

Supply Interruptions Webpage Testing

February 2024

Research Approach

Research objectives and approach

United Utilities have introduced a new webpage to streamline content and help direct customers to different elements of support and advice, should they experience a service disruption. United Utilities wished to test the draft webpage with customers and ensure it is in line with best practice described in the new Ofwat customer focused licence condition.

Introduced in February 2024, the licence has the following objectives:

- Customers are well informed
- When something does go wrong, affected customers have confidence their company will put it right
- The full diversity of customers' needs is identified, understood and met by companies in the services and extra help they provide

To ensure United Utilities is compliant, the webpage was tested against the below KPIs:

- Easy to understand
- Accessible
- Provides appropriate content/support
 - Tone of voice
 - Source of communication
 - Do customer know what to do next? Do they know how to make a decision based on this?
- Information delivered at the right time, through the right channels
- Inclusive – i.e. taking into account diversity of customer needs

You can view the webpage as it was at time of testing [here](#).

What we did:



A 15-minute quantitative survey with 500 customers



Fieldwork took place 23rd January – 2nd February 2024



Customers were recruited from the 'In the Flow' panel and from an external access panel.

Data has been weighted to ensure representativeness of the United Utilities customer base.

Ofwat standards for high-quality research

License Condition and Supply Interruption Webpage Testing

Ofwat have set out requirements for [high-quality research in their Customer Engagement Policy](#). All water company research and engagement should follow best practice and lead to a meaningful understanding of what is important to customers and wider stakeholders.

Useful and contextualised

This research is being conducted in order to test a new webpage that brings all the information a customer may need to know about a service disruption together in one place, and ensuring ongoing alignment with the new License Condition. The results of the research will be used to make improvements to the webpage and ensure it meets key performance indicators including ease of understanding, accessibility and the relevance of information provided if they were to experience a disruption to their supply.

Independently assured

The research is conducted by Explain Research, an independent market research agency. United Utilities shared the method and findings with Your Voice, the Independent Challenge Group for check and challenge.

Fit for purpose

The research method has been chosen to gain the optimum insight – a quantitative online survey with heat mapping features. This will allow us to get insight on the individual elements such as wording and layout.

Continual

The research is contextualised using a wide evidence base including existing research on supply interruptions and previous webpage testing. Customer views will be directly fed into the ongoing programme of License Condition research.

Inclusive

This research is designed to be representative of the United Utilities customer base, including age, gender, location and meter status, while also being inclusive of a range of different levels of digital confidence and vulnerability. The webpage is compatible with the accessibility help tool ReciteMe, allowing inclusivity of this research to the wider customer base.

Neutrally designed

Every effort will be made to ensure that the research is neutral and free from bias. If there is the potential for bias, this will be acknowledged in the report. The research materials were reviewed by Your Voice prior to fieldwork to give extra assurance that questions had been designed neutrally.

Ethical

This research is conducted by Explain Research who are a member of the Market Research Society. Participants are informed at the beginning of the survey that they could be open and honest in their views due to anonymity and Explain and United Utilities were subject to strict data protection protocols.

Shared in full with others

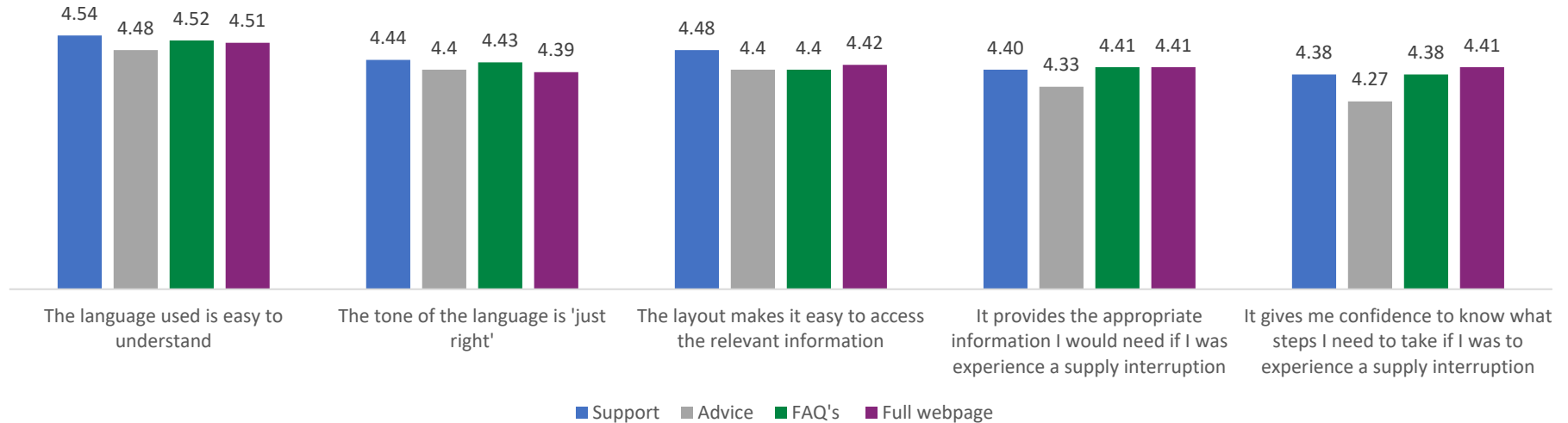
The full final report and research materials will be shared on the United Utilities' research library webpage, and through our industry newsletter The Source.

Key Findings

The webpage was well received by respondents with the full webpage returning an average score of 4.39 out of 5 or above for agreement with several key phrases.

‘The language used is easy to understand’ achieved the highest average score when reviewing all areas of the webpage.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree on the following statements? (500)



Key Findings

Respondents found the webpage easy to understand and navigate

- NET agreement of 90% was achieved when considering how easy the language of the full webpage was to understand. A NET agreement of 88% of respondents felt the tone used was 'just right'.
- A NET agreement of 86% was received in respondents who felt the layout of the webpage made it easy to access the right information.
- The webpage was described as simple, helpful and reassuring.

Respondents found the content of the webpage useful

- 88% was achieved in NET agreement of those who felt the webpage provided the appropriate information needed during an interruption to supply.
- The webpage gave 86% confidence to know what next steps to take during an interruption.
- Respondents appreciated United Utilities offering live progress updates, bottled water, compensation and pressure advice

The webpage was found to be accessible to all customers

- 87% found the webpage customer friendly while 84% found it accessible to all customers.
- Most respondents felt the webpage was good as it is and did not require any improvements.
- However, ensuring the additional functions on the webpage are more prominent is recommended, including clear contact details and the ability to change text.

Overall Scores

Introduction Feedback

Introduction banner: Like

When considering what they liked about the introduction banner, respondents felt the language used was clear, concise and reassuring. The provision of live updates to those experiencing a supply interruption was seen to be an important addition.

It's easy to understand (40)

“ The text is informative, and the language used is easy to understand

“ The wording is clear and easy to understand. It shows compassion without being condescending nor overly emotional

“ Simple easy to follow text explains perfectly everything I need to know

Providing live updates (29)

“ I like the fact you provide live updates so I can check the progress of the situation

“ Important to be kept up to date, saves having to make unnecessary calls

“ I like how it explains all the ways you may be kept up to date

The language is reassuring (13)

“ Appears friendly and helpful with some reassurance of active support

“ Like the reassuring language used

“ The language used is reassuring, there are various ways to get in touch and this would be useful in case of an interruption

The bold header (10)

“ Clear title to let us easy to find what to do next

“ I like that the header makes it clear what the purpose of the page is, and that I can receive any help or answers I am looking for here

“ Heading is clear to see this provides help and support

Introduction banner: Dislike

Those who disliked areas of the introduction banner did so due to the size of the text along with the image used. It was preferred for the image to be smaller with more emphasis on the text. It was also suggested that the information shown could be in bullet point form to minimise the amount of information needed to take in.

The text is too small (29)

- “ The white print on a green background was not easy to read and the print is very small
- “ Writing appears small, and second to the picture
- “ Needs a smaller image and bigger font size to help ease of reading

The image used (11)

- “ Do not think this the best graphic for this page should be more people focused
- “ Pointless picture. We all know what water / taps look like
- “ Not the most exciting image to be fair

The image is too large (9)

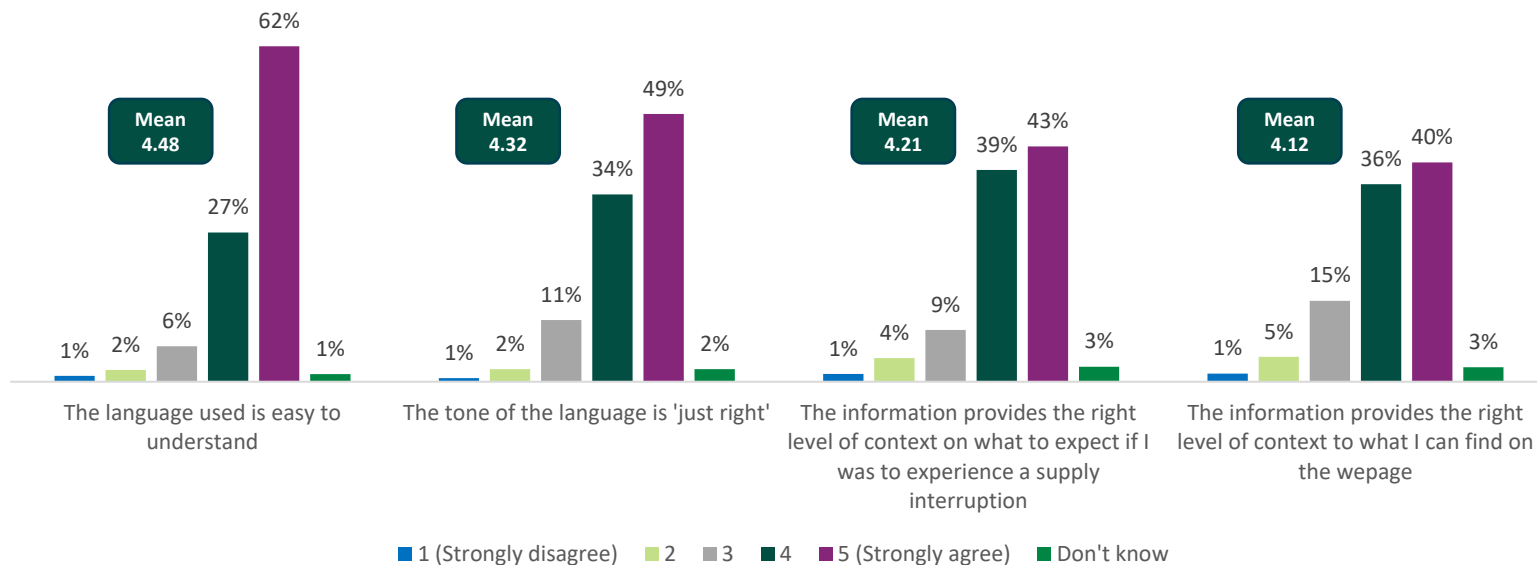
- “ Too large compared to the text, make text bigger and icon smaller
- “ Prefer bigger writing, smaller picture
- “ Picture is too big

