Budget Scheme. Furthermore, protocols should be entered into between community welfare staff, employed through the Department of Social Protection, and Irish Water to facilitate exceptional needs payments in relation to water charges being made where the need presents.

It is important to note that the most effective mechanism for low income households to manage their utility bills have been found to be 'pay as you go' meters. It is extremely disappointing that the design specification for water meters has not included the possibility of such arrangements. We believe that this is a result of the failure to consult at an early stage with organisations that are working to combat poverty and deprivation. It also suggests a worrying disregard for the realities of life for low income households. We believe that the possibility for revisiting the design specification for future meters to allow this option should be explored urgently.

In relation to properties that are not currently occupied, Focus Ireland supports the introduction of a minimum charge. This charge may encourage property owners to bring unoccupied property back into the market. Many parts of Ireland have significant housing supply problems at the moment and any stimulus aimed at increasing supply is favoured.

Finally, Focus Ireland agrees that a cap on bills for water charges should be implemented for those who have medical conditions that require increased water consumption. Focus Ireland believes that full consultation should occur with the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive in establishing the range of medical conditions that such arrangements will be put in place for.

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Focus Ireland is calling for a similar temporary provision to be introduced for those people who are moving on from homelessness and who are receiving training and guidance in managing one's tenancy. It is suggested that a capped charge would apply for the first 12 months of such a tenancy to allow the tenant develop skills in managing one's water consumption in addition to their other obligations as a tenant. This charge could be administered through the existing Local Authority Tenancy Sustainment and SLI programmes.

Focus Ireland is also suggesting that additional provisions could be made available to any customers that would fall into the category of being 'vulnerable' under the CER Irish Water Customer Handbook. In other words those people who may require additional support in communicating with or receiving services from Irish Water due to reasons related to their:

- Advanced age;
- Physical ability issues;
- Sensory ability issues;
- Intellectual ability issues;
- Mental health status.

Those people who are more vulnerable should be able to access support and assistance in managing their financial obligations through provisions made by Irish Water or through other services such as MABS and/or tenancy sustainment services.

As outlined above it is clear that Focus Ireland are especially concerned about the impact of the introduction of water charges on those people who are moving on from homelessness and those people who are at risk of homelessness. Without the benefit of a social impact assessment of the charges it is not possible to fully ascertain the risks and put safeguards into place to prevent these charges having severely detrimental effects on households.

Dispute resolution.

The opportunity for redress and complaints management for water charges and associated issues within the Local Authority lay with the Ombudsman's office prior to the establishment of Irish Water. This was an effective, transparent and independent complaints procedure. It is not clear that the CER are the most appropriate agency to regulate consumer complaints and balance consumer interest issues against Irish Water's financial commitments. Further, the CER don't have a defined legal role to investigate or resolve disputes. The CER have reserved the right to amend the Code of Practice without further consultation should their delegated duties be extended by legislation to include full dispute resolution and investigation. Focus Ireland believes that a full consultation process should be engaged in if any such changes were to be introduced. An effective dispute resolution process is essential to a system that is just and equitable.

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Given the complexity of the documents and consultation process associated with the introduction of water charges many people have not been given the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions in a meaningful way. We are also aware that the CER has a range of responsibilities which it must fulfil, including ensuring that Irish Water remain viable financially. For these reasons we believe there is an overwhelming case for a stakeholders/consumer group to be established to provide a voice for customers, including representatives of low income customers, during the full review period (until January 2017) so that their experiences of the process can inform future determinations.

3. Non Domestic Customers

Focus Ireland appreciates that the CER cannot consider water charges for non-domestic customers given that Irish Water is not in a position to provide proposals to it in relation to tariff arrangements due to the lack of data currently available. This position should change once a data migration project is completed which is anticipated for in or around January 2015. In the absence of proposals, Focus Ireland is satisfied that current levies will continue to be charged until further data is received and examined. Focus Ireland welcomes the opportunity to consult in relation to such proposals in due course.

Interim arrangements for dispute resolution should be put in place as the CER are not in a position to make determinations regarding the actual tariff levels. Given that the same charges are to apply (as have been charged by the Local Authorities) there should be an interim dispute resolution procedure around this structure or, at the very least, a rebate structure available retrospectively.

As part of the public information campaign around domestic water charges, Focus Ireland believes that there should be guidance provided to housing associations and other voluntary housing providers about how best to support their tenants in validating their occupancy details to ensure that they are receiving their full allowance under the proposed plans.

