

Consumer Panel Barometer – Wave 1 Report

11th April 2022





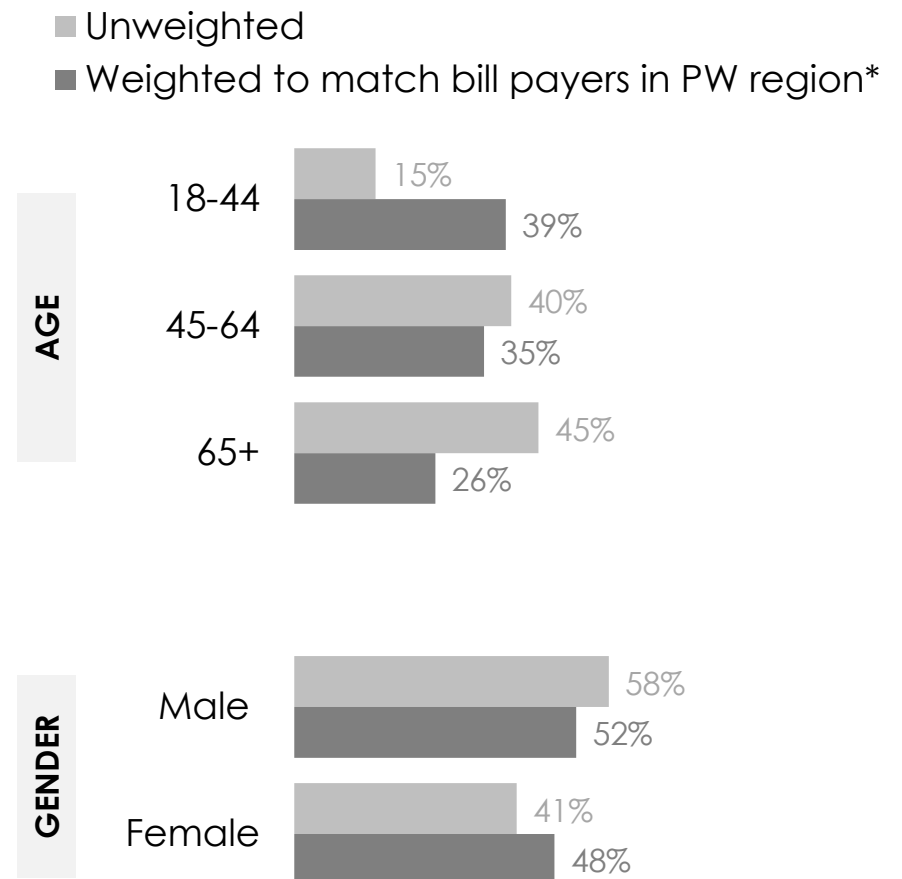
Method

- **Wave 1** of the consumer panel took place between **11th and 27th March 2022**
- A total of **700** Water Talk panellists took part
- All were Portsmouth Water **bill payers**
- Average time for completion was **12 minutes**

Topic coverage

- Awareness of what Portsmouth Water does
- Overall satisfaction with the company
- Consumer priorities of what Portsmouth Water should focus on in future
- Awareness of the water resource situation in the region
- Views on future water resourcing options

- The data contained in this report is from customers who have joined Water Talk, the Portsmouth Water Customer Panel
- The total number of interviews (700) is robust for quantitative analysis (i.e. using percentages and comparing sub-groups)
- The data in this report is **weighted** to match the known demographic profile of Portsmouth Water customers (age & gender)
 - This is to compensate for the over-representation of older and male customers on the panel
- It is important to note that the panel is self-selecting, rather than purposively sampled to be representative
 - This means panellists may be more engaged with the water sector & knowledgeable about Portsmouth Water than customers in general
 - Interpretation of the data must bear this in mind. It should be used in conjunction with other data sources to understand different viewpoints and the wider picture.



* Based on 2011 Census data for the 18+ population of the Portsmouth Water region and nationwide omnibus data on water bill payers

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The sample is made up of **household** customers who are **bill payers** and includes customers from a **full range of demographic groups** and those displaying **financial and non-financial indicators of vulnerability**. Sample sizes of key customer groups are detailed below:

		Unweighted total (actual number)	Weighted total
TOTAL (Household bill payers)	Total	700	700
Gender	Male	404	361
	Female	290	333
Age band	18-44	104	273
	45-64	279	245
	65+	317	182
Social grade	AB	347	319
	C1	136	145
	C2	79	95
	DE	71	71
	Not stated	67	70
Indicators of vulnerability?	Any vulnerability	198	200
	No vulnerability	502	500
Total water and sewerage charges affordable?	Agree	502	495
	Neutral / don't know	131	129
	Disagree	67	76
Household size (number of people)	1	189	159
	2	352	318
	3+	150	215

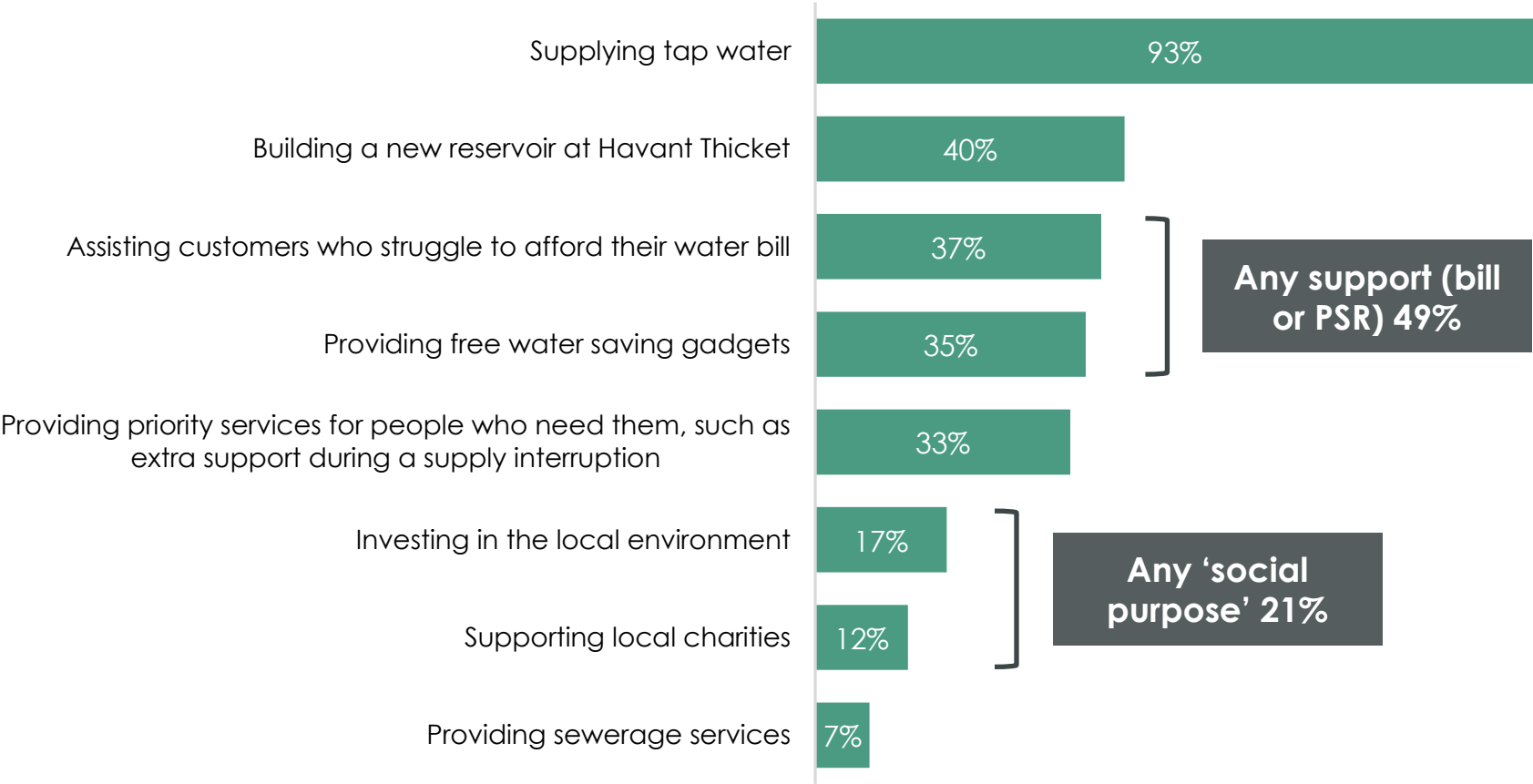
Impressions of Portsmouth Water



Accurate impressions of the basic function of Portsmouth Water: Nearly all think it supplies tap water and fewer than 1 in 10 misattribute sewerage services.

It's important for Portsmouth Water that customers understand the company's distinct role vs. Southern Water - anecdotal evidence that for some there's a stark reputational tension.