Too much information at once (9)

- “ Lots of text would rather read bullet points
- “ The content is fair enough but overall, the text is too wordy and just a big block of words - very poor readability. Bullet points, or better spacing, would help
- “ There is too much information in one block to take on. Could be worded a bit more clearly

The majority felt the language and level of context was just right, with NET agreement of all statements ranging between 76% and 89%. The highest scoring average was achieved when considering the ease of understanding the language used.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree on the following statements? (500)



18-29 were significantly less likely to agree that the information in the introduction provided the right level of context on what to expect in an interruption

Support Feedback

Heat mapping tool: Support section

Respondents were shown the support section of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.



784 likes

Respondents felt the support section was clear and easy to understand. Particularly, the ability to check for a problem online and the ease of reporting an issue.



107 dislikes

Respondents wished for clarity on what defined a priority service customer along with the inclusion of contact details. Dissatisfaction with the grammar was also cited.

Support section: Like

Respondents found the support section clear, easy to navigate and easy to understand. More specifically, the provision of being able to check for issues in the area and the ease of reporting an issue was praised and seen to be a way of preventing calling United Utilities.

It's easy to understand
(145)

- “ Easy to understand, short and simple
- “ A useful provision that is easy to use and the text is easy to understand
- “ Got different choices for us to choose what do we need to do next, it's clear to understand

It allows customers to check for issues
(61)

- “ This facility is useful, to understand whether the problem is just a domestic plumbing matter, or part of a bigger incident
- “ This is a useful tool to have, enabling you to check if there has been an actual incident in your area if you feel that your water supply is being disrupted
- “ It's good that you can quickly check if it's a problem in the area before you try to contact anyone

It's easy to report an issue
(64)

- “ Easy to report a problem using the link
- “ Report can be submitted fast, online instead of calling
- “ Makes it easy to report

It's informative
(50)

- “ Handy to know how to report an incident when it happens
- “ Informative
- “ Helpful info for people like me

Support section: Dislike

The key theme amongst dislikes on the support section was the lack of clarity in who would qualify as a priority service customer. This led respondents to question whether they would receive the extra support or not. The inconsistent use of words was also mentioned with preference sitting with 'affected' over 'impacted'.

While only mentioned by a few, the colours used, and lack of contact details were also highlighted.

Lack of clarity on a priority customer (13)

- “ This isn't clear. Are priority services for anyone 'affected by an incident'? What do you mean by 'people who need it most'?
- “ Who is priority services? I read that and thought am I priority?
- “ What defines a priority person?

The use of the word 'impact' (6)

- “ I dislike impacting, you swap between using that and affecting. Affecting is more appropriate
- “ There is no such verb as "impacting" - just say "affecting"
- “ 'Affected' is used instead of 'impacted' in the first box. I think just stick with one term - being clear is more important than variety here

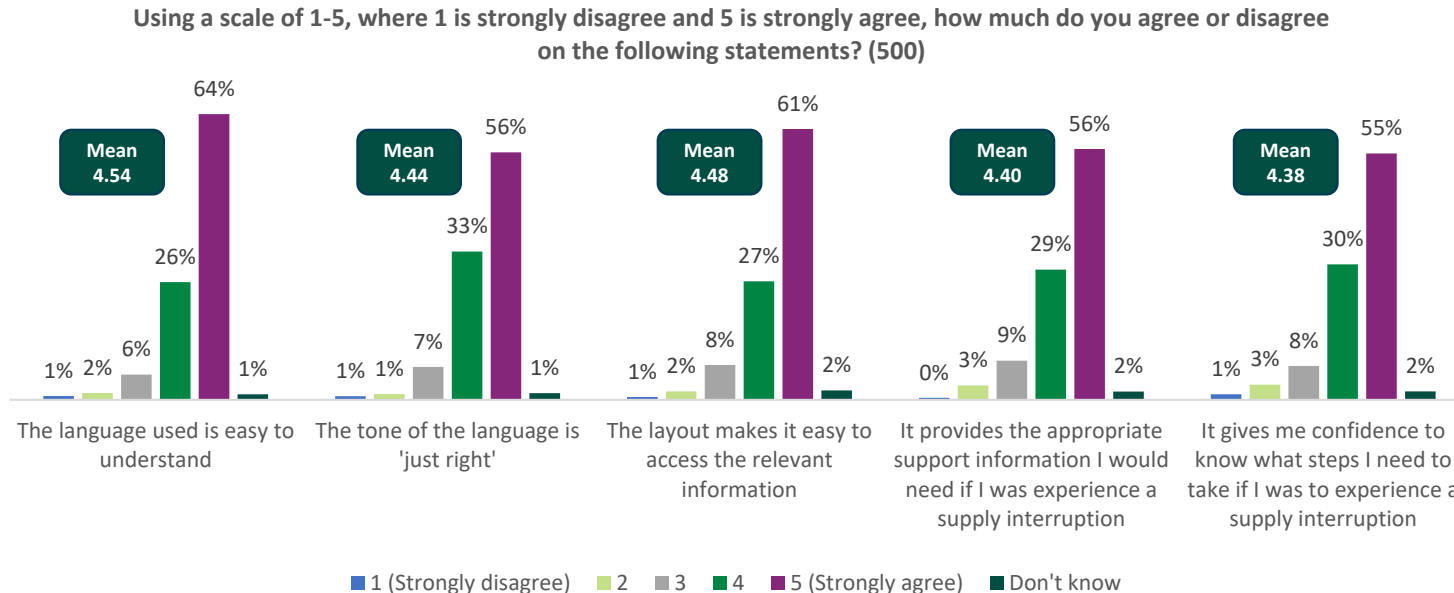
No contact details (5)

- “ Needs a phone number to call
- “ I don't see a phone number for emergencies
- “ No contact telephone number

The colours used (3)

- “ Disliked the colours
- “ Could be different colour
- “ The dark green and black are a bit too similar

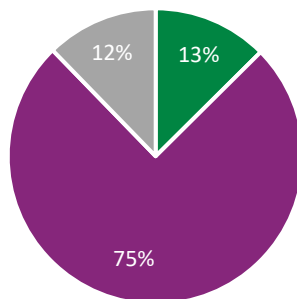
When reviewing the support section, NET agreement on all statements achieved 85% or higher. While still a high score, confidence in next steps received the lowest mean with 4.38 out of 5.



Those aged 60-69 were the most likely to feel the layout made it easy to access the relevant information

The majority (75%) felt nothing was missing from the support section. Details on how to contact United Utilities alongside timescales of resolution and support were key themes from the 13% who felt there was something missing.

Do you feel there's anything missing from the support section of the webpage? (500)



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

What do you think should be included? (63)

Contact details
(28)

“ Emergency service, i.e. in an emergency please call 01/07 etc between certain times and other numbers between other times, maybe a chat bot available could help people

“ United utilities contact details, when you are open and what to do/who to contact if you aren't

“ Contact us details for phone, Twitter, email etc

Timescales
(6)

“ No timescales given – i.e. within 1 hr or 10 days or... crucial information is the bit that really matters rather than all this stuff

“ It would be good to get an average time for issues to be resolved

“ Information on when you would give water out

Advice Feedback

Heat mapping tool: Advice section

Respondents were shown the advice section of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.



753 likes

Respondents liked how helpful, clear and understandable the advice was, particularly the advice on water pressure.



123 dislikes

The term 'Up My Street' confused some respondents. They also felt the section could provide more information for the customer and could be more eye catching.

Advice section: Like

The largest number of respondents who liked this section felt the advice offered was easy to understand and clearly laid out. They also found the information helpful in the situation; more specifically, information on water pressure was seen to be a useful addition.

It's easy to understand (159)	It's informative (121)	The inclusion of water pressure advice (28)	It's easy to check for an issue (24)
<p>“ Simple wording and limited text makes all easy to understand</p>	<p>“ A variety of helpful advice</p>	<p>“ Information on what action to take in the event of low pressure is very useful</p>	<p>“ Useful to click and go through straight away to see if you are affected</p>
<p>“ Good titles and text across all 3 boxes. Easy to understand</p>	<p>“ Helpful in this situation</p>	<p>“ Good to know that water pressure advice is readily available to me</p>	<p>“ Can quickly check for issues</p>
<p>“ Broken down into easy-to-understand sections</p>	<p>“ In a case of a real emergency, it is good that you can get real information from this website</p>	<p>“ It's a great thing that one can find out what to do on your webpage if there is poor flow of water</p>	<p>“ To check if or why the water might be off</p>
	<p>“ Helpful when there is an issue</p>		

Advice section: Dislike

The term 'Up my Street' sparked confusion with respondents. Without context, they felt it implied the issue did not relate to their properties. It was also felt that this section focused on what United Utilities did rather than advice for the customer. Suggestions for the section to be simpler and more eye catching were also key themes.

