

Water Tankers Webpage Report

December 2024

Research Approach

Research objectives and approach

United Utilities has an area of their website that customers can visit to find out more about water tankers, what they do and why they may see them.

This area of the website has recently been updated and so United Utilities wished to test this webpage with customers to understand their views on the content, particularly:

- Is the tone and language appropriate
- Does it provide the correct level of information
- Is there anything customers do not understand
- Should anything be included that isn't already
- Where would customers go for further information

What we did:



A 5-minute survey with 221 'In The Flow' panel members

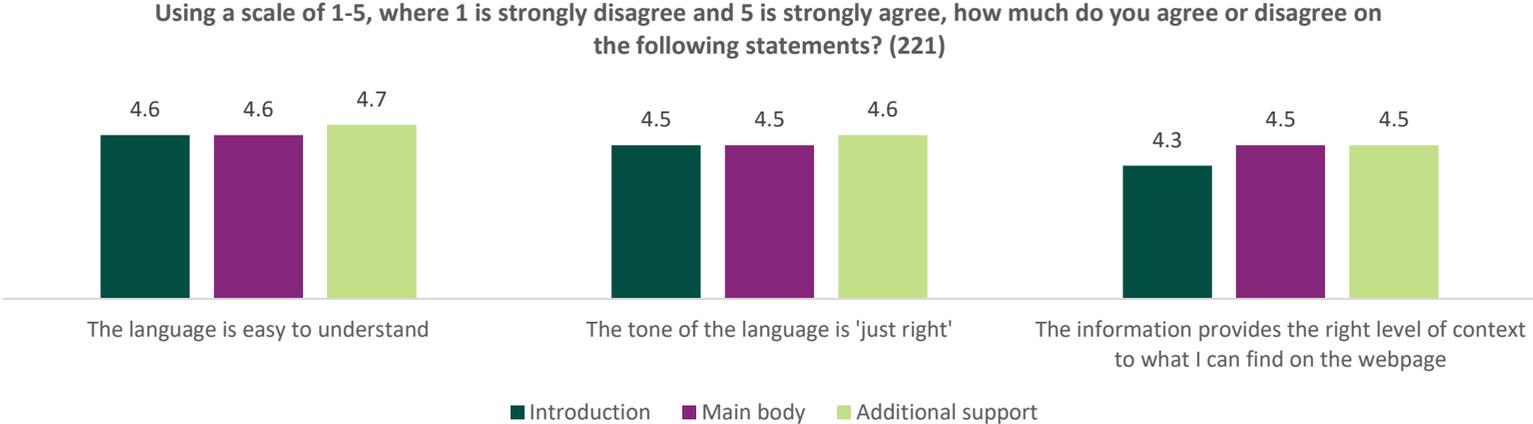


Fieldwork took place 14th November – 2nd December 2024



Key Findings

The webpage was well received by customers with all statements achieving an average of 4.3 out of 5 or above. 'The language is easy to understand' returned the highest average when reviewing all areas of the webpage.



Respondents described the webpage as clear, simple and easy to understand.

While the majority felt there was nothing to improve on, some had noticed some grammatical errors on the page such as the use of apostrophes and commas.

A desire for further information was highlighted, particularly on the water tankers themselves and how they work.

The length of the webpage was thought to be too long by some as they suggested a more condensed information site.

Results

When asked where respondents would go to seek information if they were to see a water tanker, 67% of respondents selected United Utilities website, followed by speaking to a member of staff on site.

Other areas where respondents would seek out information included: consulting local social media pages (3) and an expectation UU would contact customers (1)

A water tanker is a vehicle used to transport water to sites without a water supply



If you were to see one in your area, how would you look for information on water tankers and why they were there? (221)



