

# United Utilities

## Water quality webpage testing

Report December 2025



# Background and Approach



# Research background and approach



## Background

United Utilities has recently updated areas on their website that contain pages on the topic of water quality.



## Objectives

The research sought to answer the following objectives:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the updated water quality webpages
- Examine the full user journey when navigating the webpages
- Identify pain points and barriers
- Deliver actionable insights highlighting usability issues and customer feedback on further improvements



## Approach

A mixed method approach combining a quantitative 500-customer survey, heat mapping and qualitative user testing, with eight participants, was used to explore the full customer journey. Fieldwork took place 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

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



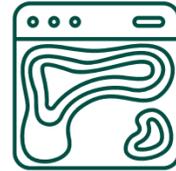
## Data

Data has been weighted to be representative of the United Utilities customer base.

Details of the sample can be found in the appendix.

# Methodology and analysis

## Heatmapping



Customers were invited to use heatmapping to click on areas of the webpage they particularly liked and disliked, with open-responses to provide reasoning.

The heatmap was analysed based on volume of clicks in specific areas and the open responses were examined in correspondence to location.

## Quantified scale questions



Customers were asked a series of scaled questions to determine their attitude towards certain aspects of the webpage including, language, tone etc.

The data was analysed quantitatively, to assign measurable values to customer feedback and allow for clear identification of trends.

## Qualitative open- response questions



Following each series of scaled questions customers were invited to respond to open-ended questions allowing them to share any insight they personally feel valuable.

This approach enriched the dataset, looking beyond quantitative measures and gaining nuanced perspectives.

## Screen-recorded navigation



8 members of the online community were invited to participate in UX testing during which they virtually record their navigation through the webpage, narrating their thoughts throughout in real time.

The recordings were analysed based on both the users' navigational paths and their verbal commentary, offering valuable insights into their decision-making processes.

# Water quality webpage survey – Applied routes

After viewing the water quality landing page, respondents were randomly assigned to one of two test routes, each focused on a different section of the website. Route A explored the 'My water looks different' page, while Route B focused on the 'My water tastes/smells unusual' page.

# Key Findings



# Key findings



## Positive Themes

**Clarity and Ease of Navigation:** Respondents consistently praised the webpages for being easy to read, intuitive to navigate, and logically structured.

**Language and Tone:** “The language is easy to understand” was the highest scoring statement across all sections, with tone generally perceived as appropriate.

**Visual Support:** Imagery and colour schemes were valued for aiding comprehension and maintaining engagement. Real-life images were preferred over icons in some cases.

**Helpful Tools:** The “Up my street” postcode tool was highlighted as particularly useful for identifying local issues

## Score Patterns

**Highest scoring:** “The language is easy to understand” (often >65% strongly agree).

**Lowest scoring:** “It provides the right level of information needed to understand X,” indicating a need for more actionable detail and clarity.

## Areas for improvement

**Formatting Issues:** Common concerns included small font size, dense text, and insufficient emphasis on key points. Suggestions included more bold text, clearer section breaks, and improved spacing.

**Content Gaps:** While most respondents felt content was complete, 6–10% suggested enhancements such as:

- Contact information on every page.
- Additional health and safety guidance.
- Clearer actions if issues persist beyond solutions provided.
- More imagery and stronger visual emphasis on critical warnings.
- Greater clarity on United Utilities’ role and responsibility.

**Visual Appeal:** Some sections were described as overly wordy or not visually engaging, which could lead to confusion.

## UX Testing Insights

Participants praised smooth navigation, clear content, and supportive imagery. The added postcode tool was seen as highly valuable.

No negative feedback was reported, aside from a note that older users may require additional support.

# Water Quality landing page



# Water quality (landing page)

[Home](#) | [Help & Support](#) | [Your water supply](#) | [Your water](#) | [Water quality](#)

## Water quality

We constantly clean, disinfect and carefully test your drinking water to ensure before it makes the journey to your taps it's safe for our seven million customers to use.



Occasionally, you may experience issues with your water, such as discolouration. Often this is harmless, with a simple explanation for the change and an easy way to resolve any issues.

If your water looks unusual or has an abnormal taste or smell, there are some quick ways you can identify what's causing the problem and, in many cases, fix it yourself.



### My water looks different

If your water appears discoloured, cloudy or has bits in it, click here to see what could be causing this.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



### My water smells/tastes unusual

If your water has a unusual taste or smell, click here to see what could be causing this and how to fix it.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

## Check your water quality

Enter your postcode to check water quality in your area

Enter your postcode here

[FIND](#)

# Heatmapping tool – Water Quality (landing page)

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



347 likes



Respondents felt the webpage was both clear and easy to read, providing useful information.

*“Clear and simple to understand”*

*“It looks simple and direct, which avoids confusion”*

Respondents praised the use of imagery as a visual cue and maintaining interest

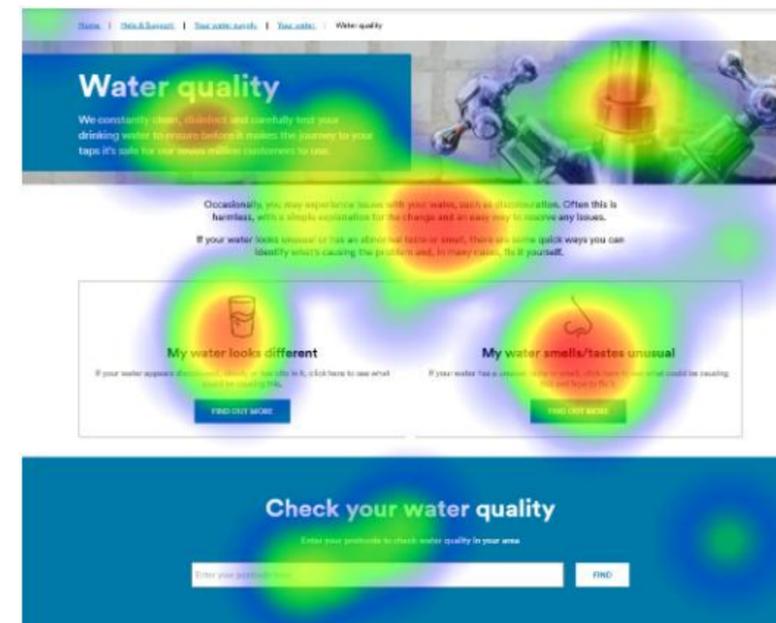
*“Good image, describes what this page is all about”*

*“The image of a nose is a great idea to help distinguish a specific type of issue, particularly for those with poor eyesight, reading or language barriers.”*

Respondents felt the layout was clear and conveys the message well, with clear instructions.

*“Easy to see calls to action. and easy to understand distinctions of the type of problem”*

*“Clear about what to do next for this issue”*



61 dislikes



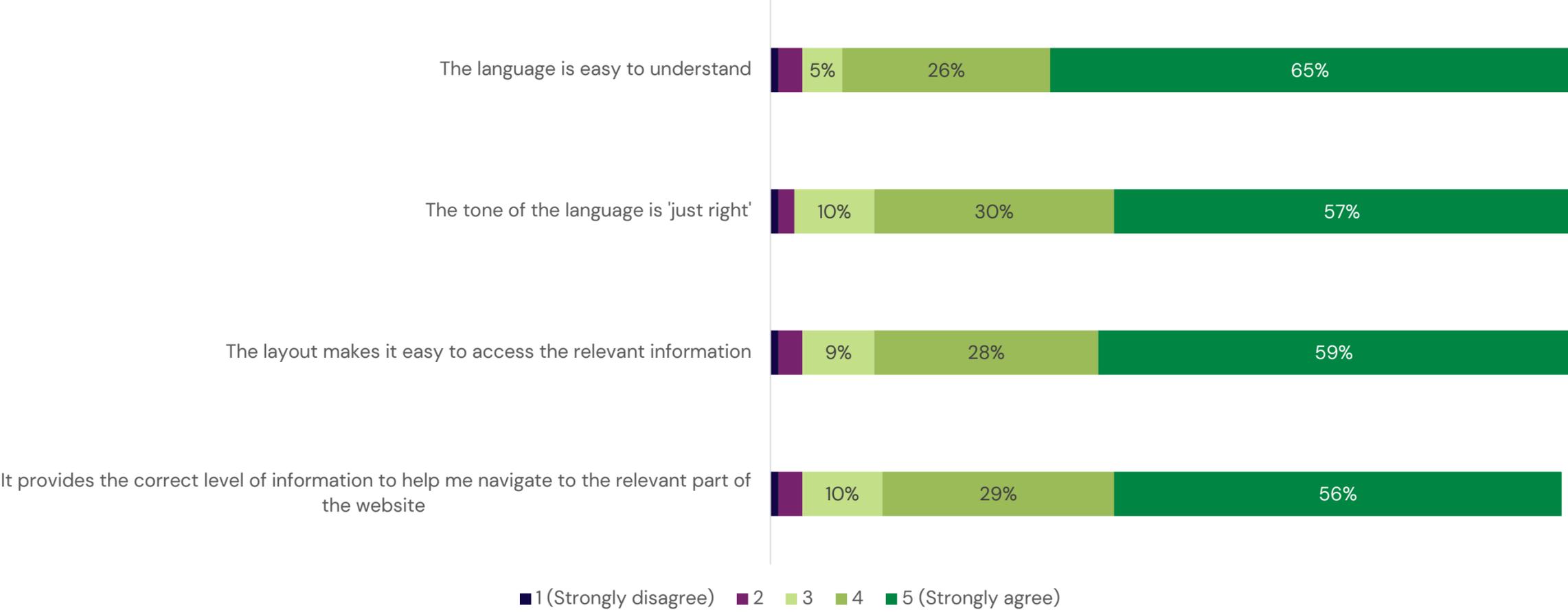
Some respondents found issue with the particular formatting of the webpage, suggesting the writing is too small and could use more bold text.