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Summary of Questions and Relevant Answers:

	Question	Answer
1	Do you agree with the CER's proposed treatment of Irish Water's establishment and pre Q4 2014 incremental operation costs? If not, please specify areas that you feel should be treated differently and how?	As the analysis of incremental operating costs are outside our area of expertise we have no comment other than to repeat the above in relation to a more efficient spend of resources.
2	Are there any other methods to evaluate Irish Water's proposed capital expenditure that you feel would be more appropriate and why?	Similarly to the above, as this is outside our area of expertise we have no comment as to whether the evaluation methods were the most appropriate.
3	Do you agree with the CER's proposals for Irish Water's capital expenditure? If not, please identify specific areas that should be treated differently and outline your reasoning.	Focus Ireland notes that the CER proposal, to allow ex ante funding for 75% of Irish Water's proposed capital investment plan, will likely result in decreases in customers' bills during the interim period. We are concerned that customer's bills will increase after this time and suggest a social impact assessment to take place. See above for further discussion.
4	Do you agree with Irish Water's approach to prioritisation? If not, please set out your views on an alternative approach to this matter?	While the prioritisation criteria appear reasonable (ie complying with existing contractual obligations etc) this is outside our area of expertise and as such we cannot comment definitively.
5	Do you agree with the need for an output monitoring group which will provide a forum for considering investment priorities, monitoring Irish Water's performance, and holding Irish Water to account in relation to capital expenditure?	Focus Ireland agrees that a monitoring group would assist in the streamlining of the service however a cost benefit analysis should be completed in relation to this.
6	Do you agree with the need for further consultation on the approach to monitoring the delivery of capital projects?	Given the limited consultation that has taken place in relation to the implementation of this system further consultation is necessary at all levels and should include customer representatives. See above for further discussion.
7	Are there any other methods to evaluate Irish Water's proposed opex that you feel would be more appropriate and why?	Similarly to the above, as this is outside our area of expertise we have no comment as to whether the evaluation methods were the most appropriate.
8	Do you agree with the CER's proposals for Irish Water's opex? If not, please identify specific areas that should be treated differently and outline your reasoning.	Please see response to question 7.
9	Do you agree with the level and cost categories to which CER proposed to cut Irish Water's establishment costs? If	As the analysis of Irish Water's establishment costs are outside our area of expertise we have no comment other than to repeat the above in relation

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	not, please specify what level of cuts you consider appropriate and why.	to a more efficient spend of resources.
10	Do you agree with the CER's proposals regarding the treatment of depreciation and asset categories/lives? If not, please specify any alternatives that you would consider more appropriate and why.	Please see response to question 9.
11	Do you agree with the CER's approach to setting Irish Water's allowed rate of return? Please state your reasons.	While Focus Ireland acknowledges that the methodology employed to calculate the rate of return is to some extent based on information from other utilities it is submitted here that this should be reevaluated as soon as sufficient data is collected. Water, as a utility is different to other utilities. See above for more discussion.
12	Do you agree with our proposed cost of debt uncertainty mechanism? Please state your reasons.	As per our response to question 11 we believe that the mechanisms used should be reevaluated as soon as sufficient data is available. See above for more discussion around data collection.
13	Do you agree with our proposed approach to incentivising improvements in quality and customer service? Are there any other aspects of Irish Water's customer service that you would expect to see covered in the proposed reporting and incentive mechanism?	<p>The approach to incentivizing improvements in quality and customer service is welcomed however the level of proposed chartered payments for breach of a commitment is quite low.</p> <p>In relation to determining a timeframe for the collection of data on overall performance assessment, feedback should be sought from consumer/stakeholder groups around this assessment prior to any determinations being made. Please see both here and here above in relation to same.</p>
14	Do you have any comments on our approach to setting the total revenue allowance, and determining the average charge to households?	<p>Focus Ireland has serious concerns that the average annual household charge will simply be excessive for many individuals and families in receipt of low incomes and that it may well force people into further poverty and may be a trigger of homelessness. See above for further discussion.</p> <p>The lack of consultation with those working within the anti poverty sector means that not all voices were heard in determining how best to proceed with a charging mechanism for a utility that is essential for human survival. See above also.</p>
15	Do you have any comments on the CER's proposals to monitor Irish Water?	Focus Ireland agrees that CER's monitoring of Irish Water would assist in the streamlining of the service through the benchmarking of KPIs and other assessment indicators. However, given that the CER has a duty to monitor compliance with economic matters it is not clear that CER would also be able to advocate for consumer interest if any conflict arose. Focus Ireland have raised concerns in relation to the lack of an independent dispute

