

## Our performance

### How we are performing

#### These are our performance commitments

In our Business Plan for 2020 to 2025 we have made a number of promises to our customers focused around five pledges which they told us were most important to them. Each year we report on our progress and these tables summarise our performance against each target.

#### Rating and descriptions

● On target ● Off target

2020 performance = calendar year  
2020/21 performance = financial year

\* The Abstraction Incentive Mechanism (AIM) means that we will reduce abstraction of water from environmentally sensitive sites when flows or levels are low but this has not been necessary this year.

<sup>1</sup> The Compliance Risk Index for SES Water will be published in the Drinking Water Inspectorate's Chief Inspector's Report - Drinking Water 2020 - which is due to be published in July 2021.



#### PLEDGE 1

We will provide you with high-quality water all day, every day

● **Water quality - DWI Compliance Risk Index (CRI)**  
score

2020 performance	target/ target limit
>2 <sup>1</sup>	0.00

● **Supply interruptions**  
hours/minutes/seconds/property/  
year

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
00:06:56	00:06:30

● **Mains repairs**  
number/1,000 kilometres

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
64.7	66.5

● **Taste, odour and discolouration contacts**  
number per 1000 customers

2020 performance	target/ target limit
0.56	0.51

● **Water softening**  
number of periods exceeding  
calcium target

2020 performance	target/ target limit
6.3	0.0



#### PLEDGE 2

We will provide your service at a fair price and offer help when you need it

● **Supporting customers in financial hardship**  
number

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
20,274	12,960

● **Void properties**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
4.42	2.80

● **Customers on our Priority Services Scheme**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
4.5	3.5

● **Vulnerable support scheme awareness**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
36.5	56.7

● **Vulnerable support scheme helpfulness**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
95.0	80.0

● **Proportion of customers who believe their bill is not good value**  
% dissatisfied

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
7	9



**PLEDGE 3**

**We will provide you with a service that is fit now and for the future**

● **Leakage reduction**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
1.2	1.2

● **Unplanned outages at treatment works**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
0.95	2.34

● **Risk of supply failures**  
% of properties connected to more than one treatment works

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
56	65

● **Risk of severe restrictions in a drought**  
% customers

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
0.0	0.0



**PLEDGE 4**

**We will provide excellent service, whenever and however you need it**

● **C-MeX (industry measure of customer satisfaction)**  
score

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
78.97	Upper quartile

● **D-MeX (industry measure of developer satisfaction)**  
score

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
60.20	Upper quartile

● **First contact resolution**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
83.9	80.0



**PLEDGE 5**

**We will support a thriving environment we can all rely upon**

● **Consumption reduction**  
%

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
(3.7)	1.0

● **Greenhouse gas emissions**  
kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/megalitre

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
40	55

● **River-based improvement - delivery of Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP)** number of schemes

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
0	0

● **Pollution incidents**  
number of category one and two incidents

2020 performance	target/ target limit
0	0

● **Abstraction incentive mechanism\***  
average megalitres reduction

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
Not triggered	-7

● **Land-based improvement - biodiversity**  
number of sites awarded benchmark

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
1	1

● **Deliver WINEP requirements**  
delivered

2020/21 performance	target/ target limit
Met	Met



## OUR PLEDGE:

# We'll provide you with high-quality water all day, every day

## Our pledge in action

Nothing is more important to us than striving to keep our customers supplied with safe, clean water, especially during a global pandemic.

Keeping our customers informed while we undertake essential mains replacement work to support the development in Redhill.



## Highlights

- We met our bursts target again this year which reflects the general good health of our network and the work that goes into maintaining it
- We continue to have upper quartile industry performance for minimising the number of customers contacting us about the taste, smell or appearance of their water
- Despite reduced activity during lockdowns, we have still replaced over eight kilometres of aging water mains in the past year
- We have made significant investment in upgrading the water softening capability at our Elmer Treatment Works
- We have invested in an important mains replacement programme in Redhill, laying more than 1.5 kilometres of new main to support the significant building development in the town
- We successfully prosecuted a company for illegally taking water from our pipe network and we gave the fine and legal costs back to the local community who were impacted with cloudy water as a result





Network Maintenance Operative Matt Earle working hard to repair our network in difficult conditions.

# 401

401 customers contacted us in 2020 about the appearance, taste or smell of their water – that's just 0.1% of the properties we supply



I've lived in eight boroughs across the capital over the past 20 years and without doubt my supply from SES Water is the best in London.