*“The writing is a bit too small and I think some of it should be in bold to make the key points more noticeable.”*

*“I can't really see the need for the taps picture get rid of that and then reshuffle the text allowing then to increase the font.”*

The water quality landing page was received positively by the majority of respondents. 'The language is easy to understand' achieved the highest rate of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement (67%), closely followed by the tone of language (57%). At least 8/10 respondents responded positively to every question

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (496)

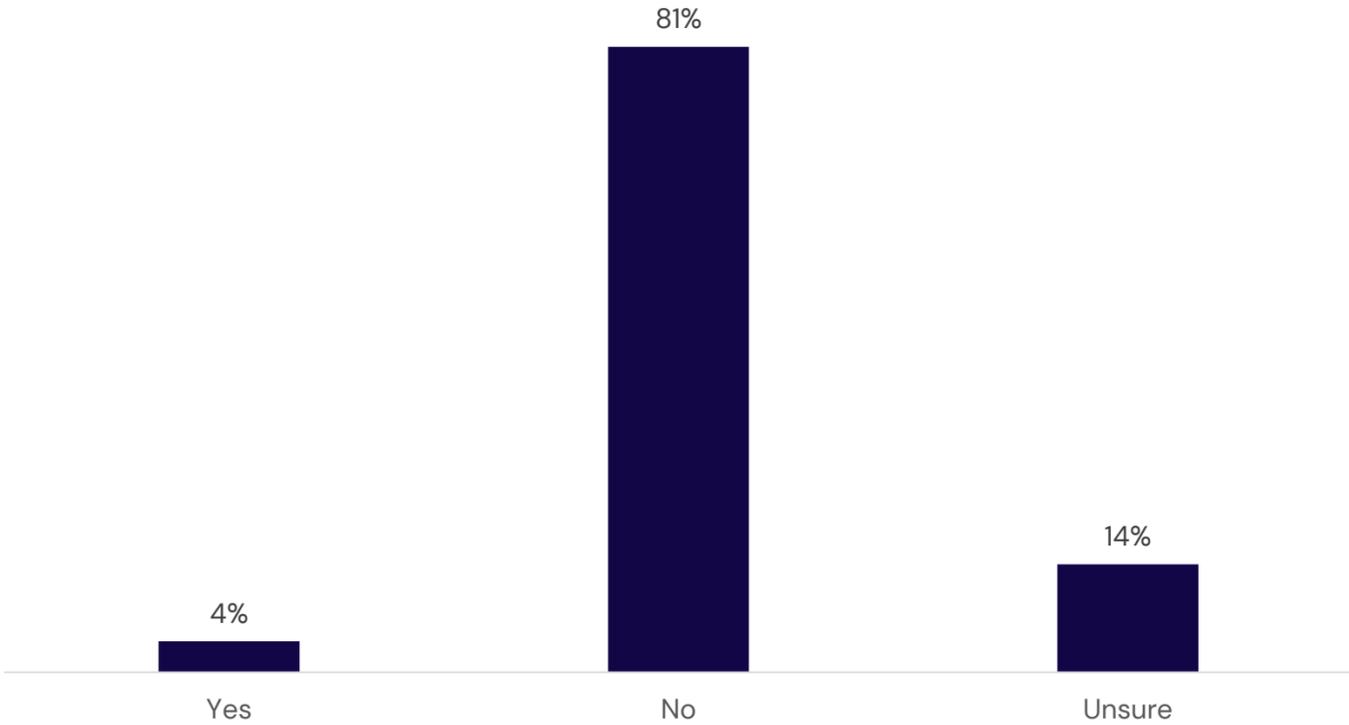


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand   | 4.7     | 4.4      | 4.6                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.8   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right   | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.3        | 4.4        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.4    | 4.4     | 4.4       |
| The layout makes it easy to access the relevant information  | 4.6     | 4.3      | 4.4                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.6   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.4    | 4.4     | 4.4       |
| It provides the correct level of information to help me navigate to the relevant part of the website | 4.5     | 4.4      | 4.4                | 4.3        | 4.4        | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.4    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

The majority of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from this section of the webpage (81%). While 14% were unsure, 4% felt there was something missing. Of those who felt the content was lacking, suggestions included contact information (23%); more visual imagery (9%); and further information if the issue does not fall into the specific categories (9%).

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (496)



**Contact information (5)**

*"I think it should also include a contact us page for customers that require further assistance as while I'm tech savvy not many people are"*

*"Contact details in case the person can't find out what is wrong or what to do about it"*

**More visual imagery (2)**

*"An image of a map may be useful along with the option to enter a postcode"*

*"Pictures of what to look for if concerned"*

**Options beyond two categories (2)**

*"What if it's both of the two options?"*

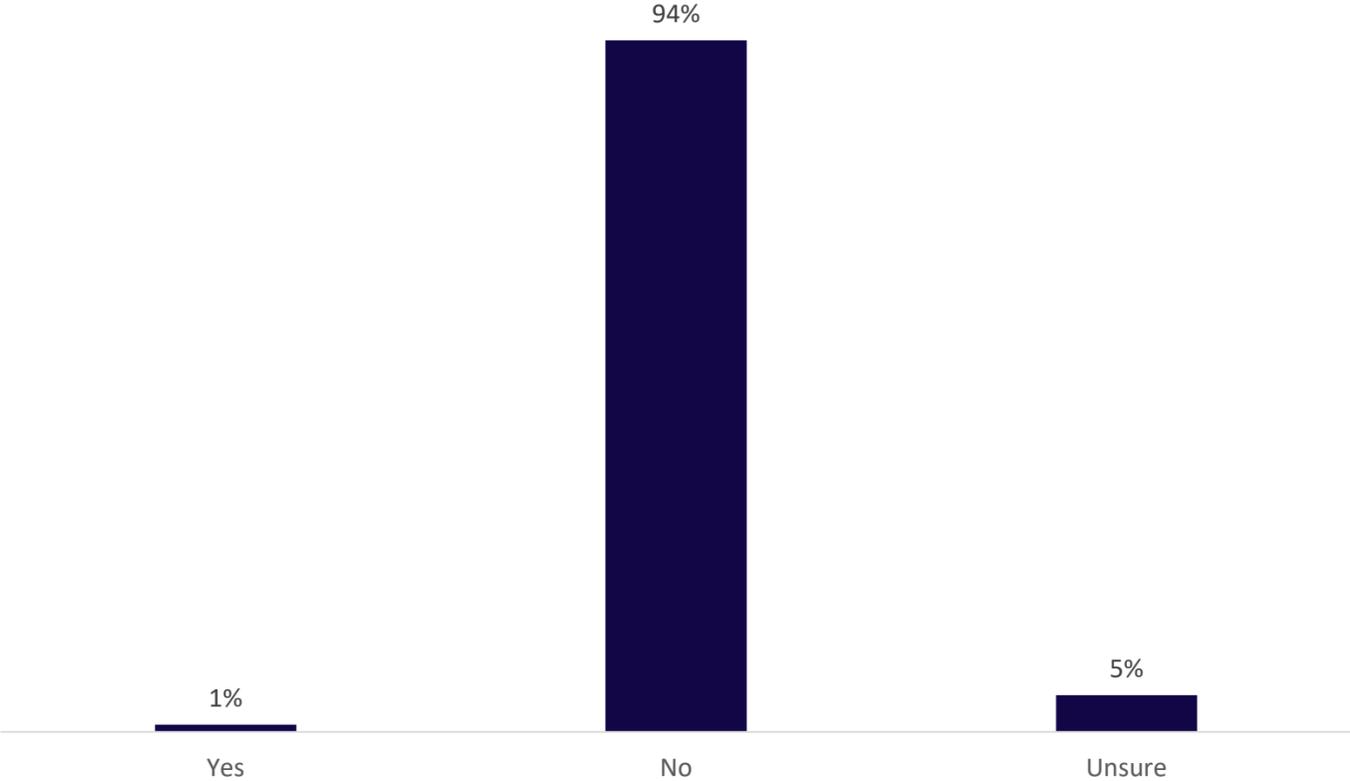
*"If my problem doesn't quite fit into the two categories? I'm sure that's a rare occurrence but maybe a something else"*

13. Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage?

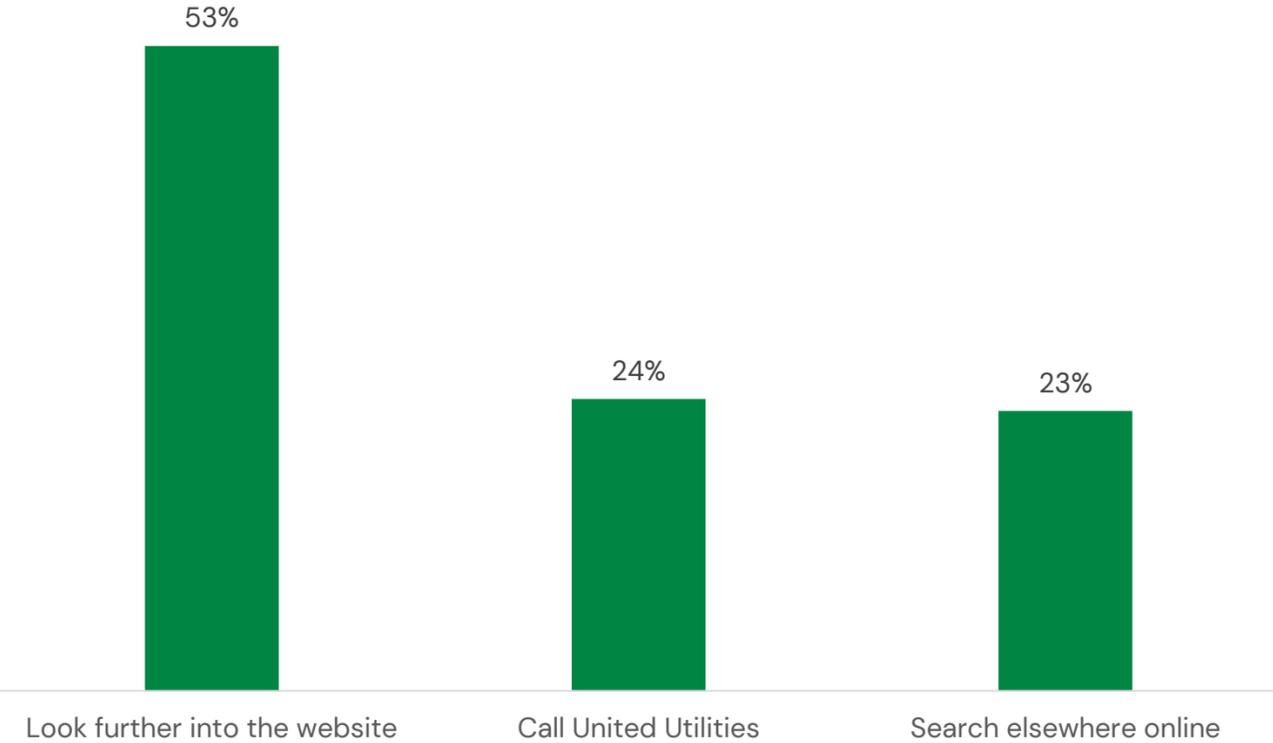
13b. What content do you think should be included?

The majority of respondents (94%) felt that they understood the webpage, with just 1% finding something they did not understand. 5% were unsure. Of those who found difficulty understanding the webpage, one respondent suggested some wording be reconsidered – “Do not use the word disinfect, it conjures up entirely the wrong concept”. When asked where they might go to find missing information, the majority said they would look further into the UU website (53%).

Is there anything on this webpage you did not understand? (496)



Where might you go to find any missing information? (4)



# Water Quality landing page – Feedback findings

## Heatmap analysis

- Respondents liked the Water quality landing page for being **easy to read** and providing **useful information**. Respondents particularly praised the **use of imagery** as a visual cue. As well as this they also liked the **layout** praising its clarity and display of the key messages.
- Respondents main dislike was surrounding the **formatting of the webpage**, some suggested the writing appeared too small and there could be more use of bold text to emphasise certain areas.