Introduction banner

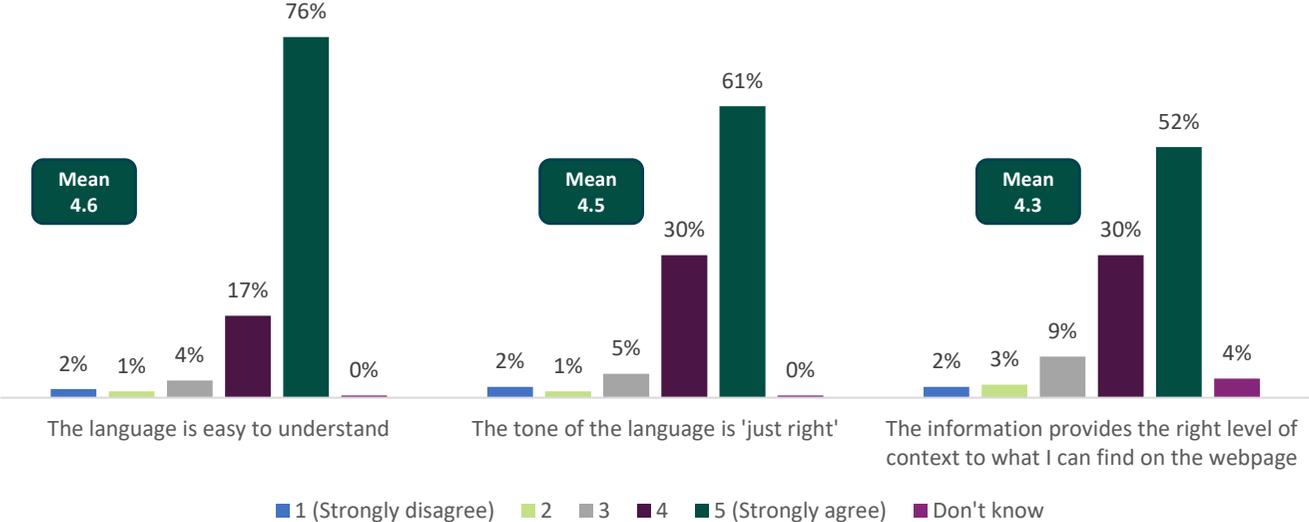
Keeping taps flowing

You may have seen our tankers filled with thousands of gallons of water near you and wondered why they're there. Our tankers are doing an extremely important job. They're keeping water flowing to your taps, ensuring you can still take a shower and use the loo, whilst our engineers work on something in the area.



The vast majority agree with all statements when reviewing the introduction to the webpage with over 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing respectively. The highest agreement was achieved when considering how easy the language was to understand with an average of 4.6.

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? (221)



While 1/2 (13) of those disagreeing with the previous statements felt they did not have any suggestions to how United Utilities can change this section, some requested further detail across a number of questions in the survey. Including a contact method was also suggested by those who did not feel the tone was right or that it provided the right level of information.

Further details

Q3 (1)
Q4 (1)
Q5 (4)

“ Provide links to enable the reader to obtain more detail (Q3)

“ Tell people what is happening (Q4)

“ Typical specific reasons why the tanker is there (Q5)

Contact details

Q4 (1)
Q5 (2)

“ Provide a telephone number to hear the message explained in more detail (Q4)

“ Maybe a way to make contact (Q5)

“ A contact number (Q5)

Q3. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q1 the language is easy to understand] How could United Utilities make the introduction banner easier to understand?

Q4. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q1 the tone of the language is just right] How could United Utilities create a more suitable tone on the introduction banner?

Q5. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q1 the information provides the right level of context to what I can find on the webpage] What do you feel is missing from the introduction banner?

The main body of the webpage

While our teams carry out essential work across the North West, some customer's water may need to be turned off for the work to go ahead — cue the tankers. They'll arrive in the area to pump additional water into the pipes, keeping taps flowing and toilets flushing.

Emergencies do occur, for example a burst water main. If it's not going to be a quick fix we will deploy our water on wheels as a temporary measure, to get impacted customers back on supply. Sometimes our tankers arrive in the area so quickly, our customers won't even realise there's been a problem.

Whether the work is planned, or an emergency we assess the area affected, to ensure that no vital services are at risks e.g. hospitals and schools. If it looks like this is a possibility, we'll send our tankers to maintain supplies.

If the tankers are near you pumping away night and day, they're keeping taps flowing for potentially hundreds or thousands of customers.

We know the tankers can be disruptive; they're large, noisy and can be there round the clock until the work is complete. So if you are impacted, now or in the future, we're sorry for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience whilst we get the job done.



How do we choose where we pump in the water?

We have a team that look at the water network in depth, they look for the pumping point (hydrant) that will keep as many customers as possible with water.

Another deciding factor, is locating somewhere that will cause the least disruption in the local area e.g. avoiding traffic management or road closures.