**A customer, posting on our online community**



## OUR PLEDGE:

# We'll provide your service at a fair price and offer help when you need it

## Our pledge in action

This year we have been able to support our customers to pay their bill and extended our financial support options when they have needed it the most.

Providing the help and support for our customers whenever they need it.



## Highlights

- Our average household bill for 2020/21 equated to around 50 pence a day and over the next four years we are lowering our bills
- We launched our 'Here For You' campaign to raise awareness of our collection of financial support schemes and priority services
- In response to COVID-19 we launched 'Breathing Space', a payment pause scheme for customers facing life changes that have affected their income and who need time to adjust
- More than 12,000 of our customers are registered on our Priority Services Register, which provides extra support to customers who have health, access or communication needs
- Over 90% of our customers think the extra services we offer are helpful





Customer Liaison Officer Janet Riley working from home to support our customers - with a little help from her dog, Ted!

# 50%

Over 20,000 customers are benefitting from our Water Support Scheme, which provides a 50% bill discount to those that need it most



The customer service agent I spoke to this morning was very kind and very understanding of my circumstances.

**Mrs Padgham from Caterham**



## OUR PLEDGE:

# We'll provide you with a service that is fit now and for the future

## Our pledge in action

We target our investment in our infrastructure every year where it is needed most and are using innovative technology to provide a better service to our customers.

Civil Engineer Chris Karunanithi has supported the work at Elmer Treatment Works to ensure the site is able to meet the supply needs of a growing population for many years to come.



## Highlights

- We completed the upgrade of our Elmer Treatment Works - investment that will improve the site's efficiency and maintain the quality of water for our customers now and for many years to come
- We have stayed at or below the maximum allowed level of leakage every year since the target was first set over 20 years ago and have invested in innovative technology to become the first water company with a totally 'smart' network to detect and fix leaks quicker
- No restrictions on water use were necessary in the past year
- We have published a consultation on our Drought Plan, linked to our Water Resources Management Plan, which sets out how we will still supply water to our customers in the driest conditions





Civil Engineer Gary Taylor overseeing the significant investment made in upgrading our Elmer Treatment Works.

# 56%

Over half our customers can be supplied by more than one treatment works if needed which means we're providing a more resilient service to them. We plan to ensure all our customers can be supplied by more than one treatment works by 2025



Your customer service has been very helpful and you sent someone out to solve my issues quickly. Brilliant service, thank you very much.

**Mr Bishop from Reigate**





## OUR PLEDGE:

# We'll provide excellent service, whenever and however you need it

## Our pledge in action

We want the most satisfied customers in the country and to get there we are fundamentally changing a lot of what we do and significantly investing in our people and the systems they use.

Network Inspector Charlie Kennett taking emergency precautions while attending a customer's home during the pandemic.



## Highlights

- We're on course to launch a new billing system this year, which will greatly improve the service we can offer by processing customer contacts and enquiries faster than we have before
- Despite the majority of our call handlers working from home over the past year, we have still been able to resolve over 80% of customer issues at the first contact
- We have continued to recruit and build a team of customer experience specialists, including our new Chief Customer Officer, Kate Thornton
- In the past year we have made steady progress up the C-MeX industry league table and are the most improved company for customer satisfaction
- We have continued to evolve our 'Voice of the customer' programme to give us much better insight into what our customers think, which helps us make more informed decisions
- We have strengthened our fleet of repair and maintenance vehicles with four new vans that will help us permanently repair roads much more quickly following our work



Network Fitter Jason Lester gearing up for a busy shift in one of our new repair and maintenance vehicles.

# 284,262

We handled many more enquiries from our customers this year as we supported them through the pandemic



I rang this morning to discuss closing my account, your colleague was incredibly helpful and polite, it was a really quick service which put my mind at ease.

Mr Fletcher from Carshalton





## OUR PLEDGE:

# We'll support a thriving environment we can all rely upon

## Our pledge in action

We are committed to reducing the impact of our operations by achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and continuing to implement more sustainable ways of pumping, treating and distributing millions of litres of water every single day.

Energy and Carbon Manager Henrietta Stock has made sure we are the first water company in the UK to have electric vehicle charging points at all our sites.