## Analysis of scores

- The '**language is easy to understand**' achieved the highest rate of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement (67%), closely followed by the **tone of language and the layout** (58% respectively).
- Though the **majority of respondents did not feel there was any content missing** from this section of the webpage (82%), those who felt the content was lacking made suggestions that the section could include more **contact information; visual imagery; and a further options beyond the two categories provided**.
- **Just 1% of respondents found something that they could not understand** on this section of the webpage, of these, 50% agreed that they would look further into the UU website to find this information.

# 'My water looks different'

(Route A)



# 'My water looks different'

[Home](#) | [Help & Support](#) | [Your water supply](#) | [Your water](#) | [Water quality](#) | [My water looks different](#)

## My water looks different

The quality of drinking water in the North West is excellent, but on rare occasions tap water may become discoloured, appear cloudy, or seem to have very small particles in it.



If you're experiencing issues with your water supply, choose one of the options below to find out what may be causing it and how you can fix it easily.

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  <h3>Yellow, brown or orange water</h3> <p>Discoloured water can range from a light, straw-yellow colour to a dark brown and even seem to have bits in it.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p> |  <h3>Cloudy or white water</h3> <p>Your water can sometimes appear 'cloudy'. This is caused by tiny air bubbles which usually disappear after leaving a glass of water to stand for a few minutes.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p> |  <h3>Other coloured tap water</h3> <p>If your water is blue, pink, green or any other unusual bright colour, please do not drink or use your water for cooking.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p> |  <h3>Small particles in your water</h3> <p>Occasionally, you may see "tiny particles" or "bits" in your tap water. In most cases this is not harmful and is usually short lived.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p> |
|  <h3>Issues in your area</h3> <p>Check if there are any active incidents impacting your water supply.</p> <p><a href="#">CHECK NOW</a></p>  |  <h3>Slime, stains and mould</h3> <p>Preventing slime and staining in your kitchen and bathroom.</p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE</a></p>   |  <h3>Unusual taste or smell</h3> <p>Click here if your tap water has an unusual taste or smell.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p>   |  |

# Heatmapping tool – My water looks different

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



230 likes



Respondents felt this page provided a good level of information with clear descriptions.

*“Clear description of the problem”*

*“It gives good level of detail about the differences in colour and what they mean”*

Respondents felt that the use of imagery and colours is helpful to direct the user.

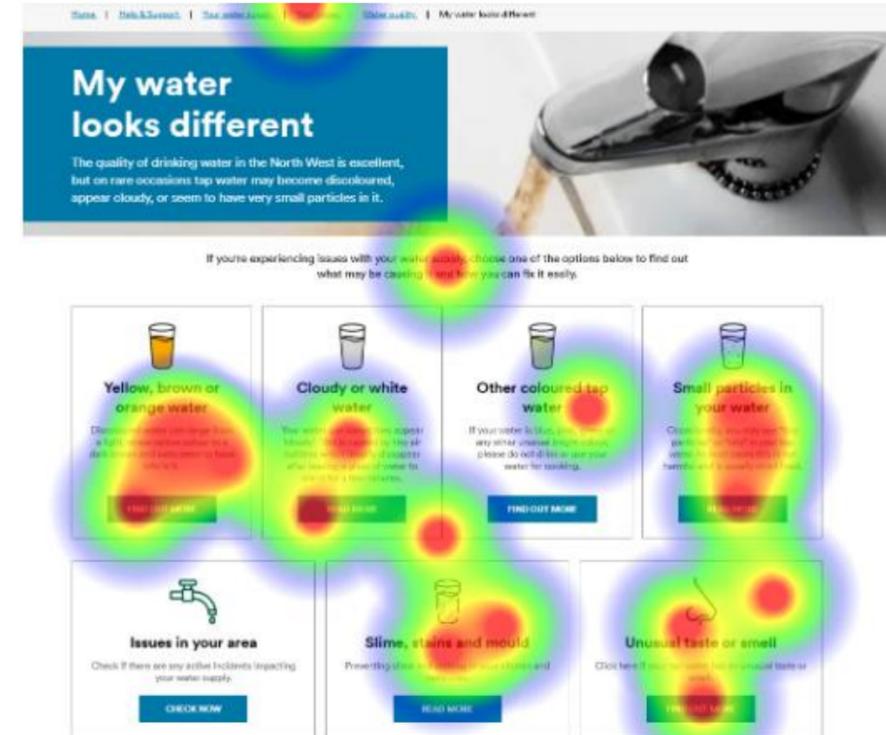
*“The colour coding helps people”*

*“I like the use of the images to direct the user to whichever section they need to go to”*

Respondents praised the range of issues covered

*“Range of issues is good.”*

*“A great breakdown of likely issues that may be encountered”*



71 dislikes



Areas that were disliked by respondents tended to be in relation to lack of detailed information and guidance at this stage of the webpage.

*“What are these particles – are they a risk to children/babies? There needs to be a lot more guidance.”*

*“What should a person do if the cloudiness continues?”*

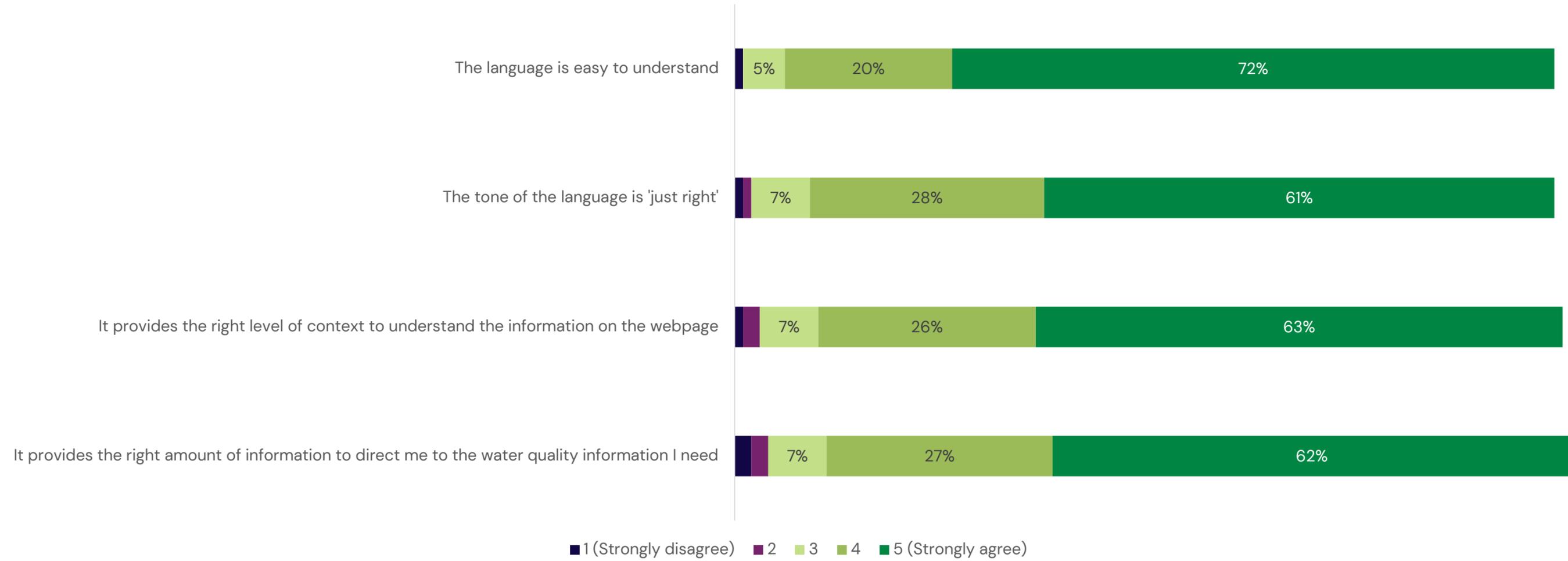
Some also suggested that the text is too small.

*“Text size may be a problem”*

*“Print too small”*

# When reviewing the first section of the 'my water looks different' webpage, respondents were most likely to agree/strongly agree that the language was easy to understand (92%).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(248)

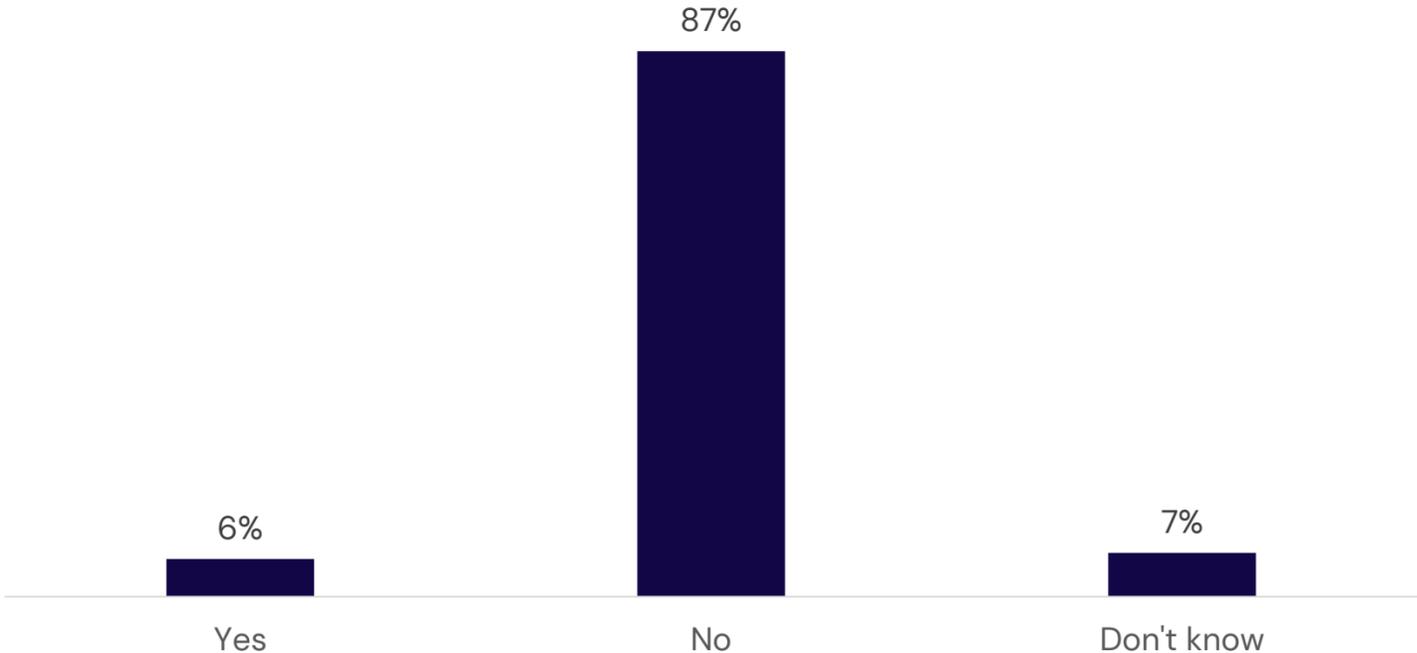


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand   | 4.7     | 4.6      | 4.7                | 4.6        | 4.7        | 4.6   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 4.6 | 4.6  | 4.7    | 4.6     | 4.7       |
| The tone of the language is just right   | 4.7     | 4.5      | 4.6                | 4.4        | 4.3        | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information                             | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.4                | 4.5        | 4.6        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.6 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right amount of information to direct me to the water quality information I need | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.4       |

**87% of respondents did not feel that there was content missing from this section of the webpage. While 7% were unsure, 6% felt there was something missing. Of those who felt that content was lacking, respondents suggested greater clarity of content (13%); contact details (13%) and better formatting (7%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Clarity of content (2)**

*"Doesn't mention what action to take"*  
*"Not everyone has the same level of intellect or understanding – so it needs to be easily read and understood and not open to misinterpretation"*

**Contact details (2)**

*"A contact if anything isn't clear"*  
*"Contact details to report the problem"*

**Better formatting (1)**

*"Bigger wording"*

# Discoloured water

## Discoloured water



Discoloured water can range from a light, straw-yellow colour to a dark brown and may even have bits in it.

