Wessex Water
YTL GROUP
your say your future
young people's panel

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Young People's Panel 2025

Final Report: November 2025

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Background and methodology

Overarching Objectives

1. **To introduce** young people to the water sector and Wessex Water's operations
2. **To gain insight into** young people's attitudes towards water usage and challenges the water industry faces
3. **To engage** future customers in deliberating on real business issues
4. **To provide** a platform for young people to influence decision-making processes

2025 Objectives

Future Customer Insights

- **Explore** youth perspectives on the pressures of their generation; attitudes towards environmental and political issues

Engagement with water and the sector

- **Introduce** the water sector and topics linked to core task
- **Gauge** understanding of household water usage and behaviour

Future planning

- **Understand** young people's preferences for recreational spaces and their suggestions for developing these
- **Explore** views on drought planning measures and behaviours in dry weather

Core task: Citizens Jury

- **Debate** two key business decisions Wessex Water faces on storm overflows and rising block tariffs
- **Consider** views and impacts on customer segments

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Application Process
Blue Marble engaged 61 schools and colleges across the region

Selection
Out of the 62 applicants, 24 were chosen from across 18 schools

Day 1
9th Sept

- 24 future customers attended
- Water sector immersion
- Household water usage activity
- Picture mapping exercise: changes from 2030 to 2050
- Core task briefing

Day 2
7th Oct

- 23 future customers attended
- Citizens Jury debate
- Group discussion on drought planning
- Designing a recreational space
- Early careers panel
- Judges feedback

School survey
15th Sept – 7th Oct

- **896 students** from years 12 and 13 across 25 different schools and colleges took part
- **Survey design** complementing YPP and included trend questions from previous years, and a question from the **August customer panel survey**

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Future Customer Perspectives

Many 6th formers have direction and ambition for immediate post-school life

Exams and applications are already weighing heavily on the panellists – even this early in the year, the pressure's on

On their minds…

A-levels and mock exams bring pressure

Although it's the start of the new academic year, panellists are already preparing for mock exams

These assessments carry weight, influencing future options. The pressure to perform well makes this a stressful period for many students

"I suppose [A-levels] are important because they decide what universities you can actually apply to and where you can get offers from… It's definitely stressful."

Applying for post-sixth form options is the key focus

Many panellists are already amid UCAS applications, while others are considering taking a gap year to explore their options

Many who have decided what's next lean towards STEM degrees or business-focused apprenticeships

"Getting into university is one thing, but getting a job after that is pretty stressful."

Future thinking…

Most looking around one year ahead

Anything beyond that feels too abstract or uncertain to plan for

For some, the priority is simply getting through the current school year without added pressure of making 'life plans'

"I'm thinking about university and anything that comes after that I'll figure out when I get there."

A few looking further ahead

Imagining goals like starting a family or owning a home

Although, home ownership feels increasingly out of reach due to economic pressures, influenced by what they've heard about rising living costs

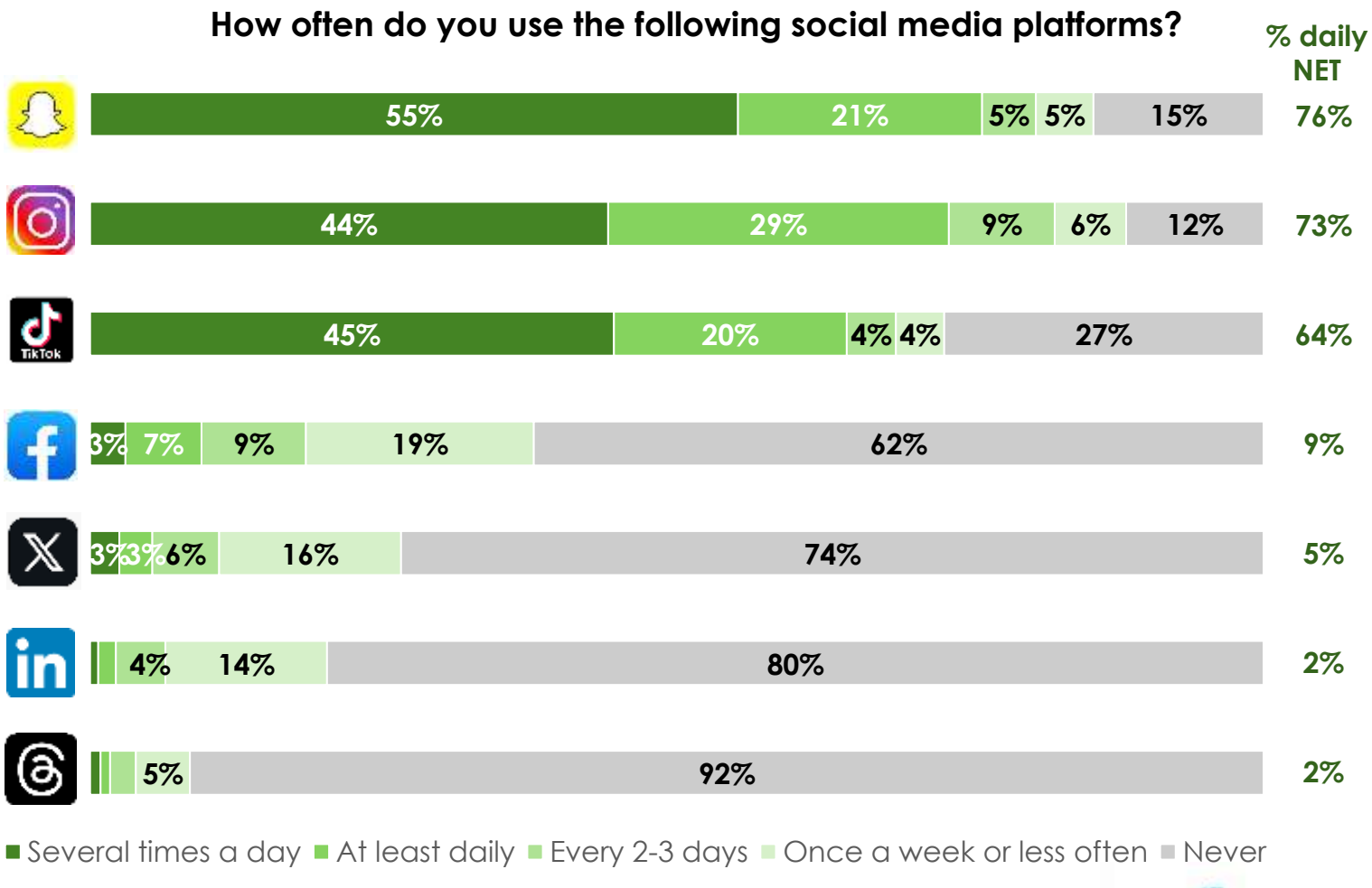
"Getting on the housing ladder will be difficult. Gaining the right amount of money [for a deposit], cause if you're earning the average salary, you can't get a proper family home in Bath."

Technology is more accessible than ever for this generation

From learning to socialising, screens and connectivity shape nearly every part of daily life – but they also bring challenges

- **Digital immersion is the norm for this cohort**, with internet access and smart devices deeply embedded in daily life
- **The generational contrast is top of mind for many,** noting that their parents didn't grow up with phones or the internet – something seen as both positive and negative
- **COVID-19 accelerated screen dependency**, especially observed among younger siblings, as remote learning and social isolation increased reliance on digital platforms
- **Mental health concerns emerge**, with doomscrolling and constant connectivity contributing to anxiety, distraction, and emotional fatigue
- **Some note misinformation as a challenge**, with dependence on critical thinking to decipher what's legitimate or credible

"The Internet as a whole has been quite damaging for my mental health. I know that it has similar impacts on many, many young people."



Q4. How often do you use the following social media platforms? Base: 896 (2025)

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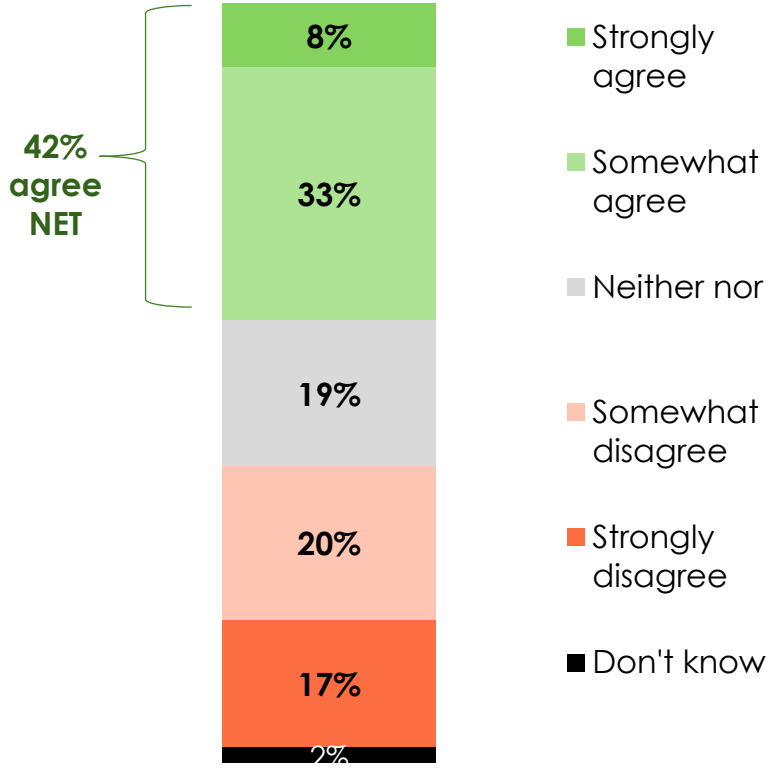
Views on AI are both nuanced and mixed, with many seeing both the benefits and risks

Concerns emerge organically in discussions, indicating its growing relevance and visibility in 6th formers' lives. The divide on AI is mirrored in the survey findings, with equal amounts of excitement and reservation about the new technology

AI is best used as a supporting tool, not a substitute

- Panellists more accepting of AI value its **ability to support information finding and research tasks**
- There is **selective integration into daily lives** amongst the panellists, with the majority open about using it for planning of, or assistance with, their schoolwork (no one claimed to use it to write a full essay outright)
- There is a perception that using **AI is becoming a cultural 'norm'** for them, with some panellists seeing themselves as early adopters or 'pioneers'
    - Several feel they must use it to 'keep up' with peers academically
- A minority believe that AI, by eliminating mundane tasks, has a **potential role in improving mental wellbeing** and productivity across the workforce
- Most panellists **do not express concerns about AI affecting their own future job prospects,** potentially reflecting a belief that AI's risks are more societal, rather than personally on the horizon



I am excited about how AI is going to benefit me

Males are significantly more likely to agree NET than their female counterparts (52% vs 35%)

Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I am excited about how AI is going to benefit me. Base: 896 (2025)

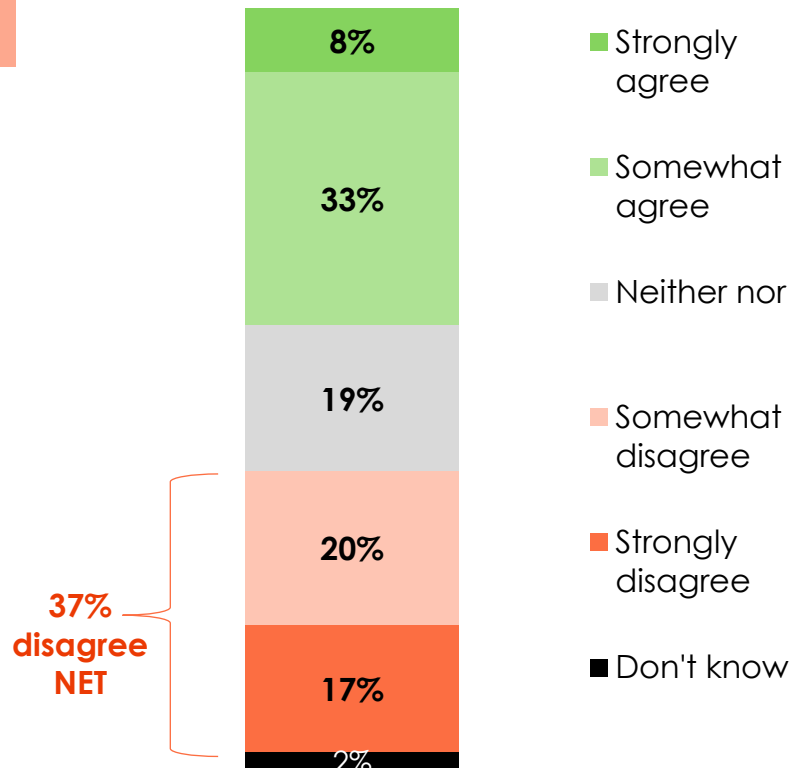
Views on AI are both nuanced and mixed, with many seeing both the benefits and risks

Concerns emerge organically in discussions, indicating its growing relevance and visibility in 6th formers' lives. The divide on AI is mirrored in the survey findings, with equal amounts of excitement and reservation about the new technology

Panellists recognise the harm of AI, challenging authenticity

- Panellists critical of AI see it as **a shortcut that undermines genuine effort**, seen as **'lazy'** to some, with concerns including overdependence and affecting absorption of learning, for both themselves and peers
- Some **feel uneasy about AI's impact on creative industries** (e.g. using artists' work without their permission), revealing an ethical and economic implication of AI

- The use of AI by teachers is a point of tension amongst the panellists:
  - Some express **disappointment when teachers rely on AI** for tasks like lesson planning, careers advice or replying to their emails
  - This **modelling of AI feels contradictory**, implicitly normalising AI in secondary schools through open use, while some panellists anticipate being penalised for similar use at university
  - This leaves some **unsure about whether AI is a tool to embrace and use, or something to be cautious about** and use sparingly