What aware of Portsmouth Water doing



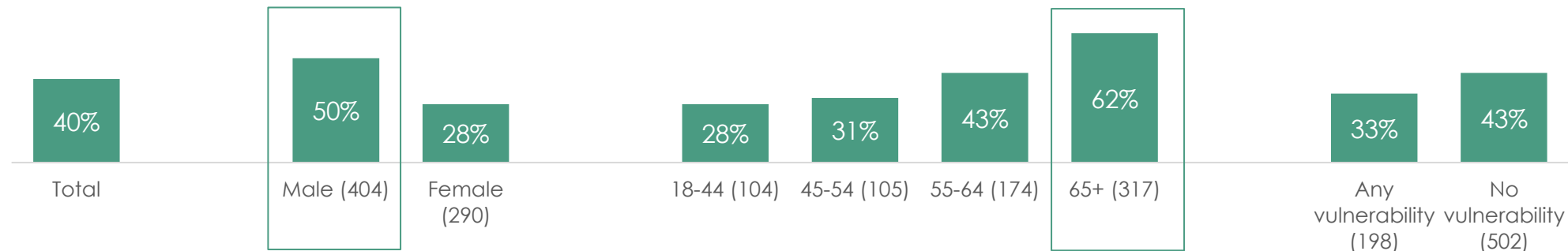
"I realise that it's not your fault but I am horrified by the recent press coverage of the way Southern Water has been dealing (or rather not properly dealing) with sewage in the area. I would be interested to know if this is causing you any problems."

Q1 Firstly, which of the following are you aware of Portsmouth Water doing? You can tick as many or as few as you think apply?
Base: All (n=700)

There is opportunity to raise awareness of Havant Thicket reservoir amongst younger customers, and to expand awareness of bill assistance & PSR amongst those who may benefit from them.

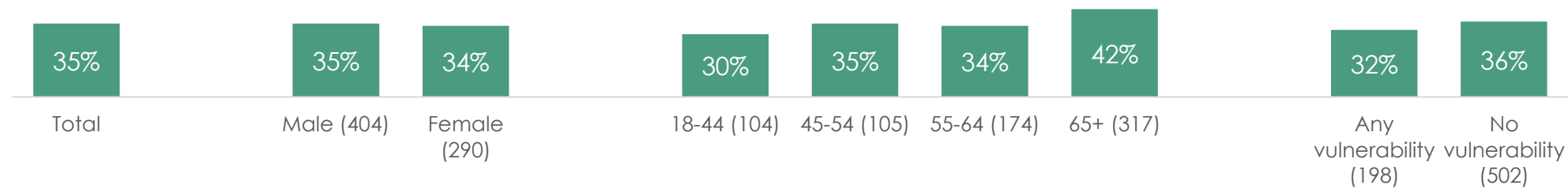
Havant Thicket Reservoir (HTR) is more familiar to older and male groups; could future communications about it be focused more on younger audiences?

Awareness of Havant Thicket Reservoir



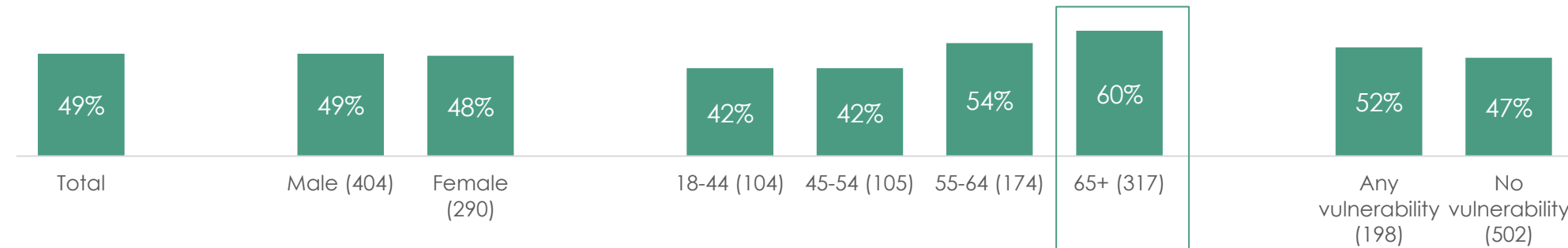
Awareness of free water saving devices is consistent across most groups – there is scope to increase awareness across the board.

Awareness of Portsmouth Water providing free water saving gadgets



Awareness of support is higher for older groups, although around half of customers with signs of vulnerability are not aware – and so potentially not benefitting from the relevant help

Awareness of any support (bill assistance and / or priority services)

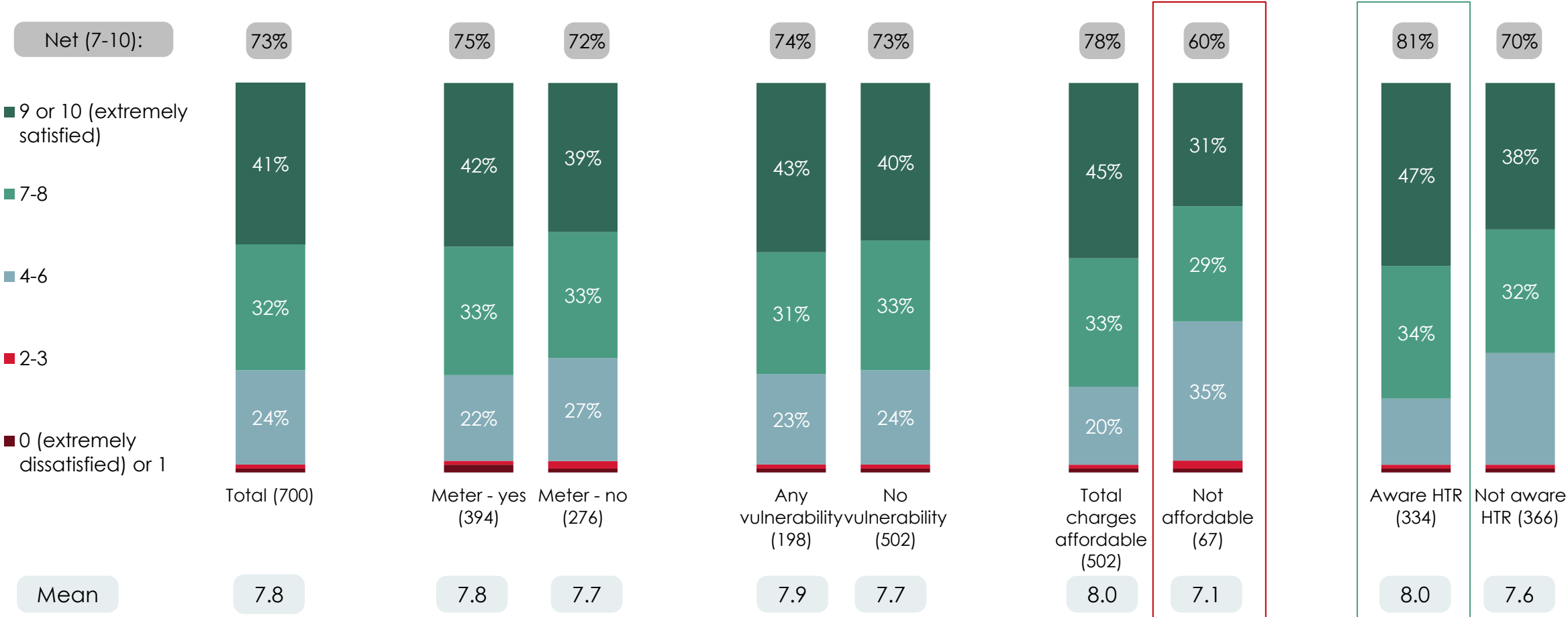


Q1 Firstly, which of the following are you aware of Portsmouth Water doing? You can tick as many or as few as you think apply?
Base: All (n=700)

Amongst panellists, the mean satisfaction score for Portsmouth Water is 7.8 out of 10, with few actively dissatisfied. 8

Satisfaction is directionally higher amongst those with a meter, and those who have heard of HTR (evidence that the scheme has a positive 'halo' effect). However, those who struggle to afford charges are less satisfied – increasing uptake / reach of bill support may be important.

Satisfaction with Portsmouth Water



Q2a We'd like you now to think about your experience of Portsmouth Water, the company that supplies you with drinking water. Taking everything into account how satisfied are you with Portsmouth Water? Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0 = extremely dissatisfied, 5 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 10 = extremely satisfied? Base: All (n=700)

Satisfaction is often based on having no problems or issues: Reliable, good quality water, and good customer service underpin satisfaction.

Amongst the small proportion who are actively dissatisfied, issues with water quality (mostly taste and / or hardness) is one of the more prominent themes.

Reasons for satisfaction / dissatisfaction

Those who are strongly satisfied (8-10)

"I have never experienced any issues with Portsmouth Water and am satisfied with the rates being charged and cost"

"Efficient and have a good customer services section. They answer the phone and return calls."

"I haven't faced any problems with supply. Water is clean and always smell free and drinkable."