**ⓘ Discoloured water can contain sediment; by using your hot water supply, you could bring this through your hot water pipes and appliances.**

To avoid this, wait until the cold water runs clear before using the hot water taps or appliances such as dishwashers or washing machines.

### Why am I seeing this?



This temporary discolouration is likely caused by historical sediment disturbances in the water main, for example, when there is a burst pipe or if the fire service is using a lot of water to tackle a fire.

This is mostly seen in our older cast iron pipework. To help prevent this, we are replacing and updating our pipework.

### What should I do?



#### Run your tap

Running your tap for around 20 minutes at a pencil thin flow should clear the water. Do this from the tap closest to your inside stop valve (if you don't know where this is, it is normally under your kitchen sink, so it is advised to run your kitchen tap).

#### Check with your neighbours

You can ask your neighbours to check their water. If they're also experiencing discolouration, it's likely that a burst pipe or other works is happening nearby. To see if there's an issue in your area, please visit the link below.

[CHECK NOW](#)

### What if that hasn't worked?



If this doesn't work, turn the tap off, wait 20 minutes and try again.

One reason you may see disturbance is due to proactive pipe cleaning, to remove this iron sediment. You can find out more about pipe cleaning and see if we're carrying out this work in your area by visiting the link below.

[WORKS NEAR ME](#)

To see if there are any issues happening in your area that may be affecting your water supply, please visit the link below.

[CHECK NOW](#)

# Heatmapping tool – Discoloured water

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



209 likes



Respondents felt the introduction to this page gave a clear description and that was both easy to read and understand.

*“Clear and informative”*

*“I like their well detailed explanation in an understandable language on what to do to avoid decoloration”*

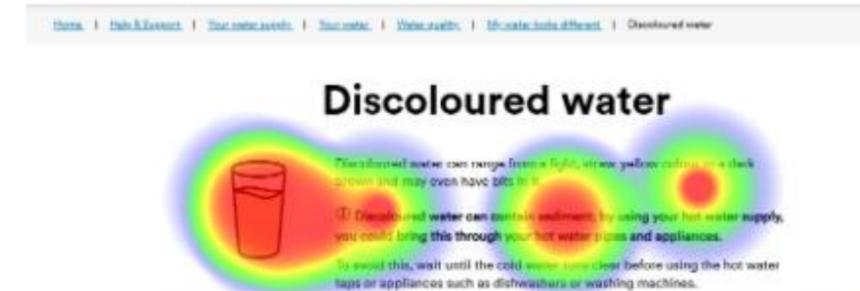
Respondents felt the following section provided an explanation of all possible reasons and gives informative advice.

*“This page really does seem to cover all eventualities and provides answers and solutions.”*

Respondents praised the layout of the information, with headers making the information digestible

*“I like the headers added to each section – why, what, it makes the information more digestible and easier to find.”*

*“Love the layout”*



29 dislikes



Some respondents dislike the icon and suggested a real-life image would have been better suited

*“Would have been better with a real-life example instead of a clip art image”*

*“I'd like to see a real-life photo instead of the one shown or 3 varying examples.”*

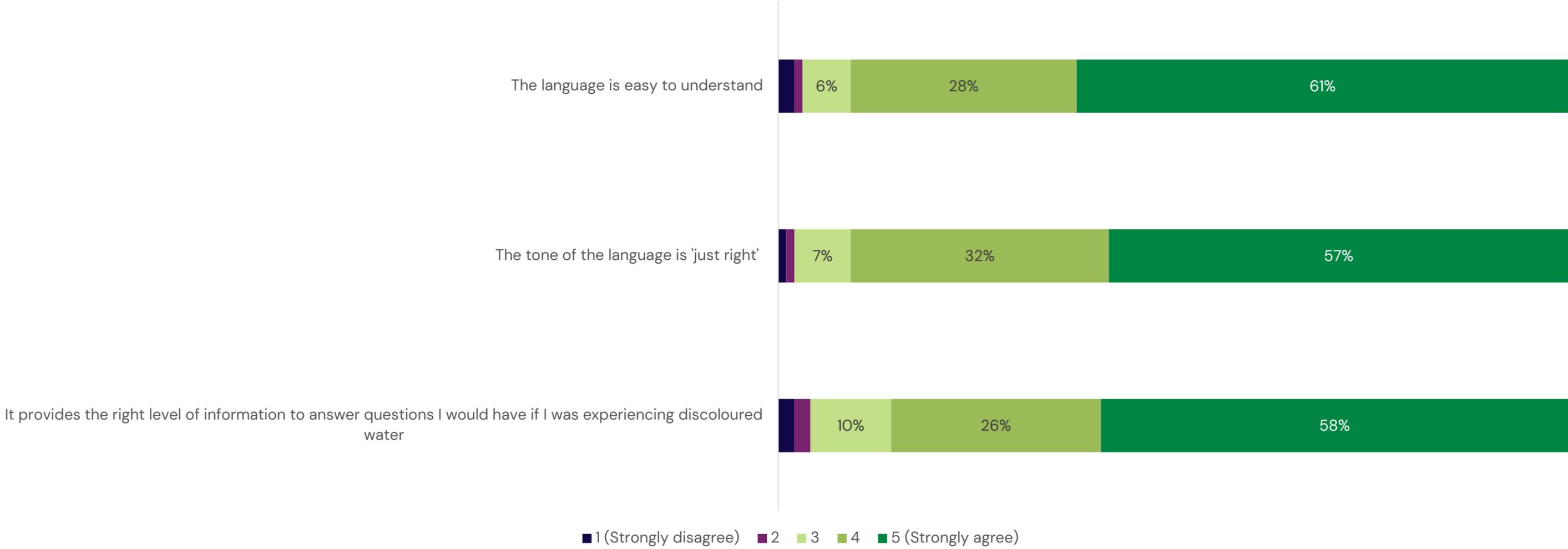
Some suggested there was a lack of an alternative option if issue persists.

*“Absence of a 'none of these work' option”*

*“What happens if it's still not clear after the second 20minutes? What would I do then ??”*

# Of all statements, respondents were least likely to agree that this section of the webpage provides the right level of information to answer questions they might have if they were experiencing discolored water.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(248)

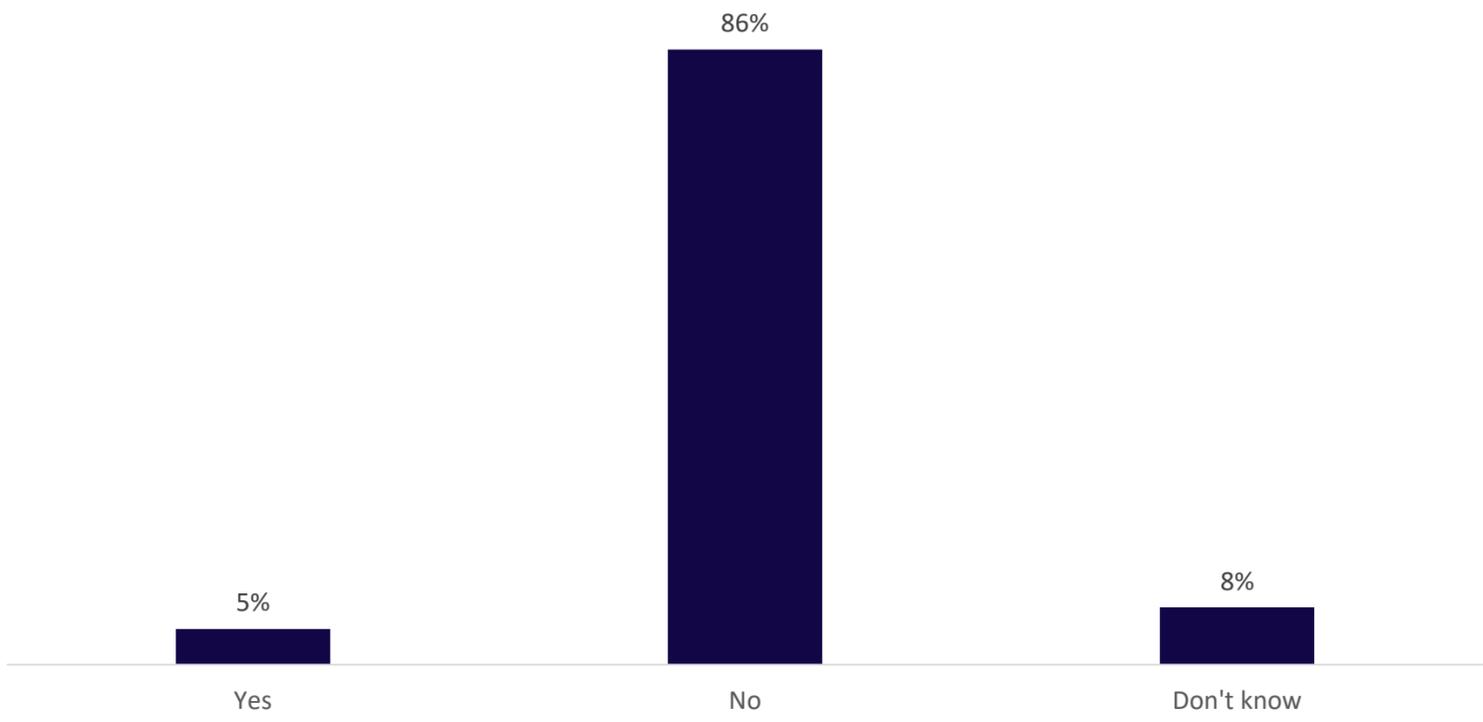


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|   | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|---|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand  | 4.6     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.7        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                                      | 4.7     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.3        | 4.5        | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.5 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of information to answer questions I would have | 4.7     | 4.4      | 4.3                | 4.3        | 4.6        | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.5 | 4.3  | 4.5    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

The majority of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from this section of the webpage (86%). While 8% were unsure, 5% agreed that there was some content missing. Of the respondents who felt some content was lacking, suggestions included: compensation for water testing (21%); actions beyond solutions (21%); and, health and safety information (14%)

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Compensation for water testing (3)**

*"Am I entitled to any compensation if I have to run a large volume of water before it runs clear?"*

*"Ways to save the water you are running"*

**Actions beyond solution provided (3)**

*"Some action if none of the solutions work"*

*"What to do if water is still not clear after a second time after waiting 20 mins"*

**Health and safety information (2)**

*"There is no information about whether it is safe or not to drink the water if it remains discoloured or what actions should be taken if the problems persist, such as boiling the water as a precaution"*

*"Can I drink it? Can I use it? The statement 'by using your hot water supply...' Is very poor english. It starts with a command, and ends with a confusing statement. Should start with 'do not use because..."*

# Cloudy or white water

[Home](#) | [Help & Support](#) | [Your water supply](#) | [Your water](#) | [Water quality](#) | [My water looks different](#) | Cloudy or white water

## Cloudy or white water

Your water supply can sometimes appear 'cloudy'. This is caused by tiny, compressed air bubbles which usually disappear after leaving a glass of water to stand for a few minutes.