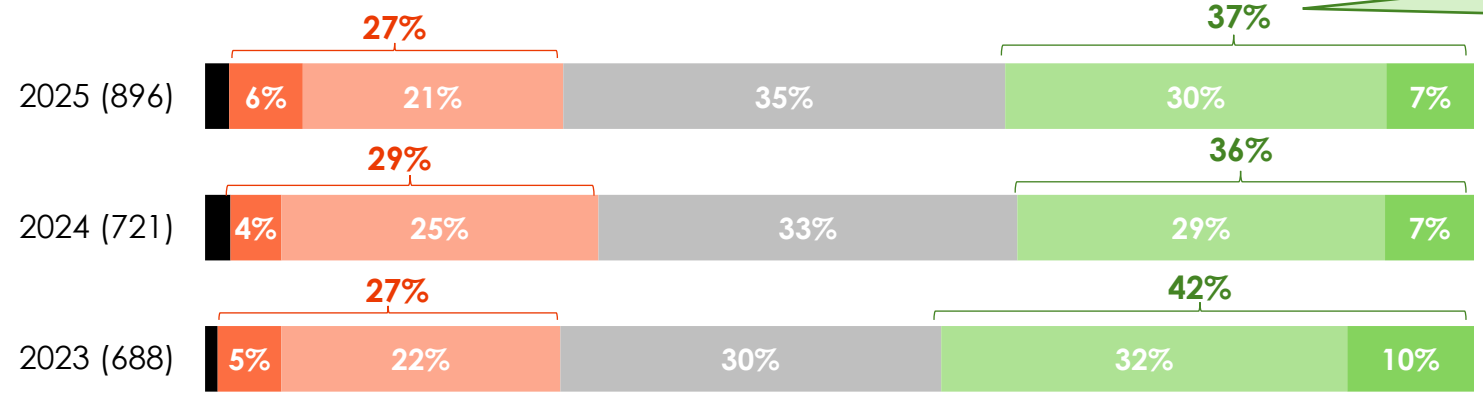
Females are significantly more likely to disagree NET than their male counterparts (43% vs 27%)

Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I am excited about how AI is going to benefit me. Base: 896 (2025)

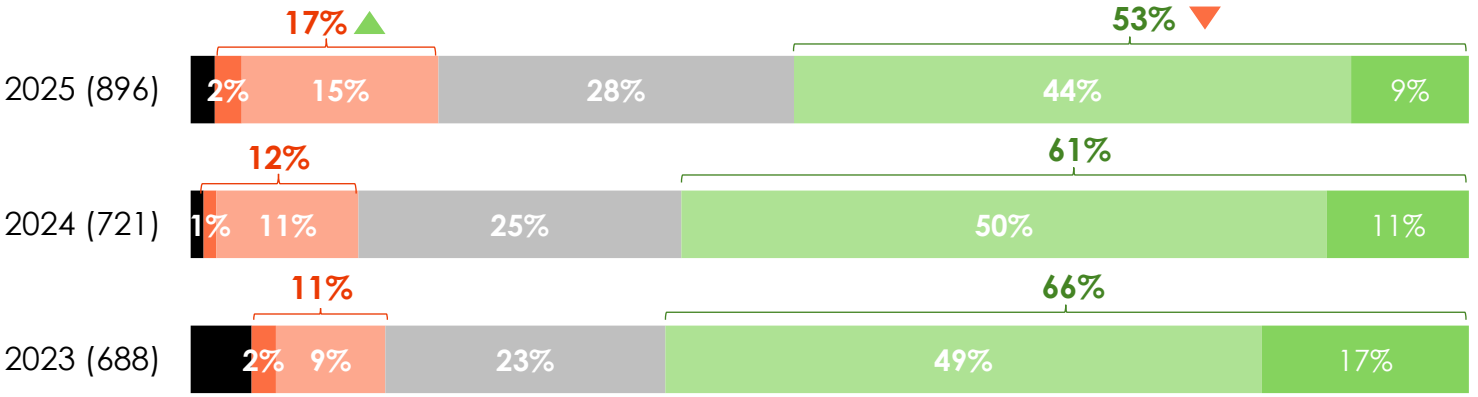
Students are significantly more pessimistic about their employment prospects versus last year

Perceived financial prospects remain mixed, which echoes panellists' concerns about the UK economy

Perceived financial prospects in the next 10 years



Perceived employment prospects in the next 10 years



■ Don't know ■ Very negative/pessimistic ■ Quite negative/pessimistic ■ Neutral ■ Quite positive/optimistic ■ Very positive/optimistic

Males and those attending private schools are significantly more likely to feel optimistic / positive NET
(47% for males & 44% for private schools)

Economic influence on career choices

- As in previous years, **economic pressure is a significant factor shaping this generation's outlook and decisions** around education, career, and long-term stability
- **Going to university is widely seen as an important next step from school due to the perceived widening of job prospects,** but also a challenge due to rising costs and oversaturation (more people attending university than parents' generation)

▲ Sig higher than 2024 total
▼ Sig lower than 2024 total

Q5. How are you currently feeling about the following issues in relation to life after education? Base: 896 (2025)

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While panellists care about the environment, it's not always front of mind

It's a value they hold, but not one that shapes their day-to-day choices or drives their behaviour

Generational differences

- Panellists are **divided on whether their generation is genuinely more environmentally conscious** than previous ones
- Many acknowledge awareness and care about the environment and climate change was **embedded through their upbringing**, with heightened collective consciousness
- **Recycling, avoiding littering and basic eco-friendly habits are seen as standard** - 'a no brainer', rather than a conscious choice
- However, this awareness **does not translate to becoming a defining aspect of identity** for most – few identify as deeply eco-conscious
- Some question whether their actual behaviours are better, acknowledging a gap between their values and actual behaviours
- Some cite possible **climate fatigue** as a limiting fact on urgency to act

"Young people care more about the environment, but they don't necessarily do as much to change it."

"I can't say that I'm having conversations about trees… I wouldn't say that we're any more or any less conscious [about the environment] than other generations."

Corporate responsibility

- Panellists can see some merit in personal action, or sacrifice, but there's also **scepticism about actual impact without systemic change**
- Relatedly, 6th formers **don't feel they have enough power over their buying/spending** habits to make a difference, with that largely sitting with their parents/caregivers
- Many feel **meaningful progress depends on corporate accountability**, not just individual action

"As an individual, spending £2 more on the [environmentally friendly option] is unnecessary, the actual impact has to come from a corporation level."

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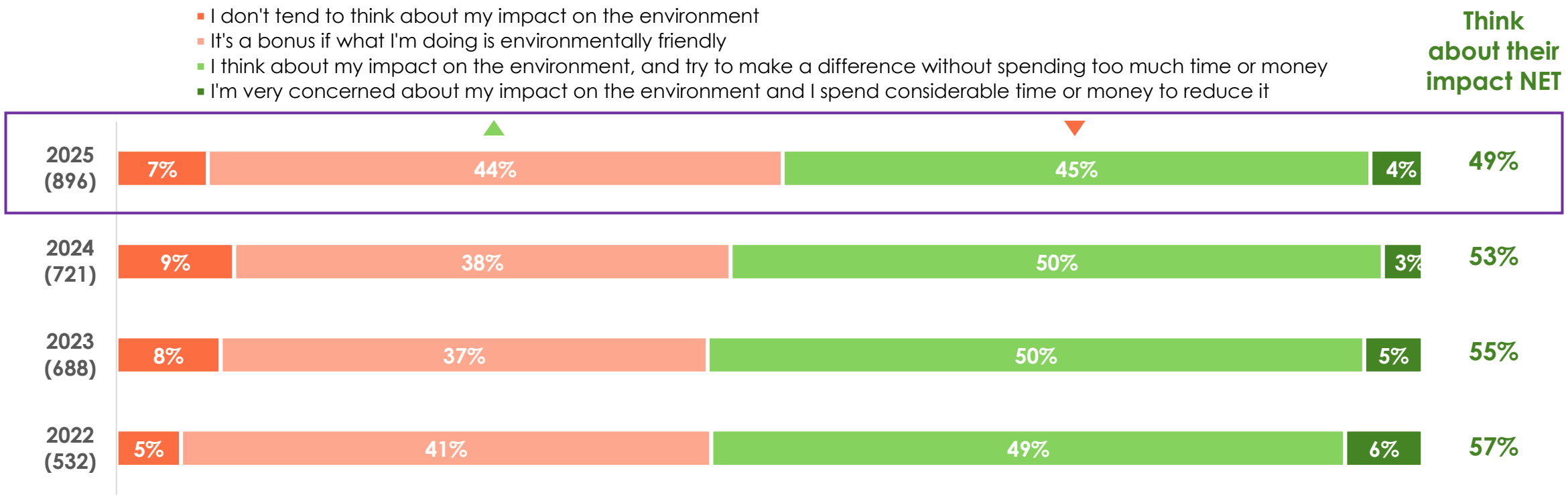
More widely, interest in environmentally active behaviours has dipped slightly this year

Female future customers are significantly more likely to think about their impact than their male counterparts.

Environmental consideration within young people's daily lives



"When there are [minor] decisions to be made, it's easy, but when you have to sacrifice something, it becomes more difficult. I enjoy eating meat and I wouldn't sacrifice that even if being vegan is better for the environment."

Females are significantly more likely to 'Think about their impact' NET than males
(58% vs 39% for 2025)

▲ Sig higher than 2024 total
▼ Sig lower than 2024 total

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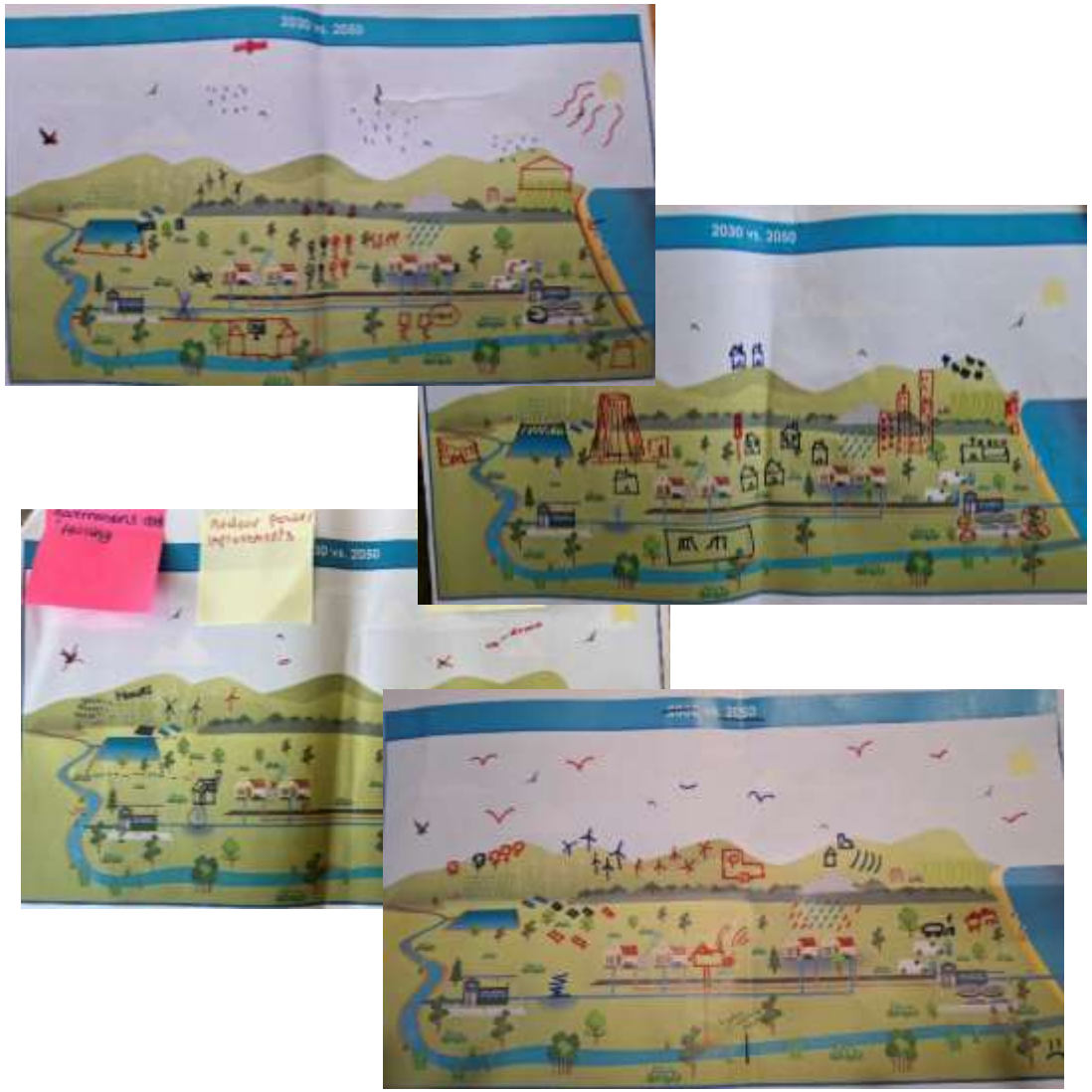
Q7: Thinking about what you buy, how you travel and how you live your day-to-day life, which of these best describes you? Base: 2022 (532) / 2023 (688) / 2024 (721) / 2025 (896)

We asked panellists to about the changes they expect in the next 5 and 25 years…

Panellists worked in groups and **mapped out what changes might occur to a model town** by 2030, and then 2050

They considered what would there be **more or less of**, what would be **new**, **why these changes** happened and what the **main challenges** of life will be in 2030 / 2050



This activity also **served as a warmup for the core task**, by encouraging students to think about future planning and decision making

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Changes by 2030

- Panellists find it **challenging to think about** the changes to include in 2030, as it feels like there is little time for society to build and transform significantly from what it looks like in 2025
- Several make comparisons between the **lack of clear differences in the past 5 years** (2020 vs. 2025) despite Covid – with surprise at the lack of enduring change
- Most expect some population growth - bringing more **housing**, and **improved water infrastructure** with expanded reservoirs, treatment centres and hydro dams
- They predict **climate change and pollution to occur at the same rate** as it does today, with 5 years too short a timeframe to put meaningful measures in place to mitigate its impact
- **Existing sources of clean energy** - such as solar panels and wind turbines – are expected to become more commonplace, alongside more electric vehicles

"I'm not really convinced there will be much of a change in five years. Five years ago, it was Covid. I thought there was gonna be more change than this."