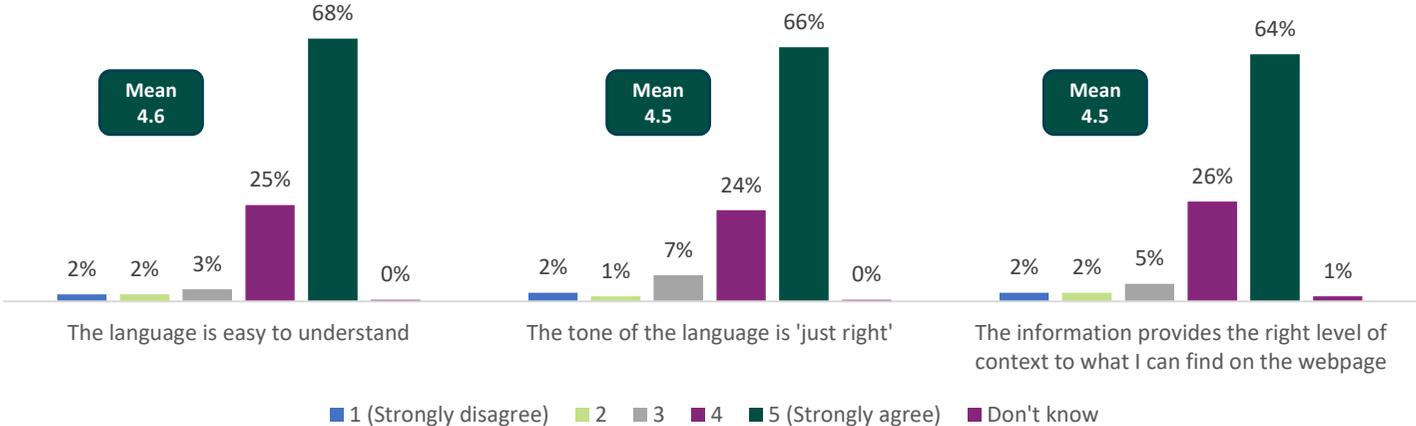
Finally, the team will always try for a spot as far away from customers' properties as possible, however this isn't always feasible due to the makeup of our pipework. In these cases, we will have attempted all we can to avoid it and we're really sorry for the inconvenience. If you do need to contact us, [please call us on 0345 672 3723](tel:03456723723)

A bit more about our water tankers

Water tankers are vehicles fitted with large tanks for transporting water. They come in various sizes, with capacities ranging from **5,000 litres** in smaller trucks to **30,000 litres** in larger tankers — that's the equivalent of **200 bathtubs**. The type of vehicle we send depends on the specific job requirements. We operate one of the largest fleets among water companies in the UK, with **45 tankers** across the North West.

All statements achieved agreement of 90% respectively when reviewing the main body of the webpage. In particular, the language was found to be easy to understand with an average of 4.6.

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? (221)



54% (14) of those disagreeing with the previous statements felt they did not have any suggestions to how United Utilities can amend the main body. However, across all questions it was highlighted that the information could be condensed. Two further respondents felt the grammar and language could be improved.

Information is too lengthy

Q7 (1)
Q8 (1)
Q9 (2)

“ *Get an editor! It's far too long and complicated (Q7)*

“ *Easy explanation (Q8)*

“ *Very wordy. Should be able to use fewer more precise wording (Q9)*

Improve grammar/language

Q7 (1)
Q8 (1)

“ *Not all of what has been written is grammatically correct the first line in paragraph one needs changing (Q7)*

“ *Contact the plain English society and employ a good editor (Q8)*

Q7. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q6 the language is easy to understand] How could United Utilities make the introduction banner easier to understand?

Q8. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q6 the tone of the language is just right] How could United Utilities create a more suitable tone on the introduction banner?

Q9. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q6 the information provides the right level of context to what I can find on the webpage] What do you feel is missing from the introduction banner?

Additional support

Incidents in you area

Check the status of active issues in your area.

[UP MY STREET](#)