The term 'Up my Street' (9)

- “ The naming of this button doesn't match the description. The description says it's about the property not the street
- “ Up my Street I don't like, properly as I live in a converted mill and not on a street
- “ What does Up my Street mean

It does not feel like advice (7)

- “ Saying what's done by the company is not "advice"
- “ I don't want information about how you treat water - I want to know what to do if my water is poor
- “ 'What we do' isn't really advice - it's just information

The look of the section (7)

- “ Not bold enough - No water = emergency
- “ Bigger and bolder header needed
- “ Boring, needs made more colourful

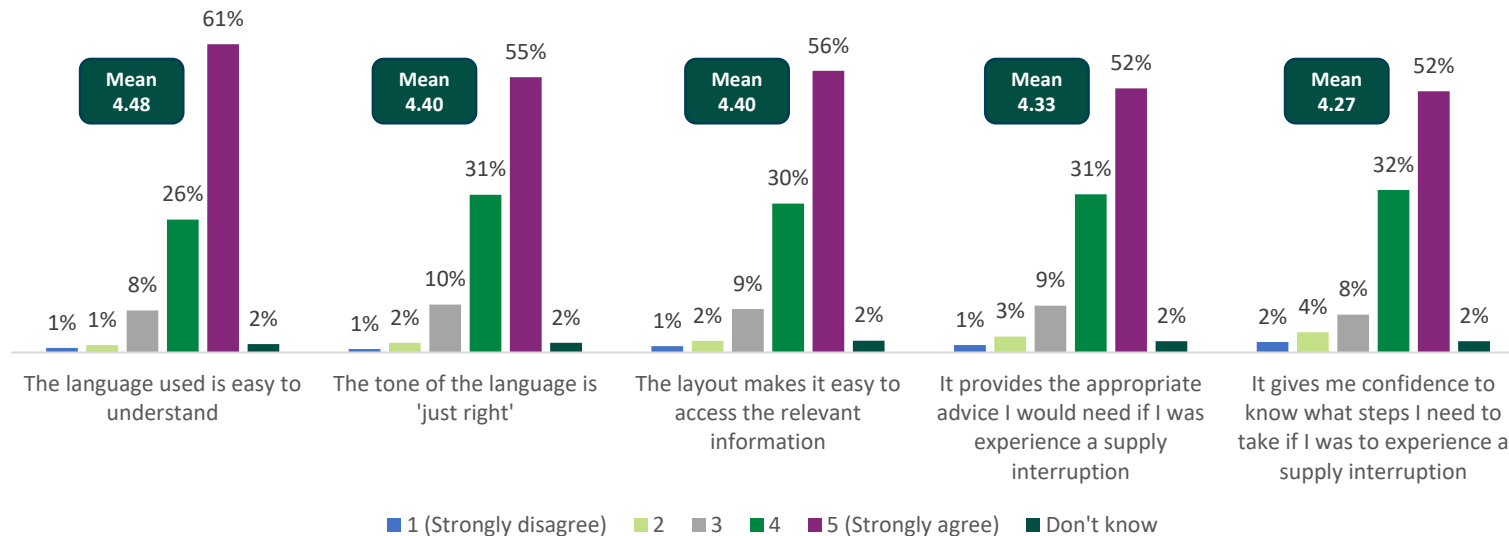
Wording is too complex (5)

- “ Should be simple statement as the no water option. E.g. "click here if you have low water pressure" and "click here if you have poor water quality"
- “ Why are you saying things like "[...]" in the instance of "[...]"? It's too wordy again. Either: "Click on the button below to find out about low water pressure." OR "Why do you have low water pressure? Click on the button below to find out"

NET agreement on the advice section achieved a minimum of 83% across all statements.

Confidence in next steps reached an average of 4.27 out of 5, a .11 decrease when compared to the support section of the webpage.

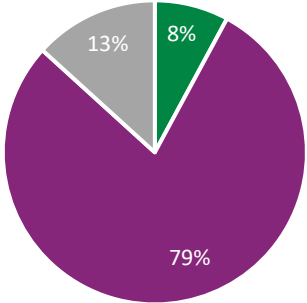
Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree on the following statements? (500)



50-59 were significantly more likely to strongly agree that the section provides the appropriate advice

Only 8% of respondents felt there was something missing from the advice section. Reasons underpinning this were mostly individual, however the provision of contact details and an additional option for further advice were suggested as improvements.

Do you feel there's anything missing from the advice section of the webpage? (499)



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

What do you think should be included? (39)

Contact details (6)

“ Phone number alternative

“ A contact telephone number

“ Alternative contact information

An additional option for advice not covered (5)

“ Ask if there anything else the customer needs advice on not already covered

“ An "other" section

“ Maybe a fourth option in case your issue isn't one of the 3 listed

FAQs Feedback

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 1 – How can I check the progress of a job in my area?

Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.

Frequently asked questions

How can I check the progress of a job in my area?

For any reported problems in your area you can use our online tool [Up My Street](#). It's quick and easy to use, type in your postcode or the problem location and you can keep an eye on our progress. If there isn't an existing problem, you can report it to us and our team will investigate this for you as soon as they can.

For our wider scaled incidents you can find [live updates here](#). We'll keep you updated regularly until everything has been resolved.



392 likes

The answer was found to be helpful and easy to understand. Particularly, the ability to track progress with the direct links included was viewed favourably.

Frequently asked questions

How can I check the progress of a job in my area?

For any reported problems in your area you can use our online tool [Up My Street](#). It's quick and easy to use, type in your postcode or the problem location and you can keep an eye on our progress. If there isn't an existing problem, you can report it to us and our team will investigate this for you as soon as they can.

For our wider scaled incidents you can find [live updates here](#). We'll keep you updated regularly until everything has been resolved.



59 dislikes

A small portion of respondents expressed concern for the provision of advice for the digitally excluded. They also felt some of the terms used could be simplified.

FAQ 1 – How can I check the progress of a job in my area? - Like

The first FAQ was found to be helpful and easy to understand. Respondents particularly liked that United Utilities offers the opportunity to follow progress and felt directly linking the pages in the FAQ was useful.

The information is informative (62)	It's easy to understand (56)	Live progress updates (45)	Direct links (28)
“ A useful provision	“ Clear advice for finding the current status of an issue	“ Really like live updates!	“ These are good useful links with clear wording on what they're for and how to access them
“ A useful summary	“ The wording is clear and understandable throughout	“ Like the idea that there is live up to date information so you know what is happening	“ The localised link could be very useful
“ A really informative section I've used this myself	“ Comprehensive and easy to understand	“ I like that you can search on the website using your postcode. It is good that you can check the progress of a job in your area which may be causing some traffic disruption in your street	“ Love how they added links to help users
“ This is a good summary and reassuring that there are places to look	“ Perfectly clear wording with all relevant information available, and concise details of how to access it		

FAQ 1 – How can I check the progress of a job in my area? - Dislike

Concerns were raised regarding how the digitally excluded would be able to access these updates. Many of the remaining comments related to the terms used, specifically ‘wider scale’, ‘if there isn’t an existing problem’ and ‘job’. It was suggested they could be split out and simplified.

Accessibility for digitally excluded (7)

- “ Doesn’t cater for those who do not wish to use this medium
- “ What happens if someone doesn’t have access to a computer
- “ I wish that there was another way to get this information across to people who do not check these bulletins online

Confusion with term ‘wider scale’ (7)

- “ ‘Wider scaled incidents’ is vague. Why not ‘if an incident is affecting a wider area than just your locality’?
- “ Wider scaled. This isn’t clear. Do you mean wide-scale? Maybe you mean major incidents?
- “ Don’t know what ‘wider scaled incidents’ means. Maybe ‘larger’ or ‘more serious’? Depends what you’re trying to say

Confusion with term ‘if there isn’t an existing problem’ (5)

- “ You can definitely improve this wording. For example, ‘if there isn’t an existing problem’ doesn’t make sense. Maybe ‘if the problem isn’t already listed’
- “ Why would you check on progress if there isn’t an existing problem? Seems a bit confused
- “ Maybe separate out the info on existing incidents and reporting new incidents into two paragraphs

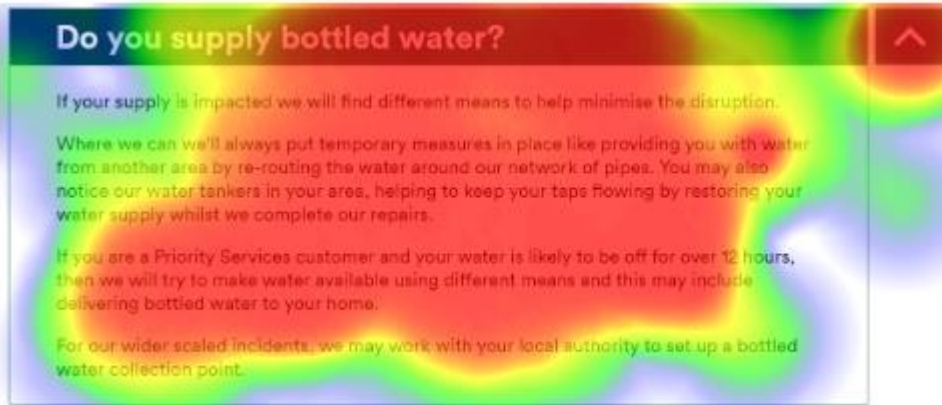
The use of ‘job’ in the question (4)

- “ What do you mean by a job? it’s unclear
- “ Confiding information about ‘job’
- “ The name doesn’t quite tell the story of what the tool is

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 2 – Do you supply bottled water?