## Highlights

- We became the only water company to currently hold The Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark for making our Elmer Treatment Works more attractive to plants and animals, with two more sites expected to follow by 2025
- We opened 'Flow Zone', our brand new, state-of-the-art education centre at Bough Beech Reservoir which will help us continue delivering our very successful education programme that started more than 20 years ago
- We have expanded our fleet of electric vehicles and our new company car scheme policy means all qualifying employees are provided with either electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids
- We were the first water company to offer virtual home water efficiency checks to help our customers save water, with our partners Save Water Save Money
- We formed our new independent Environmental Scrutiny Panel this year



Teaching good habits from an early age – we give reusable water bottles to children to cut down on single-use plastic.

# 266,045

We only use electricity from renewable sources and this year we have generated 266,045 kWh of our own solar energy at our sites



Just wanted to say a huge thank you for a great school trip recently. This morning I taught my first geography lesson since the Bough Beech visit and the children's recall of knowledge about the water cycle was amazing, which shows the way you teach it really sinks in.

**A teacher from a local school**



## Our performance

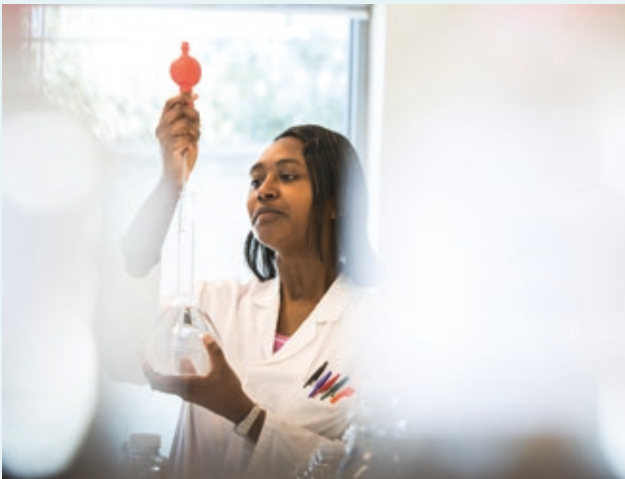
Delivering our customer and environmental commitments in the first year of our ambitious Business Plan for 2020 to 2025.

Water plays a role in all our lives and our customers rightly expect their supply to be clean and plentiful – even in the most testing of circumstances – and responding to a global pandemic has certainly tested us this year. This can be seen in our performance against some of our challenging targets, but at the same time we have remained focused on delivering what matters most to our customers.

That is the aim of our Business Plan, having conducted the most extensive customer engagement programme we have ever undertaken.

We listened to what they said and this led to us making five pledges that will not only improve the service we deliver but also enhance the environment and ensure we are playing our part in making it better.

## Our pledges



**All drinking water in the UK has to comply with stringent standards and we take samples at every point from source to tap.**



### High-quality water all day, every day

We pride ourselves on producing some of the highest-quality water in the country and for all water companies this is measured against the Drinking Water Inspectorate's (DWI) Compliance Risk Index (CRI). Our sampling programme normally includes going into customer properties to test taps but this was not possible during the lockdown restrictions, so instead we took samples from the homes of our employees living in our supply area, as well as our head office in Redhill. The CRI for the Company will be published in the Chief Inspector's Report in July 2021. During 2020 there were seven sample failures, which included one exceedance of the standard for benzo(a)pyrene at a commercial property. Investigations into each failure confirmed there was no concern regarding the quality of the wider

network and remedial action resolved the local concern.

We have a challenging target to minimise the number of customers that need to contact us about the taste, smell or appearance of their water. In 2020 we received 401 contacts which is above our target limit of 366 so we will receive a financial penalty from Ofwat. Whilst any penalty from our regulator is disappointing, this continues to be industry leading performance of which we are proud as it demonstrates the teamwork involved to deliver a product that our customers are so satisfied with.

Illegal usage of hydrants can compromise water quality for paying customers and this year we have continued to pursue companies who do this – we believe it accounts for 20% of contacts from our customers.

In October, we successfully prosecuted a company for taking water from a fire hydrant using an unauthorised standpipe and we gave the fine it incurred and legal costs back to the local community who were impacted with cloudy water as a result.