### Why am I seeing this?

A 'white', 'cloudiness' or 'milky' look to your water appears when pockets of air, trapped in the main, get compressed after the main is refilled following a burst. This air combines with the water and is released when you turn on your taps.

Following significant bursts, you can sometimes even see and hear this air 'fizzing' as it releases from the surface of the water in a glass.

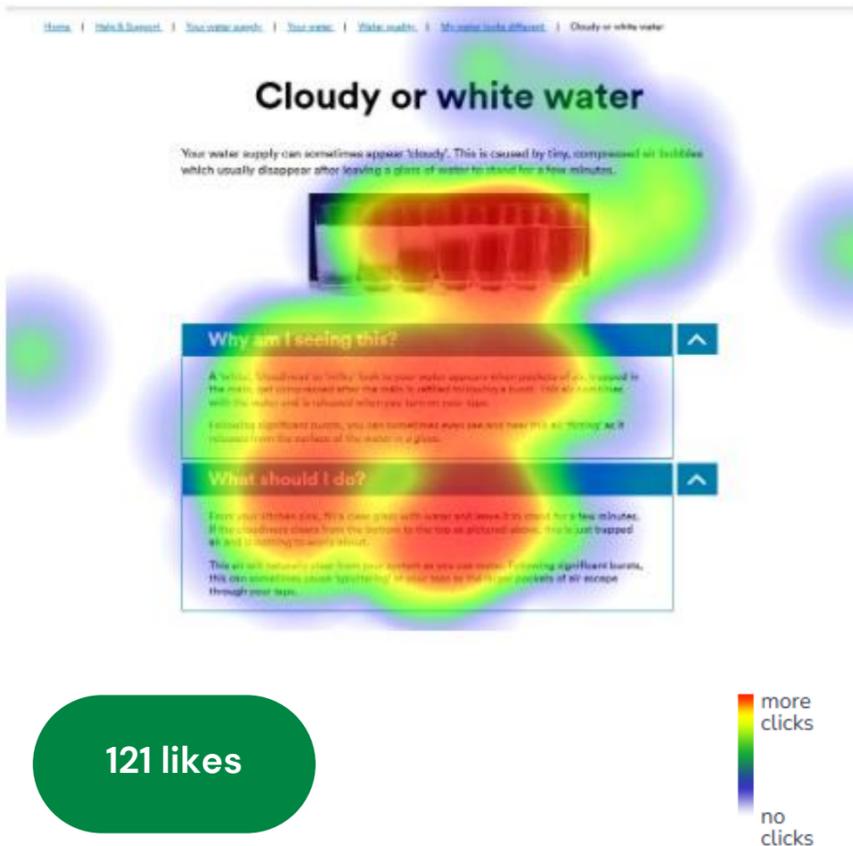
### What should I do?

From your kitchen sink, fill a clear glass with water and leave it to stand for a few minutes. If the cloudiness clears from the bottom to the top as pictured above, this is just trapped air and is nothing to worry about.

This air will naturally clear from your system as you use water. Following significant bursts, this can sometimes cause 'spluttering' at your taps as the larger pockets of air escape through your taps.

# Heatmapping tool – Cloudy or white water

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



Respondents felt the use of a real image provided clarity on the situation and helped to compare circumstance.

*"Can compare with own circumstance"*

*"Easily understood with clarifying images"*

Respondents felt this section provided a clear description of useful information

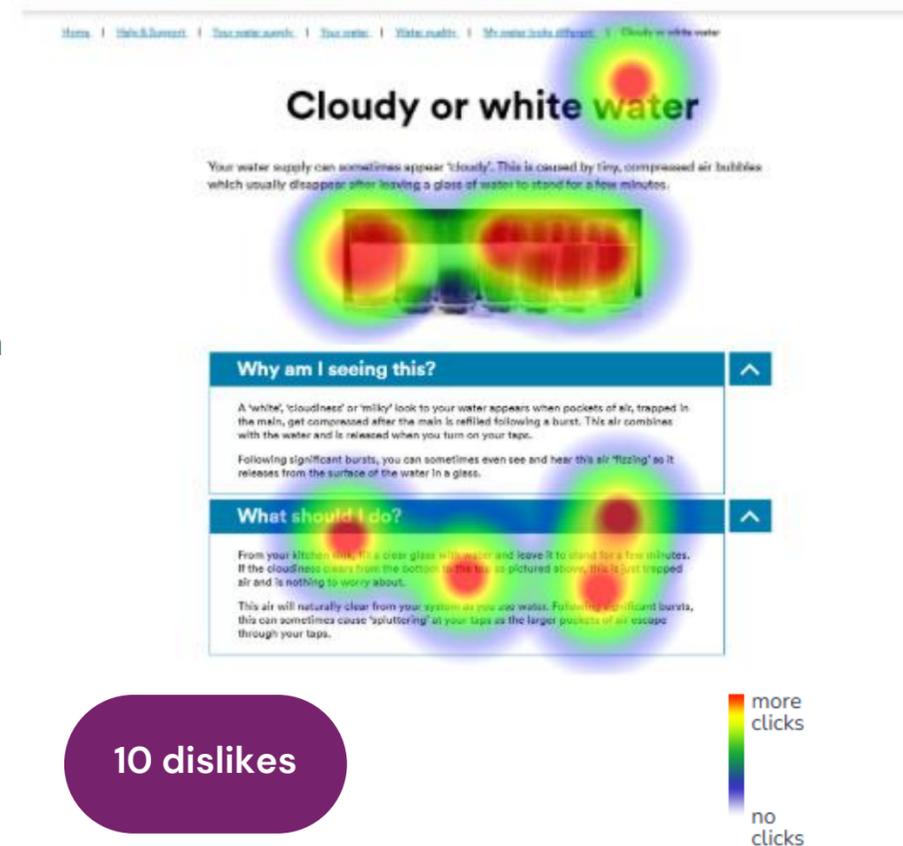
*"Simple description but informative"*

*"A very good simple set of descriptions when dealing with cloudy water."*

Respondents generally found this section straight to the point and were happy with solutions provided – finding them reassuring.

*"I like the solution provided"*

*"This puts my mind at rest"*



One respondents found the imagery unnecessary, with another suggesting improvements could be made to the image

*"Image isn't really required"*

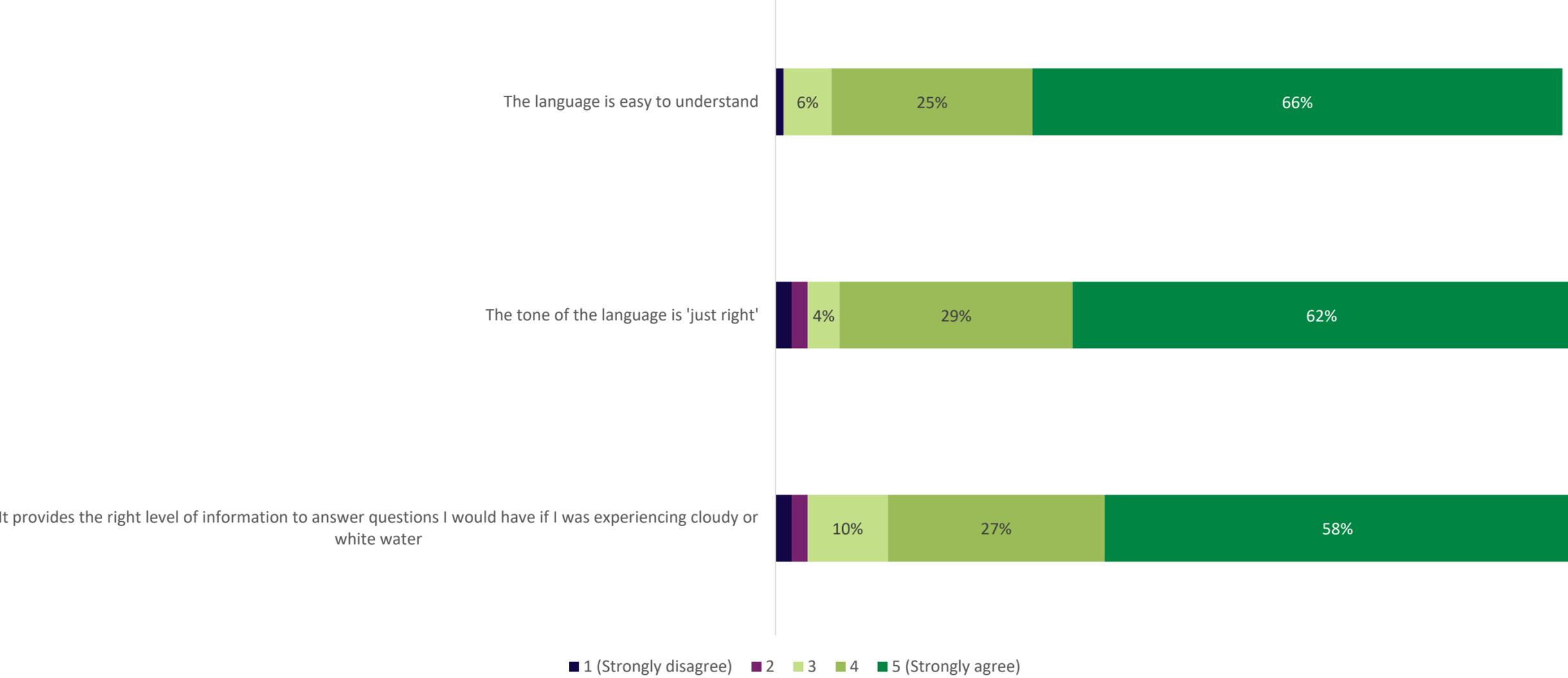
*"Graphic or the picture can be improved"*

Some suggested that there was a lack of information on what to do if cloudiness doesn't disappear

*"It doesn't tell you what to do if the cloudiness doesn't disappear"*

For this section of the webpage, respondents were more likely to agree/strongly agree that the language is easy to understand and tone of the language was 'just right' (91% respectively).