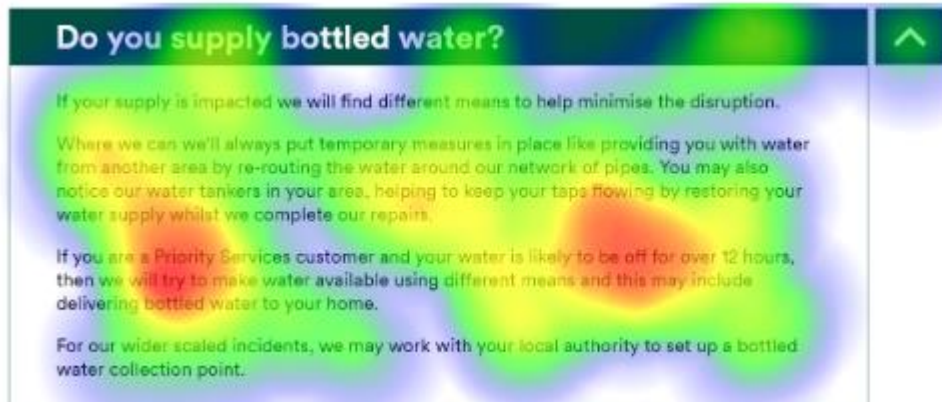
Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.



318 likes

Respondents felt this answer was informative and easy to understand. United Utilities were praised for the support and reassurance.



94 dislikes

Some respondents felt terms used in the answer projected uncertainty. The length of time before provision was mentioned along with the need for all customers to receive the support.

FAQ 2 – Do you supply bottled water? - Like

The answer to the second FAQ was well received by respondents. Alongside feeling it was informative and easy to understand, United Utilities were praised for supporting and reassuring customers should they experience an interruption.

The answer is informative (57)

“ Gives the right information to the question

“ Great information about how water will still be available if there was an issue in your area clear and easy to understand the different options

“ It provides the information needed if supply is affected for a period time

The provision of bottled water (50)

“ If water is interrupted, I like how supportive they are in ways to provide water for their customer

“ Delivery of water in bottles during appropriate times of need is really welcome

“ I like that they provide water during any ongoing issues

It's easy to understand (39)

“ Simple language easy to understand

“ Informative and didactic, easy to understand

“ Clearly worded and easy to follow

It provides reassurance (19)

“ I really like the tone of this. How you're reassuring us customers that no matter what you'll ensure we have water. It's greatly appreciated

“ Very reassuring into put customers minds at rest

“ This section is great just to reassure the customers that they will always be provided with the help needed if they are ever struggling due to a problem with the water source

FAQ 2 – Do you supply bottled water? - Dislike

As with FAQ 1, respondents disliked the terms ‘wider scaled incident’ and ‘impacted’. They also felt the use of the word ‘may’ projected uncertainty regarding what customer would receive, rather than an exact answer. While some customers focused their feedback on the service itself rather than the webpage, a few felt the section could be clearer on who was classed as a Priority Service customer.

The term ‘wider scaled incident’ (7)

- “ Wider scaled - this isn't easy language. Do you mean wide-scale, major incidents?
- “ The phrase "wider scaled incident" is vague and does not explain when bottled water will be provided
- “ Wider scaled incident terminology used again

The use of the word ‘may’ (6)

- “ Both remedial measure state 'may'. Surely should be 'will' as water is vital to life
- “ Use of the word may make it feel uncertain of the outcome at a time when you really need to know
- “ Too much reference to 'we may'. Customer would want to know what you will do

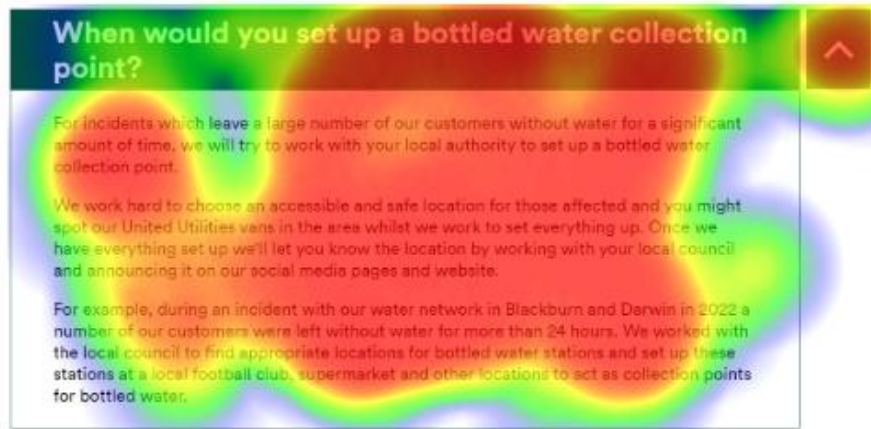
The word ‘impacted’ (4)

- “ I still think 'affected' is better. Is 'impacted' used by most people, or is it corporate speak? Not sure
- “ Affected NOT impacted. Impacted suggests a blockage when a bowel become impacted!
- “ Replace 'impacted' by 'interrupted'

Clearer info on a Priority Service customer (3)

- “ What is a Priority Services customer, and who decides, using what criteria?
- “ Perhaps a hover description of what a priority customer is
- “ It doesn't say who would be considered a priority and what other people are meant to do if the water is off for 12 hours

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 3 – When would you set up a bottled water collection point?

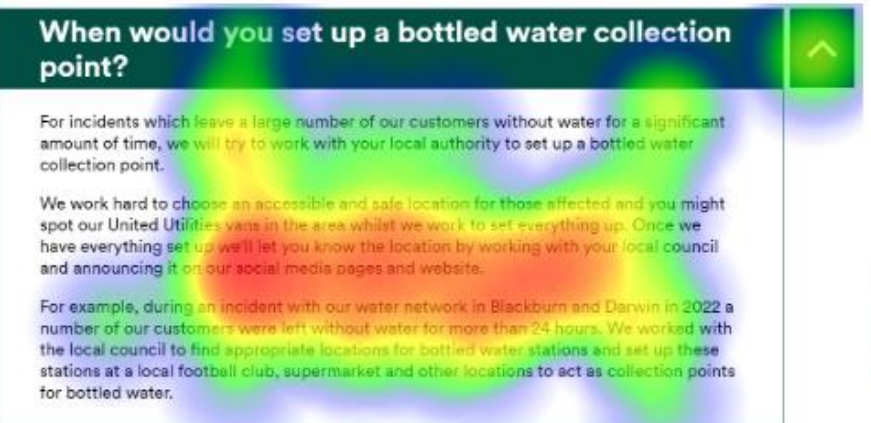


Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.

311 likes

Respondents found this informative and easy to understand, while praising the idea of a collection point and the use of examples within the answer.



87 dislikes

Respondents questioned how all customers would be aware of, and have the ability to use, the collection point. They also found the answer to be too wordy and lacking clarity on timescales.

FAQ 3 – When would you set up a bottled water collection point? - Like

The answer was found to be informative and easy to understand. The provision of a bottled water collection point was seen as a good idea in this situation. Respondents also found a real example as valuable, with one describing it as adding credibility.

The answer is informative (50)

- “ There is plenty of relevant and useful information
- “ Tells the reader where to find future information easily or to wait to be contacted
- “ This is a great way of informing customers how they can find and access bottled water when they are in need, working with the council etc a great way to keep the community informed

It's easy to understand (46)

- “ Simple to understand, a larger problem might evoke this sort of question
- “ The response is easy to understand
- “ Easy advice to follow and understand

The provision of a water collection point (33)

- “ Very clear and the location of bottled water supply is a great idea. It's where people would normally go. Great idea
- “ Water collection point is a very good idea
- “ Setting up a bottled water collection is a great idea and will smooth any issues during a problem with water supply

The use of an example (27)

- “ Having an example is useful to show what could be expected
- “ Good to see an actual real example
- “ I like the example you quoted. It gives it credibility
- “ Clear example of a situation is very helpful

FAQ 3 – When would you set up a bottled water collection point? - Dislike

The main theme amongst this group was concern for digitally excluded customers and how United Utilities would make them aware of the collection point. There was also concern for those customers who may not be able to access the collection point.

Specific to the webpage, it was thought that there was too much text and a lack of clarity regarding the length of time before the collection point would be offered.

Accessibility for the digitally excluded (11)

“ How did you communicate with customers who were not on the internet

“ This is good however for older customers or those without and online access or presence they won't know

“ It's okay but how do you know every house will find out what's going on as to the arrangements? Especially for the elderly

Too much text (11)

“ Too wordy. I got bored reading it and started skimming

“ Very wordy - would discourage people to read

“ Unnecessary reading while having a water crisis

Concerns around ability to collect (7)

“ What if those concerned can't get to supply points?

“ Not everyone is able to collect and carry bottles of water. something needs to be in place for them

“ Solution ok for most people but what about disabled people who are unable to get to collection point or carry supplies home

Lack of clarity on 'significant time' (6)

“ What is a significant time 12 hours 18 hours 24 hours?

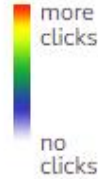
“ What is a significant time? I see lower down that you mention 24 hours, but without any clear guidance I wouldn't know whether I should be planning to purchase water

“ Significant amount of time is too vague

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 4 – Will I receive compensation?

Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.



329 likes

Respondents praised the compensation and the proactive payment. They felt the FAQ was informative and easy to understand.



57 dislikes

It was suggested that simpler language could be utilised within this response and that it could include further details on payment and how to contact United Utilities.

FAQ 4 – Will I receive compensation? - Like

Positive comments focused on the compensation itself, with customers feeling it was an important addition. They also praised that compensation is offered proactively.

Consistent with previous sections, customers felt this answer was easy to understand and informative, clearly addressing the query presented.