How we manage incidents

Find out more about what we do when an incident occurs

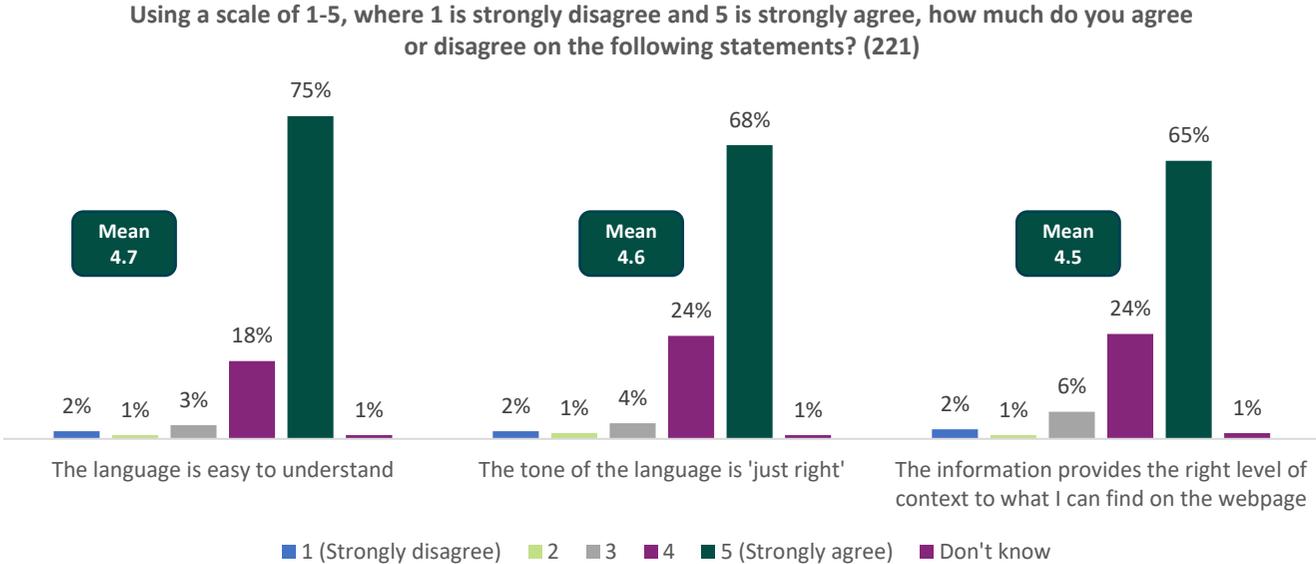
[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Appearance of your water

Our tankers pumping into the network will sometimes cause aerated or discoloured water.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

All statements achieved agreement of 89% respectively when reviewing this section of the webpage. While the highest average (4.7) was achieved when considering how easy the language was to understand, the highest agreement of the tone being just right (92%) was achieved when reviewing the additional support information.



75% (15) of those disagreeing with the previous statements felt they did not have any suggestions to how United Utilities can amend the additional support area of the webpage. Only three suggestions were left, one wishing for regular updates and the other two wishing for contact details.

“ *Regular updates and where possible, a timescale for work completion (Q12)*

“ *Some sort of contact information... phone number etc (Q13)*

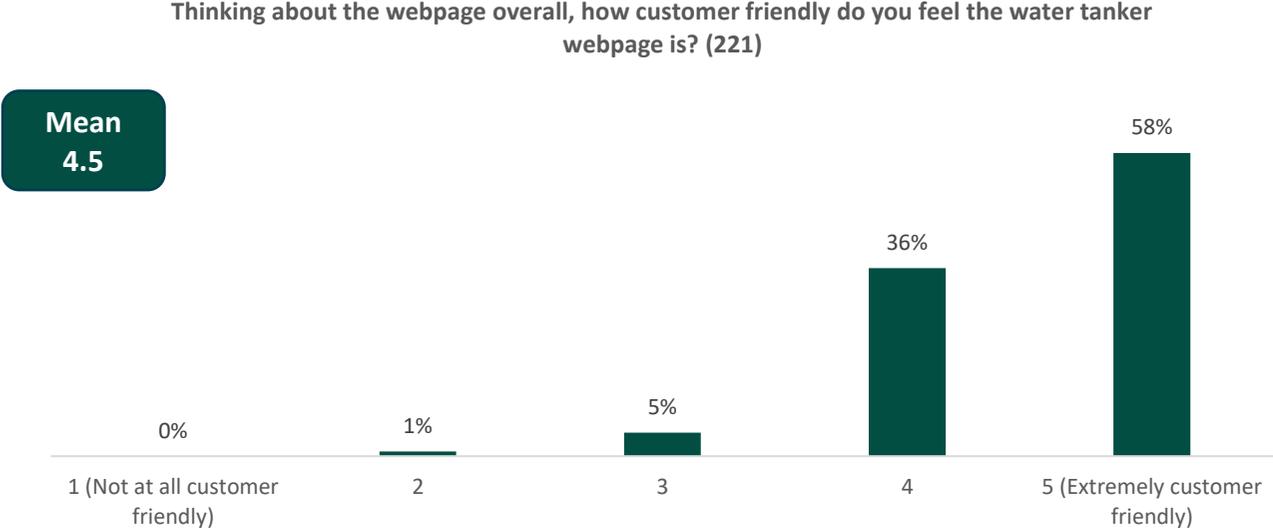
“ *A contact number (Q13)*

Q11. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q10 the language is easy to understand] How could United Utilities make the introduction banner easier to understand?