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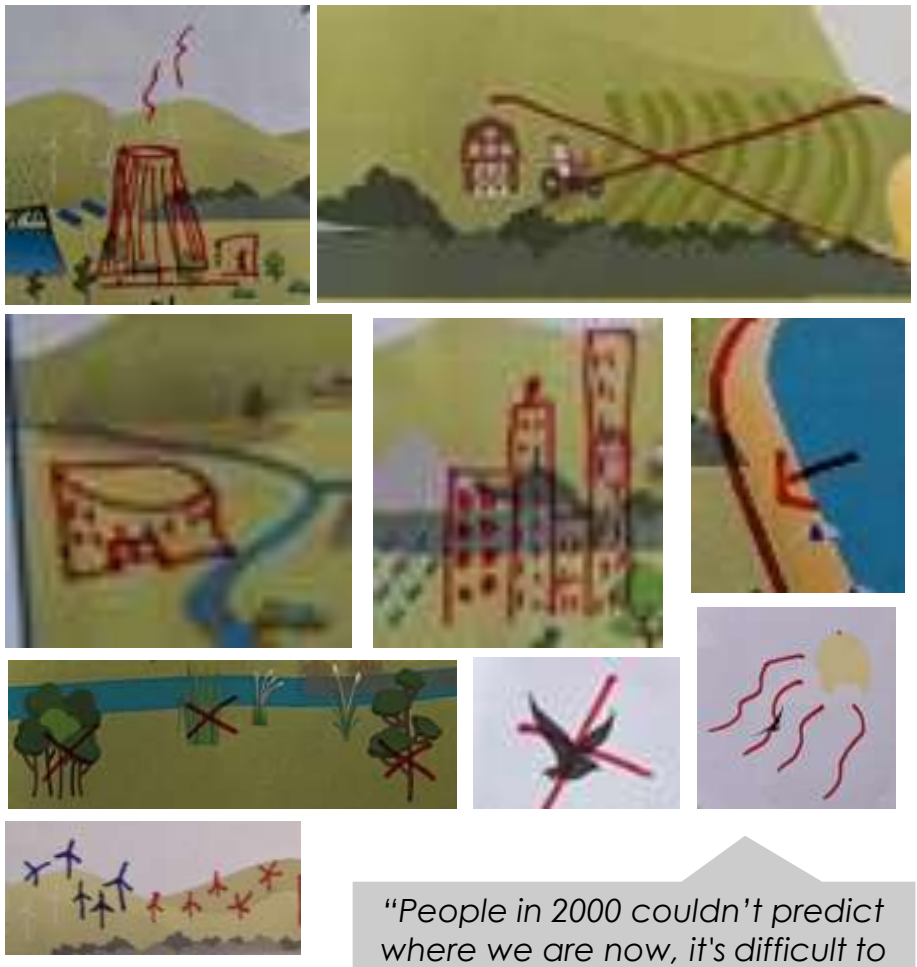

"People in 2000 couldn't predict where we are now, it's difficult to know."

"It's about being more efficient, which might mean a move away from traditional farming in 2050."

Changes by 2050

- Panellists anticipate **significant environmental changes**, with many **removing species**, expecting climate change to severely impact local wildlife and biodiversity
  - While some foresee **coastal erosion**, most are uncertain about the extent of physical damage
- They **doubt the government meeting its 2050 net zero targets**, with some instead focusing on how society will adapt to mitigate climate impacts
- All greatly **expanded the amount of housing** in the town, with one group building large tower blocks rather than houses, to allow for denser populations
- All built **solar panels** on houses and on open land
- Some introduced **nuclear power**, imagining non-renewables will be phased out due to emissions
- **Automation and AI** are expected to dominate daily life, reducing employment and increasing demand for building data centres. Some imagine drones and robots becoming more commonplace across society too, transforming the workforce as we know it
- Several predict a **decline in traditional farming** methods

Most panellists encounter political content online, but their engagement is often shallow

Political interest varies widely, shaped by family background, personal circumstances, and subject choices

"Most 6th formers don't care about politics, unless it affects them directly… I wouldn't say they know about Net Zero, immigration or other issues."

"A lot of [6th formers] care about what their parents care about. If your parents are struggling, you'll have empathy towards that and look at who's in power. Also, if it's going well for your parents, then maybe you'll think [the current government] are good."

"Everything the government does in the UK affects us directly... A lot of my friends find politics dull, but I find it really interesting."

General political sentiments

- **Most encounter political content online**, especially through social media
  - Although many avoid deep engagement with the political videos or posts they see, preferring to engage with positive content
  - Panellists generally have low levels of trust in politics
  - Some awareness of misinformation, with Reform UK referenced by one panellist regarding how media coverage can shape public opinion
- **Political beliefs are often shaped by parents**, with some speculating a relationship between feeling more politically aware when a family faces financial hardship, and vice versa with parents who are more apolitical
- **Political engagement is present amongst panellists,** but some feel it's not always encouraged, whether that be at school or at home by parents and wider family
  - Some panellists talk about politics with friends but note that teachers often avoid political discussions
- **Interest varies widely across panellists**, with some feeling that politics doesn't affect them, while others see its relevance clearly
  - Studying politics or economics at A-level naturally increases awareness and interest

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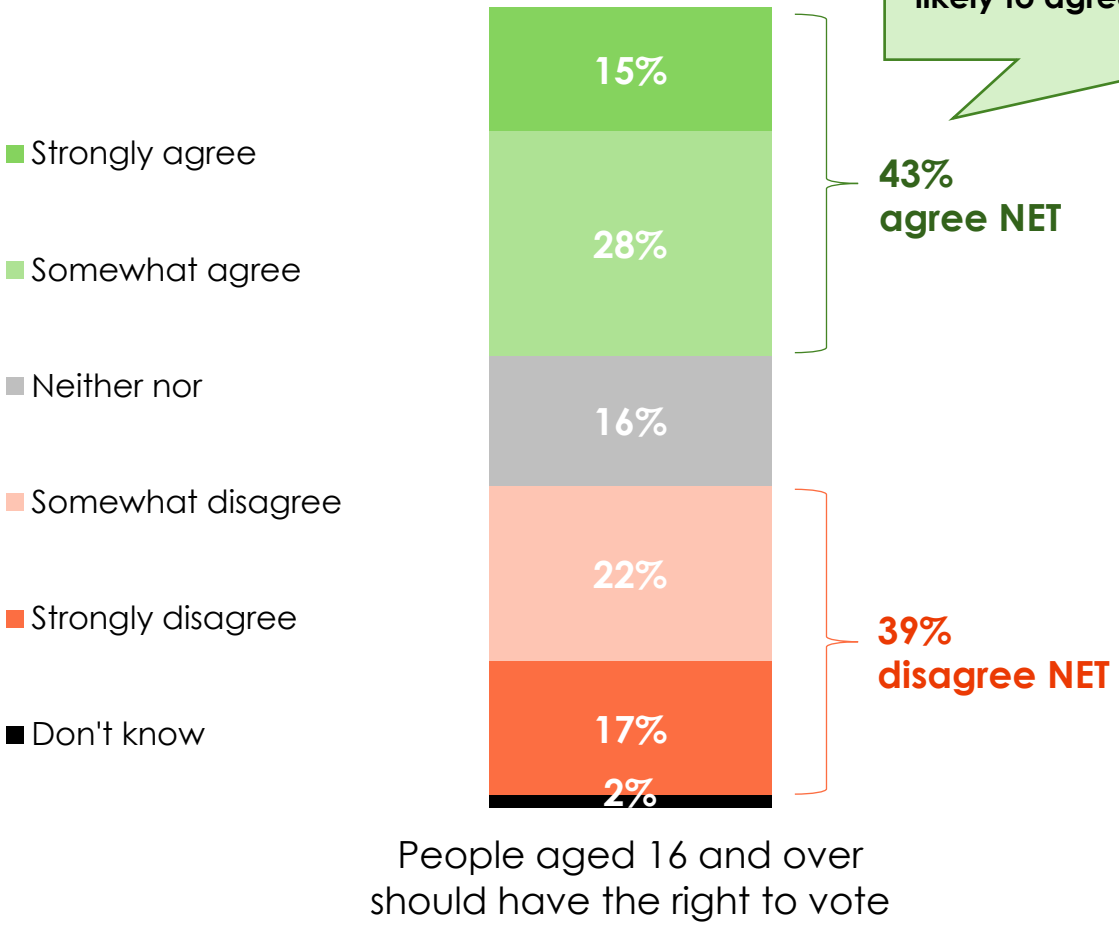
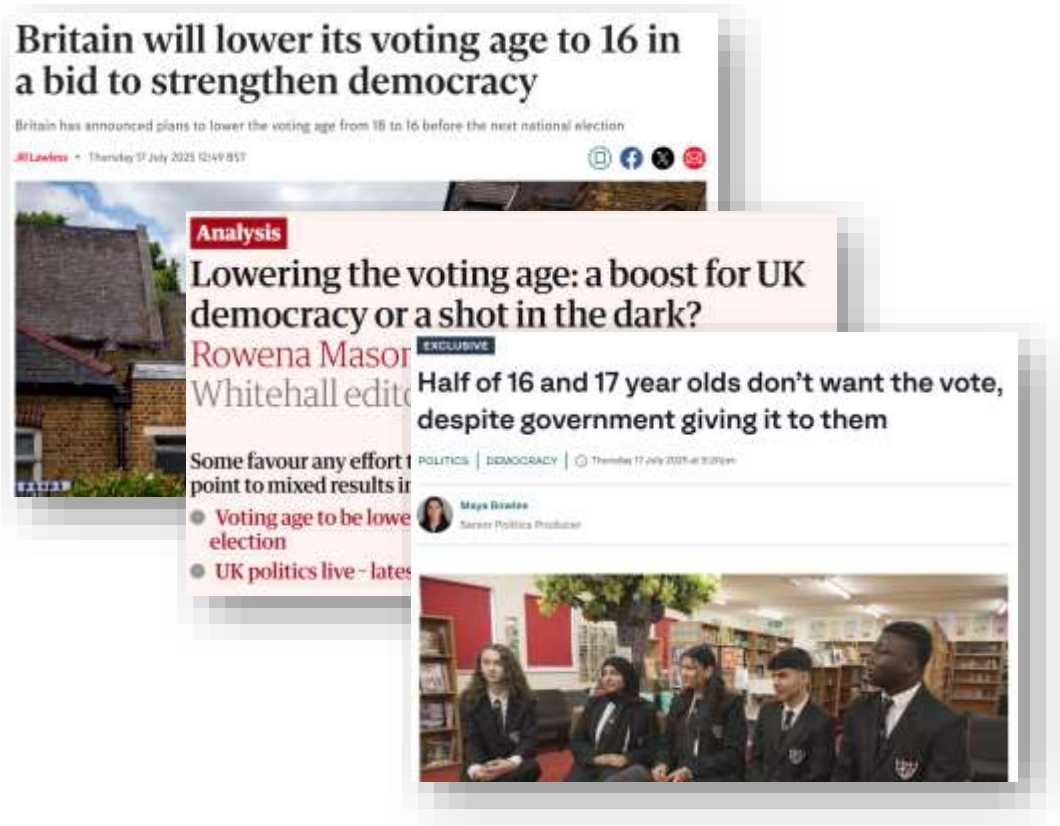
Students are divided on the right to vote

Survey results reveal a near-even split on lowering voting age – with no notable differences across the demographics



Those from state schools are significantly more likely to agree NET than private school students (48% vs 32%)



Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People aged 16 and over should have the right to vote. Base: 896 (2025)

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While some panellists support lowering the voting age, many feel the debate is not youth-led

Despite feeling personally capable of making informed choices, they also question peers' readiness, acknowledging influence from parents and friends

Mixed levels of awareness and support

- **Several panellists spontaneously raised the topic of lowering the voting age**, with a minority already aware of the ongoing debate and changes
- While the topic of voting age change was discussed, **most don't feel it is being driven by 16-year-olds themselves**, more a conversation happening around them than one led by them
- **Many panellists reflect on their exclusion from the Brexit vote,** despite its personal impact, as a driver for wanting greater youth representation in political decision-making
- **Immigration and the economy** are also mentioned as **key issues** that would motivate political participation

"You can either be switched on to politics or you can't. I know a lot of people that don't even know who the Prime Minister is."

"I wish I was old enough to vote against Brexit."

Personal readiness to vote

- **Many feel personally capable of researching and making informed choices, but express concern about peers' readiness**, even among those already eligible to vote
- Some acknowledge **they don't yet see themselves as fully independent thinkers**, citing influence from parents and friends
- There is a sense that **political understanding comes with life experience**, not just age
- **Panellists feel less informed about local candidates and politics**, which affects their confidence in voting at the community level as well

"I think it's positive in a democratic sense. I may not like the way [my peers] would vote, but you can go into the army to fight but you can't vote, which seems unfair."

Engagement with the water sector

Panellists are broadly disengaged with both Wessex Water and the water sector at large

The concept of 'future customers' raises questions about the dichotomy of being both current consumers and non-bill payers

Engagement with the sector is minimal

- As non-bill payers, panellists see **little reason to know more** at this stage of their lives
- A few are aware of **issues in the news** around sewage, bill increases and the finances of companies
- This limited engagement is linked with panellists **avoiding the news generally**, therefore seeing little news about the water sector

"We're less aware because we're not the ones paying the bills, you just use it as much as the people around you and not think about it much."

Some struggled to relate to the idea of being a future customer

- Some call out being **regular consumers of water** since birth, despite not paying for the bill
- Some feel it is not a priority to be informed about their own local water company, as many are at a point in life where they **will be moving out of the area**
- For those looking to attend university, living in **student accommodation or house sharing is seen as a further delay** in becoming a 'typical' water customer

Few had formed opinions of Wessex Water specifically

- A couple recall **local touchpoints**, such as water fountains built in their towns
- Recall of Wessex Water vans or staff working in their local area is minimal
- A few had direct interaction with Wessex Water through **school outreach programs and visits, or work experience** opportunities
- Some were aware of the recent bill increase for their household and press coverage of local storm overflows

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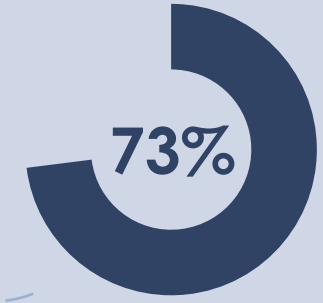
What three words come to mind when you think about Wessex Water?

Word Cloud from Day 1 of YPP workshop
Base: 24

The panel's **focus on sewage and rivers** mirror the wider future customer concern evident in the survey findings…



agree (NET) they are **concerned by the levels of pollution** in their local rivers and coastlines

"I know people are complaining and are quite unhappy that they're paying more for the same stuff."

"They chuck untreated sewage in rivers whenever it rains then blame the damage on farmers."

Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
I am concerned about the levels of pollution in my local rivers/coastlines
Base: 896 (2025)

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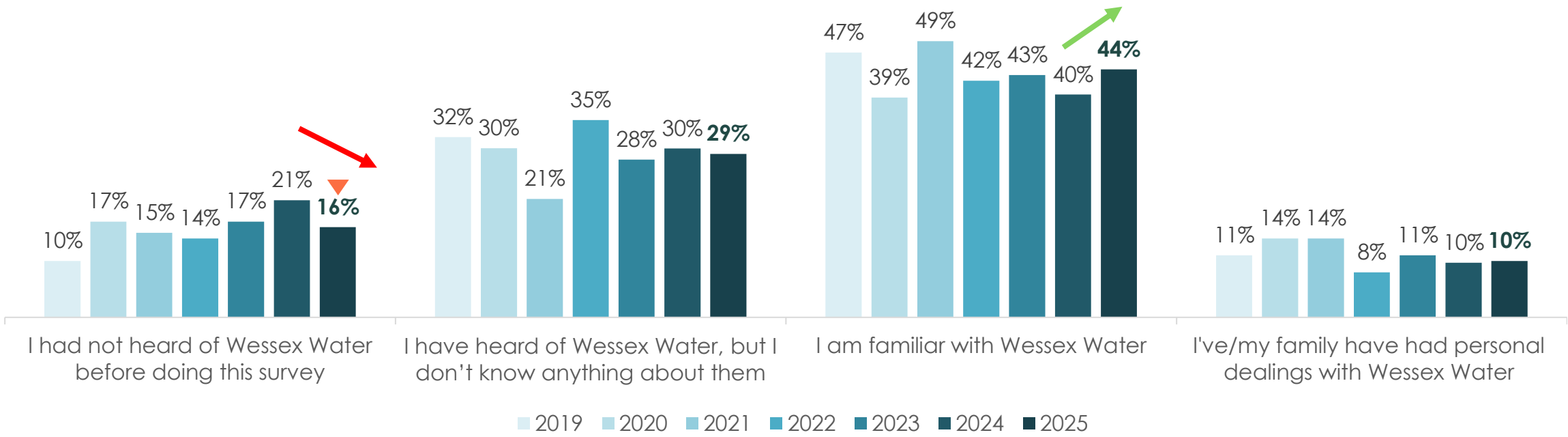
Overall familiarity with Wessex Water increases slightly this year

Compared to 2024, significantly fewer young people say they have not heard of Wessex Water at all

Which of the following reflects your awareness of Wessex Water?



	2019	2020	2022	2022	2023	2024	2025
Familiar with Wessex Water NET:	58%	53%	50%	50%	54%	49%	**54%**
Unfamiliar with Wessex Water NET:	42%	47%	49%	49%	45%	51%	**46%**

▲ Sig higher than 2024
▼ Sig lower than 2024

Q11. Which of the following reflect your awareness of Wessex Water?
Base: All 2019 (703) / 2020 (555) / 2021 (326) / 2022 (532) / 2023 (688) / 2024 (721) / 2025 (896)

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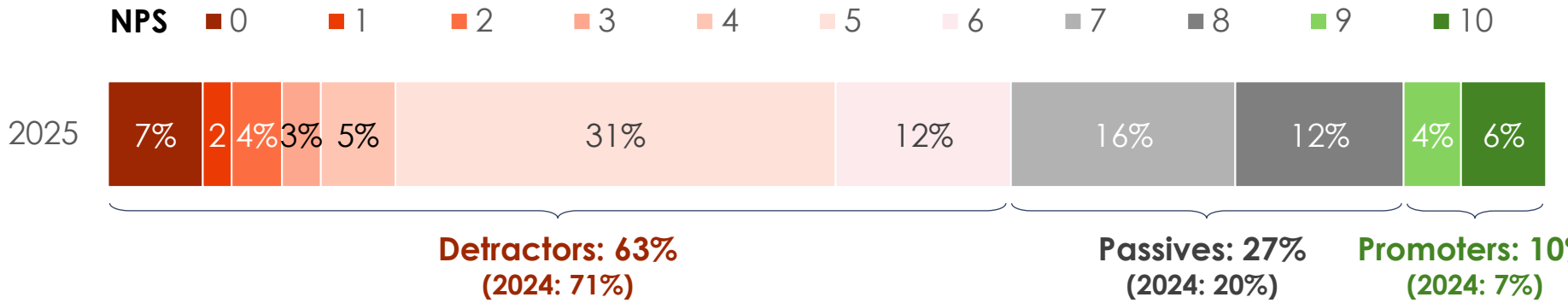
Wessex Water's NPS score has improved compared to 2023 and 2024, though it remains low

However, negativity is 'soft' - passives and detractors commonly cite having little knowledge of Wessex Water as the reason for their score



2025 NPS* -53

vs
-64 (2024)
-62 (2023)
-47 (2022)
-44 (2021)

Reasons for being a detractor

- Most detractors **feel unable to form a judgement on Wessex Water, as they have little knowledge about the company - 57% of 0-3s aren't 'Familiar NET' with Wessex Water**
- Those with firmly negative perceptions mention hearing stories about **sewage pollution in the news**
- A small number feel opposed to the company as they disagree with the sector being **privatised**

"Scandals related to sewage in the drinking water."

"I do not know enough about the company to form an opinion."

"I haven't heard too much information about the company, but it seems like you have efforts to save water and reduce water pollution."

Reasons for being a promoter

- Promoters reference a range or reasons for their positive perceptions of Wessex Water:
  - **Having direct interaction** with Wessex Water
  - Hearing about Wessex Water's **environmental initiatives**
  - Providing a **reliable water supply**

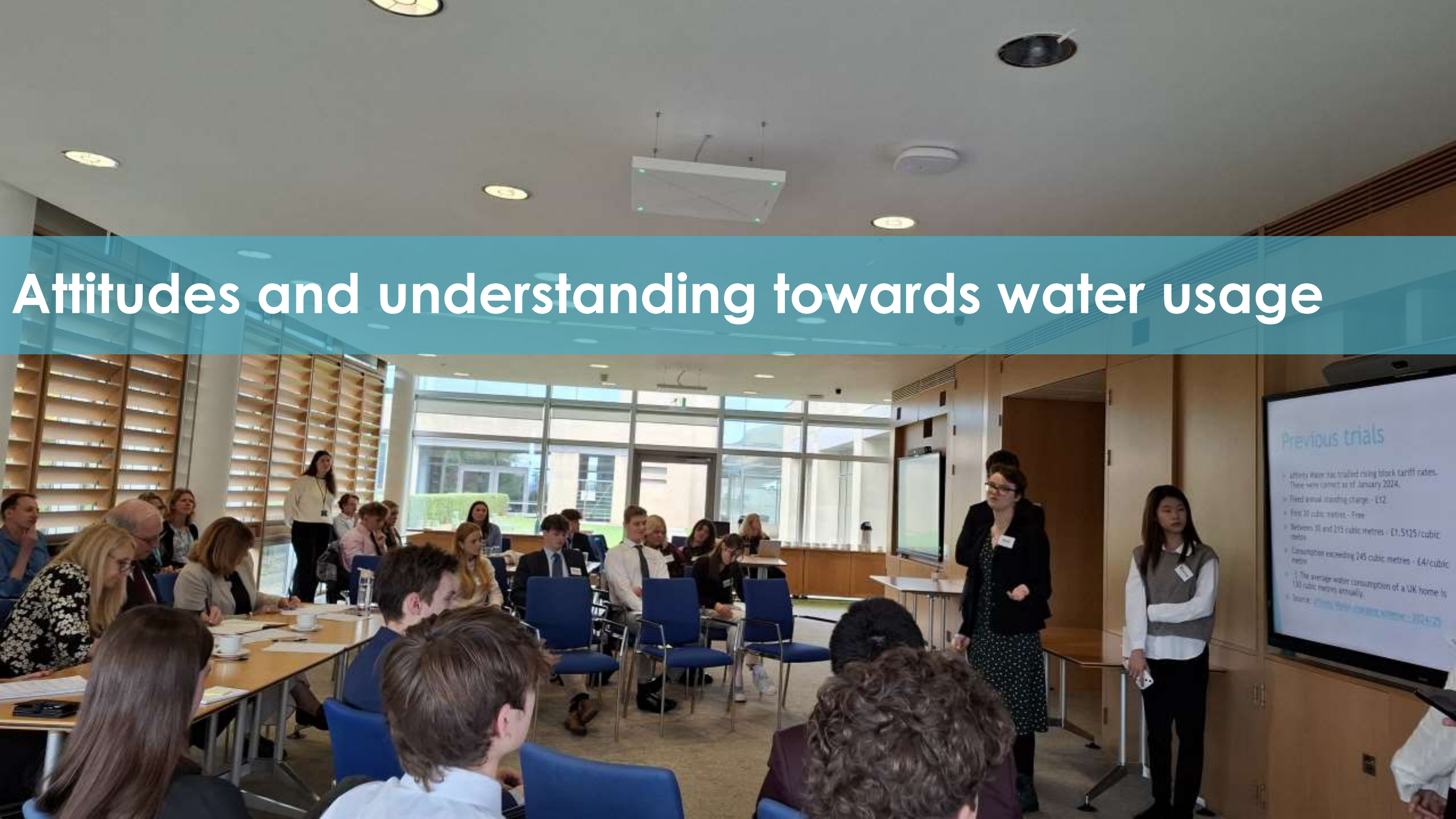
"The company makes a good effort to save water and is environmentally friendly, while also being focused on sustainability."

"Wessex Water has come into my college for talks and explained what they do/who they are, and I think they're a good company."

"In our village we occasionally have burst water pipes due to the number of new houses going causing a water shortage, and Wessex water work around the clock to get it fixed and give out free water to those most in need."

Q12. How likely are you to describe Wessex Water as a good company to someone you know? And why did you give that score? Base: 896 (2025)
*Net promoter score calculated by subtracting the proportion of 'detractors' from the proportion of 'promoters'.

Attitudes and understanding towards water usage



Nearly 2 in 3 survey participants claim they make a conscious effort to save water

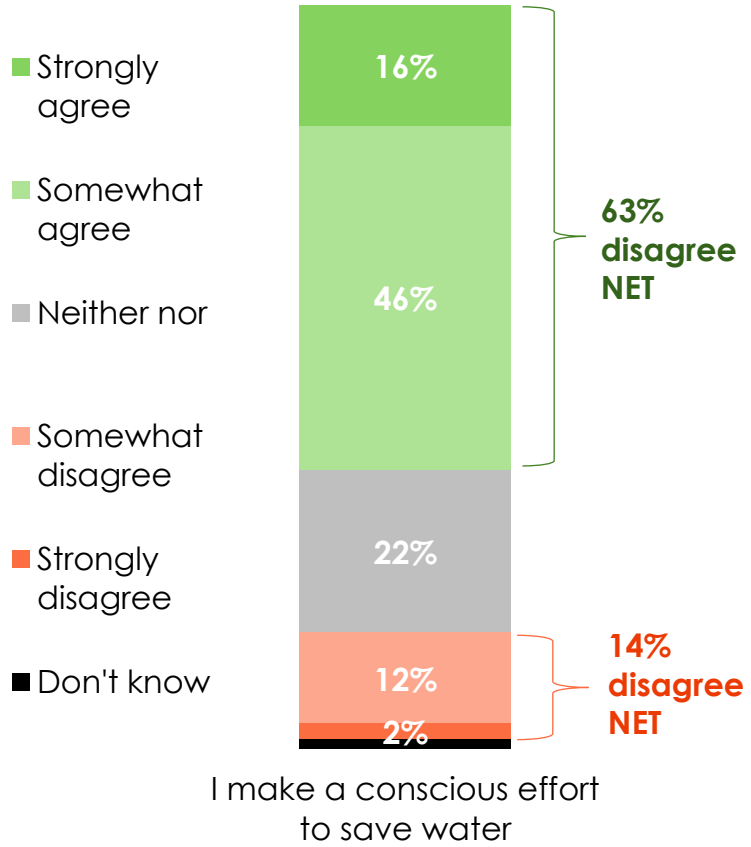
Panellists recognise the need to save water, but struggle to change their habits as they are unaware of the amount of water day-to-day activities can use

- **Panellists struggle to self-assess their household's water usage**, as most passively use water and aren't aware of how much others in their house use
- During the icebreaker, **most estimated the average daily water usage at between 20-80 litres** – only a few guessed above 100 litres

- A majority of panellists believe **young people use more water than other age groups**
- They feel this is driven by the high proportion of young people taking **more frequent, longer showers** than adults

- Despite seeing water saving as a socially responsible behaviour, **students broadly don't feel their water usage is wasteful,** which is leading some to take little to no actions to reduce their water usage

"I bring my speaker, and I listen to music in the shower, and I'll be in there for like 30-40 minutes, whereas my dad will shower for a minute and be out."



Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I make a conscious effort to save water
Base: 896 (2025)

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To help them become more aware of water use, panellists were challenged to think about how different households use water…

Panellists were asked to **estimate the total weekly water usage for four different households** during a hot summer. Using an excel tool calculator that contained a range of core household activities involving water, they had to determine how frequently each activity would be carried out per week to work out their overall water use.

Each household had different behaviours, habits and needs to consider, such as white goods, gardens, hot tubs and the overall number of people.

Household 1	Household 2	Household 3	Household 4
Single person, living alone in a flat with no garden in Taunton. They have only a shower (no bath) and a washing machine. There is no dishwasher.	Couple with a 2-year-old toddler who have recently had a newborn baby. They are living in a house in Bath, which has a small garden and a few flower beds to maintain. They have a dishwasher and washing machine, plus a bath and shower.	Couple with 3 teenage children, living in a house in Chippenham with a small garden. They have a dishwasher and washing machine, plus a bath and shower.	Retired couple living in a big house in Salisbury, with a large garden. This has all appliances, plus baths and showers. Their garden has multiple flowerbeds, vegetable patches and a greenhouse. They have a hot tub, which they fill 3-4 times a year.

Your task:
Estimate how much water each household uses per week during a hot summer, considering their household size and how each individuals' habits will affect their water usage. Each of the four households have different behaviours and features to consider. You may use calculators if this is helpful - but this is not a test!

Household activity	Litres used per go	Household 1 Single person, living alone in a flat with no garden in Taunton. They have only a shower (no bath) and a washing machine. There is no dishwasher.	Household 2 Couple with a 2 year old toddler who have recently had a newborn baby. They are living in a house in Bath, which has a small garden and a few flower beds to maintain. They have a dishwasher and washing machine, plus a bath and shower.	Household 3 Couple with 3 teenage children, living in a house in Chippenham with a small garden. They have a dishwasher and washing machine, plus a bath and shower.	Household 4 Retired couple living in a big house in Salisbury, with a large garden. This has all appliances, plus baths and showers. Their garden has multiple flowerbeds, vegetable patches and a greenhouse. They have a hot tub, which they fill 3-4 times a year.
Showers taken	65	0	0	0	0
Baths taken	80	0	0	0	0
Toilets flushed	5	21	63	105	42
Dishwasher runs	18	0	0	0	0
Washing machine runs	50	0	0	0	0
Watering the garden	10	0	0	0	0
Using a garden sprinkler/hosepipe (large gardens only)	150	0	0	0	0
Using a watering can to water the garden	50	0	0	0	0
Running a hot tub for a week	100	0	0	0	1
Additional usage per adult/child per week (cooking, cleaning, washing up, hand washing etc).	210	0	0	0	0
Sum of litres used per week		**105**	**315**	**525**	**310**
Cost per week		**£0.62**	**£1.86**	**£3.09**	**£1.83**
Cost per month		**£2.65**	**£7.95**	**£13.25**	**£7.83**

This activity was also a warm-up for the core task, designed to encourage students to think about how different types of households use water, which may differ from their own lived experiences.