Compensation is positive (68)

“ This is a great addition. It lets people know who are worried about paying their bill, even with no water, will receive some compensation. I think this is an important addition

“ I like that it provides information on compensation - many people including myself worry about paying for interrupted services so this is very reassuring

The answer is informative (53)

“ Giving information for even the less important stuff- well done

“ Very informative

“ Very clear information on when to expect compensation

It's easy to understand (53)

“ Clearly sets out when you will qualify for compensation

“ Clear, informative and shows how you do not need to do anything as a customer

“ Good, clear info addressing the query

Proactive payment (28)

“ Automatic compensation is a good move

“ Good that people who are affected for a long time will automatically be compensated without having to apply

“ Compensation is given without having to ask

FAQ 4 – Will I receive compensation? - Dislike

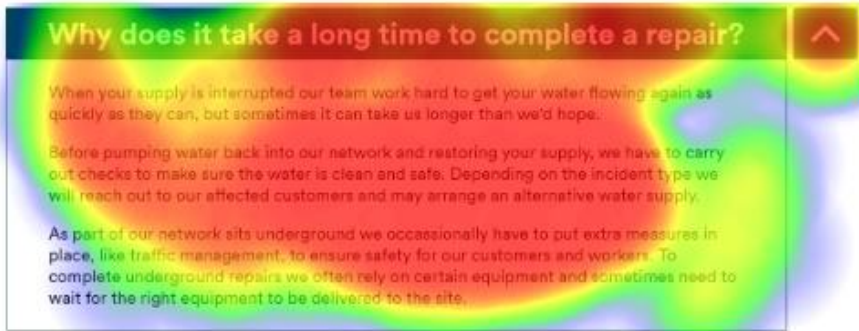
These respondents felt there should still be contact details included, allowing customers to follow up should there be an issue. It was also suggested that language could be simplified, mainly the word 'proactive'.

Contact details (7)	Simplify language used (5)	Lack of information on how it will be paid (4)
<p>“ Need to know how to contact if the payment isn't made as stated</p>	<p>“ Why use the word 'proactively'? Better to say that the compensation is automatically applied (to your bill?). Do we really need to know how many data loggers you have on the system? Maybe just say the UU routinely monitors the performance of the network and can quickly identify problems on the network</p>	<p>“ Doesn't say how or when it will be paid</p>
<p>“ There should be a phone number. Not everybody is website-savvy</p>		<p>“ How will you pay me cheque, bill reduction?</p>
<p>“ Contact if this logging not correct?</p>	<p>“ 'Automatically' is easier to understand than 'proactively'</p>	<p>“ How will you pay me, and what should I do if I don't receive a payment?</p>

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 5 – Why does it take a long time to complete a repair?

Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.



310 likes

Respondents felt this section used simple and accessible language while providing extra detail and assurance to customers.



58 dislikes

Some thought it was too wordy and sounded like an excuse, while others preferred the use of different terms.

FAQ 5 – Why does it take a long time to complete a repair?- Like

Respondents found this section informative, using simple and accessible language. They felt the extra detail into the process helps customers understand the timescales as well gives assurance to their safety.

The answer is informative
(64)

- “ Informative and transparent
- “ Informative and lets us know what you're doing
- “ Informative for customers

It's easy to understand
(53)

- “ This is clear why there are sometimes delays, the language is simple, and it seems honest and open
- “ Explained in clear and accessible language
- “ Didactic and presented in a clear and easy to understand way

Further detail on the process
(38)

- “ Nice to be told why the job may take longer than we would think it should
- “ I think this is a necessary FAQ. People may be worried about how long things are taking. This could put them at ease as it explains things quite well
- “ It is good to know the reasons why it may take so long and is reassuring

Assurance safety checks are happening
(16)

- “ I am glad that before putting water back into the tanks, they check that it is clean and safe, which is really good to know
- “ Checks that water is clean and safe are very important
- “ Good to understand the checks in place so that water is safe

FAQ 5 – Why does it take a long time to complete a repair?- Dislike

Those who disliked this section felt like the answer was unspecific, making it sound like an excuse. It was also suggested that the answer could be shorter and more to the point. A few respondents noticed a spelling mistake of the word 'occasionally', while others preferred that 'contact' is used rather than reach out.

It sounds like an excuse (5)

- “ *This sounds like a made-up excuse*
- “ *A bit vague and unspecific, too like an excuse rather than particular explanation*
- “ *It's just making excuses for work over running*

Too much information (5)

- “ *Rather wordy, could be shorter while still being clear*
- “ *'Depending on the incident type' is meaningless as to most people a supply problem is a supply problem. 'In some cases we have to contact our customers and set up an alternative water supply until the problem is fixed'*
- “ *Too long and wordy*

Spelling mistake (4)

- “ *Typo - occasionally, not occassionally*
- “ *Spelling mistake*
- “ *Occasionally*
- “ *Spelling!*

The use of 'reach out' (3)

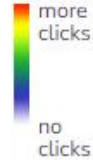
- “ *Don't use American jargon, you mean contact I think*
- “ *Can you not just say 'contact'?*
- “ *Why not just 'contact'? 'Reach out' is yet another silly jargon expression*

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 6 – How will you contact me if my supply is interrupted?

How will you contact me if my supply is interrupted?

We work hard to keep all our impacted customers updated if affected by an incident and we will proactively contact you to let you know our progress. During an incident our contact centre can get very busy, and we may add a recorded message onto our phone lines to keep you updated, as well as updating our website. For customers who have provided us with their contact details, you may receive a text or an email from our Customer Incident Team. If you would like to update your personal details, to ensure you are kept updated during emergencies, you can visit [MyAccount](#) or alternatively you can call us on 0345 672 2999.

For our priority services customers we will aim to contact you to understand how we can help, based on your preferred method of contact and individual circumstances. We offer extra help to our customers who have a medical need for water and so if there is an incident affecting your supply then it is our priority to contact you as soon as we can. You can find out more on [how we support our priority services customer during an incident here](#).



333 likes

Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.

This was seen as helpful and simple. Particular emphasis was placed on the different methods of communication used to reach different customers.

How will you contact me if my supply is interrupted?

We work hard to keep all our impacted customers updated if affected by an incident and we will proactively contact you to let you know our progress. During an incident our contact centre can get very busy, and we may add a recorded message onto our phone lines to keep you updated, as well as updating our website. For customers who have provided us with their contact details, you may receive a text or an email from our Customer Incident Team. If you would like to update your personal details, to ensure you are kept updated during emergencies, you can visit [MyAccount](#) or alternatively you can call us on 0345 672 2999.

For our priority services customers we will aim to contact you to understand how we can help, based on your preferred method of contact and individual circumstances. We offer extra help to our customers who have a medical need for water and so if there is an incident affecting your supply then it is our priority to contact you as soon as we can. You can find out more on [how we support our priority services customer during an incident here](#).



58 dislikes

It was suggested the information could be condensed while being clearer on some of the terms used.

FAQ 6 – How will you contact me if my supply is interrupted?- Like

It was felt the answer provided in this FAQ was helpful and gives the appropriate information simply. Respondents particularly liked that different methods of communication are used, in addition to the additional proactive support for priority customers.

The answer is informative
(87)

- “ Great information to make users understand where to go for help
- “ Answers the FAQ succinctly and refers/ links to other webpages for further info/ explanations
- “ Helpful and useful information given

It's easy to understand
(30)

- “ Simple language easy to understand
- “ The information is clear and concise and easy to understand and navigate
- “ Everything is clearly laid out and has appropriate contact info or how to change their details to keep updated

Different methods of communication offered
(27)

- “ Demonstrate different methods of communication and ways which customers can find out more information if needed
- “ The way that the company are updated multiple different platforms is great as it gives people plenty of different ways to find out progress of the job being carried out

Additional support for priority customers
(15)

- “ I like fact that you will actively try to contact people to inform them about the issue, especially the priority people
- “ Contacting those most vulnerable to provide support
- “ Details of support for priority customers to reduce stress

FAQ 6 – How will you contact me if my supply is interrupted?- Dislike

Respondents felt this answer could be summarised into bullet points to minimise the length of text. There were questions asked by some as to how digitally excluded customers would be contacted as well as who qualifies as a priority customer. The use of 'may' and 'aim to' also sparked uncertainty for respondents.

Too much information (9)

““ *Could be condensed*

““ *A little long winded. Bullet points?*

““ *A bit too many words*

Concerns for digitally excluded (3)

““ *There is no clear explanation of how people without internet access and mobile phones might be contacted in the event of a problem with their supply*

““ *Some elderly people don't have phones or internet access, and I'm now wondering how they would get contacted if they have no preferred method*

Terms used are unclear (3)

““ *"Aim to "*

““ *"May"*

““ *Would you contact each customer-it says you may?*

Define priority customer (2)

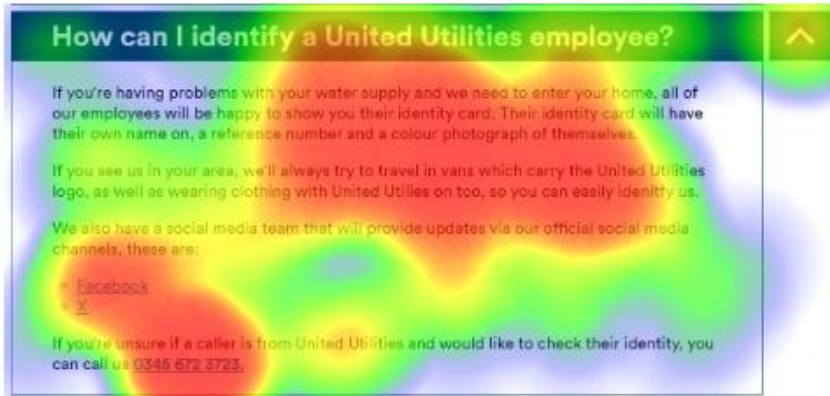
““ *Please define 'Priority services' customer*

““ *It doesn't state where to find it who would be a priority*

Heat mapping tool: FAQ 7 – How can I identify a United Utilities employee?

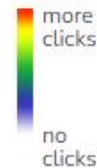
Respondents were shown an FAQ of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked.

The images show the overall heatmap results.



328 likes

Informing customers of the different ways to keep customers safe was seen as reassuring. Respondents felt this was informative and clear.



45 dislikes

Suggestions for updates to be put on different channels, alongside images for reference, was seen as beneficial.

FAQ 7 – How can I identify a United Utilities employee?- Like

This section of the FAQs was seen to be an important addition, demonstrating that United Utilities have different ways of keeping customers safe and reassured. Respondents also found it informative and clearly laid out.