"Not aware of anything particularly negative. The customer service team were very helpful recently."

"I have had no problems with PW. The water supplied is of a good quality. There have been no interruptions of supply. The price of my metered water is fair. The administration of my account works well and I get individual responses to any communications I send."

"Our water is reasonably priced and there are very rarely any restrictions such as hose pipe bans etc."

"You supply the water I need, keep me in the loop when things go wrong and provide clear billing."

Those who are neutral or less than satisfied (0-5)

"Portsmouth Water aren't doing anything out of the ordinary beyond what I would expect of a water supply company."

"Our drinking water has an odd taste, quite unpleasant and chemically."

"The water contains too much limescale. I need to filter drinking water before I use it."

"I don't drink the water as it tastes funny - we buy bottled water."

"Primarily the 'taste' of drinking water."

"I have black bits coming out of my tap all the time, I contacted Portsmouth water a few years ago and they just didn't seem interested."

"Happy with the water. Unhappy with the extraction affecting the flow of local chalk streams, especially the River Ems."

"I really struggle with your website and how to set up a direct debit online."

Attitudes to water resources

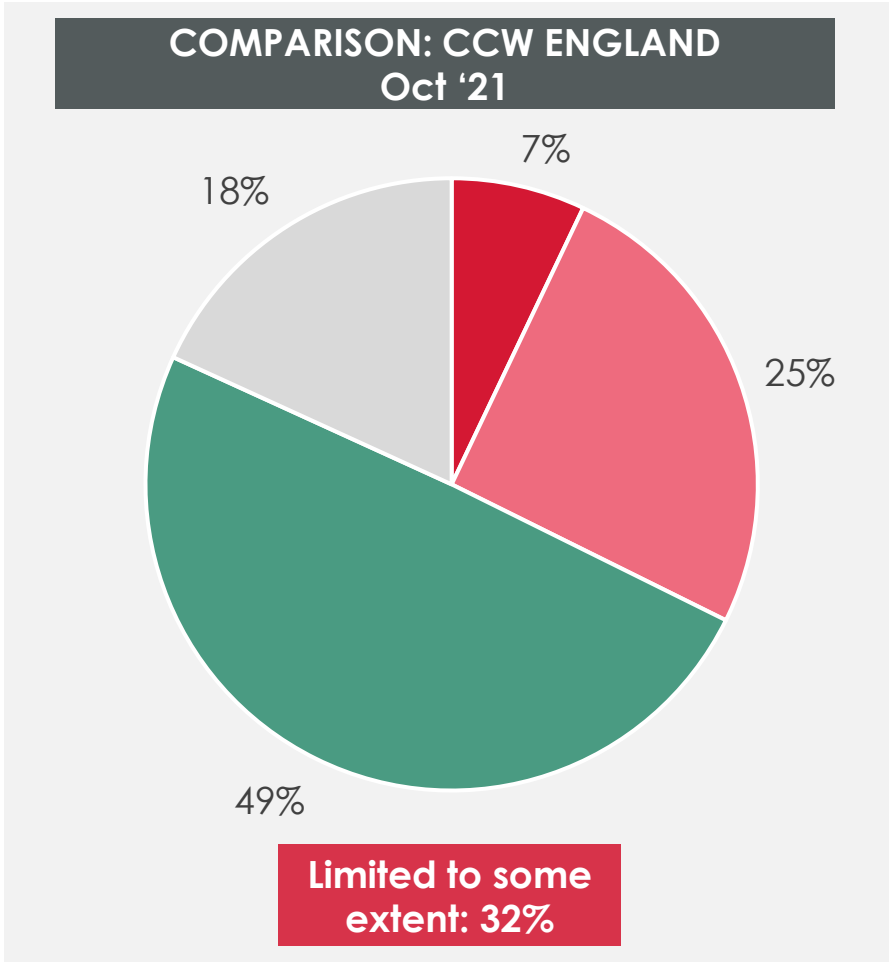
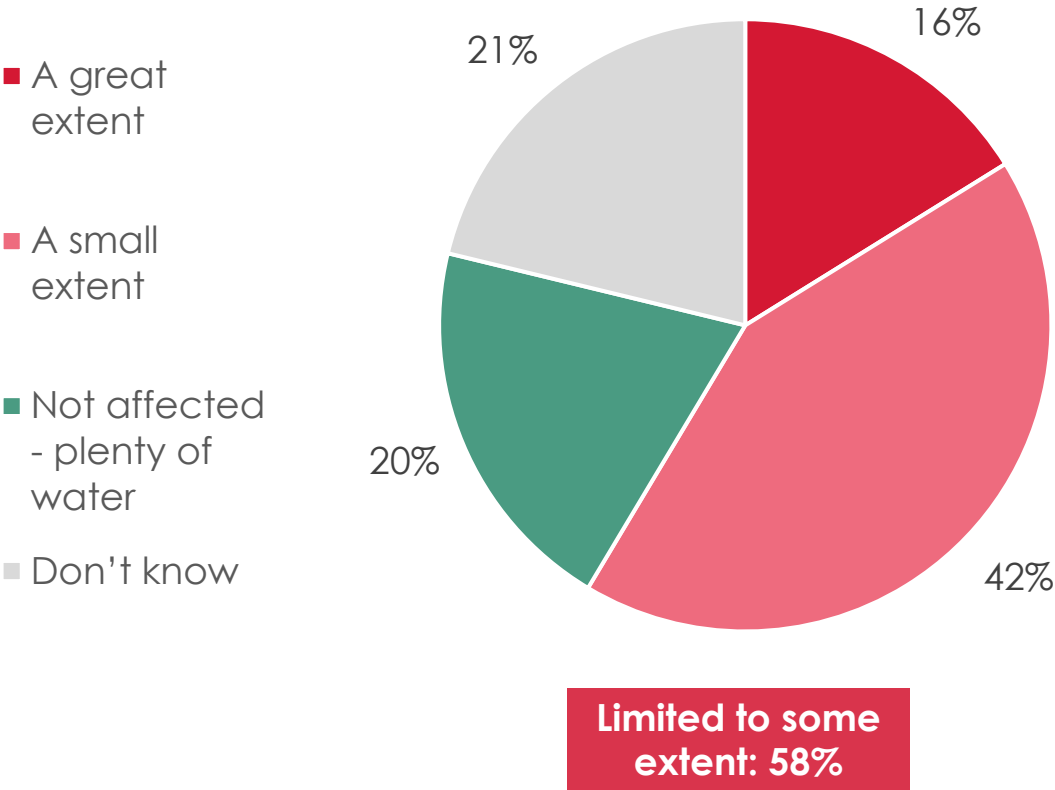


Over half of panellists think that their area has – to some extent – limited water resources. This is ¹² higher than the overall average for England reported by CCW.

There a correlation between perceived limited water resources and the amount of effort made to save water.

Extent to which area has limited water resources

PORTSMOUTH WATER BAROMETER PANEL
Mar '22



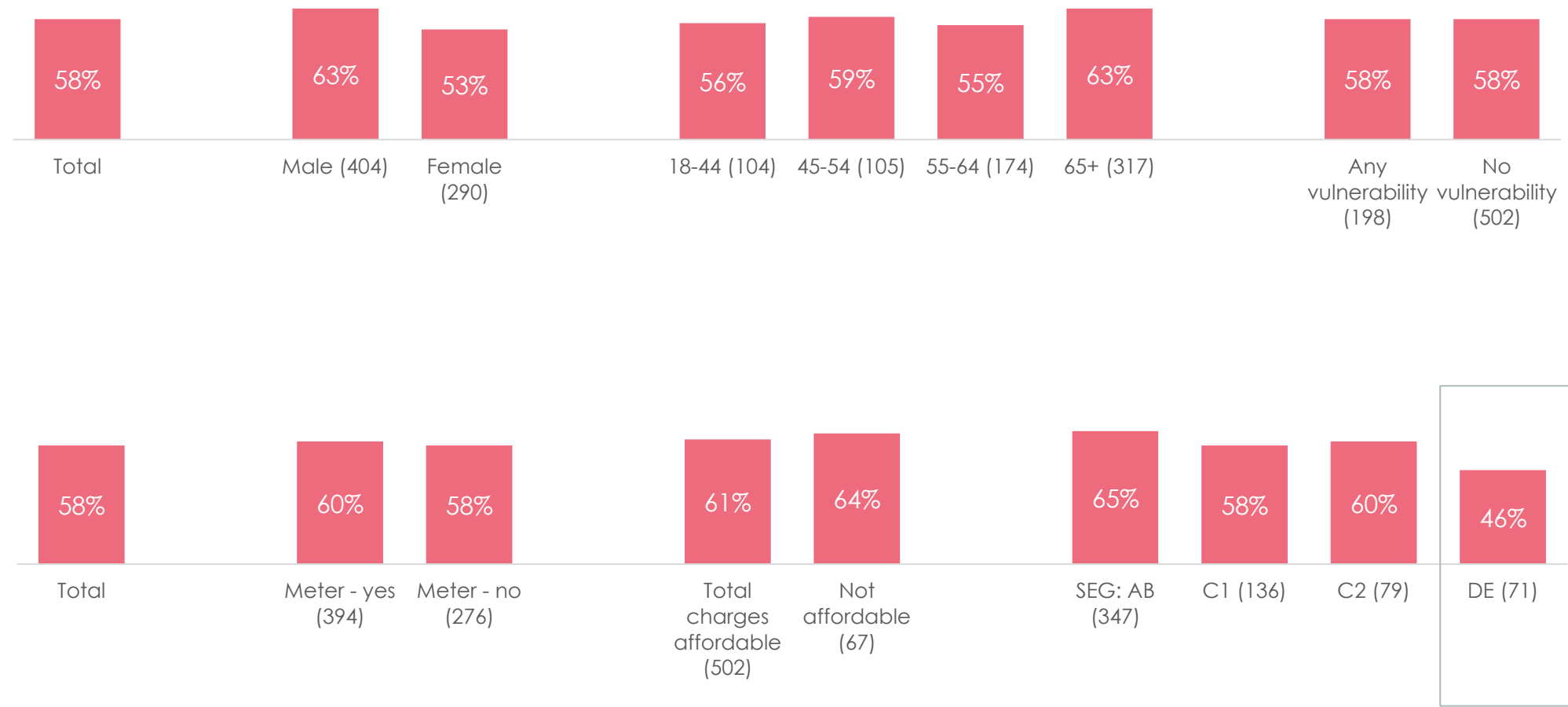
Q3 Pressure on water resources occurs when people and businesses use a large proportion of the water available in rivers, lakes, reservoirs and water-bearing rock underground. To what extent do you think the area where you live has limited water resources? Base: All (n=700)