BLUE MARBLE

Estimates varied more for the households' that were less relatable to their own lives (HH 1 & 4)

Single person, living alone in a flat with no garden in Taunton.

They have only a shower (no bath) and a washing machine. There is no dishwasher.

Couple with a 2 year old toddler who have recently had a newborn baby. They are living in a house in Bath, which has a small garden and a few flower beds to maintain.

They have a dishwasher and washing machine, plus a bath and shower.

Couple with 3 teenage children, living in a house in Chippenham with a small garden.

They have a dishwasher and washing machine, plus a bath and shower.

Retired couple living in a big house in Salisbury, with a large garden. This has all appliances, plus baths and showers.

Their garden has multiple flowerbeds, vegetable patches and a greenhouse. They have a hot tub, which they fill 3-4 times a year.

Groups	Household 1	Household 2	Household 3	Household 4
1	970	3,752	5,062	**5,026**
2	890	2,900	**4,475**	3,834
3	610	3,471	4,526	**2,357**
4	**595**	3,661	4,567	4,248
5	820	3,191	5,401	4,009
6	1,150	3,715	5,845	3,416
7	940	**2,876**	5,506	3,072
8	**1,325**	**4,491**	**6,697**	2,742
Average per week	**913**	**3,507**	**5,260**	**3,588**

Highest estimate
Lowest estimate

BLUE MARBLE

Panellists initially found the task difficult, as most passively use water as and when they need to

The **amount of water each activity used was quite shocking to them**, particularly in the context of their low estimates of daily usage during the icebreaker.

Groups frequently **estimated the larger households would use the washing machine or dishwasher twice per day**, due to many being removed from these tasks.

For showers and baths, **estimates were as high as 42 per week for the household with young children**, as some assumed the children will need to bathe twice per day, in line with their experiences with siblings.

After the activity, students wanted to know the 'correct' usage and bill for each household, to see how realistic their estimates were.

Some **questioned how it could be possible to meaningfully reduce water usage if essential activities consume a significant portion** of the weekly amount.

They were surprised by how much water essential activities can consume but **less surprised by the bill amount**. The exercise **revealed how divorced they were from water volumes in relation to daily tasks** - especially where these task related to things they themselves didn't do.

Activities necessary for hygiene were prioritised as essential for households, with the **hot tub and garden activities viewed as the most discretionary.**

BLUE MARBLE

The different requirements of each household provided an extra layer of challenge to panellists

Household 1
Single person

- Groups expected this household to be the most stringent with their water usage, due to the lack of appliances, and the fact they lived alone
- Estimates were the most similar across groups, and the closest to an accurate amount, based upon the average daily amount used by one person

Household 2
Couple with toddler and newborn

- Groups were unsure of the impact of having a baby in the household and the specific care needs that would impact water behaviours here
- Some questioned whether the baby would require a shower or a full bath, while others struggled to gauge what impact the baby would have on the amount of clothes washing – with guesses up to as many as 7 or 14 washing machine runs per week

Household 3
Couple with 3 teenage children

- Some felt the most confident with this household, as it closely reflected their situation
- Despite this, they placed high estimates on the amount of bathing and the number of chores (e.g., washing machines runs) conducted in the week

Household 4
Retired couple

- Panellists broadly assumed that the retired household would use water more responsibly than other households and be more mindful about their water bills
- The inclusion of a garden was a challenge for some, as they struggled to gauge the average amount a hosepipe would be used
- Some expected the garden to be watered twice per day

BLUE MARBLE

Drought planning

Panellists have heard of droughts – but understanding remains somewhat surface level

The vast majority have not experienced a drought themselves, likely affecting their understanding of where this differs from just prolonged warm weather

Understanding of droughts

- **Associated with 'a lack of water', 'dryness', or 'extreme weather'**
- Commonly associated with **hotter, equatorial countries**, not the UK. Many felt Britain is "well equipped" to cope, due to strong infrastructure and rainfall
- The **negative nature of droughts is understood but lacking technicality** - very few make the link to reservoir levels, instead relating them more to visual cues around them
- **Hosepipe bans** were one of the few concrete indicators spontaneously mentioned, the clearest mental cue that a drought was happening or had been declared.
- Causes of droughts are attributed to **climate change and human activity** – with call outs for: *fossil fuels, overuse of water, urbanisation, data centres etc*.

"I'd imagine [there were droughts] more central, or Eastern, because the rainfall typically high in the West."

"It's because global warming has been on the rise and I don't think our governments, or the government of any other country, is going to stop or try and do anything about it."

Impacts of droughts

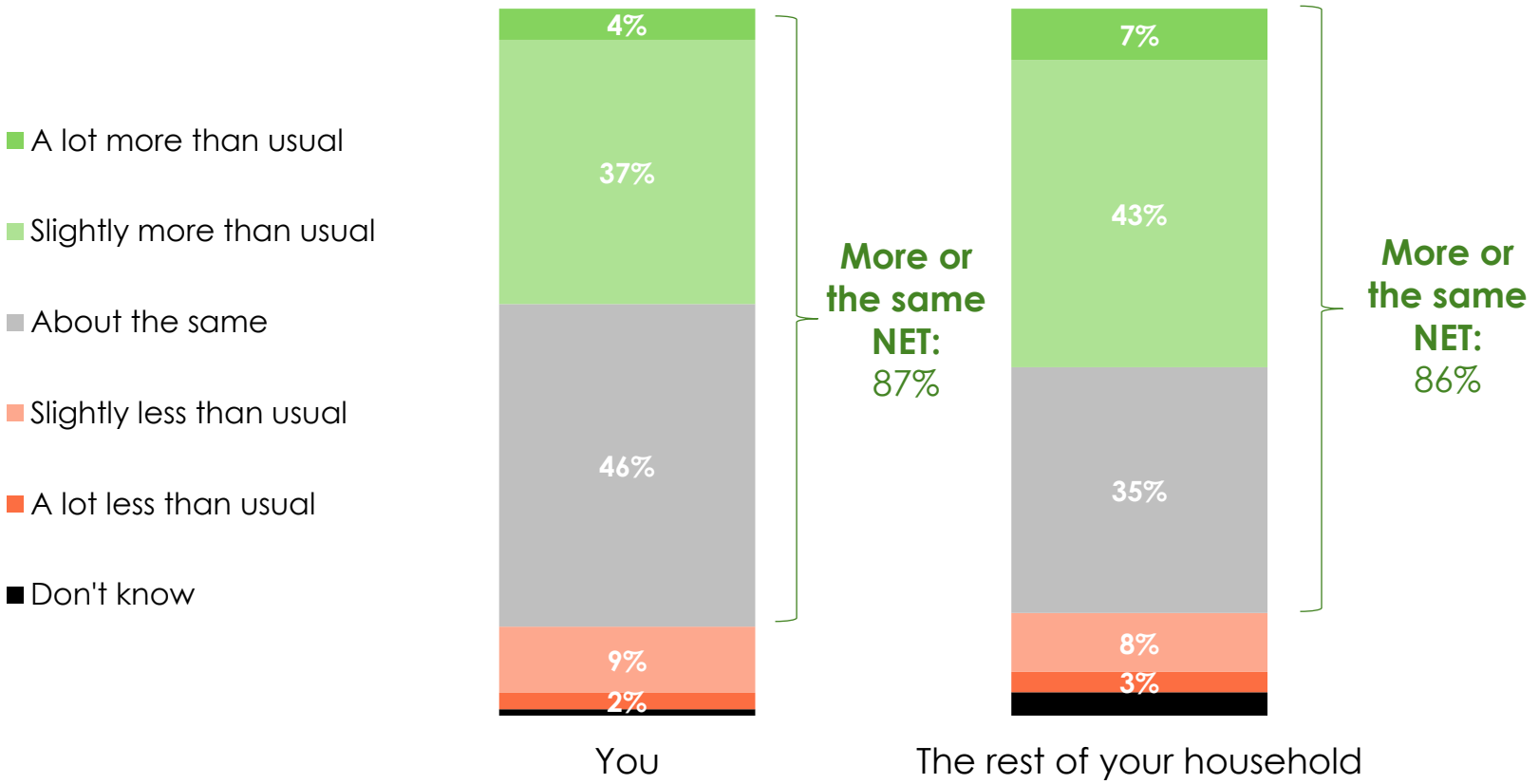
- Panellists tend to not distinguish between drought versus warm weather – conveying their lack of technical understanding
- **The most common perceptions of consequences of droughts is highly visual and nature-led,** e.g. brown grass, low levels in ponds/rivers, dying plants, disrupts natural ecosystems
- **A few connect droughts to less visible or systemic effects:**
  - Such as negative effects on drinking water supply, farming, energy production, changes in water prices etc
  - Authority intervention: issue water-saving messages, handing out water
  - A couple also showed deeper concern, framing water as a finite, geopolitical resource used in future conflicts
- **Individual behaviour change references are mainly about coping with the associated heat, not conserving water** (e.g. showering more frequently, drinking more water)
- Some references about saving (e.g. not watering plants, washing cars less) but many **doubt whether people would actually change their habits** – perceiving the difficulty of forcing people to change what they do

BLUE MARBLE

Survey data reflects young people's perception that household water usage would be the same or higher for most during hot and dry weather

Half of young people believe others in their household would use more water than usual

Q8. During periods of hot and dry weather, would you and your household be likely to use more or less water than usual?



"I take [a shower] in the morning, come home from school during the day, shower, go back to school, come home and take another shower."

"The problem with water is we need it to live."

"I don't and nobody I know really thinks about saving water, it just comes straight from the tap."

Q8. During periods of hot and dry weather, would you and your household be likely to use more or less water than usual?
Base: Young People's Panel Survey respondents (896)

BLUE MARBLE

Prolonged periods of hot weather are seen as a normal occurrence in panellists' lives

Spring 2025 was the hottest and sunniest spring on record – with droughts in multiple regions

- Awareness of any records being broken this year, including for spring, is limited
- They often **remember having warm weather**, but many didn't think it was exceptional - a couple called out other recent springs/summers as likely record breakers
- They describe **feeling like every season breaks a record now**, especially in summers for some, suggesting some sort of 'record fatigue' – so many "hottest", "sunniest" or "driest" announcements that they blur together
- Young people are **not sensitive to hearing about droughts in other parts of the country** - only a few, often through geography studies, knew parts of the UK had been under drought status this year (Thames Water)
- As panellists have **not experienced a drought in their own region**, awareness if drought has affected them is unclear

"Each season seems to be always hitting a record."

"Something is getting worse every season."

BLUE MARBLE

While there is openness to take personal action to prevent droughts, most remain unlikely to act

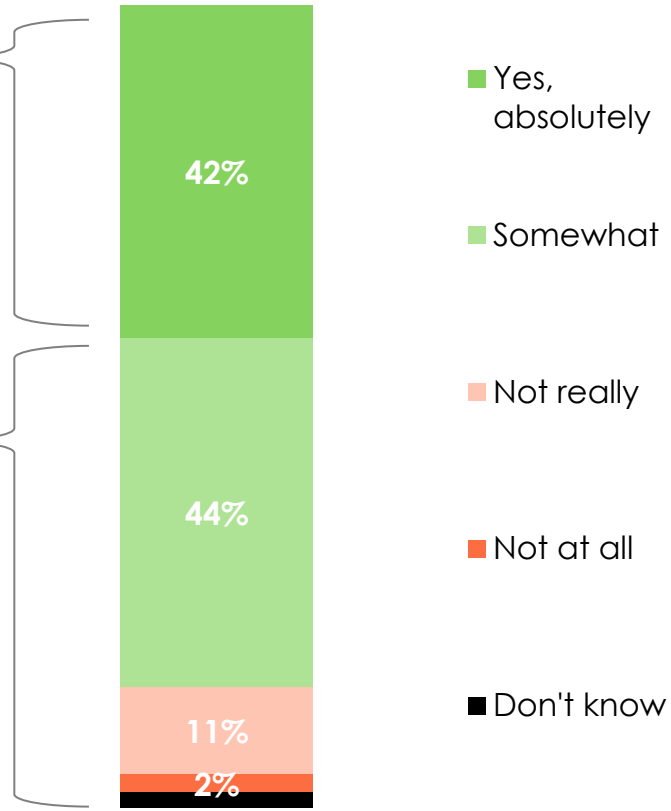
People recognise what they could do where water use is excessive, but many admit it's not what they would do

- **Little outright refusal**: Survey results suggest that many young people are 'open' to 'trying' to save water during warm weather, with only a small minority saying they would refuse to change their habits
- **Group effort:** A few say they would be more likely to if others in society did too

- **Moderate responses:** Most respondents fall into the middle ground, only 'somewhat' open to taking action at best
- **Openness versus reality:** During workshop discussions, when participants reflect more realistically on their likelihood of changing behaviour, many identify clear stop-gates that would prevent them from acting to help mitigate drought risks
- **Awareness–action gap:** Panellists demonstrate reasonable awareness of where their water use may be excessive (for example, taking long or multiple showers), yet most admit they would not adjust these behaviours due to various personal and contextual barriers

"It depends on the person and how aware they are of it - if water is still coming out of taps, then they might not change anything because in their eyes you can see its still working, so why would they resist this?"

Q9. During periods of hot and dry weather, would you be open to try and save water?



Q9. During periods of hot and dry weather, would you be open to try and save water?
Base: Young People's Panel Survey respondents (896)

BLUE MARBLE

Fundamentally, panellists expressed a lack of interest in modifying their established routines

This feeling was underpinned by a sense that they don't waste water, so would struggle to identify meaningful ways to reduce their usage

Overall, panellists question the value of individual actions in helping to mitigate droughts during warmer weather, citing several barriers…

"It's not something we could stop as individuals, if we all [tried] we can make some changes, but I feel like it won't be enough… I just feel that the majority of the impacts are caused by companies rather than individuals."

A lack of desire to change

Many simply don't want to change, finding it inconvenient and low priority.