Some planned interruptions to supply are unavoidable as we work to improve the long-term resilience of our pipe network but our performance this year largely reflects one significant burst last summer where our customers were without water for longer than three hours. Historically we perform very strongly in this area, amongst the best in the industry, so it's disappointing to miss the target this year. Our teams worked very hard to minimise the impact and we received positive feedback from customers about our response. While we aim to not have any burst mains, they do occur; however, the low number reflects the general good health of our network and the work that goes into maintaining it.

Around 85% of the water we supply comes from underground and we are unique in the industry in having a legal obligation to soften the groundwater we treat and a performance commitment on the amount of hardness in the water we distribute. To do this we make significant capital investment, which this year includes an upgrade to the softening capability at our Elmer Treatment Works. We will always reduce or stop softening if it poses a risk to the quality of the water to ensure we meet the strict requirements of the Water Industry Act. Operational outages as well as site upgrades affect our softening capability and this is reflected in our performance against this target.



### Fair prices and help when you need it

Most customers do not normally struggle to pay their bill but understandably this year we have seen a rise in the number of people with money worries due to their personal circumstances changing. Back in March 2020 we worked very quickly to introduce a payment holiday within five days of the first lockdown starting, and we provided more financial assistance per 10,000 customers than any other water company. This has now progressed into a new, permanent support option called 'Breathing Space', where customers can pause their bill payments while they get back on their feet.

We had a target this year for 12,000 customers to be benefitting from our Water Support Scheme, which provides a 50% bill reduction to eligible people. At the end of March 20,274 people were on this tariff, which means we are already surpassing the target we set ourselves for year three of this five-year Business Plan period. We will continue to welcome more customers onto the scheme who need it and also continue to raise awareness of the support on offer as we are currently not meeting the target for this commitment.

With just 7% of customers questioned feeling their water bill is not good value for money, this is within the target limit of 9%. Our average household bill for 2020/21 equated to around 50 pence a day, with money from bills playing a crucial part in funding our ongoing investment programme.

Our Priority Services Register provides extra support to customers who have health, access or communication needs and helps us tailor the help we can offer. 4.5% of our customers are on this register, higher than the target of 3.5%, and over 90% of people think the extra services offered are helpful, which is great news.

We have a target to reduce the number of 'void' properties in our supply area, which means they are connected to our network but not charged for any water. Although the number of properties is reducing, we have more to do to meet our target and this year we have incurred a financial penalty as a result.



### A service that is fit now and for the future

Since 2010 we have been progressing with a resilience programme to enable the transfer of water from Bough Beech Treatment Works in Kent to the north of our area, which was previously completely reliant on groundwater supplies. This means that by 2025 every property can be supplied by more than one treatment works if needed, such as during periods of low rainfall or operational outages. Unfortunately last summer we were unable to progress with laying a strategic trunk main in Purley, which was a key part of the programme, but this work is now being re-planned and we are confident that we will be able to join up our network over the next three years and be the first water company to achieve this.

There have been no restrictions on the use of water this year. Like other water companies, we depend on winter rainfall for the water we supply to our customers as underground aquifers – rocks which act like a giant sponge – only usually fill up between October and March when there is less plant growth and evaporation. During this recharge period we saw well above average rainfall which meant our underground resources filled up and we were in a good position to meet the demands of the spring.

Managing leakage is one of our customers' top priorities and a key focus for us too - we have one of the lowest levels in the industry. In fact, we have stayed at or below the maximum allowed level of leakage every year since the target was first set over 20

years ago, which is particularly pleasing given the increase in leaks due to the challenging winter weather conditions. This was only made possible through a concerted team effort to drive down the backlog of jobs and respond to the increase in leaks reported. We are committed to significantly and sustainably reducing leakage levels for the long term, aiming to more than halve the water lost from our network and our customers' pipes by 2050. That's why we are investing in innovative technology and real-time data solutions with key partners such as Vodafone and Royal HaskoningDHV, to be the first water company with a totally 'smart' network.



## Our performance

Continued



### Excellent service, whenever and however you need it

Regardless of the reason for our customers needing to contact us and the method they use, we aim to provide an excellent, tailored resolution every single time. For the first time this year, we have a target to reduce the number of times customers have to contact us about the same issue, with 80% of contacts being resolved first time. Over the last year many more customers have needed our help, with things like home moves due to the stamp duty holiday and financial support following furlough, and we have been able to resolve 84% of these at the first contact. This is particularly pleasing given that there was the added complication of the majority of our call handlers working from home during lockdowns to keep them safe, which inevitably made meeting this target more challenging.