Profiling: The belief that water resources are limited in the area is similar for most groups – although lower social grade customers are less likely to have a firm view.

Awareness of **water resources being limited** is broadly similar across different customer demographics – directionally higher for older and male customers

Slightly lower knowledge amongst the lower social grade groups.

Think water resources are limited to some extent

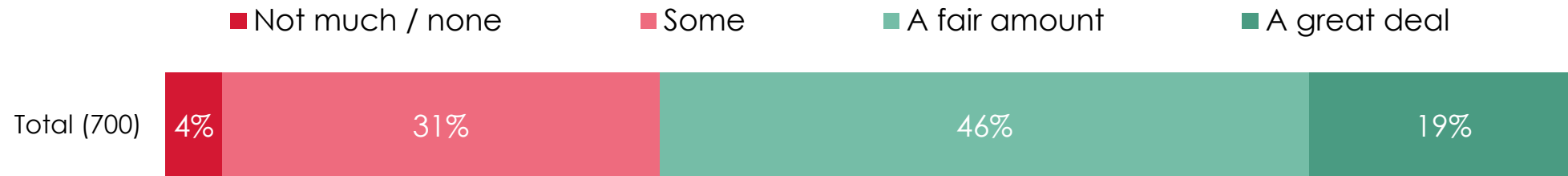


Q3 To what extent do you think the area where you live has limited water resources?
Base: All (n=700)

A majority claim to make 'a great amount' or 'a fair amount' of effort to save water at home.

Varying levels of motivation and ability to save water are evident.

Effort made to save water at home



"I wish I could do more but balancing with a busy lifestyle."

"My water bills aren't very high. Don't really think about it as supply is constant."

"With two families in one house it's not easy to monitor water usage."

"Because I believe that the water available in this area is limited and I should and can make the effort to be less wasteful."

"I like to be as environmentally friendly as I can and I have a water meter, so I am very aware of 'save water save money'."

"There's probably more I could do but I don't know much about it."

"Because it's important to bear it in mind, but don't think it's at critical levels (more conscious of it in the summer)."

"Because everyone has a responsibility to do so and our resources are scarce."

"Because I don't believe in wasting anything."

"I don't use a great deal of water so do not think I need to make any effort to save it."

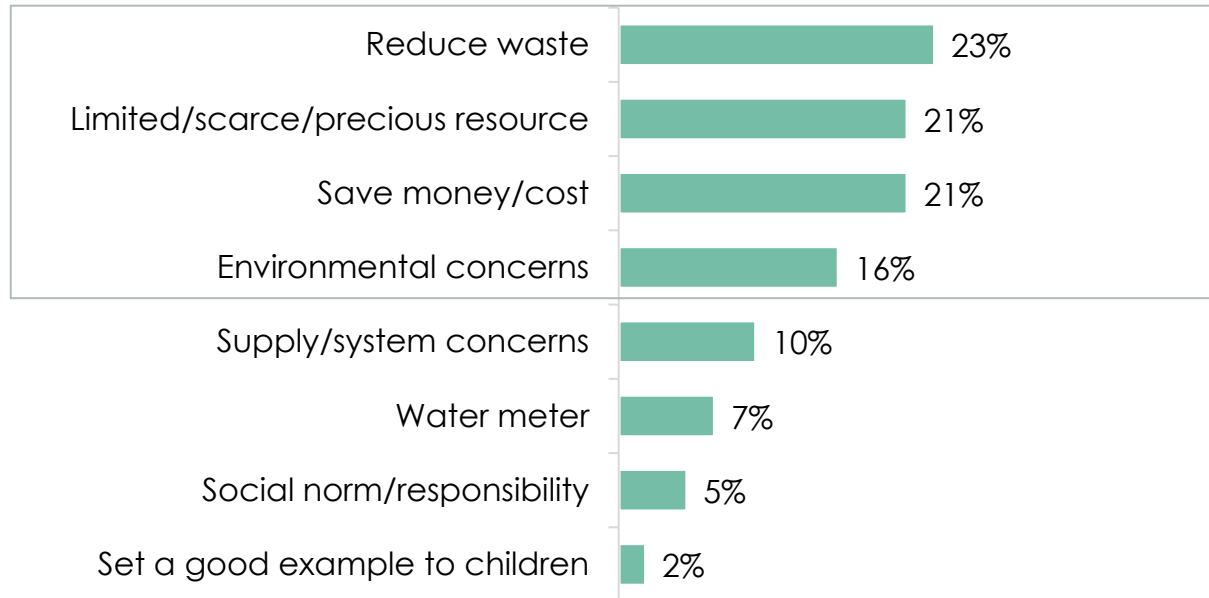
"With 2 teenagers, it's hard to limit the amount they use."

"Unfortunately due to my health conditions I need to use more water than I would like."

"Because of prices going up. And it's good for the environment."

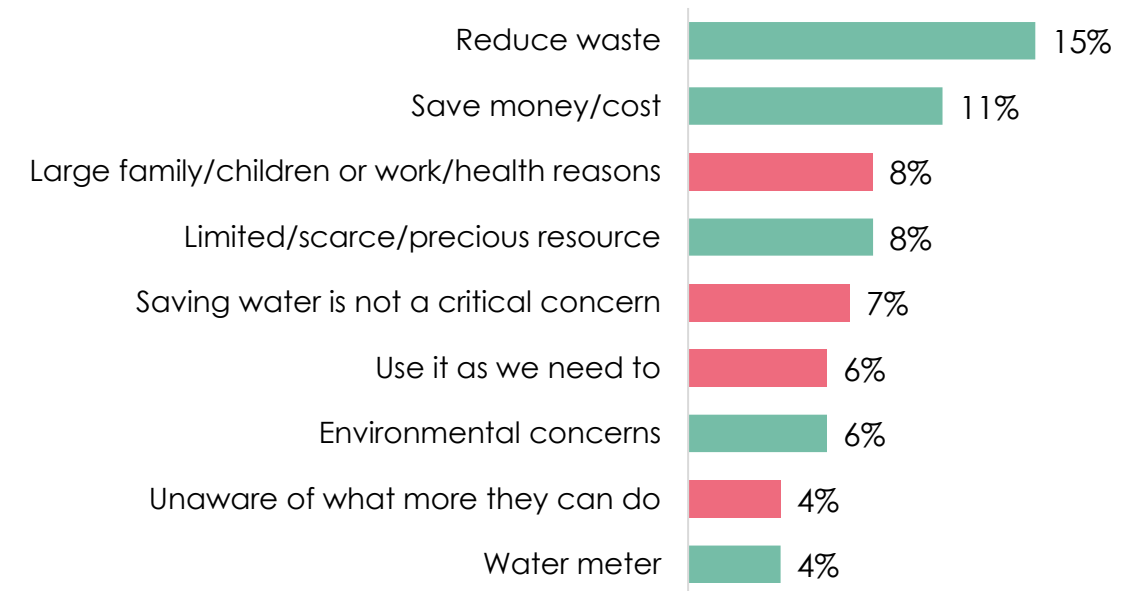
Motivations to save water currently stem more from an underlying ethic of minimising waste and conserving resources, rather than more specific environmental or financial benefits.

Why make 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' of effort to save water?