Q12. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q10 the tone of the language is just right] How could United Utilities create a more suitable tone on the introduction banner?

Q13. [If strongly disagree or disagree with Q10 the information provides the right level of context to what I can find on the webpage] What do you feel is missing from the introduction banner?

When reflecting on the webpage as a whole, an average of 4.5 was achieved with 58% selecting that the water tankers webpage was extremely customer friendly.



When asked to consider any improvements that could be made to the webpage, 58% of respondents who left a comment felt that there was nothing to suggest describing the webpage as clear, simple and easy to understand. One customer praised the layout and the accessibility features.

“*No; navigation is clear and easy to follow, with intuitive headings like "Request a Water Tanker," "Emergency Information," and "Contact Us." So far, I've only looked at it on my laptop. I still need to try it out on my iPad and mobile to check if the page is responsive across devices. The images and text are pitched at just the right level—everything's clear and easy to understand. I was impressed with the accessibility features, especially the Recite tool (I create user guides for work, so this caught my eye). The variety of colour schemes, fonts for visual impairments, and keyboard navigation options were spot on. The interactive widgets—like "How We Manage Incidents" and info about water colour, bottled water, or reimbursements for shortages over 12 hours—were simple, straightforward, and super helpful*

“*No improvements necessary as is easy to understand and very informative*

“*None it's fine , easy to understand and clears up most misunderstood points*

“*It's a simplistic, down to earth script that all readers of the website will clearly understand. No gobbledygook !!!*

“*It's excellent, clear, understandable and the images complement the text*

Of those who did leave comments, the most common theme was highlighting grammar errors within the webpage, particularly the apostrophe when referencing multiple customers. Further information about the water tanker itself was mentioned alongside a wish for less lengthy information.

**Grammar/spelling errors
(9)**

“ Yes, it said "some customer's" ergo the apostrophe has been incorrectly placed. There isn't just one customer who may be affected but this is what the apostrophe denotes. There are multiple customers who may be affected ergo the apostrophe should be after the s e.g. customers' ”

“ It needs another proofread for punctuation - you've got a misplaced apostrophe and a few rogue commas in there! ”

**Additional information
(7)**

“ I would be interested also: to hear about how the water is pumped from the tanker into the pipe network (is it electric or engine pump) - is this why it's noisy? Can it be done by gravity from a high place? ”

“ I would want to know where the water had come from that you were putting into the system and how the tanker had been sterilised before being used for clean water supply ”

**Condense the information
(5)**

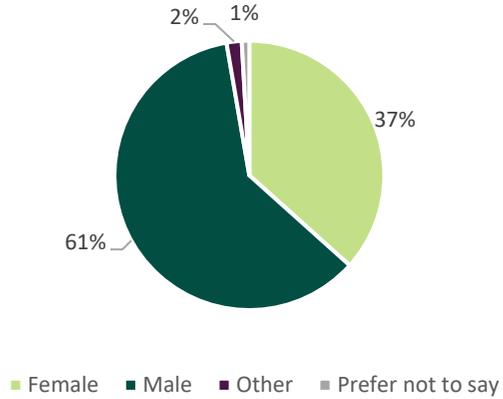
“ Less wordy and more specific information ”

“ Less text, it's a lot of reading, people don't want to read that much, maybe try slide show style for critical pieces of information... ”

Demographic Breakdown

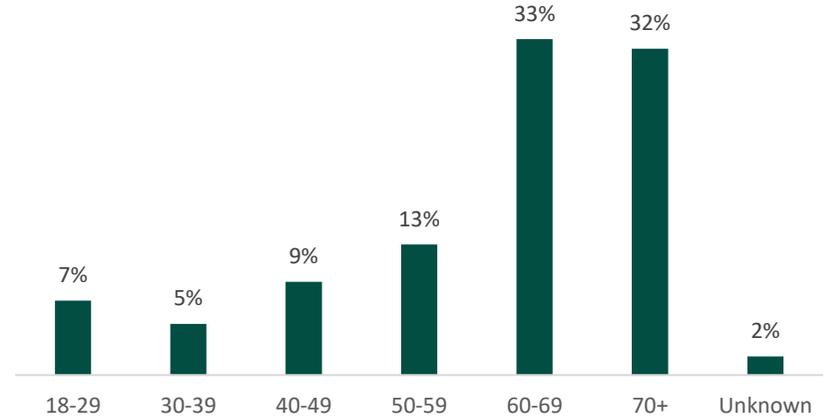
Demographic tables

How would you describe yourself?



