

Sentiment Tracking

Objectives

This research tracked customer views on a range of range of environmental issues across the South West and the UK overall, including awareness and attitudes towards issues such as river health, pollution and climate change.

Format	Quantitative (mix of CATI and online)
Households (number)	2,000 online 1,000 CATI
Non households (number)	
Vulnerable customers	✓
Future customers	✓
Retailers	
Stakeholders	
South West Water	✓
Bournemouth Water	✓
Bristol Water	

Impact on our plan and ways of working

We engaged YouGov and Ipsos to carry out weekly tracking on a national omnibus to test customer sentiment on river water quality.

Online surveys were run by YouGov, targeting around 2,000 respondents from across the UK.

We have also run telephone surveys of around 1,000 per week using the same questions as online to check for any difference in survey methods. We launched WaterFit in part due to this research.

Topics

Storm overflow	✓	Drinking water quality	
Water resources	✓	Net zero/ climate change	✓
Nature	✓	Affordability	

Key messages – what matters most

What we did

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What matters most

- When asked directly about river quality people seem to be concerned, with over half of people worried about it at the time
- Over a quarter of people had thought about river water quality in the previous week and had heard about river water quality from family, friends and news or social media in the same period
- Concern and awareness trended downwards throughout the tracking period as the media coverage reduced
- When ranked against other environmental issues, river water quality is seen to be less of a priority, with deforestation and ocean pollution viewed as the more serious issues
- Water companies are seen as one of the major contributors to river water pollution nationally, but in the South West it is recognised that other sources such as agriculture are responsible to the same or higher levels
- The majority of people think that water companies should be responsible for funding investments to improve water quality, ahead of the Government and river users
- People in the South West show higher levels of concern about environmental issues than the national average and across individual regions
- Those who regularly use social media, especially Facebook and Twitter have higher levels of personal engagement with these topics and are more likely to have heard and thought about the issues.

Are there differing views?

No significant differences

Next steps

Questions from the sentiment trackers have been incorporated into our quarterly business as usual tracking surveys.

Date February 2022 Supplier YouGov/Ipsos