United Utilities ways of keeping customers safe
(68)

- “ This is essential in this day and age as bogus people will use any event to get inside people’s home. I would always challenge anyone knocking at my door without prior knowledge and it’s great to know that official passes and other ways of confirming identification is available
- “ It’s good that there are options to verify the identity

The answer is informative
(58)

- “ Informative and also let’s you know how to seek confirmation if needed
- “ A helpful explanation of how to identify employees of the organisation
- “ Very useful information

Gives customers reassurance
(21)

- “ Reassurance that employers can easily be identified for safety purposes
- “ Important reassurance
- “ This is a great way to reassure people as you are informing them of how they can find a true member of staff

It’s easy to understand
(21)

- “ Very clear with immediate method of clarification if unsure
- “ To the point, clearly informs the customer
- “ Good clear info with safety in mind

FAQ 7 – How can I identify a United Utilities employee?- Dislike

Respondents felt that updates could be posted via other methods, e.g. the United Utilities website for those who do not use social media. It was also suggested that an image showing ID cards and the clothing staff could be wearing would be beneficial.

Two further respondents felt that the phone number should be more of a focus than the social media channels in the layout of this answer.

The use of social media (8)

“ Not everybody uses Facebook & X

“ What about your website if I don't do X or Facebook

“ Some people don't use social media

Include an example (4)

“ Maybe supply a photographic example of the ID, vans and clothing

“ Why not show an example of an official ID card so customers can check the one they are presented with

“ Picture to support what the ID card looks like?

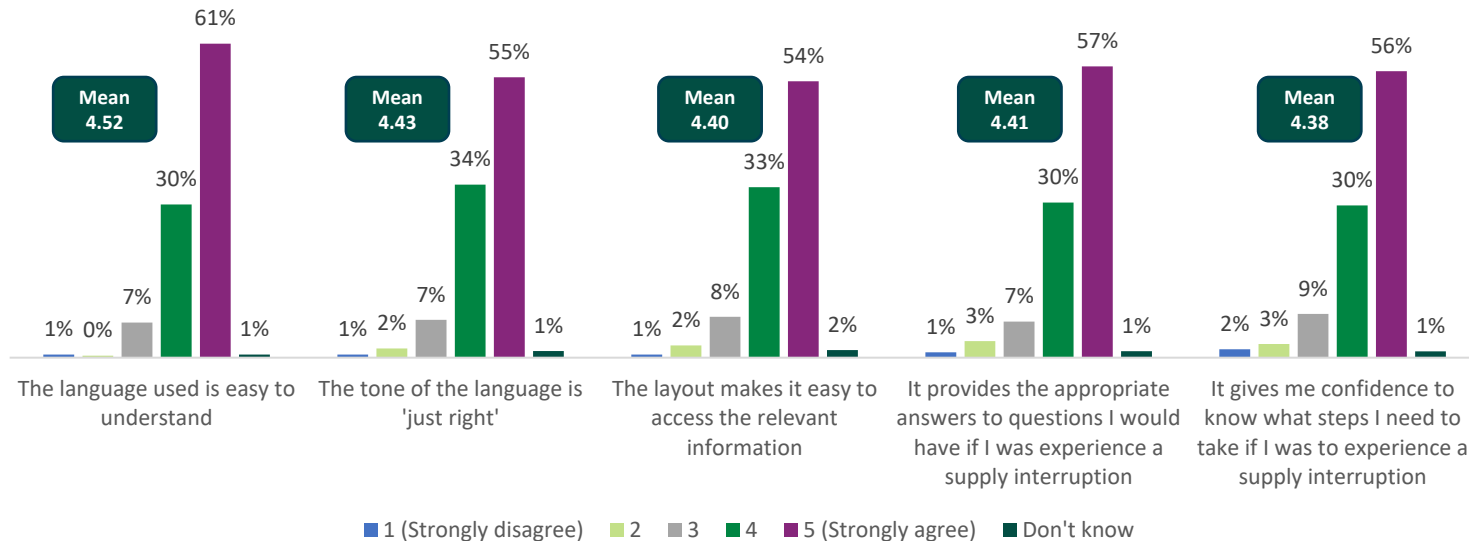
More focus on phone number (2)

“ Think the sentence and telephone number relating to contacting United Utilities if you are unsure of whether the caller is genuine should be the first sentence in this section not the last sentence

“ The phone is only an afterthought, it should come first, before social media to which many will not have access

NET agreement across all statements achieved a high score of 85% or above regarding the full FAQs section. Consistent with previous sections, confidence to know the next steps received the lowest average, however still a high score (4.38 out of 5).

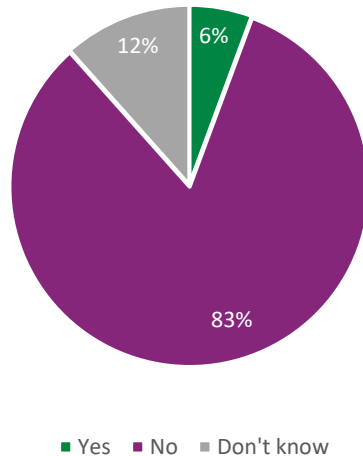
Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree on the following statements? (500)



Those from Cheshire were significantly more likely than those from Lancashire to agree it gives confidence to know what steps to take

Only 6% felt there was something missing from the FAQs section. A key theme amongst this group was information on what customers need to do during an interruption, e.g. whether it is safe to use home appliances.

Do you feel there is any content missing from the FAQs section of the webpage? (500)



What do you think should be included? (28)

What customers need to do when experiencing an interruption (8)

“ I'm not sure if there are any steps I should be taking within my home if the water supply is interrupted - e.g. is it safe to leave my combi boiler running? I'd also like some information about what to do when the water comes back on e.g. is it safe to drink? I appreciate this information may be available elsewhere on the website, but perhaps you could provide a link

Details to speak to a staff member (3)

“ Assurance that a customer can speak to a person about the issue in a prompt manner

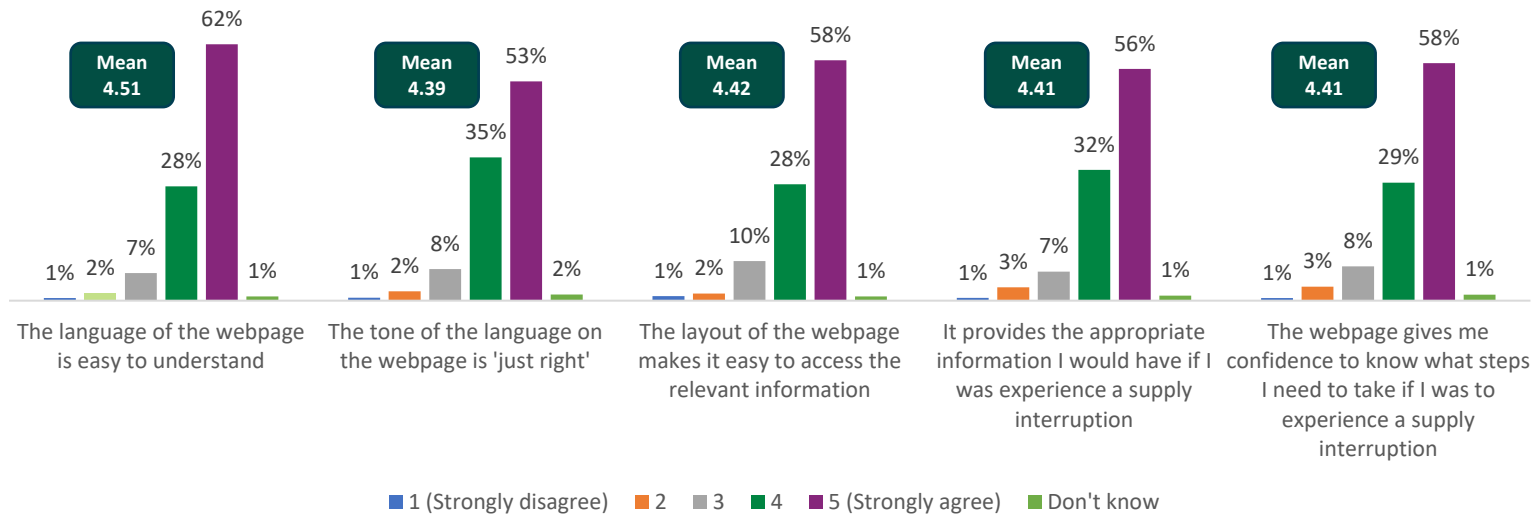
“ How to SPEAK to someone!

“ How can I speak to someone?

Full Webpage Feedback

NET agreement achieved over 86% for all statements. The highest average was achieved when considering the ease of understanding (4.51 out of 5), while the lowest was the tone of the language (4.39 out of 5).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree on the following statements? (500)



Those with previous interruption experience were significantly more likely to disagree that the page gives confidence in next steps than those without previous experience. Comments from this group suggest this is due to lack of clear contact details and methods, and minimal details such as timescales, or steps on what the customer should do if experiencing an interruption.

Do you feel there are any improvements that can be made to the webpage?

The vast majority felt there was nothing to improve about the webpage. While 168 of those left no detail, many did leave positive comments describing the webpage as easy on the eye, reassuring and comprehensive.

The webpage is good as it is
(52)

- “ I don't feel that improvement is possible as the provision is excellent
- “ The website is great. Easy on the eye and easy to understand
- “ This is an excellent webpage, superior by far to other utility providers

The webpage provides all relevant information
(62)

- “ I genuinely think the layout is great. It's easy to navigate, even for people who aren't as tech savvy. I don't think you need to do any changes. This gives all the necessary information to give answers to the people with a variety of questions
- “ None, all the information is there no matter what the situation and it gives me peace of mind knowing I can access info at any time or receive alerts of a local incident

The webpage is easy to understand
(45)

- “ Everything seems to have been covered and the information is laid out in a comprehensive way making it easy to read and understand
- “ I don't feel any improvements are necessary, it is all clear and very easy to understand
- “ No, I think this is clear and easy to understand

The layout is clear
(16)

- “ Well laid out and easy to navigate
- “ No. I think it's very well laid out and easy to find the help and advice needed
- “ Not really....it is well set-out and seems to deal with the major queries you would have in the event of a disruption to your water supply

Do you feel there are any improvements that can be made to the webpage?