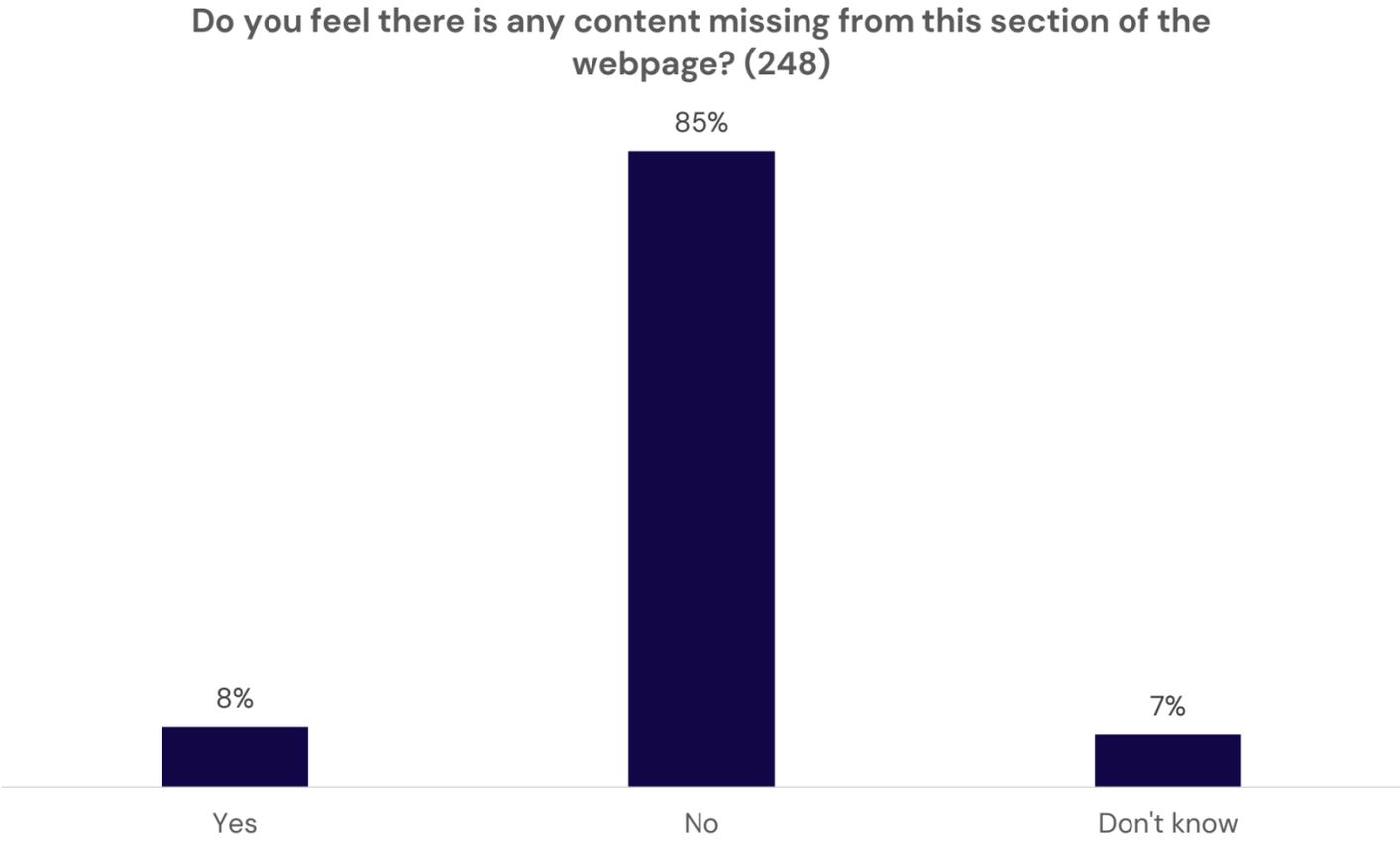
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|   | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|---|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand  | 4.7     | 4.6      | 4.6                | 4.5        | 4.7        | 4.7   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.6 | 4.6  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right                                      | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.6        | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.5       |
| It provides the right level of information to answer questions I would have | 4.5     | 4.5      | 4.4                | 4.2        | 4.4        | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.3   | 4.4 | 4.3  | 4.5    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

8% of respondents, the highest rate across this section, felt that content was missing from this section of the webpage. 85% did not feel any content was missing, while 7% were unsure. Of respondents who felt that there was content missing, suggestions included further actions if issues persist (35%); contact information (20%); and, information on health and safety of water (10%).



**Actions if issues persist (7)**

- "What to do if the cloudiness doesn't disappear"*
- "No indication of what to do if the cloudiness does not clear"*

**Contact info (4)**

- "Contact information for more info"*
- "Contact details to report the problem"*

**Health and safety information (2)**

- "Can I drink it, cook with it, use it? It's not clear."*
- "More emphasis on the water being safe to drink without the need to boil etc."*

# Other coloured water

## Blue, pink, green or other coloured water



If your water is blue, pink, green or any other unusual bright colour, please follow our advice contained in the sections below.

**ⓘ** If your drinking water is a bright or vivid green or blue colour, it may pose a risk to your health. If this happens, please call us immediately on [0345 672 3723](tel:0345 672 3723).

### Why am I seeing this?



Blue/green water can indicate elevated levels of copper in your water. This is most common where newly installed copper pipework has been installed in your property. After a few days of use, a protective layer should form inside the copper pipe as it 'settles in' which will stop the colour. In some instances of older properties, it could indicate a problem with the electrical bonding.

On rare occasions, coloured water can be caused by poorly installed toilet cisterns, which allow water to flow back into your internal plumbing when there is an interruption to your supply. This sometimes only comes to light when coloured toilet cleaning products are used in the cistern.

Algae can also cause a green colour to water, however this would normally only ever occur in properties with 'header tanks' when regular maintenance checks are not completed. If you think this may be what has caused your issue, have your regular maintenance checks completed.

### What should I do?



In most instances, this is not caused by the water being supplied to you and is caused by your private internal pipework. You should contact your house builder or a professionally qualified plumber to help.

[FIND A PLUMBER](#)

### What if it that hasn't worked?



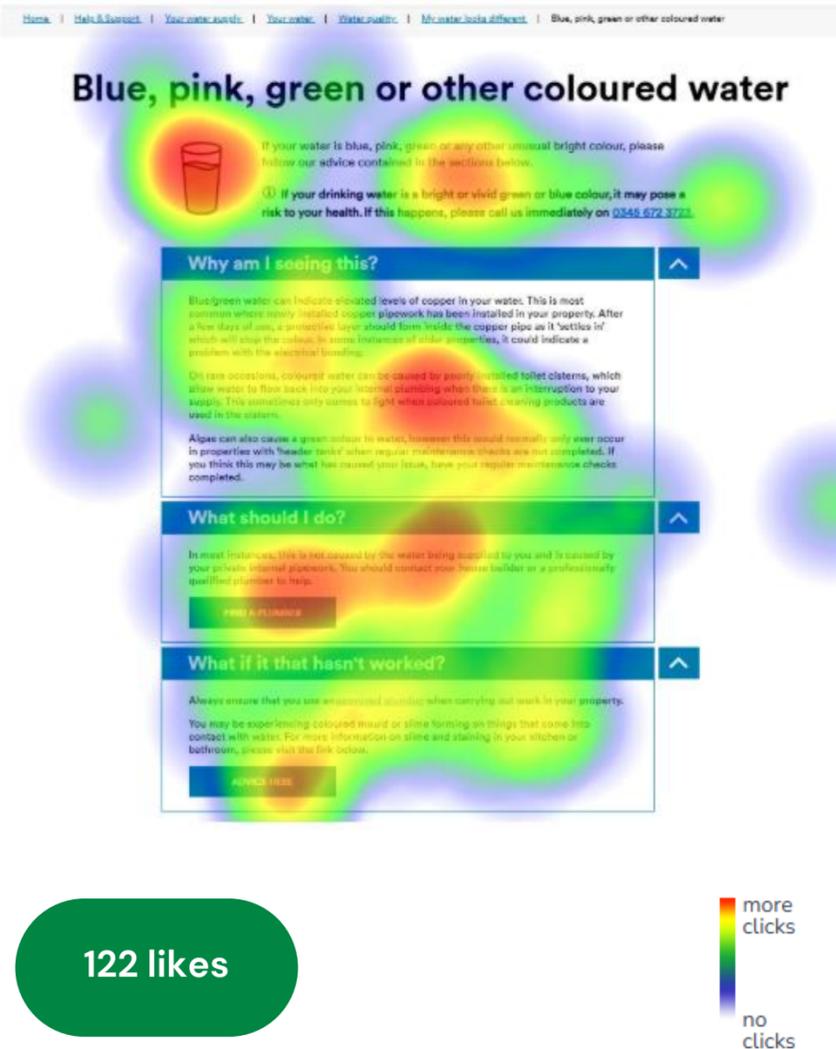
Always ensure that you use an [approved plumber](#) when carrying out work in your property.

You may be experiencing coloured mould or slime forming on things that come into contact with water. For more information on slime and staining in your kitchen or bathroom, please visit the link below.

[ADVICE HERE](#)

# Heatmapping tool – Blue, pink, green or other coloured water

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



Respondents liked that the page was organised and provided step-by-step instructions

*“Talks you through a step by step”*

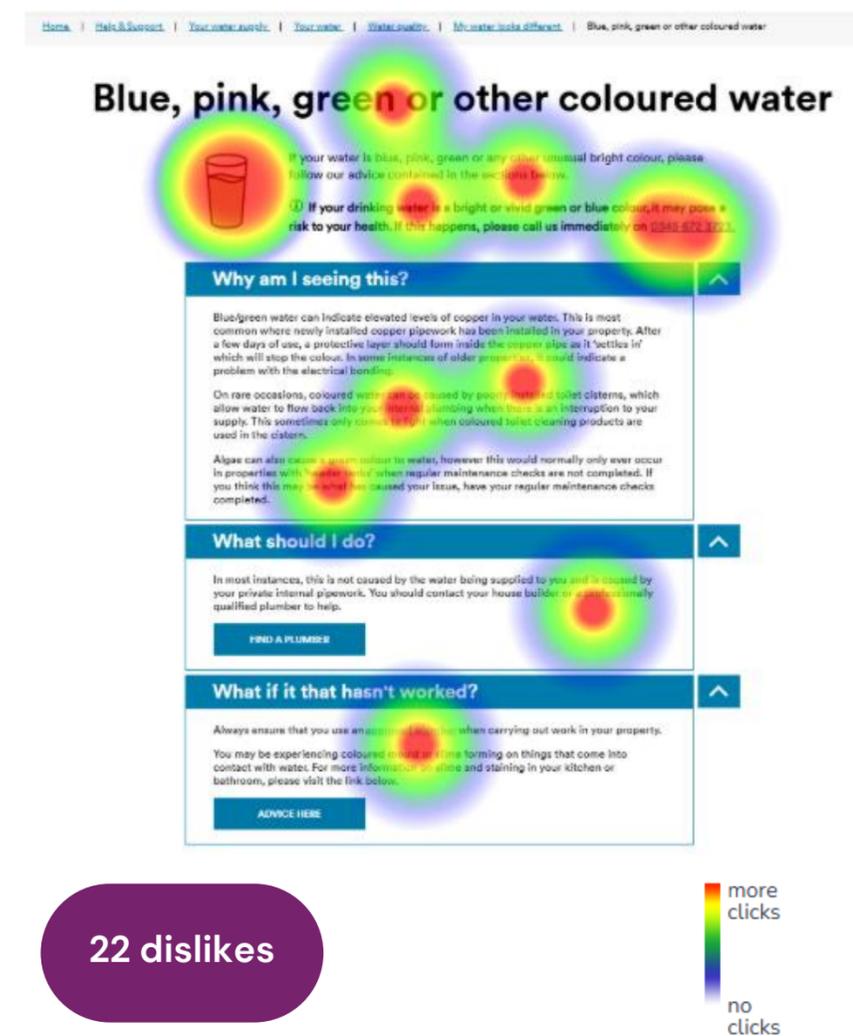
*“I like that the page explains why the water looks red, pink, and green, and clearly tells me what steps to take”*