Some call out competing priorities (e.g. A levels, busy lives) meaning saving water isn't front of mind.

Perceptions of non-wasteful current use

Many believe they already use water sensibly and find it hard to identify easy places to make savings (that don't disrupt).

Water is called out as a necessity, and as one panellist pointed out, those on meters must already careful due to cost.

Need for more water in warm weather

Hotter weather increases imagined need - they expect to drink more and take more showers.

Reducing water use feels counterintuitive to warmer conditions.

Water use is subconscious, habitual use

Water use is largely automatic.

Even with good intentions, people feel they'd forget to change established routines or struggle to track (or know) how much water they actually use.

Lack of urgency and incentive

If water still flows from the tap, there's no perceived problem. Feel infrastructure can handle their use.

The issue feels distant, and without visible consequences or clear rewards, there's little motivation to act

Perception of limited individual impact

Many feel their personal efforts won't make a difference unless others and large organisations act too (which they feel doesn't happen).

Expected collective inaction leads to a sense of futility about individual mitigations.

Mixed and muted responses to sources of authority for water saving messages

- No single source is dismissed, but panellists considered the credibility, trustworthiness and personal relevance of the different potential sources.
- Attitudes towards messengers largely shaped by existing levels of trust and relevance to their lives
- Limited motivation to change behaviour means discussions about sources are fairly abstract. Many are disengaged from any source.

Wessex Water 	• Credible, direct from the source – trusted due to regulation and perceived expertise • However, concerns of distrust among those critical of water companies (e.g. because of sewage issues) • Mascots or branded figures recalled positively from other regions (e.g. Bristol Water's Peter the Meter)
Government & national agencies 	• Recent emergency alert triggered familiarity and confidence in government's ability to reach people • Seen as the highest authority and a logical channel for national messaging • Distrust may limit emotional engagement; scepticism that messages would drive action. Sometimes perceived as less local and less suited to context-specific guidance
Friends & family 	• Low perceived expertise – most unlikely to suspect they use credible sources; less of an authority • Some exceptions where family influence (e.g. parents) linked to personal consequences or shared responsibility
Social media, Influencers & celebrities 	• Generally dismissed or ignored – not seen as the right context for behaviour change messages. Audiences use social media for entertainment, not education • Recognition that influencer appeal varies widely by demographic. For a few, David Attenborough emerged as one of few universally respected figures
Schools 	• Muted but positive agreement – seen as a practical way to reach panellists directly
Media & news 	• Widespread distrust and fatigue with "fear-mongering" narratives; many deliberately avoid news due to negativity • A minority view the news as still the most neutral source available

BLUE MARBLE

The term ‘temporary usage ban’ carries heavier, more intrusive connotations than hosepipe bans

Most accept hosepipe bans in exceptional conditions, but this also feels like an issue that would not impact them

The terms ‘temporary usage bans’ and ‘hosepipe bans’ attract questions about how/when these are implemented

Temporary usage bans:

- Some assume this encompasses hosepipe bans, while others are **unsure what it covers** (e.g. time limits, price increases, pools/hot tubs, or government-imposed restrictions)
- **Feels more intrusive** than ‘hosepipe ban’. Expanding restrictions beyond hosepipes is seen as drastic or unfair, with practical doubts about enforcement
- They anticipate such measures could **trigger emotional resistance** from customers

Hosepipe bans:

- **Spontaneous mentions** of these earlier in discussions
- **Understanding of how bans operate is limited** – one participant even queried whether it involved halting hosepipe sales. A few are aware of the need for communications for public awareness or to instil guilt
- Perceive it as **mainly affecting gardeners or pool owners** – therefore not personally relevant to most sixth formers
- Considered effective in principle but **small-scale impact**

Reactions towards bans are muted and uncertain, due to low personal relevance

- **Views are divided:** Some blame water companies, seeing a duty to maintain a reliable supply. Others are more accepting if short-term or weather-driven
- **While not seen as outright company failure** for most, bans are understood as having undesirable optics
- **Regional variation is contentious:** Most feel differing restrictions across the country could spark suspicion or reflect poorly on those with bans. A few acknowledge the logic of localised drought responses though and would just want clarity on the radius affected

However, this all sits within the context of:

- Weak engagement with recent droughts elsewhere
- Bans feeling distant from their day-to-day lives - unlike personal conservation actions that require direct behavioural change

> *“A lot of people will blame Wessex Water because it’s their job to provide water. So a lot of people assign blame because they're the easiest to blame.”*

Panellists were undecided or mildly negative about rising block tariffs to mitigate droughts

- Tariffs are unfamiliar to this audience and not intuitive – requiring a lot of clarification
- After consideration, tariffs viewed as potentially effective in reducing water use, but many have concerns about fairness of the approach

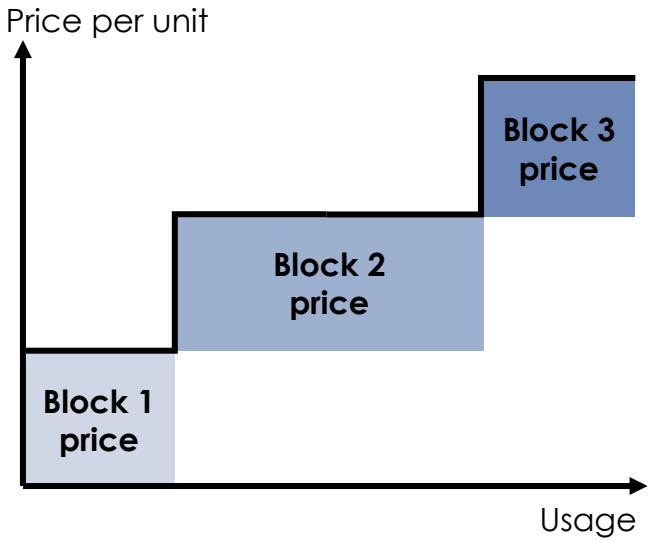
Drawbacks were top of mind for many:

- **Overly simplistic** response to a complex issue
- **Unfair on certain households,** e.g. worries about larger households being penalised heavily
- **Punishing for a necessity** feels wrong, concerns of emotional resistance
- **Wealthier households** may not be affected sufficiently enough to cause change
- **Doubt the impact:** question whether it would make a real impact overall as those willing to cut back may already have made their changes ahead of the tariff

"I think it helps some people but then a lot of people will have a larger negative impact."

Some advantages perceived:

- **Would incentivise people to use less** water, and therefore an effective way to mitigate drought risks
- **Parallels with energy smart meters** lead some to feel existing habits and familiarity with smart meters could support behaviour change with water too
- **Situational acceptability -** potentially effective as a temporary drought response, rather than a yea-round tariff.



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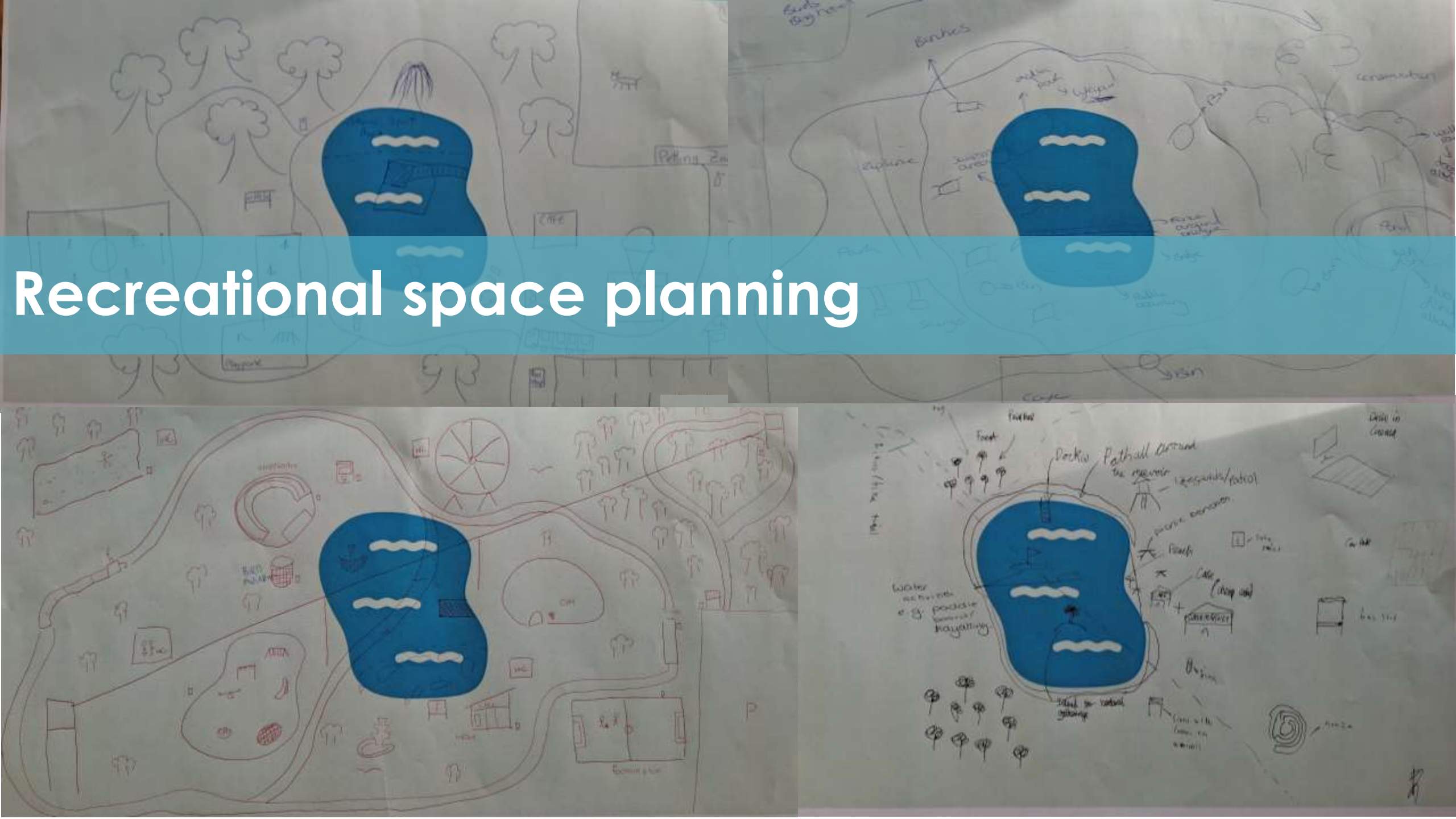
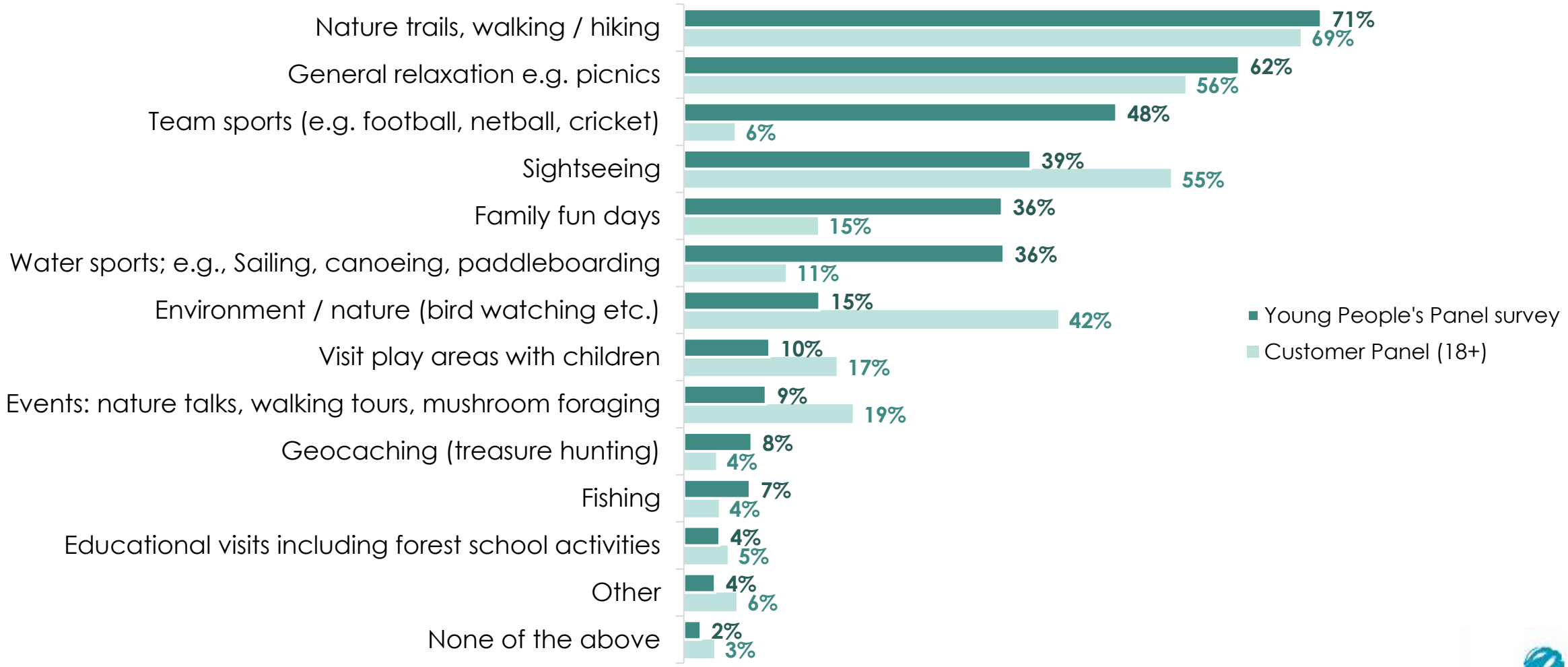


Recreational space planning

When outdoors, young people are most likely to be walking, relaxing and playing team sports

Whilst the Customer Panel (18+) aligned with YPP survey respondents (18 or under) on the top 2 activities, they were far less likely to be involved in team sports. Sightseeing, family fun days and water sports all resonate with a sizeable proportion of young people too.

Q10. Which of the following activities are you most likely to do when spending time outdoors?