- For those making more effort, simply wanting to **reduce waste or conserve resources** was the most widespread motivation
- After this, saving money was next most widely mentioned, followed by environmental concerns
- So, while a significant motivation, the **environment** is not most front of mind, and is usually mentioned in generalised terms – scope for greater education on the issues (e.g. chalk streams)

Why make 'some' effort to save water?

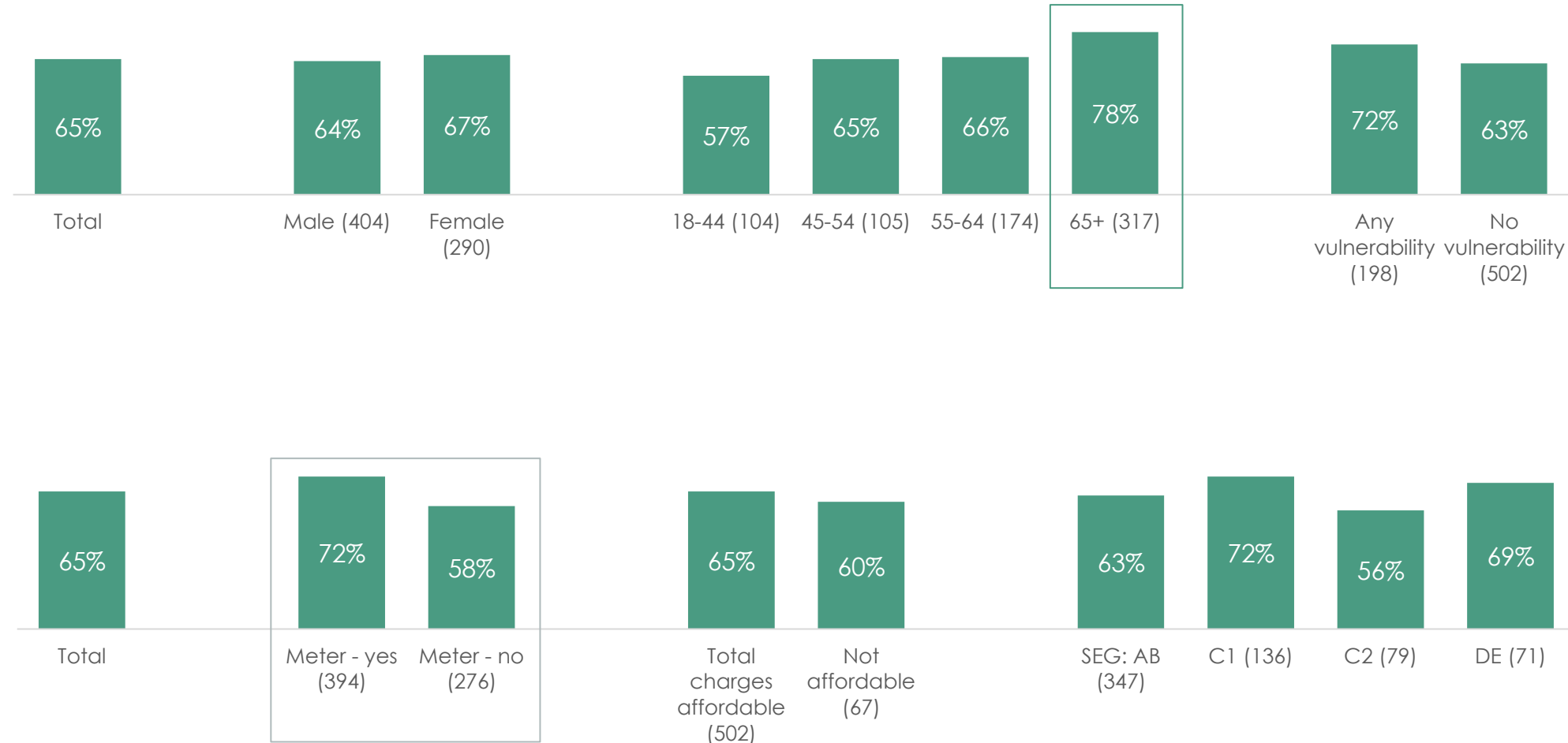


- For those making more moderate effort, the main **positive motivations** remain reducing waste / conserving resource and saving money; environmental concerns less prominent
- A variety of **barriers** include busy lifestyle, family size, health needs, and a lack of perceived need to save water. Some also feel they should be able to use whatever they want
- Clear scope for people to be more aware of reasons to save

Effort to save water is notably higher amongst the oldest age group than others – this appears to be related to being more conscientious about conserving limited / scarce resources – a more entrenched value for this generation? Can younger people and (busy) families be persuaded to increase efforts?

There is also a clear correlation between making an effort to save water and being metered – suggesting more widespread metering should help reduce PCC.

Make a great deal or a fair amount of effort to save water



Q4a How much effort do you make at home to save water? Base: All (n=700)

Priorities

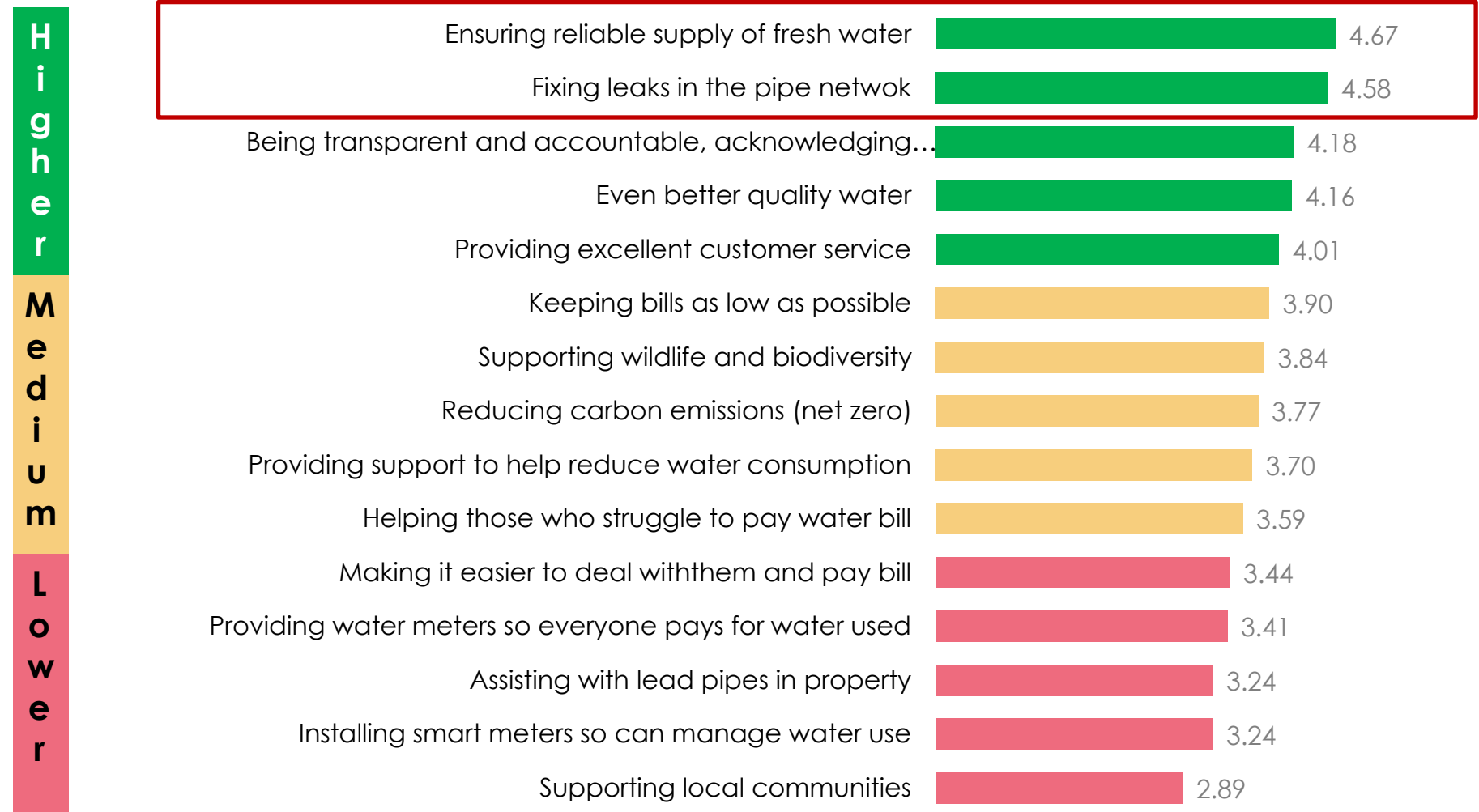


The highest stated priorities are ensuring reliable supply and fixing leaks. Corporate transparency, better water quality and excellent customer service are also key.