*“It provides the next step in a simple, concise, and instructional way, keeping things calm and clear”*

Respondents liked that this section gave a clear safety warning to users

*“Tells me to avoid drinking it”*

*“important information to stop people from drinking and to immediately seek help”*



Some respondents disliked that the safety information did not stand out and suggested that it be in larger font and bold colours

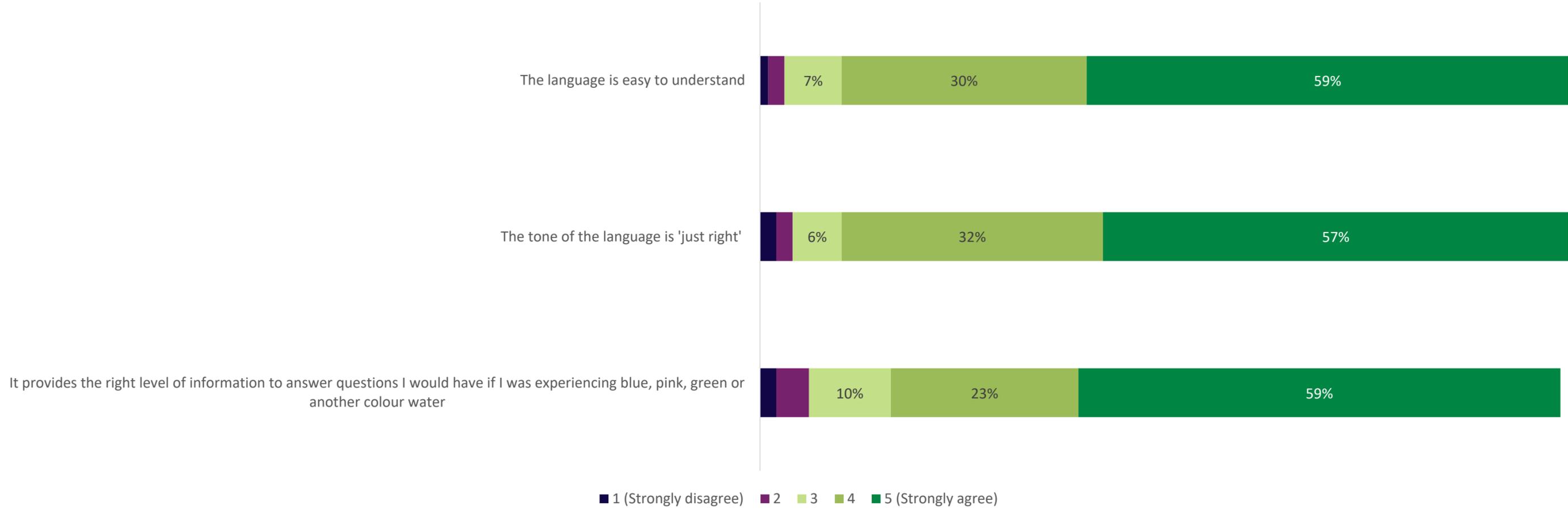
*“Needs to be in larger font and RED”*

*“I didn't catch this part on my first reading maybe in a bigger font /different colour”*

*“Larger exclamation mark graphic or border to highlight this important information.”*

**89% of respondents either agreed/strongly agreed that the language is easy to understand and the tone of the language is 'just right'. A higher rate of NET disagreement (6%) was observed with the statement 'It provides the right level of information to answer questions I would have if I was experiencing blue, pink, green or another coloured water'.**

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

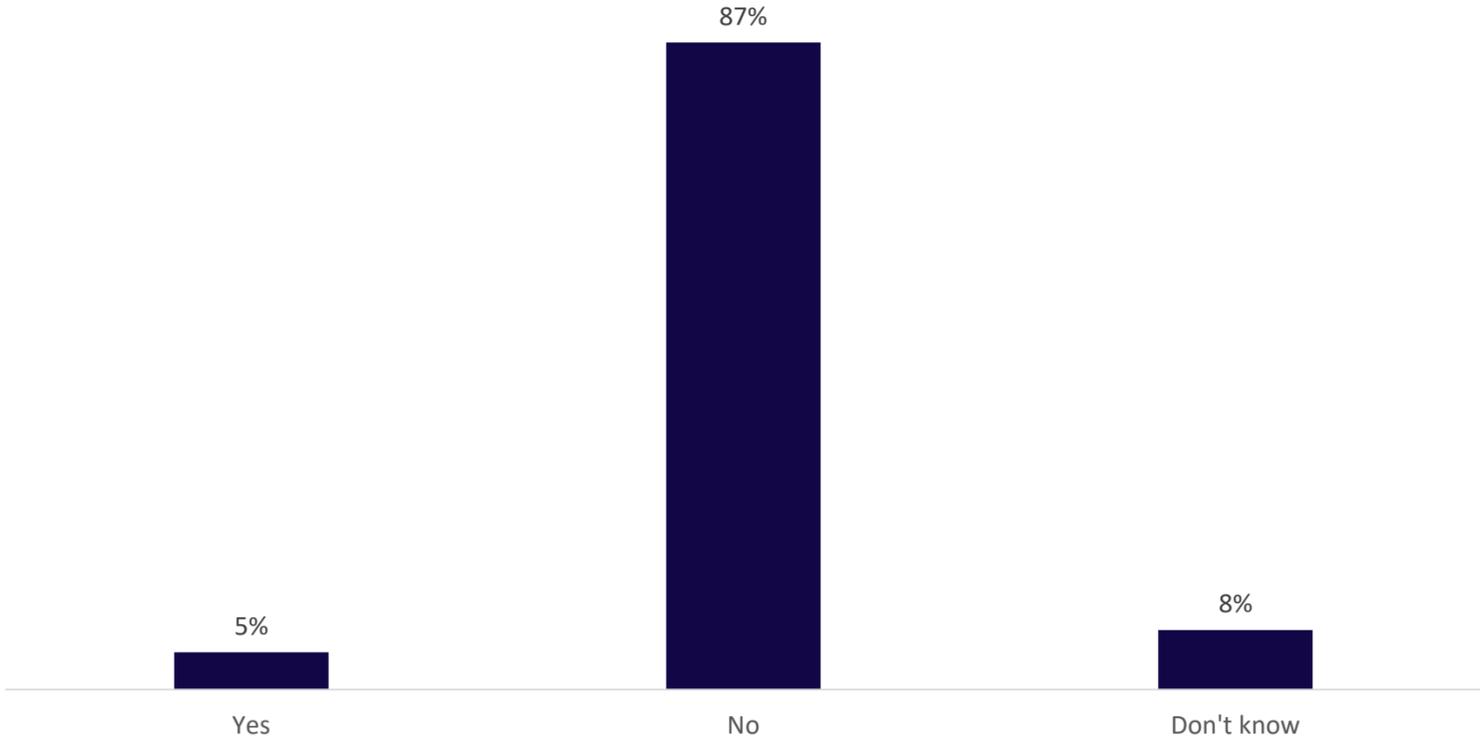


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.7   | 4.3   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.7     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.3        | 4.4        | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.3   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.4     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.6     | 4.3      | 4.4                | 4.2        | 4.3        | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.3   | 4.3   | 4.4 | 4.3  | 4.4    | 4.4     | 4.3       |

**87% of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from the webpage. 7% were unsure, while 5% felt there was some missing content. Of the respondents who felt that some content was missing, suggestions included: clarity of safety warnings (39%); contact information (15%); and more detailed information (15%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Health and safety communication (5)**

- "What to do if the cloudiness doesn't disappear"*
- "No indication of what to do if the cloudiness does not clear"*

**Contact info (2)**

- "Contact information for more info"*
- "Contact details to report the problem"*

**Further detail (2)**

- "What the colours indicate"*
- "I think the text is incomplete and evasive – needs more detail and precision"*

# 'Bits' in your water

## 'Bits' in your water

Occasionally, you may see "tiny particles" or "bits" in your tap water. In most cases this is not harmful and is usually short lived.

### Why am I seeing this?

#### Dark red/brown 'bits' can be caused by:

- o Historical sediments, that have built up over time, being disturbed in the water pipes - usually caused by sudden changes to direction or flow rate of the water within the mains, for example when there is a sudden higher demand such as the fire service using a lot of water to fight a fire.
- o Corrosion of your internal pipes due to age or repairs.
- o By planned or unplanned work to the water supply network, which has caused sediment in the pipes to shift.

#### Small dark grey or black particles:

- o If your pipework is made by lead, small dark grey or black particles can occasionally be caused. This is most likely if your house was built before 1970. [Find out more about lead pipes here.](#)

#### White particles:

- o These particles are calcium deposits or more commonly, naturally occurring limescale. They are more common in hard water areas and are not harmful.

#### Blue particles:

- o Shavings from blue plastic pipes, known as 'swarf' can occur if there have been pipe replacements at the property or within the water supply network. These are not harmful and usually should clear through the system quickly.

#### Black or pink particles:

- o In some cases, 'bits' in your water can be associated with biofilms. This does not come from the cold water mains supply. It is mould and slime that build up, especially in and around your taps. [Click here for more information on slime and staining.](#)

### What should I do?

If your tap water contains 'bits', you should avoid running the hot water tap or using dishwashers, washing machines or any other appliances which use your hot water supply.