Improvements mainly concerned the functions already provided through the 'ReciteMe' accessibility help on the webpage, e.g. changing font size and colour themes, suggesting these functions should be more apparent. It was also suggested that the provision of clearer contact details would be beneficial, as well as summaries of some of the information.

The ability to change the font/text (20)

- “ Possibly option to increase size of font
- “ A button to make the print larger
- “ Make it more user friendly in terms of fonts and font sizes

Provide contact details clearly (15)

- “ A telephone number in the rest of the drop-down menus may be useful as well as those in the bottom two
- “ ensure emergency phone numbers are always visible
- “ More emphasis/prevalence given to a phone number

Summarise the text (11)

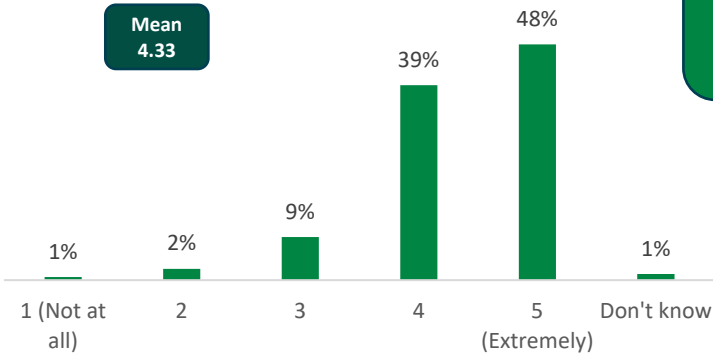
- “ Maybe cut down the text slightly as there is a lot
- “ Some of the explanations are lengthy and some people may find it easier if they had a simpler read version
- “ The info is too long and should be larger with main points highlighted

The ability to change the colours for easier reading (9)

- “ Make it easy to read for customers who are visually impaired perhaps change the font and colour
- “ I don't find the small white print on a green background easy to read. Back print on a light background is much more accessible
- “ The font can be a bit difficult with someone with dyslexia like myself to read however mainly the white on green background

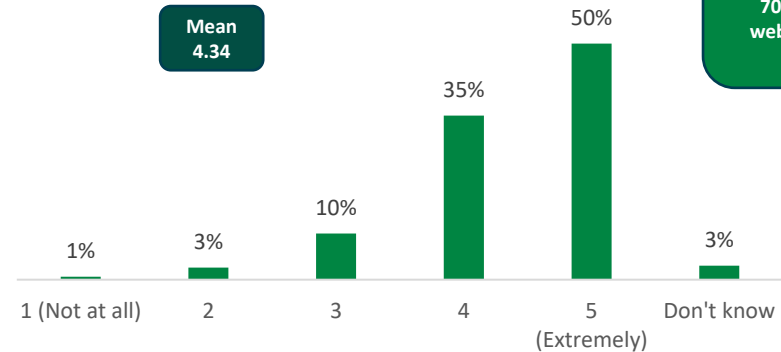
An average of 4.33 out of 5 was achieved when considering how customer friendly the webpage is. Accessibility of the webpage achieved 4.34 out of 5.

Overall, how customer friendly do you feel the supply interruptions webpage is? (500)



Those with previous interruption experience were significantly less likely to find the webpage customer friendly than those without experience

How accessible do you feel the information on the webpage is for all customers? (500)



30-39 were significantly more likely than those 70+ in finding the webpage accessible

What, if anything, could United Utilities do to improve the accessibility of the content, style and information of the webpage?

As with general improvements, most did not feel there was anything to improve for accessibility, citing it was clear and easy to understand.

As the top two key improvements related to provisions already offered by United Utilities, it would suggest that both contact with the digitally excluded and the functionalities of ReciteMe should be advertised more clearly.

Accessibility of info for digitally excluded (25)

- “ Not everyone has access to the internet. A more inclusive way would be a well-resourced phone line given on bills
- “ Most of your customer base will have access to a computer but there will still be a small percentage who don't. So potential leaflet drop or loud haler announcement in some communities might be needed. Webpage is good

The ability to change the font/text (17)

- “ Provide more tools for different fonts, sizes, colours, light/dark feature options - this makes it more inclusive and sensitive to customers' needs
- “ Maybe a slightly larger print in the information sections
- “ Maybe the font size a bit bigger is easy for elder to read

Provide contact details clearly (13)

- “ Include some mention of a contact telephone number. This would allow customers with internet access to provide any of their neighbours without it a means of getting information or contacting United Utilities
- “ Have a contact number if people are struggling to understand the information

Content in different languages (8)

- “ A link to translate for people to use if English is not their first language
- “ BSL translation
- “ The facility for different languages, and reading aloud in different languages

Conclusions and recommendations

Understanding the language

Respondents were most likely to strongly agree that all areas of the webpage used a language that was easy to understand. The means scores ranged from 4.48 to 4.54 with the full webpage returning an average of 4.51 out of 5. Respondents found all areas of the webpage easy to understand, informative and reassuring.

The tone of the language

Around half of all respondents strongly agreed that the tone of the language was 'just right' for all sections of the webpage. The support section of the webpage returned the highest average with 4.44 out of 5. However certain terms used throughout were found to be unclear – **reconsider these words used to ensure clarity and reassurance to customers.**

Accessing the relevant information

Respondents were most likely to think the support section of the webpage was laid out in an easy way to access the relevant information, 61% strongly agreed with this. The full webpage received an average of 4.42 out of 5.

Conclusions and recommendations

The relevance of the information

Respondents found the full webpage provided the appropriate information with an average of 4.41 out of 5. The FAQs section received the highest percentage of respondents strongly agreeing to this with 57%.

Support such as live progress updates, bottled water, compensation and pressure advice were particularly praised by respondents. Contact details and timescales were cited as a suggestion – **consider including these more specific details throughout.**

Confidence in next steps

An average of 4.41 felt the full webpage would give them confidence to know what steps to take. While still a high score, the advice section returned the lowest confidence with 4.27 out of 5. Details on what a customer can and can't do in their home during an interruption was felt to be missing from the webpage – **could this be an additional FAQ?**

Inclusivity

Around half of all respondents found the webpage extremely customer friendly (48%) and extremely accessible to all customers (50%). Improvements focussed on inclusivity. For example, changing the size / colour of the text and concerns for the digitally excluded. There was also a wish for contact details to be clearer. Some cited dissatisfaction with some of the terms used throughout the webpage - **focus on making the additional functions for vulnerable customers via ReciteMe more prominent**





Appendices

Completing the feedback loop

In June 2023, we completed the feedback loop with In the Flow community members to demonstrate how their feedback has been used to improve the webpage.

Supply Interruptions Webpage Feedback

In February, you completed a survey on our Supply Interruptions Webpage, here's some of the things your valuable feedback has helped improve for our customers

-  **Visual Improvements**
You said... the banner at the top of the page wasn't clear and the image wasn't helpful. **United Utilities has removed the image, and made the text bolder and clearer.**
-  **Telephone Number Support**
You said... the telephone number was difficult to find. **The phone number is now repeated throughout the sections and in bold.**
-  **Supply Interruption Advice**
You said... it wasn't clear what customers needed to do during a supply interruption. **There is now a section on what you can do at home in this situation.**
-  **PSR Accessibility**
You said... it wasn't clear who was on the Priority Services Register and how those digitally excluded accessed help. **There is now an improved link for the Priority Services, and information on how United Utilities will contact people through a variety of methods such as letters and phone calls.**

We received positive feedback on the new and improved page, in addition to members feeling valued that their feedback has been utilised.

This an excellent home page. Your / Our number 1 questions one page, no routing through menus to try and figure out what category the issues might be under. Big and bold, easy to navigate. Well done everyone 🤩🏆

Yes, page looks really good. Easy to find all the information you may require even for those with only limited IT skills. Just need to make sure that information about and status of any problems is updated regularly.

Great to see feedback from this forum being actioned and improving communications for all customers.

Good to be consulted to help improve the service you offer to us all.

Data statement

Note on analysis

There is a very small portion of In the Flow community members who do not have demographic information available due to missing profile data. These have been classified as 'prefer not to say' and 'other'.

In order for the full research sample to be representative of United Utilities customers, this group has been down weighted to a miniscule amount, so that when figures are rounded to whole numbers, they equal zero. All other customers meet the quota and equal the proportions specified. As an effect of weighting, some subgroup base sizes may not equal the total base displayed, to a minor extent.

Some percentages may not add up to a sum of 100%. This is due to rounding of percentages to display a whole number, consistent with reporting formatting.

All data from external panel providers has been cleaned and vetted against rigid standards to remove those that flatline (select the first choice on all questions in order to complete the survey quicker), speeders (completion faster than 1/3 of the total LOI (5 minutes) and poor verbatim (gibberish, random characters and profanities).

All statistical significance has been calculated using a Z-Test between subgroups across all question options.

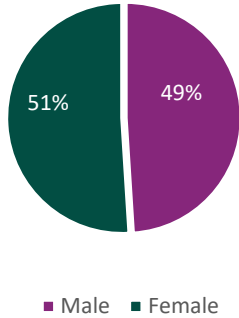
For analysis purposes, some response sentiments have been grouped into 'NET' agreement/disagreement. These are derived variables which are an aggregation of question options from scaled questions, for example, 1 – strongly disagree and 2 – disagree would constitute NET disagree.