Those with a meter advocate universal metering and smart meters more than those who don't have one. Smaller households also emphasise universal metering more than larger households (who may fear bill implications). Lower social grade customers and those with financial vulnerabilities prioritise helping those who struggle, and keeping bills low. The minority of actively dissatisfied customers place more emphasis on better quality water.

Priorities for Portsmouth Water (mean score out of 5, where 5=very high priority)



Q5 There are many challenges ahead and lots of things Portsmouth Water would like to invest in – but they can't do it all at once, it would cost too much. Bearing that in mind, how much of a priority do you think the following are for Portsmouth Water in the future? Base: All (n=700)

After seeing information about the region's water resource status, most panellists indicate that for them reliable long-term supply and avoiding environmental damage outweigh low bills.

Having been informed about the water-stressed status of the region, and the ecological implications of taking more water from chalk downland, not damaging local environments is regarded as a pressing priority – nearly as valued as ensuring a reliable long-term supply.



Trade off

Trading off against keeping bill as low as possible

■ Much higher priority than low bill ■ Slightly higher priority than low bill ■ Equal priority ■ Slightly lower priority ■ Much lower priority

Ensuring reliable supply in longer run



Not damaging local environments and wildlife (e.g. chalk streams)



Minimising energy use and carbon emissions



Making sure those who struggle to pay can afford their bill



Q6 Thinking about each of the following possible long-term aims for Portsmouth Water, do you think they are more or less of a priority than keeping your water bill as low as possible? Base: All (n=700)

Priorities amongst the customer panel are broadly consistent with the qualitative foundational research and the initial stakeholder engagement conducted earlier in the year.

The panel survey provides a larger-scale read of more ‘top-of-mind’ views, while the qualitative research generates more considered and informed views through a deliberative process, also representing views of a wider range of audiences (including non-bill payers and non household customers). Discussions in the forthcoming CAP study can be used to help further explore key areas.

PRIORITIES	Leakage	New sources / reliable supply in future	Water efficiency	Excellent customer service	Environment	Carbon	Helping to pay	Water quality	Low bills	Universal Metering (pay for what use)	Smart meters	Supporting local communities
Customer panel (quant) based on MEAN. Uninformed	H	H	M	H	M	M	M	H	M	L	L	L
Customer (qual) Deliberative	H	H	H	M	M	H	M	L	L	M	L	L
Stakeholders (qual)	H	L	H	-	M	-	H	L	M	M	-	(M)

A contrasting picture on water quality – water hardness / taste can be seen as an issue amongst panellists

Lower initial priority, but widespread support for universal (smart) metering when customers are more informed on the range of benefits

Looking ahead:
Ensuring there is
enough water

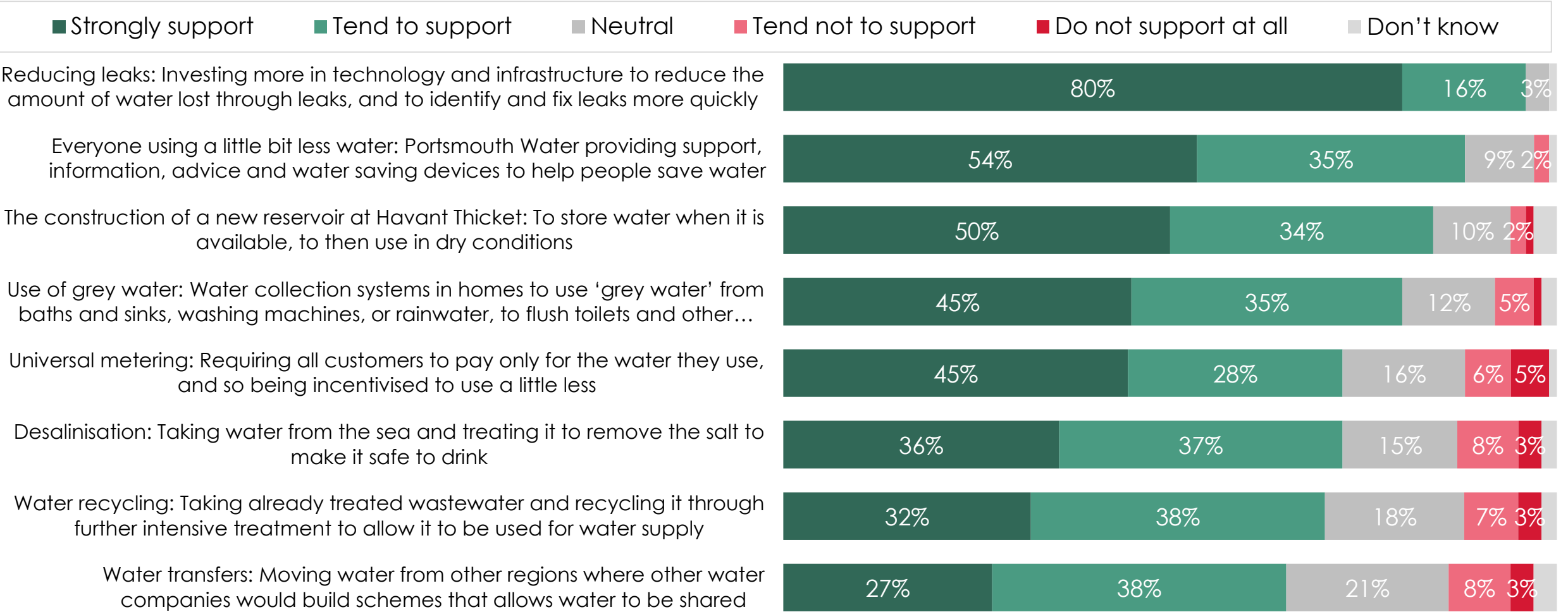


Nearly everyone wants to see investment into reducing leaks; there's also strong support for demand management and Havant Thicket Reservoir (based on brief descriptions).

22

Universal metering is broadly supported by our panellists – ahead of desalinization, water recycling, and water transfers. None of the methods evoke widespread resistance, although there is a c.1 in 10 minority actively not supporting several methods.

Level of support for methods to ensure enough water in the region in future

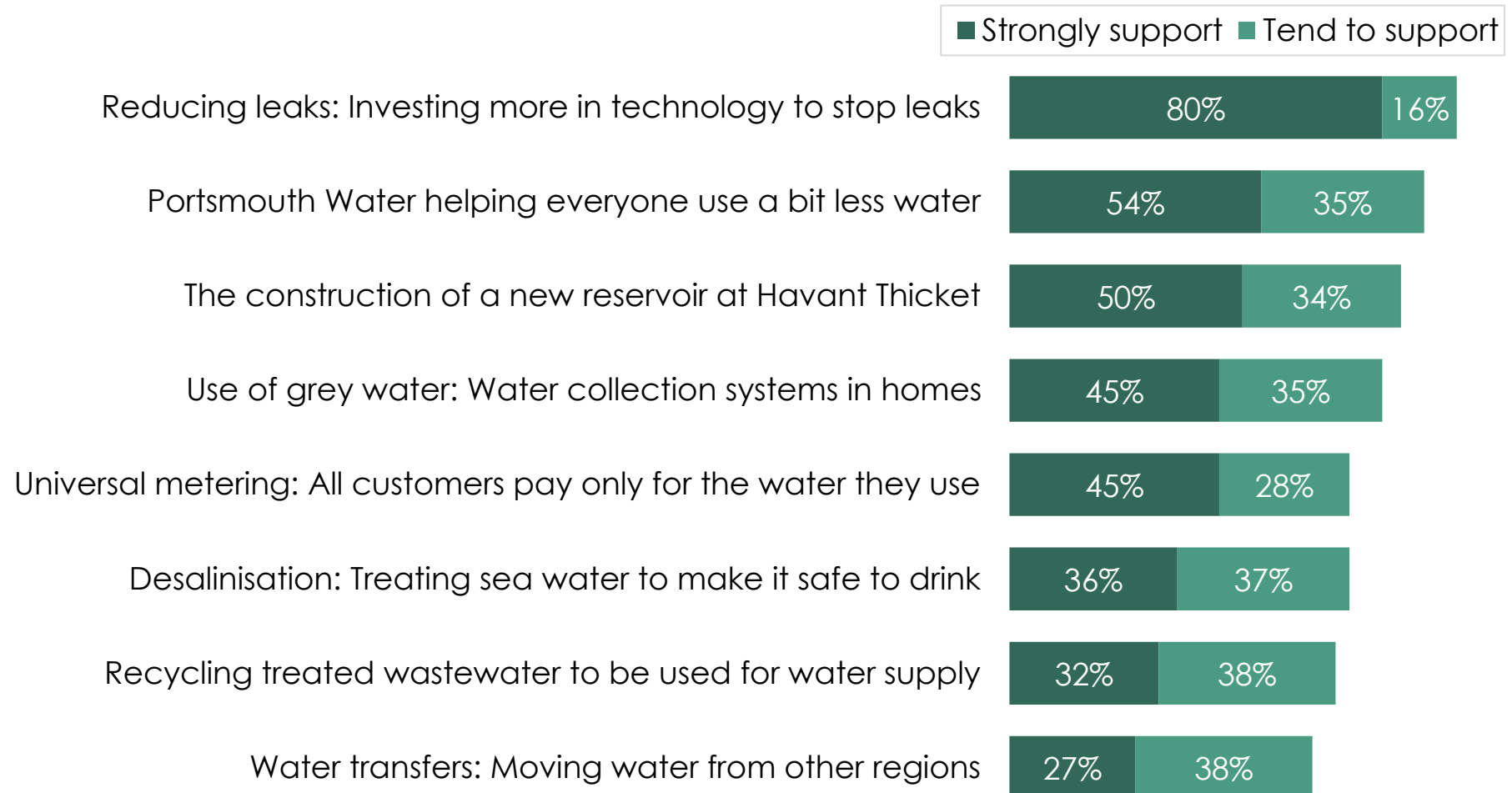


Q7 In future there won't be enough water to meet everyone's needs unless we invest to increase supply and / or reduce demand. What is your feeling about using each of the following methods to ensure there is enough water in the region in future? Base: All (n=700)