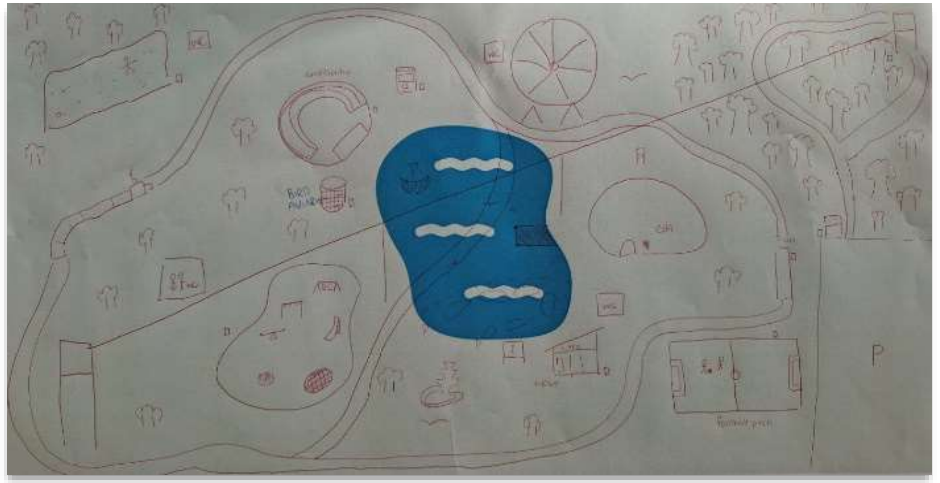
Q10. Which of the following activities are you most likely to do when spending time outdoors? Please select all that apply
Base: Young People's Panel Survey respondents (896), August Customer Panel Survey respondents (387)

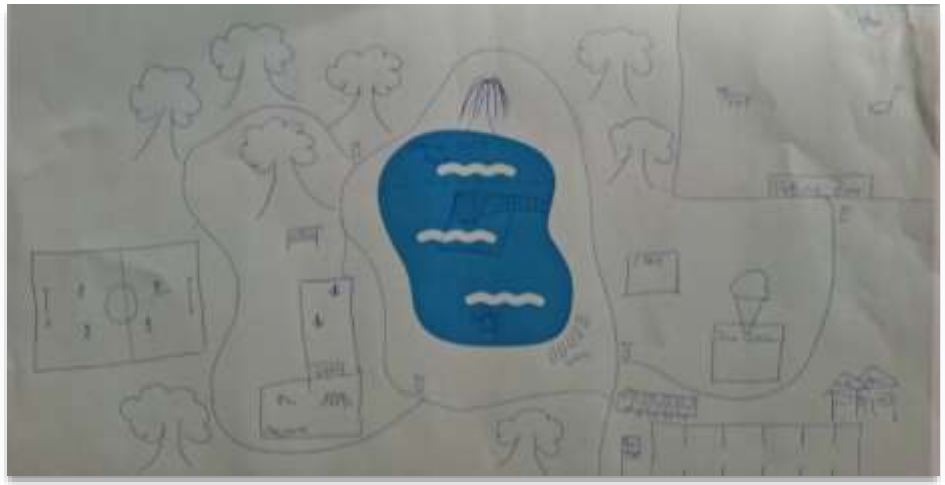
BLUE MARBLE

Groups were tasked with designing a recreational space at a fictional reservoir site, which met the needs and wants of young people

Panellists created spaces that prioritised entertainment and water activities

- Each group included activities on the reservoir, such as **paddleboarding** and **kayaking.** These were part of the **main appeal** of their spaces, and the focal point to attract young people to visit.
- Groups focused on **planting trees** and building **play parks** within these spaces. Some included **aviaries / bird watching sites** to preserve wildlife at the site. Conservation was a secondary factor to the entertainment / activities they included.
- **Each space included pathways** (incl. around or over the water), with **amenities** (cafés, visitor sites and bathrooms) for those visiting the site to walk. These were seen as a standard need for a recreational space.
- **Parking spaces** and **public transport** options were included by all groups. Due to the rural nature of these spaces, strong transport links (e.g. buses) were viewed as a necessity for young people to be able to visit.
- One group suggested **events,** such as concerts and seasonal activities (e.g. for Halloween) to attract repeat visitors.





BLUE MARBLE

Core task: Citizens' Jury

This year's core task was inspired by a Citizens' Jury approach

Citizens' Juries bring together people from different backgrounds to have an honest conversation on a specific issue

- Jurors work towards finding common ground on a specific issue
- They are used widely across the public sector often in relation to complex issues such as setting priorities for dementia services and increasing the wellbeing of young people

On behalf of Wessex Water, we asked the panellists to develop arguments for either the prosecution or the defence across two real business issues

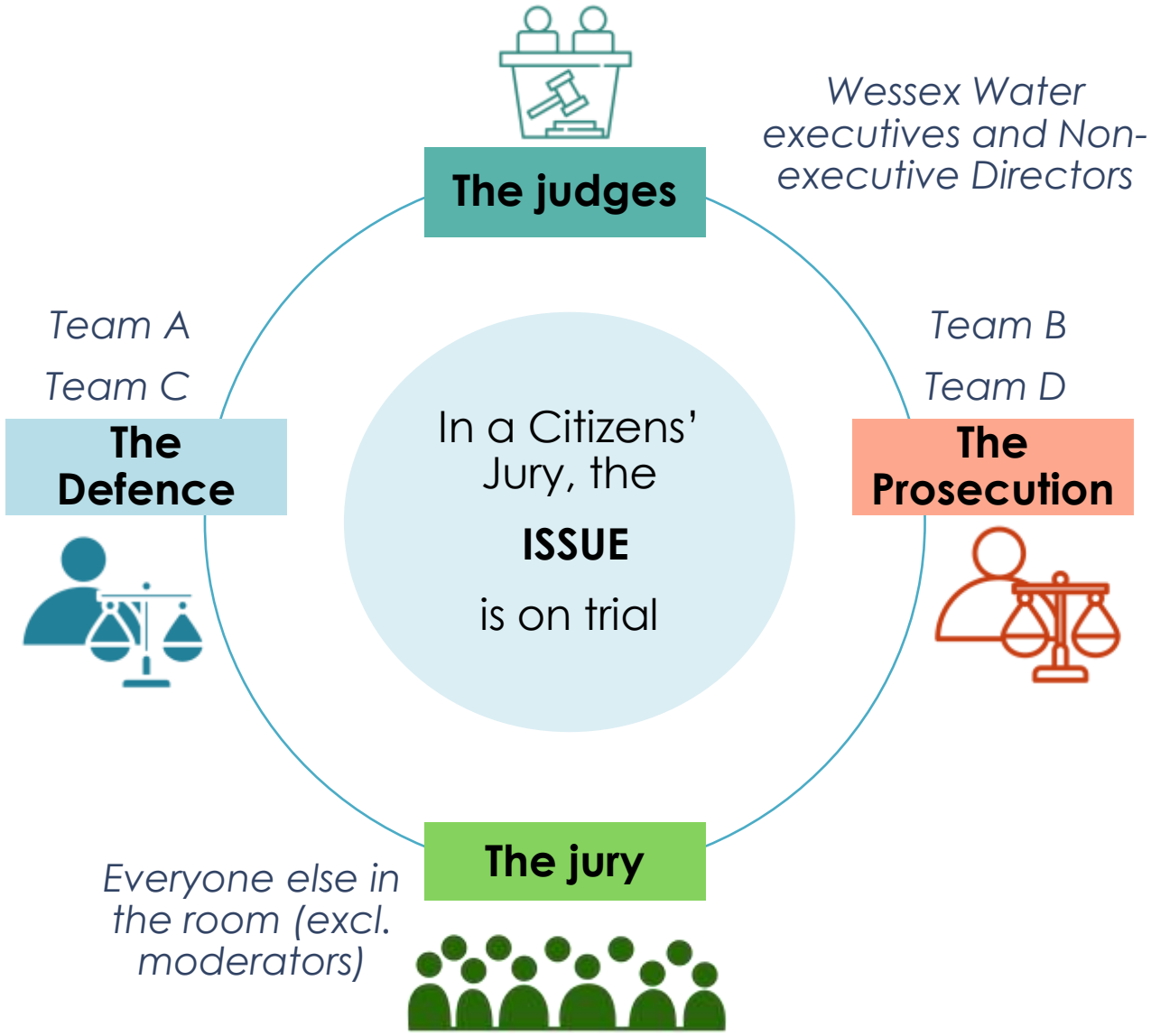
1. Wessex Water should introduce new tariffs that charge households a higher unit price for water over a set threshold
2. Wessex Water should hit improvement targets on all storm overflows as soon as possible (e.g., by 2030), rather than a longer-term goal (e.g., by 2050)

Each team delivered a 10-minute presentation, drawing on both the materials provided and their own independent research and evidence to build their case

- Preparation time was spread across Days 1 and 2
- Teams were also encouraged to work independently between sessions to refine their arguments and presentation strategy

BLUE MARBLE

Our 24 panellists acted as both the parties and the jury at different points during the day



Each team argued a case for the defence or the prosecution of the issue at hand.

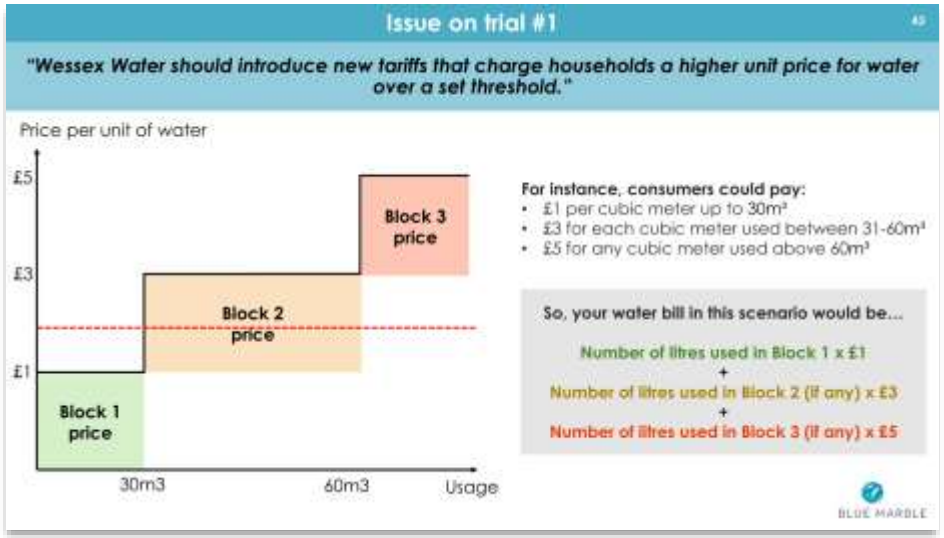
Following the initial presentations, the jury worked together to field questions or challenges to both teams. The jury then voted on their preferred case.

The cases had to consider the quality of their presentation and evidence provided, the persuasiveness of their argument and the quality of their response in the Q&A section.

The two 'issues' on trial were chosen as live business issues for Wessex Water:

- **The introduction of rising block tariffs**
- **Investment strategy to reach storm overflow targets**

BLUE MARBLE



> ***Wessex Water should introduce new tariffs that charge households a higher unit price for water over a set threshold.***

The first debate centred around whether Wessex Water should introduce a new rising block tariff, that would charge households a higher unit price across three different block thresholds.

The team for the defence had to put forward customer arguments and evidence to support the introduction of the rising block tariff; the prosecution had to argue the case against.

The assumptions they had to work within were:

- ✓ Every household having a smart meter
- ✓ Everyone would be given water saving tips
- ✓ Discounted tariffs available for low-income households
- ✓ A revenue-neutral tariff
- ✓ The outlined costs per block

BLUE MARBLE

SEGMENTS

- **Convenience Cost-Savers** and **Pro-Planet Advocates** represent around 30% of the customer base (a sizeable group) and currently hold negative views of Wessex Water.
- Introducing tariffs should improve their sentiment, as it enables customers to reduce costs (CCS) and have positive impact on the environment by reducing their water usage (PPA)

ARGUMENT

Encourage fairer water pricing by rewarding water-conscious customers and discouraging excessive consumption

- Basic water needs (consumption, hygiene) are covered affordably, while luxury use (long showers, garden sprinklers) costs more - this is fairer as it recognises basic use as a necessity, while high use is a choice
- Helps people become more aware of their usage by creating a clear price difference: most unaware of use, but money engages.
- The incentive of avoiding 'Block 3' would encourage households to be more proactive (e.g. try to reduce leaks, fit water butts)
- Recognise and combat challenges:
  - *Low-income households:* expand and utilise social tariffs to still protect those most vulnerable in society
  - *Larger households:* improve the support offerings available
  - *Understanding of blocks and calculations:* add clear bill information to help make sense of the tariff and see potential to save water/money

EVIDENCE

- **Wessex Water's tariff trial**: when customers understand the link between usage and cost, they become more "water aware" and reduce consumption – impactful at a community level
- **Wessex Water survey:** 71% of customer support this proposal
- Referenced **similar trials at Affinity Water** and other water suppliers
- **International studies (California, Australia)**: saw ~10% drops in usage after introducing rising block tariffs, especially in dry seasons

"Why would you want to implement a scheme that benefits the wealthiest in society and makes budgets tighter on hardworking families?"