C-MeX is the industry metric for measuring customer satisfaction and experience across all companies and is based on two surveys – one based on customers' experiences when they have had to contact us and the other which scores us based on their perception of the Company. While we did not meet our target of our score being in the top quartile of the industry, the year has seen sustained progress with quarter-on-quarter improvements, demonstrating that the investment we are making in the service we provide to our customers is working. We are also the most improved company in the league table for satisfaction; however, we acknowledge we must improve even further to reach a consistent upper quartile position, which is our goal. Our people are passionate about what they do and many are involved in programmes of work that we know will make a difference, such as

improved complaints handling, listening to and acting on customer feedback and reducing bill shock.

Investing in our digital contact capability is key to transforming our service to customers and this year we will launch a new billing system. This innovation is the biggest change we have made to this key area of our business in over 20 years but it's a very important one in enabling us to manage contact with our customers in a much more efficient and effective way.

The service we provide to developers is also measured through the D-MeX industry metric and we have not met our target in this area. We are taking action to respond more quickly to their applications, keep them updated on progress and better tailor our service to meet their individual needs, and we are confident in the progress we are already making in doing this.



Staying safe – taking extra precautions to make sure we could still help customers with water supply emergencies in their homes during lockdowns.



On the right road – as well as displaying an important message about saving water, our new grab lorry is packed with environmentally friendly features including conforming to the latest exhaust emission standards.



### Support a thriving environment we can all rely upon

We're committed to reducing the impact of our essential service on the environment, while making a positive contribution to its quality. This year we were the first water company to achieve The Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark for making our land at Elmer Treatment Works more attractive to a variety of plants and wildlife. Covering over ten hectares, the accreditation process identified six significant habitats all found to be supporting species such as butterflies, dormice, badgers, lizards and slow worms.

Pumping, treating and distributing millions of litres of water every single day is incredibly energy intensive so we are doing more to limit the emissions we create. In addition to only purchasing electricity that has been generated from renewable sources, in the past year we have added to our fleet of electric vehicles

and our new company car scheme policy means all qualifying employees are now provided with either electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids. Both of these initiatives are contributing towards our ambition of achieving net zero carbon by 2030 in the most affordable and resilient way. We are consulting with our customers on our routemap to get there and our Environmental Scrutiny Panel is providing an independent voice on our plans.

We operate in a region which is classified as being in serious 'water stress' due to the growing population and limited resources, which is why we have a target to reduce the amount of water per person we need to take from the environment. The hot summer as well as many more people being at home this year has seen household demand soar and we have therefore not met our target. Water meters are one of the most effective ways of bringing down

consumption, but our installation programme slowed down significantly during the three lockdowns when we were only carrying out emergency activity in people's homes. However, we remained committed to helping our customers use less water and we were the first water company to offer virtual home water efficiency checks with our partners Save Water Save Money. We have started a programme to install meters for all our customers without one by 2025 and also plan to provide as many of them with smart meters as possible over the next few years.

There have been no category one or two incidents of pollution this year, as measured by the Environment Agency. There have been some less significant incidents, primarily caused by burst mains, but we are the only water-only company to have put forward a target in this area, another notable indicator of the importance we place on protecting and enhancing the environment.



## Our performance

Continued

### Our people

Pivotal to everything we do is our skilled workforce, many of whom have faced challenges of their own this year. Whatever their role, they are dedicated to providing our customers with great service and have shown determination, commitment and flexibility during an unprecedented time.

The physical health and safety as well as the mental wellbeing of our employees will always be our top priority and never more so than over the last year. Representatives from the Health and Safety Executive visited us this year to see our COVID-19 safety measures for themselves and were very satisfied with what they found.

Despite endeavouring for no safety-related incidents to occur, disappointingly there have been six lost-time accidents this year with two of those resulting in the employees needing extended time off work, so