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Level of support for methods to ensure enough water in the region in future



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Based on the outline descriptions of a variety of future methods, the data suggests a broad hierarchy of preference:

1

**REDUCING AND FIXING
LEAKS**

**2**

USING LESS WATER

**3**

INCREASING SUPPLY



Q7 In future there won't be enough water to meet everyone's needs unless we invest to increase supply and / or reduce demand. What is your feeling about using each of the following methods to ensure there is enough water in the region in future? Base: All (n=700)

Upon seeing a more detailed description, a large majority – 70% – of customers support universal smart metering.

Note that in the separate deliberative research, we found that support for smart meters is primarily driven by the perceived benefits for the water network – particularly for fixing leaks, in the context of long-term water supply challenges

Informed response to water resource solutions: Universal Smart Metering

Having a water meter means you only pay for the water you use. This encourages customers to be more careful with water, and so reduces pressure on water resources.

Smart meters are a new kind of meter that let you see on your smartphone or computer how much water you're using in real time. This helps you better understand how you can save water. Smart meters also allow Portsmouth Water to identify and fix leaks.

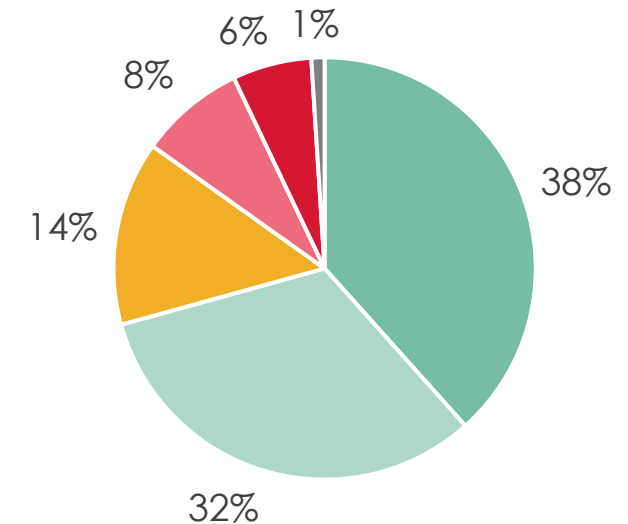
A programme of universal smart metering means all Portsmouth Water customers would receive smart meters along with support and advice from Portsmouth Water on water efficiency.

Cost: £80 million

Benefit to water supply: 20 million litres a day

Environmental / community impact: Short-lived installation disruption in streets

- Strongly Support
- Tend to Support
- Neutral
- Tend Not to Support
- Do Not Support At All
- Don't Know



"Installing water meters should be compulsory and universal. There should also be a home display, so that consumers can measure how much water they are using. This might also help leak detection."

"Conventional meters are a good idea but I don't believe the significant cost of smart meters is worth it."

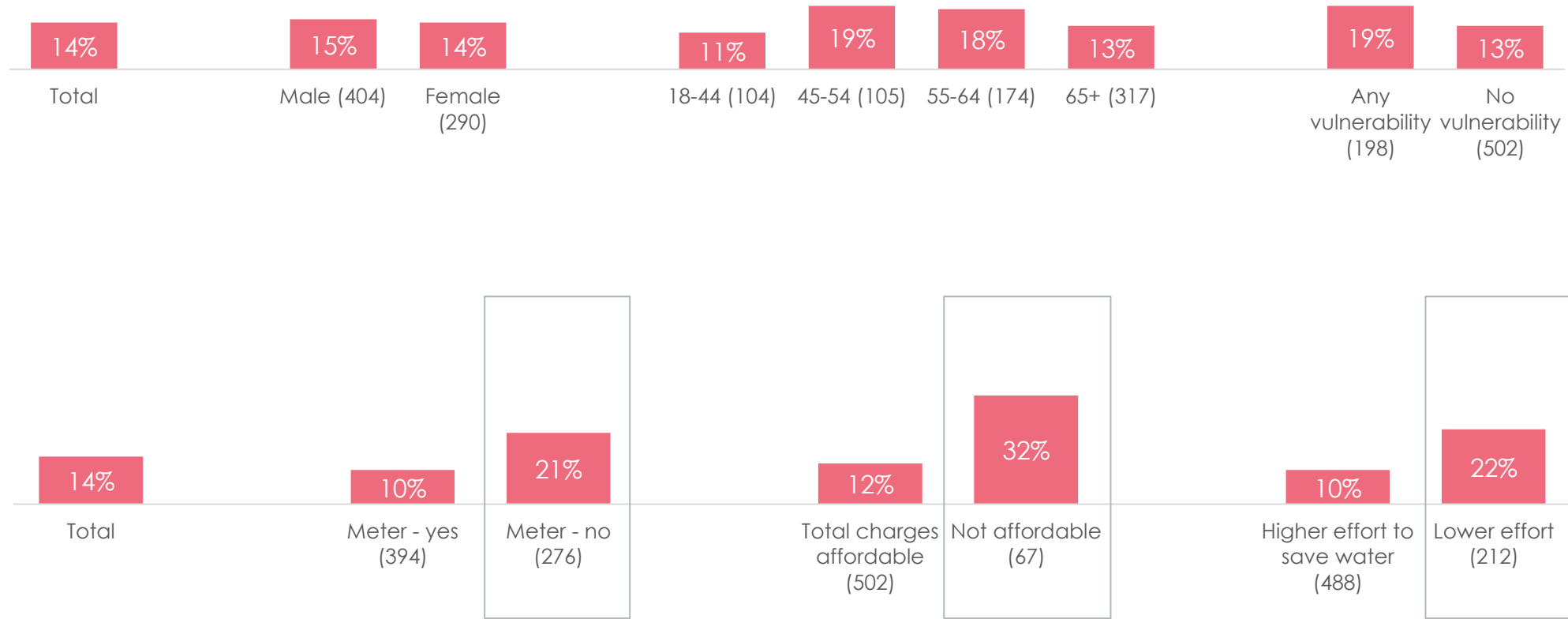
"I'm against metering for everyone as it might be economical for me, living alone, but it won't be for families with children."

Having seen fuller details about universal smart metering, resistance to the idea is driven by those who do not find their current water and sewerage charges affordable.

Resistance to universal smart metering is reasonably consistent across different demographic groups.

Those who do not support universal smart metering are more likely to already struggle with affording their bill – reflecting anxiety for some that metering will increase their bill. Those who do not already have a meter, and those who make less effort to save water are also more resistant to the idea.

Do not support universal smart metering (based on full description)



Q8 Based on the information, how much do you support this scheme? Base: All (n=700)

Upon seeing a more detailed description 7 out of 10 panellists support water recycling in Havant.

Only a small number of customers actively do NOT support water recycling – 9%. Some anecdotal evidence that this is related to putting wastewater into the new Havant Thicket reservoir. There will need to be care in how water recycling is presented to people.

Informed response to water resource solutions: Water Recycling Plant in Havant

Predictions suggest that five water recycling schemes will be required in South East England by 2050. One of these is proposed to be located in Havant.

Water recycling is where highly treated wastewater is returned to the environment (in this case into the new Havant Thicket Reservoir) and used to supplement our natural water supplies.

The treatment that recycled water goes through is far more significant than the treatment normal wastewater receives. Recycled water would be used in relatively small volumes to supplement the spring water that will be in the reservoir.