Sample profile

Total	Unweighted		Weighted		UU customer base
	Count	%	Count	%	%
Gender					
Male	244	49%	245	49%	49%
Female	252	50%	255	51%	51%
Age					
18-29	38	8%	40	8%	8%
30-39	84	17%	80	16%	16%
40-49	78	16%	85	17%	17%
50-59	91	18%	100	20%	20%
60-69	82	16%	80	16%	16%
70+	117	23%	115	23%	23%
Region					
Cheshire	71	14%	70	14%	14%
Cumbria	43	9%	45	9%	9%
Greater Manchester	186	37%	185	37%	37%
Lancashire	101	20%	100	20%	20%
Merseyside	93	19%	100	20%	20%
Region					
Metered	237	47%	235	47%	47%
Unmetered	242	48%	265	53%	53%

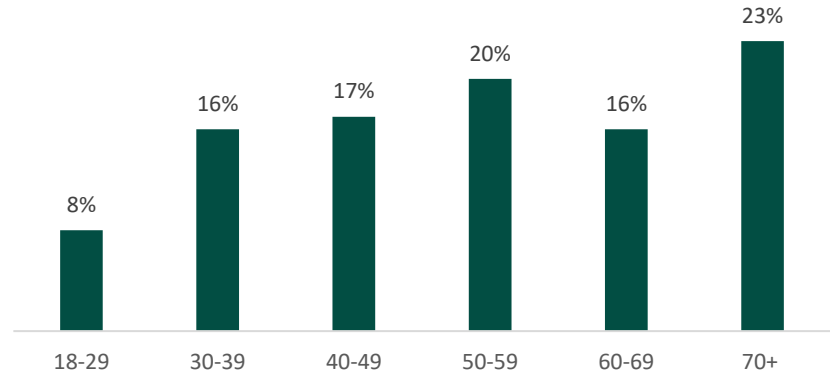
Demographic tables

How would you describe yourself?



Gender	Count	%
Male	245	49%
Female	255	51%
Total	500	100%

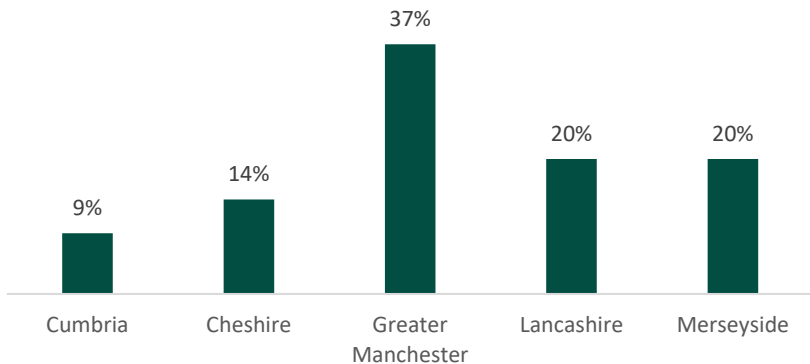
Which of the following age bands do you fall into?



Age	Count	%
18-29	40	8%
30-39	80	16%
40-49	85	17%
50-59	100	20%
60-69	80	16%
70+	115	23%
Total	500	100%

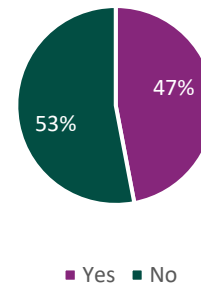
Demographic tables

Which of the following regions do you live in? (500)



Region	Count	%
Cumbria	45	9%
Cheshire	70	14%
Greater Manchester	185	37%
Lancashire	100	20%
Merseyside	100	20%
Total	500	100%

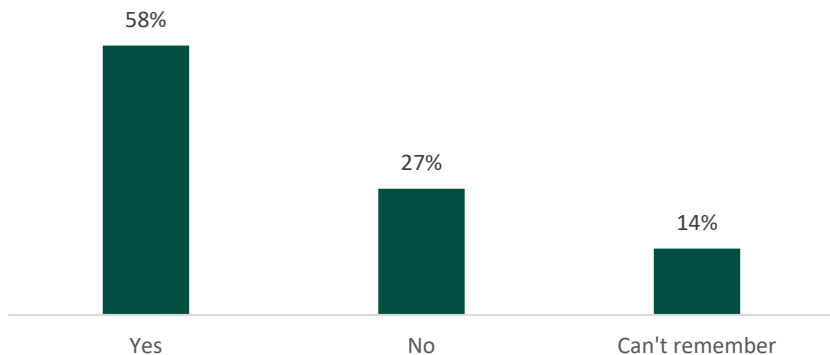
Do you currently have a water meter installed at your home? (500)



Water meter status	Count	%
Yes	235	47%
No	265	53%
Total	500	100%

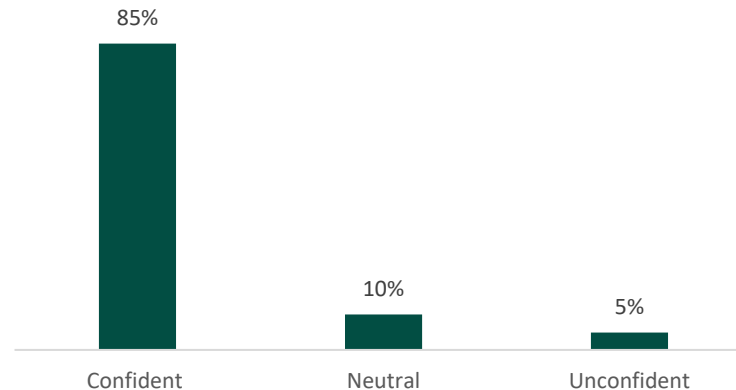
Demographic tables

Have you previously experienced an interruption to your water supply?



Previous interruption	Count	%
Yes	292	58%
No	137	27%
Can't remember	72	14%
Total	501	100%

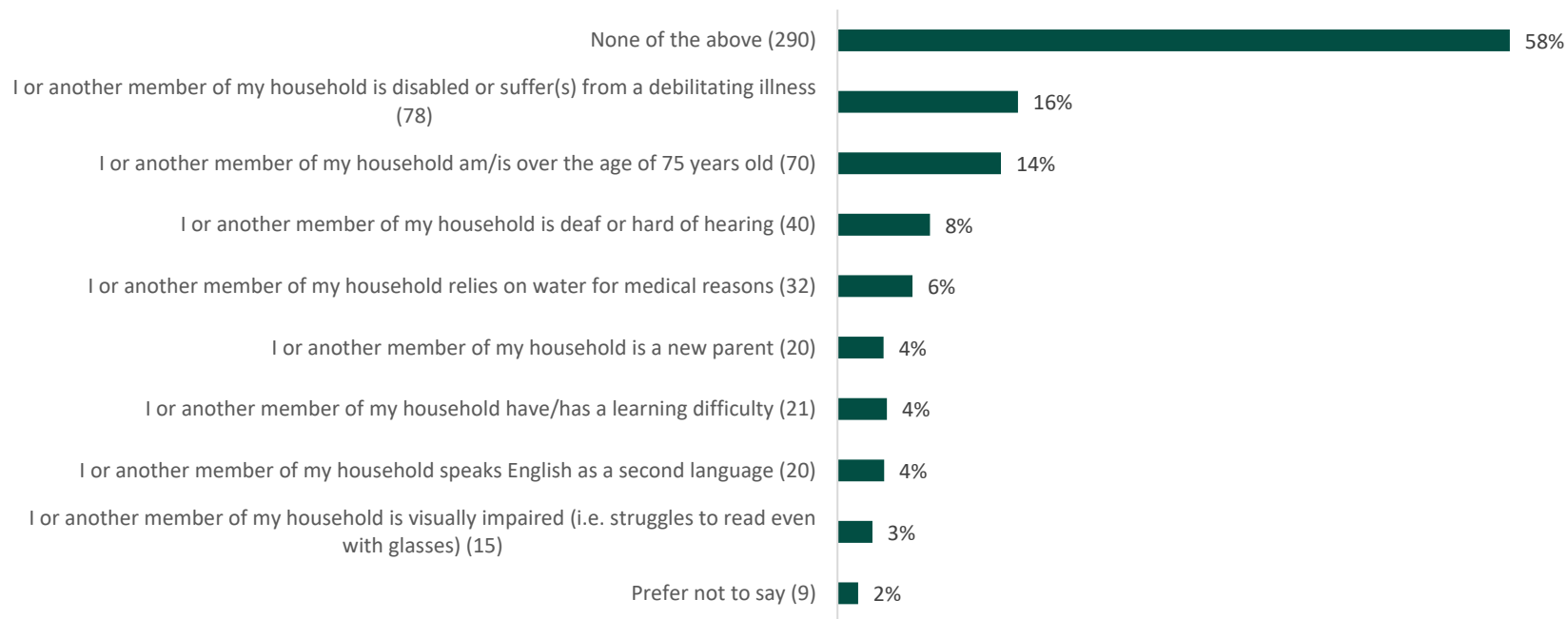
How would you rate your technical ability when it comes to using online tools?



Technical ability	Count	%
Confident	426	85%
Neutral	49	10%
Unconfident	24	5%
Total	501	100%

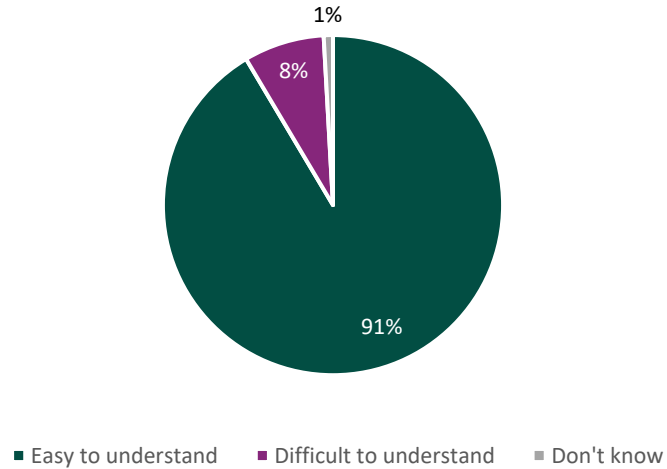
Demographic tables

Do any of the following apply to you? (500)



Demographic tables

How did you find all the information and questions in this survey?



Ease of survey	Count	%
Easy to understand	457	91%
Difficult to understand	38	8%
Don't know	4	1%
Total	501	100%