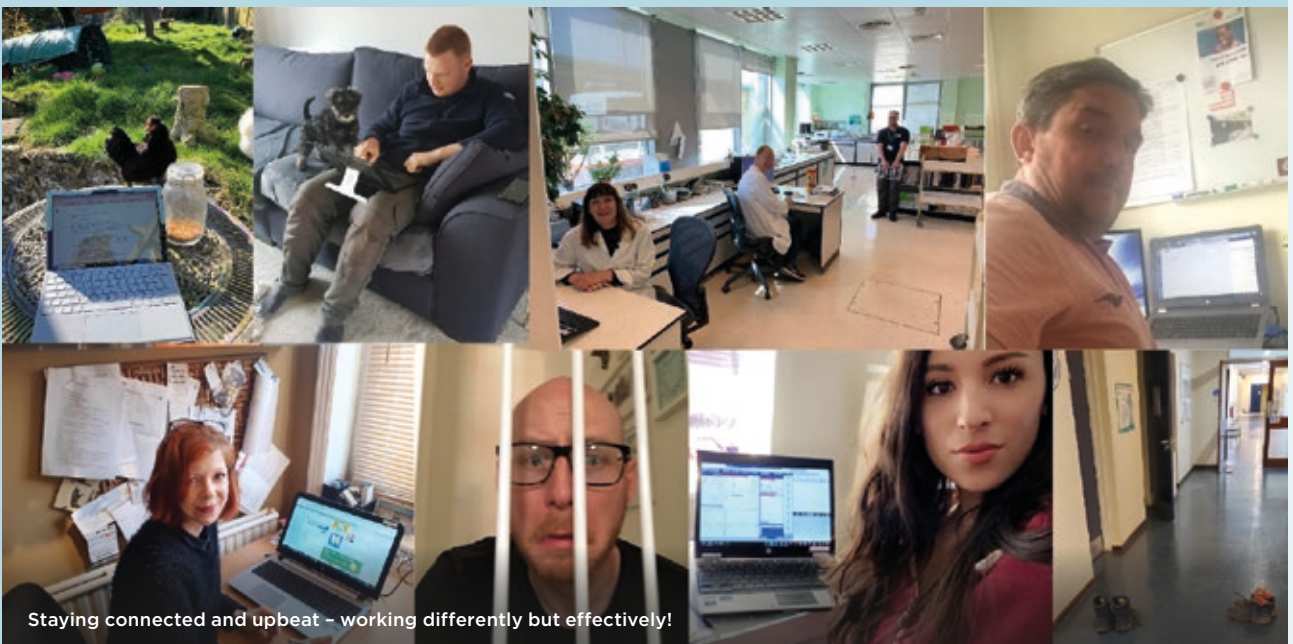


Check it, don't regret it – with their 'stop card', our employees have the authority from CEO Ian Cain to stop work if they think the safety of our people or the public is compromised.



**I've felt very supported at work while also managing some difficult personal situations too. Working at home has its benefits but I've also missed the spontaneity of seeing people in the office and those 'watercooler' moments!**

**Kevin Shilling, Procurement Manager**



Staying connected and upbeat – working differently but effectively!



were reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). As ever, all incidents are thoroughly investigated and remedial actions are taken so we learn all we can, in discussion with our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Our team of trained Mental Health First Aiders have gone above and beyond this year to support their colleagues – from being on the end of the phone to just chatting over a cup of coffee, they've been the first point of contact for people needing some extra support and guidance. We have also recognised the toll this difficult time has taken by offering free access to the Headspace app for all our people so they can benefit from some mindful meditation and get some perspective back.

As a respected and responsible local company, through our Investors in People accreditation, we will continue to help our employees be the best they can be and, as we return to more normality, we'll ensure we create a working environment where people thrive and do a great job.



After being furloughed in my previous job and in lockdown for most of it, the opportunity to have a virtual catch up with colleagues on a Friday afternoon has been priceless. Chatting about anything without

judgement. It's very strange joining a new company remotely but I feel I am meeting people, talking and looking at the positives in life even though I might have had a bit of a low week. The Steps Challenge in March got me off the settee. I donned my Tomtom watch and it made me walk my target which was five miles a day!

**Joanna Hinchliffe**  
Learning and  
Development Manager



Following the bereavement of both my parents, brother and sister in a two-year period, I believe these darker life experiences and my enjoyment of working with people has assisted me to support others as a Mental Health First Aider even if it is just for them to grab a coffee (or a beer!) and know they have support and someone who will listen.

**Ian Adams**  
Head of Network



I've always enjoyed talking to people and finding out their life story. If someone sharing their thoughts and feelings helps them feel heard and understood, then I am more than willing to listen to anyone during a difficult time. There is much to be said for small talk with a little banter thrown in – it's the most underrated conversation as it shows you genuinely care when you ask how someone is.

**Sharon Flores**  
Senior Learning and  
Development Advisor