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		resolution process above .
16	Do you agree with the proposal to set the single occupancy consumption and incremental consumption levels at 66,000 and 21,000 litres per annum respectively? If not, do you think there is a more appropriate way to set the annual incremental consumption?	Focus Ireland understands that the data used to calculate the consumption levels is limited and as such while it doesn't have any specific proposals in relation to the levels as they are set at the moment, we do believe that the interim review period should be viewed as a transition period and where data is proven to be inaccurate that immediate changes should be put into place. See above for more information.
17	Do you agree with the proposal to change the child allowance from 38,000 litres to 21,000 litres a year?	Similarly to the answer to question 16, further data needs to be produced. Also a stated response mechanism must be outlined in the event that the children's water allowance volumetric rate is underestimated.
18	Do you agree with the CER's proposals for the application of water allowances?	The CER's proposals in relation to the amount of allowances available are based around what was outlined in the Policy Direction . However the CER's proposals regarding the carrying over of unused allowances and eligibility for children's water allowances being allocated in line with the rules determined for child benefit are acceptable. However, safeguards should be put in place so that consumers are notified where they have unused allowances in the last quarter of the year.
19	Do you agree with CER's proposal that Irish Water provide water and wastewater services to customers where domestic tariffs are calculated on a national basis, with separate tariffs for water and waste calculated on a 50/50 cost basis? If not, please state why.	It is difficult to determine whether the domestic tariffs being calculated are satisfactory given the recent Government decision not to levy standing charges and the short time frame and complexity of the documents that require examination prior to the closing date for the submissions. The adequacy of the current proposed structure should be analysed during the transitional period and feedback should be sought from all sectors in relation to same.
20	Do you agree that flexibility to pay on a monthly basis should be provided for domestic customers?	Focus Ireland believes the failure to plan for 'pay as you go' metering is a major oversight. We agree that greater flexibility should be given to customers in relation to payment options. Please see above for further information.
21	Do you agree with CER's proposed unit rates for water and wastewater services? If not, please state why.	Focus Ireland is concerned that the proposed unit rates appear quite high compared to other European rates and there has been a failure to explain the disparity. Furthermore, the rates set do not take into account affordability for those individuals and families on low incomes. Focus Ireland is calling for a social impact assessment to be carried out and further analysis of the water charges once further data becomes available as outlined in more detail above .
22	Do you agree with CER's proposal for setting water and wastewater charges for unmetered customers?	Unmetered water and wastewater charges should, as CER proposes, be based on occupancy rather than other criteria. It is difficult not to agree to the

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		CER proposal around setting charges based on the average usage per occupant. However, the usage versus affordability on a wide scale should be reopened for consultation as data arises and feedback should be sought on a national level from consumers and other stakeholders around the suitability of the current arrangements.
23	Do you agree with the proposal to apply a default tariff to customers that do not validate before the end of the campaign?	No. Whilst in principle the notion of providing allowances to those who register is acceptable Focus Ireland believes that many people may have difficulty validating their allowances due to misperception and/or inability to do so. It is not reasonable to punish people for these difficulties. Provision should be made to accept applications for validation during the first 6-12 transition period. If a justifiable reason can be established for a failure to validate then allowances should be backdated. There is reason to expect that there will be organized attempts to resist the levying of water charges. It is critical that efforts by Irish Water to respond to such cases of 'refusal to pay' should not negatively impact on those who are unable to register or pay for genuine reasons.
24	Do you agree that, where a customer is late to validate, allowances should only be applied from the data that the customer validates and that the allowance prior to that date would not be available to the customer?	No. This policy would penalize customers who have difficulty in understanding or completing the registration material. Particularly given the inadequate time frame provided for the information campaign and registration, such a policy would be unreasonable. See response to question 23.
25	Do you agree that the cap on customers' bills should be extended where a leak is identified?	Focus Ireland agrees that the cap on customers' bills should be extended until the time the leak is fixed and that no additional charges should apply in relation to such issues. See above for further discussion.
26	Do you think there should be a minimum unmetered period for customers to qualify for a rebate?	Focus Ireland agrees with the CER submission that customers should not have to wait for up to 12 months for a rebate to be available. The CER suggested that a full rebate after a three month period was being considered. This would seem reasonable and fair to customers.
27	Do you agree with either of the CER's proposals to operate the rebate? If so, please indicate a preference and if not, please provide detail of how you think rebates should be applied.	Rebates should be applied in line with the customers' preferences as outlined above .
28	Do you agree that there should be no minimum amount due to qualify for a rebate?	Focus Ireland agrees with this proposal, as individuals should be able to see the financial benefit (however small) for water conservation.
29	Do you agree with the proposal to apply a minimum charge for premises which are not permanently occupied? If not,	Having regard to the reasoning proffered by the CER for the level of minimum charges it would seem reasonable that such charges are levied. It may also