SEGMENTS

- Did not address the reactions of the different customer segments
- Focused on 'at risk' customer groups instead (including low-income families and/or larger households, who would be negatively impacted by the new model)

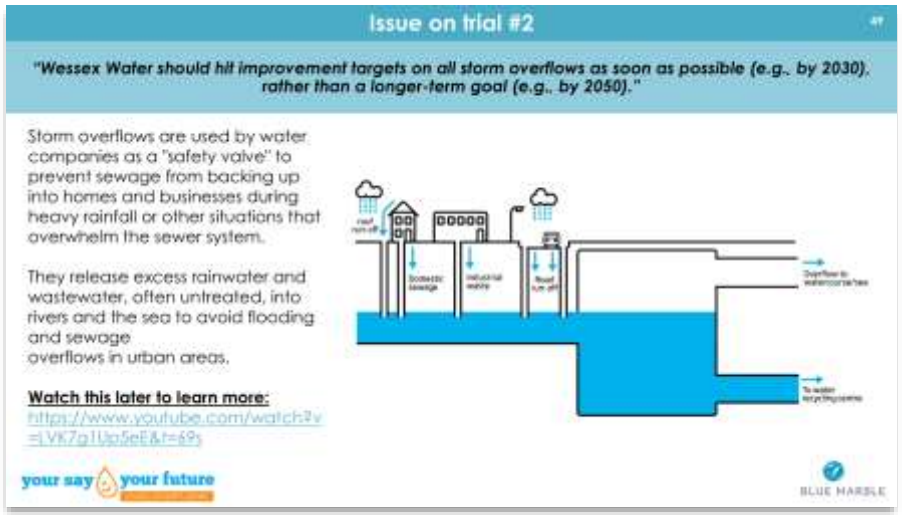
ARGUMENT

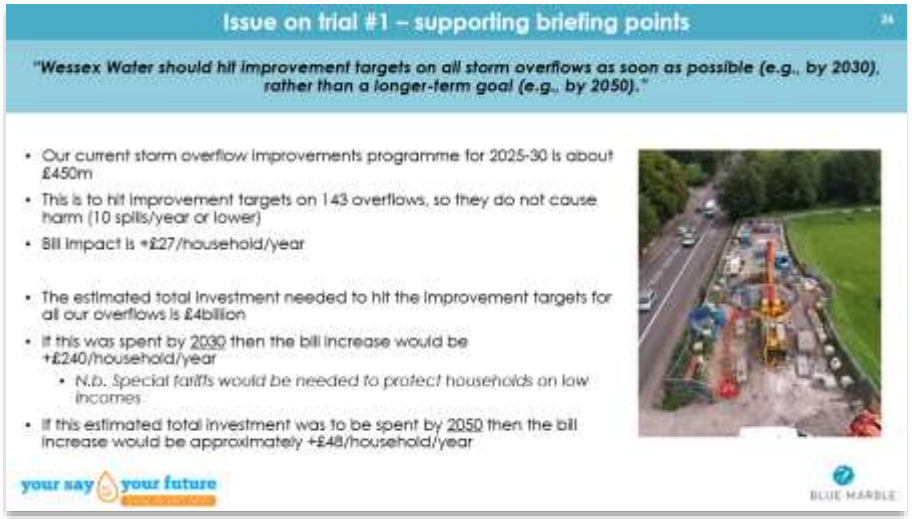
It unreasonably punishes some who have less control over usage

- While it may benefit single-person households, it could disproportionately burden larger families, even when their per-person water use may be lower
- Without safeguards, this model could push low-income households into water poverty and deepen existing inequalities.
- Lack of awareness of support schemes, plus embarrassment of asking, might prevent people living comfortably. Knock-on effects occur – physical health (if compromising personal hygiene), mental health (social isolation if unable to wash), overreliance / strain on public services (additional aid)
- There are barriers based on social psychology e.g. people's tendency to be loss averse, complex systems weaken conservation drivers etc.
- Regulation concerns due to reliance on smart meters – the technology is unproven at scale in the water sector, plus some customers may learn to tamper with the meters.
- Very few customers will take the time to understand the new system; may increase confusion and complaints for Wessex Water.

EVIDENCE

- **ONS data**: most people living alone are 65+ so likely already supported by pensioner discounts; 55% of families live in 4+ person households - likely to fall into higher-cost blocks, hard to change.
- **Student-led survey:** 86% of bill payers content with current system; 27% read the more detailed information on their water bill
- **Psychological research**: Example studies to show perceived unfairness and cost spikes damage trust and cooperation





> ***"Wessex Water should hit improvement targets on all storm overflows as soon as possible (e.g., by 2030), rather than a longer-term goal (e.g., by 2050).***

The second debate centred around how quickly Wessex Water should meet all storm overflow improvement targets.

The team for the defence had to put forward arguments and evidence to support the 2030 target, while the prosecution argued the converse, in favour of 2050.

Panellists were informed about:

- ✓ The number of storm overflows, regionally and nationally
- ✓ The number of spills recorded last year
- ✓ Proportion of pollution that spills are accountable for
- ✓ Harmful vs. non-harmful spills
- ✓ Bill impact of 5 year vs. 25-year timeframe

BLUE MARBLE

"Would you still like to bring your friends and family to rivers and beaches if they were polluted with sewage? "

SEGMENTS

- Relevance to '**high interest' customer groups** (environmentally conscious customers, families)
- Even low interest groups e.g. **Carefree Consumers**, should be given the opportunity to avoid costs of delayed action

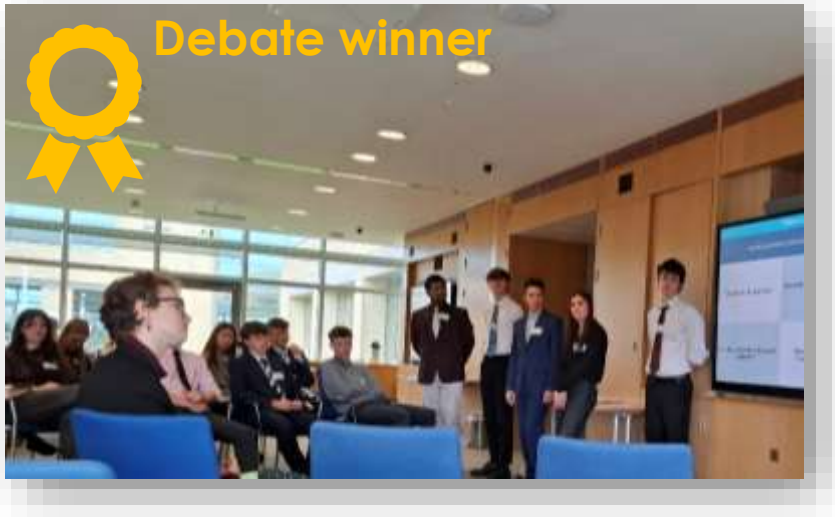
ARGUMENT

The issue is urgent and may get worse if left, act with public support

- Delaying until 2050 could mean 9 million more storm overflow spills, harming water quality. More rainfall is likely due to climate change too, which may mean it's even more than this.
- Currently have the technology and investment climate ("good time to borrow"). Timing the investments for 2050 risks undermining investors' confidence in Wessex Water.
- Storm overflows are responsible for 36% of water pollution – would make a notable difference to remove these.
- Meet the public's expectations - demand for water companies to address storm overflows and pollution is greater than ever.
- Improving storm overflows by 2030 will improve the aesthetics of coastal towns and minimise risk to public health when swimming.
- Delayed action risks greater costs for the next generation, who may inherit a more significant problem with poor infrastructure.
- Customers can be brought on side by highlighting the consequences of delayed action, encouraging them to reconsider their usage and understand the true impact of this.

EVIDENCE

- External evidence included articles from the **Met Office**, **MDPI** (Land journal), and **Forbes**
- Referenced other successful large-scale infrastructure projects: **Copenhagen's "Cloudburst"** and London's **Elizabeth line**
- **Student-led survey**: 80% would pay £5 a week to remove all storm overflows) - made the comparison to 'half a packet of cigarettes or a coffee' in question wording. Also assigned customer segments based on their own allocation ideas



SEGMENTS

- **Responsible Environmentalists & Pro-Planet Advocates**: supportive of lower carbon emissions, greater sustainability of solutions, better effectiveness
  Lifestyle Empowered & Convenience Cost-Savers: oppose high bill increases (stable bills = better for families), prefer minimal disruption
- **Frugal Traditionalists & Carefree Consumers:** lower immediate and future costs, less scepticism with well-planned projects (budget efficiency)

ARGUMENT

Protects the environment, customers' wallets and future generations by doing the job once and doing it right.

- Acting by 2030 would require significant bill increases, sudden spikes in carbon emissions and bring more disruption to bathing waters. There is also the risk of technologies not being ready for use at scale and/or becoming outdated in the near term.
- Propose prioritising the worst sites first (20-30% by 2030) to reduce the main sources of harm.
- It is better to spread cost and disruption over time, avoiding large bill increases for customers.
- By waiting until a later date, there will be the option to use future-ready technology to deliver lasting results.
- Allows Wessex Water more time to plan and engage communities in this work along the way.
- Customers would have more trust in a gradual plan that includes realistic promises, and more steady progress. Wessex Water risks losing trust if they fail to deliver on a 5-year promise; a 25-year plan feels more reliable.
- There is opportunity to pilot nature-based solutions and learn from them, if you have more time.

EVIDENCE

- **Statistics (source unknown)**: 3.6 million hours of raw sewage discharged into rivers last year; water bills projected to rise by £31 nationally; 50% of customers find overflows "unacceptable" etc.
- **Student-led survey**: 56% of customers prefer a 2050 target vs 28% for 2030 (16% don't know or wouldn't do it)

Conclusions

1. Panellists are feeling **pressure from multiple directions**, leading most to focus on the short term as academic demands increase. Envisaging wider societal change over the next 5 to 25 years proves difficult, though future customers **recognise shifts since previous generations**, particularly their deeper integration with technology and ongoing economic challenges.

2. **Views on wider technological progress are mixed**. While social media remains central to social life, it's widely criticised for harming mental health and spreading misinformation. **AI is now commonplace** and valued as a study aid, yet panellists remain cautious about overreliance - both for themselves and within education more broadly.

3. Panellists show **varying levels of political engagement**, with beliefs often shaped by family, friends, and online content. They are wary of misinformation. Many are **ambivalent about lowering the voting age**, recognising that informed decision-making develops with age. They doubt their peers' willingness to research issues thoroughly before voting. For some, the age-cap should be issue dependent.

4. **Environmental consciousness runs deep** among this generation, **but action is inconsistent**. While all recognise the climate crisis, cost pressures and competing priorities often limit personal change. The same applies to water use – some awareness of how to save water is present, but behaviour rarely shifts, even during hypothetical droughts or warm weather. Panellists call out several barriers, primarily lack of motivation.

5. **Engagement with the water sector is minimal, as it feels low priority** until they become bill payers and know their local provider – yet several **struggle to identify as "future customers"** as they are already 'consumers'. Around half of wider future customers are aware of Wessex Water, though few say they know enough to form a proper judgement.

The core task was designed to **explore the arguments for and against** the two issues at hand (storm overflow targets and rising block tariffs) – **rather than the prevailing view of the panellists** themselves. Using a Citizen Jury format enabled deep discussion, critical evaluation of evidence, and the generation of diverse perspectives for Wessex Water to consider in future planning.

Support for tariffs focused on reducing water use and protecting the environment, with price signals seen as a resonating and practical way to encourage mindful consumption. However, **fairness concerns were prominent**, particularly the risk of disadvantaging certain households. Communications will need to address psychological barriers and comprehension challenges, particularly around the complexity of the approach and perceptions of smart metering.

There are strong arguments to invest in the reduction of storm overflows at pace, with panellists citing **strong public expectations** and fears that delays would worsen the issue. Conversely, a slower pace was viewed as **better for bill payers** in an economically sensitive time, and **more conducive to effective and considered planning** - spreading costs over time while **maintaining public trust**.

The strength of this core task lies in how it captured panellists' reasoning, going beyond just their own opinions. They not only explored many arguments in depth but also **identified how different audiences may respond to each**, shaped by panellists' own interpretations and expectations about the customer segments. These insights provide a valuable springboard for further research to build on these findings:

1. **Exploring how faster and slower investment approaches resonate** with each segment.
2. **Testing how communications about these two issues can effectively draw on the sentiments** revealed in these debates, to support Wessex Water's own objectives.
3. **Understanding how widespread these arguments are** as underlying drivers of customer views and expectations, at a total and segment level.

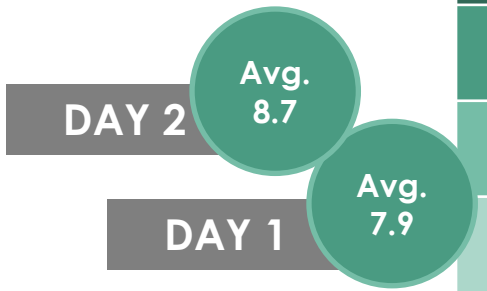
Appendix

Feedback scores for the YPP 2025

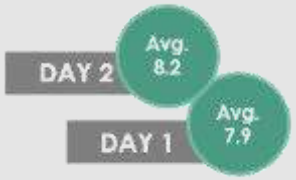
Score	Day 1*	Day 2*
10	3	5
9	5	9
8	7	7
7	5	2
6	-	-
5	-	-
4	2	-
3	-	-
2	-	-
1	-	-
0	-	-

Excellent

Terrible



2024 scores



- **Overall, panellists enjoyed the Citizens' Jury.**
- Suggested improvements include:
  - More time debating the opposing team's argument.
  - More time in their Citizens Jury groups, with longer activities and more time on day 2 to prepare for the debate.
  - Day 1: more time on the water usage activity and tour.

✓ **Citizens Jury format**

✓ **Enjoyed working as a team with new people**

✓ **Early careers panel**

✓ **Learning about the water sector**

✗ **More time to prepare debates on the day**

✗ **Wanted to explore the debate topics further**

✗ **The tour was too short and didn't cover enough of the business**

✗ **More time with experts on the carousel**

"Really engaging and thought provoking, lovely discussions with switched on people."

"It was a helpful insight into how the water system works and how our usage affects our lives."

"Possibly allowing more time for questions with the experts."

"More interaction with judges. Cross examination / debate during mock trial."

*The day 1 feedback was collected via an online survey. This was changed to a traditional paper-based form for day 2.

BLUE MARBLE

Addressing Ofwat's research principles

Standards for high-quality research:	How these were addressed in this project:
Useful and contextualised	This research is part of Wessex Water's BAU engagement with future customers. 24 sixth form students participate in a process that involved in-depth immersion in the workings of a water company and co-creative tasks that relate to either the business operation or long-term planning. The students spend 2 full days in Wessex Water offices and complete a core task that focuses on a real business problem. The activities also include group discussions, team challenges and a survey distributed across a wide range of schools and colleges in the region.
Fit for purpose	This initiative encompasses community engagement with pure research. The methodology enables Wessex Water to learn about the lives and attitudes of future customers and how their views differ from bill payers. Both qualitative and quantitative data is gathered within the approach. Traditional methods of researching young people about water services are problematic as this cohort are very distant from the topic of water services. This co-creative approach is highly engaging for the young people who value the work experience it also offers, and means they become informed and able to give their views on e.g. their priorities for investment.
Neutrally designed	Our team's extensive experience in designing research stimulus and discussion guides ensures our lines of questioning are neutral and not leading. Information is provided about Wessex Water and the regulation of the industry as part of the briefing sessions.
Inclusive	We engage with over 60 schools in the region offering the opportunity for pupils to participate in this initiative. Whilst the process is self-selecting, we ensure that schools and colleges understand that we are looking for applicants from all parts of society and we make it clear that academic performance is not a criteria for selecting applicants. The scheme is oversubscribed; therefore, we are able to choose candidates from a wide geography and a range of schools and colleges.
Continual	The Young People's panel is in its 10th year and is part of Wessex Water's ongoing research and engagement.
Shared in full with others	The research findings are included in this full report for Wessex Water to share as required.
Ethical	Blue Marble is a company partner of the MRS. All of its employees abide by the MRS code of conduct and as such all of our research is in line with their ethical standards.
Independently assured	Wessex Water to advise.

https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PR24-customer-engagement-policy.pdf

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