Gender	Count	%
Male	134	61%
Female	81	37%
Other	4	2%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
Total	221	100%

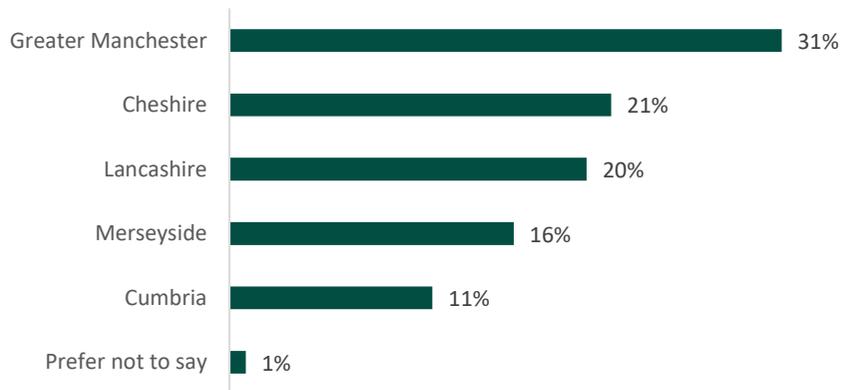
Age



Age	Count	%
18-29	16	7%
30-39	11	5%
40-49	20	9%
50-59	28	13%
60-69	72	33%
70+	70	32%
Unknown	4	2%
Total	221	100%

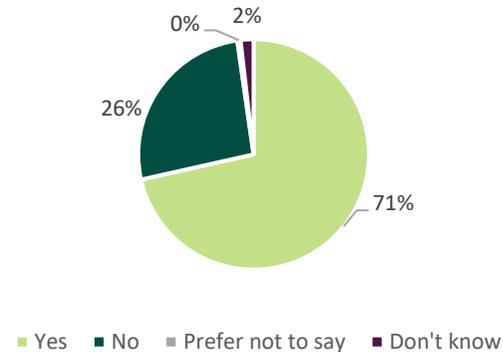
Demographic tables

Which of the following regions do you live in?



Region	Count	%
Greater Manchester	68	31%
Cheshire	47	21%
Lancashire	44	20%
Merseyside	35	16%
Cumbria	25	11%
Derbyshire	0	0%
Prefer not to say	2	1%
Total	221	100%

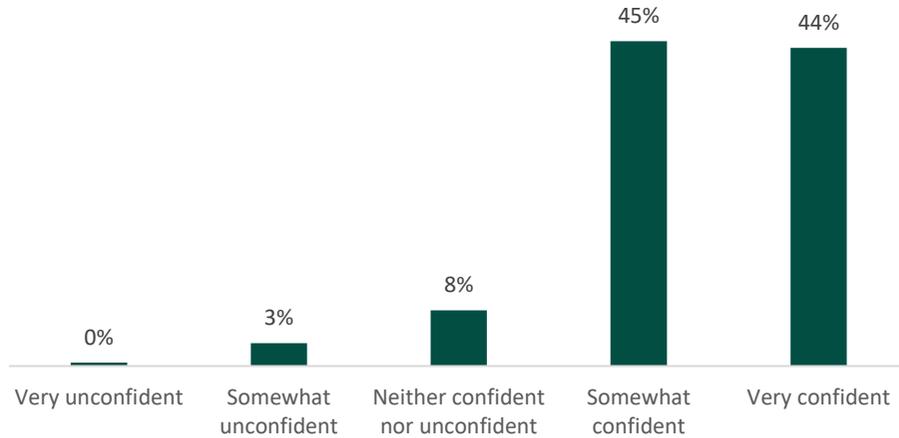
Do you currently have a water meter installed at your home?



Water meter status	Count	%
Yes	158	71%
No	58	26%
Prefer not to say	1	2%
Don't know	4	0%
Total	221	100%

Demographic tables

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



Technical ability	Count	%
Very confident	97	44%
Somewhat confident	99	45%
Neutral	17	8%
Somewhat unconfident	7	3%
Very unconfident	1	0%
Total	221	100%

Demographic tables

Do any of the following apply to you? Select all that apply (221)