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	what do you think would be a more suitable charge for metered and assessed customers and why?	have the effect of bringing more properties onto the market for occupation. See above for further discussion.
30	Do you agree with the CER's proposed definition of long term, i.e. 3 months?	Focus Ireland favours CER's definition of long term over the definition put forward by Irish Water. It seems reasonable that discounts would be applied within one billing period.
31	Do you agree with the CER's proposed discounts for water that is unfit for human consumption?	Focus Ireland does agree with a full discount being applied in circumstances where water is declared unfit for human consumption for a period in excess of 3 months and in relation to a proportionate discount being applied for periods that are shorter than this.
32	Do you think that Irish Water's proposed definition for Force Majeure is appropriate?	Please see above for a full discussion in relation to this. We do not agree that water charges should be imposed in situations where a customer can't access their water supply or that discounts shouldn't apply where the quality of the water is compromised due to a <i>force majeure</i> .
33	Do you agree with the CER's proposals and are there any other payment options you feel Irish Water should offer?	As outlined above , weekly payments should be facilitated. In addition to this however consideration should be given to installing a 'pay as you go' feature whereby a person can track their usage versus their average spend and can allocate off small amounts of payments when they are able to. Consideration should be given to having a freephone telephone number to facilitate payments being made.
34	Do you agree with Irish Water's proposals regarding non-domestic water and wastewater charges? If not, please set out reasons for your position and propose alternatives where possible.	In the absence of verifiable data to support the determination of charges for non-domestic water and wastewater it would seem to be reasonable to retain the existing charging structure.
35	Do you agree with the CER's views regarding Irish Water's proposals? If not, please set out the reasons for your position and propose alternatives where possible.	Focus Ireland understands that the CER cannot make specific proposals in the absence of information provided by Irish Water to them. However, we are concerned that there is no specific dispute resolution procedure available in the interim and believe that retrospective rebates should be available. See here for further discussion.
36	Please advise of your views in relation to the matters set out above regarding group water schemes.	We believe that the proposals around group water schemes are reasonable in the circumstances.
37	Do you agree with Irish Water's proposal in relation to the treatment of mixed use customers? Please note Irish Water's proposals and the CER's views on the same in relation to domestic customers as set out in section 4.3 of this paper apply to the domestic use of mixed use customers as appropriate. Those relating to non-domestic customers as	Having regard to the responses above in relation to both domestic and non domestic customers the proposals in relation to mixed use customers appear to be acceptable but should be subject to review as soon as further information is available in relation to non domestic water charges and around domestic water usage data.

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	set out in section 4.6.1 of this paper apply to the non-domestic use of mixed use customers as appropriate.	
38	Do you agree with Irish Water's proposal regarding discounts for non-domestic customers for water that is determined as unfit for human consumption? If not, please set out the particular aspects of the proposal which you do not agree with and the reasons for your views. Please propose an alternative approach if you are in a position to do so.	Focus Ireland agrees that discounts should be given to non-domestic customers for water that is determined as unfit for human consumption.
39	Do you agree with either of the proposed definitions of long term, i.e. three months or six months?	There should be an element of equity between domestic and non domestic water charges and as such the definition of long term (being 3 months) for domestic water should also be applied for non-domestic purposes.
40	In your opinion, how should Irish Water determine an appropriate discount for non-domestic customers receiving water that is unfit for human consumption? The CER welcomes evidence regarding water use by differing industries from respondents.	This level of detail is outside our area of expertise however from an in-house point of view much of our non-domestic water supply would be used in the preparation of meals and for service to our customers so if the water was unfit for human consumption the additional expenses that would be incurred in purchasing supply that was fit for consumption could be significant.
41	Do you agree with Irish Water's proposals as outlined regarding domestic and non-domestic connection charges? If not, please outline the reasons for your views and propose an alternative approach if you are in a position to do so.	As the CER were not provided with comprehensive information in relation to this matter it is difficult therefore to make a submission on the proposals by Irish Water. The lack of information around current charging structures hinders it even further.
42	Do you agree with Irish Water's proposals as outlined regarding charges for additional services to domestic and non-domestic customers? If not, please outline the reasons for your views and propose an alternative approach if you are in a position to do so.	No. Focus Ireland believes the proposed charges for additional services to domestic customers are extremely high and would result in destitution for households dependent on social welfare. Please see above for further detailed discussion. Further consultation is required and no such charges should be implemented until the social impact assessment has been completed.

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