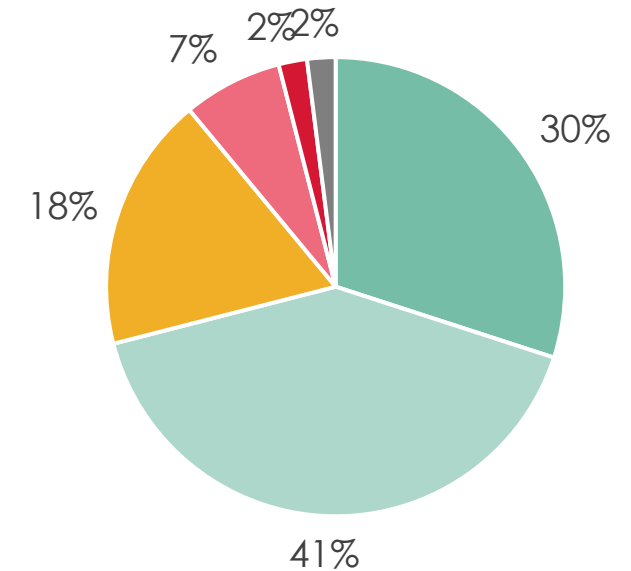
When needed, the water is then re-abstracted from the reservoir, treated again to drinking water standard and supplied to customers.

Cost: £ 130m

Benefit to water supply: 15 million litres per day

Environmental / community impact: The extra treatment will need a new treatment works building and will use a lot of energy. This energy will need to come from sustainable sources.

- Strongly Support
- Tend to Support
- Neutral
- Tend Not to Support
- Do Not Support At All
- Don't Know



"I'm not too happy about recycling water to go in the proposed reservoir. Nothing is 100%: a mistake or malfunction would do a lot of damage."

Focus on: Metering



Across both the panel and the qualitative deliberative research, universal and smart metering are not initially seen as top priorities, but with more information, most customers are supportive.

There will be a need for careful communication alongside smart water meter roll out – explaining relevant benefits of smart meters in the water sector, and ensuring that customers with financially and non-financial vulnerabilities understand the support available for them.

Initial, less informed impressions
are that universal metering is a low-mid priority, with the need for smart meters near the bottom of the list

Upon receiving more information
about water resources and the benefits of smart metering, there is widespread support for universal smart metering

However, there remains a portion of Portsmouth Water customers (14%) who do not support universal smart metering



Priority (less informed)

■ High ■ Medium ■ Low

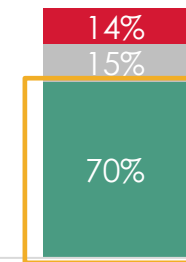


Providing water meters so everyone pays for water they use

Installing smart water meters so customers can understand and manage their water use

Support (more informed)

■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No



Universal smart metering (full description)

Least supportive of universal smart metering:

- Those who cannot afford their bill
- Those who don't already have a meter

Panel findings

Qualitative research findings

- Metering seen as a **fair basis** for bills and **long-term environmental challenges** mean charging based on usage feels very valid
- **But not felt as urgent** as some other priorities
- **Support for smart meters rarely very enthusiastic.** But also few objections

- On consideration, the key benefit for smart meters is to **detect and fix leaks.**
- Access to personal water use data holds more limited appeal – although a minority (those enthusiastic about data) were very enthusiastic

- **Safeguards wanted for households who might be vulnerable in the context of metering** (financial and / or health-related)
- A minority worried metering could be an excuse to increase bills

For some, metering is a key issue. A number of panellists chose to express their opinions, revealing a variety of perspectives.

Those that support conventional but not smart meters reference poor experiences with smart energy meters as reasons for opposition. Other negative comments include anxieties about the cost for customers, both in terms of rollout as well as increased bills.

Support for smart meters:

"Installing water meters should be compulsory and universal. There should also be a home display, so that consumers can measure how much water they are using (similar to smart meters). This might also help leak detection."

"Point of notes, the smart metering of water usage needs to be installed in all homes and businesses immediately. Population waste needs to be stopped. More detailed information, advertising and education to help people, the old and the young alike, to try and save water has to be also implemented and quickly."

Support for conventional meters but not smart meters:

"I don't support smart meters but I do support water metering. I have found gas and electric smart meters to be absolutely useless [...]. I ignore mine now as do most other people I know."

"Conventional meters are a good idea but I don't believe the significant cost of smart meters is worth it. If it is like electricity smart meters, it really winds me up when advertisements say they save money because it's a myth that people save any money at all."

"I am bewildered that Portsmouth Water is thinking about smart meters. The evidence of electricity smart meters is that they are a one shot wonder and then are never of any use to the householder [...]. Mandatory water meters is a brilliant idea. The sight of neighbours running sprinklers on lawns in the summer must be socially unacceptable unless they pay for what they actually use."

"Smart metering costs a lot of money. It has to be paid for by the bill payers one way or another. It does not actually save water, only makes you aware how much you are spending. If people are already only using what they need there is no benefit only cost."

Anxieties around cost:

"Slightly against water meters, people may not use the water they need for fear of larger bills."

"I'm against metering for everyone as it might be economical for me, living alone, but it won't be for families with children."

"I would support metering more if it was utilised to detect leak events and locations thus ensuring maximum value."

"Smart Meters are a very good idea, but people are afraid of exceptionally high bills. What happens when a leak.' occurs? I would like one, but the cost could be worrying."

"Not sure that having smart meters would help everyone. Families with young children tend to need more for drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing. Single or smaller households are the ones who would benefit."

Executive summary

1

Panellists are generally well aware of Portsmouth Water's core role. **Fewer than 1 in 10 misattribute sewerage services to the company.** However, 'non-core' functions like bill support and in-community activity could be communicated more widely.

2

Satisfaction overall with Portsmouth Water is strong although **there's scope to move some customers from being ambivalent to more actively satisfied.** Those who can't afford water & sewerage charges are less satisfied and so an important group to engage with. There are also signs that water quality is a bugbear for the least satisfied customers.

3

The customer panel is more sensitized to pressure on water resources than the public in England as a whole although **4 in 10 still do not think, or do not know if, there is any pressure on water resources in the area.** There's still a way to go before everyone understands the reasons for conscientious water use.

4

A sizeable majority claim to make effort to save water – even though Portsmouth Water customers tend to use more water than average. Is there a gap between perception and reality that needs to be bridged? The biggest motivation is **avoiding waste / preserving resources**, followed by saving money and being environmentally responsible.

5

Looking ahead, the two biggest stated priorities are **ensuring reliable supply** and **fixing leaks**, followed by a number of others:



**Ensuring
reliable
supply**

Fixing leaks

Corporate
transparency

Better water
quality

Excellent
customer
service

6

Considering the **longer-term** picture, and after being informed about the region's water resource status, the large majority want to prioritise both ensuring a reliable long-term supply, and **avoiding damage to local environments**, over keeping bills as low as possible. This indicates that most are prepared to pay more for long-term *sustainable* supply.

7

In terms of *initial response* to ideas to ensure enough water in future, **nearly everyone on the panel wants to see further investment into reducing leaks**; there's also very strong support for demand management and Havant Thicket Reservoir. Universal metering is also broadly supported – slightly ahead of desalinization, water recycling, and water transfers.

8

In response to detailed descriptions of local schemes: **7 in 10 support universal smart metering** with the 14% who do not having concerns over water bill affordability and negative perceptions of smart energy meters. There's **a similar level of support for water recycling at Havant**, but with fewer (9%) actively against it.



Blue Marble Research Ltd

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26. Portsmouth Water Barometer Wave 1 Report

Standards for high-quality research:	How addressed in this project:
Useful and contextualised	This customer panel forms part of Portsmouth Water's ongoing research. Panellists were originally recruited via a large invitation mailout to c.40,000 customers, selected at random. An initial registration process served to communicate about the purpose of the panel; explain that surveys would be issued regularly; and cover all permissions for recontact. The barometer surveys were used throughout the PR24 research programme to provide a quantitative read on a range of issues. All participants are sent a newsletter after each survey to highlight key findings and how the research is being used.
Fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The barometer surveys were all issued via emails to customers who had registered. • The total number of interviews (700) is robust for quantitative analysis (i.e. using percentages and comparing sub-groups) • Survey data was then weighted to match the known demographic profile of Portsmouth Water customers (age & gender) • The panel is self-selecting, rather than purposively sampled to be representative. This means panellists may be more engaged with the water sector & knowledgeable about Portsmouth Water than customers in general. This is borne in mind in the interpretation and triangulation of the data.
Neutrally designed	Blue Marble designed the survey and materials with impartiality. The quantitative survey used balanced answer lists, randomised answer lists and gave options to say 'don't know'.
Inclusive	The barometer surveys reflect a wide range of perspectives by including the views of many hundreds of households and specifically households with vulnerabilities and those who are financially struggling. The invitation to become part of the panel was sent to a random sample of c.40,000 household customers, of which c. 2.5% elected to register. Robust subsamples of a wide range of household customer types and segments were achieved, including younger and older age groups, all social grades and customers with vulnerabilities.
Continual	The barometer panel has and continues to provide Portsmouth Water with an ongoing dialogue with a large sample of PW customers.
Shared in full	Portsmouth Water to publish this report and supporting appendices on its website.
Ethical	Blue Marble is a company partner of the MRS, senior team members are all Members of the MRS and/or SRA. All Blue Marble's employees abide by the MRS Code of Conduct and as such all our research is in line with their ethical standards.
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