In most cases particles are not harmful, to resolve the issue follow the following steps:

- o Allow the first incoming cold water tap (usually in the kitchen) to run at a trickle until it clears - why not collect this water and use it to water your plants?
- o Sometimes this can clear quickly (within minutes), but this can take longer depending on the cause.
- o If you are experiencing slime, please follow our advice about [slime and staining.](#)

### What if that hasn't worked?

- o If the particles still don't clear, please check with your neighbours to determine if their water is also discoloured.
- o If your neighbours are not affected, this is most likely an issue with your internal pipework. Please click here to find a [Watersafe approved plumber.](#)
- o If you are seeing red, black or blue particles and your neighbours are affected, the issue may be related to a burst pipe or planned works in your area. You can check to see if we're aware of [work in your area.](#)
- o If you are seeing grey particles and your house is built before the 1970s, you may have lead service pipe. [Find out about replacing your lead service pipe here](#)
- o If you are seeing white particles and your neighbours are affected, this is most likely calcium deposits, please [follow our advice about water hardness here.](#)

# Heatmapping tool – ‘Bits’ in your water

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



185 likes

Respondents liked that the page provided clear explanations that were easy to understand

*“Simple details and easy to understand”*

*“Good information and simple explanations.”*

*“Clear and informative”*

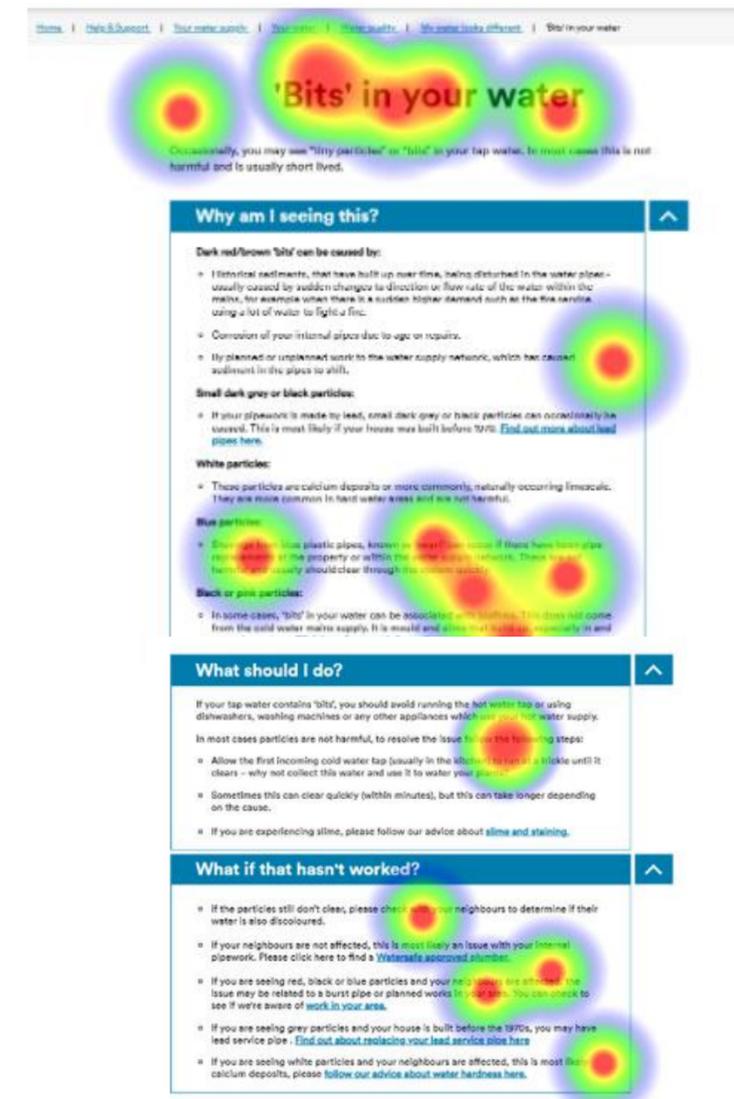
Respondents liked that the layout of this section made advice clear, though some suggested more visuals could better engage the user.

*“I like that the page provides steps to follow”*

*“Useful advice”*

*“Clear instructions”*

*“A flow diagram may be a more visual / interesting way to engage the reader”*



24 dislikes

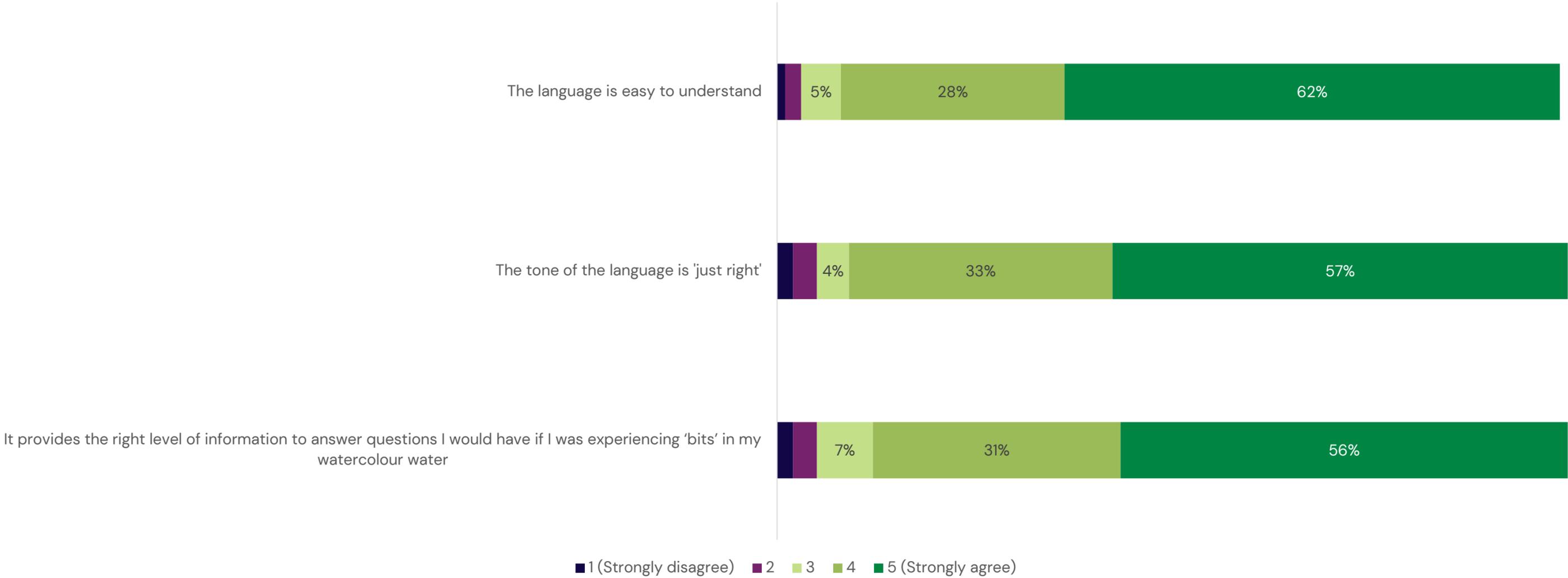
Respondents disliked that the text may appear too small.

*“Text too small, blue colour not clear”*

*“Text is too small”*

# Most respondents felt that the language was easy to understand in this section, closely followed by those who felt the tone of the language was 'just right' (57%).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(248)

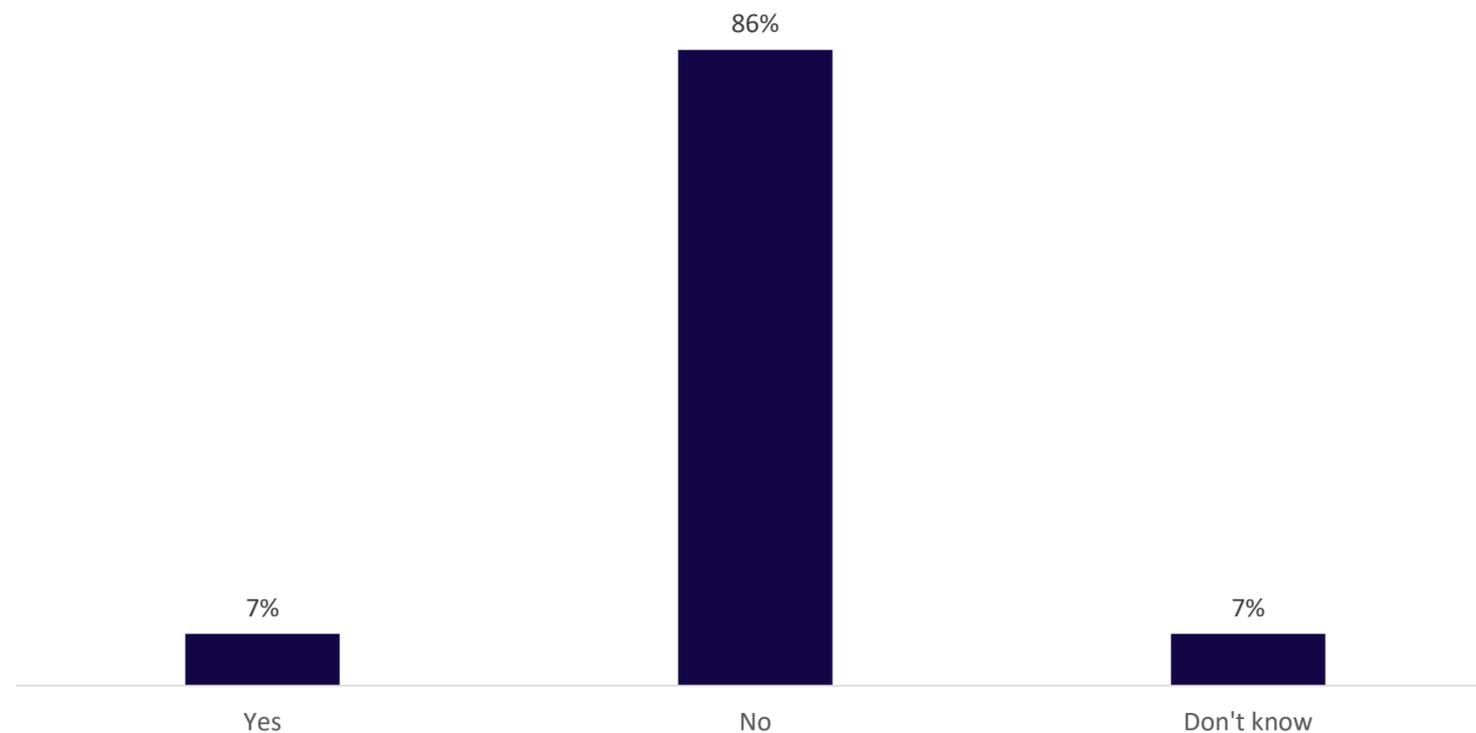


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.7        | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.6  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.6     | 4.2      | 4.5                | 4.3        | 4.5        | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.4     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.4                | 4.3        | 4.4        | 4.4   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.4    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

**86% of respondents did not feel that any content was missing from this section. While 6% were unsure, 7% felt some content was lacking. Of the 7% of respondents who felt there was content missing, 29% suggested more use of imagery, 11% suggested contact information, a further 11% suggested more clarity on health and safety of the water.**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



### More imagery (5)

*"More images would be helpful"*

*"Pictures and photos as evidence"*

### Contact info (2)

*"Contact information for more info"*

*"Contact details to report the problem"*

### Further detail (2)

*"Can I drink it (filtered?) cook with it? You do address guidelines for machines, not for humans?!"*

*"It would be better if there was specific advice against each option as to whether it is safe or not"*

# 'Up my street'

[Home](#) | [Emergencies](#) | Up My Street

## Up My Street

Enter your postcode to select an address or use your current location (requires location sharing) to find out if there are any issues that may be impacting the water supply in your area.

**Address**

[Clear address](#)

or

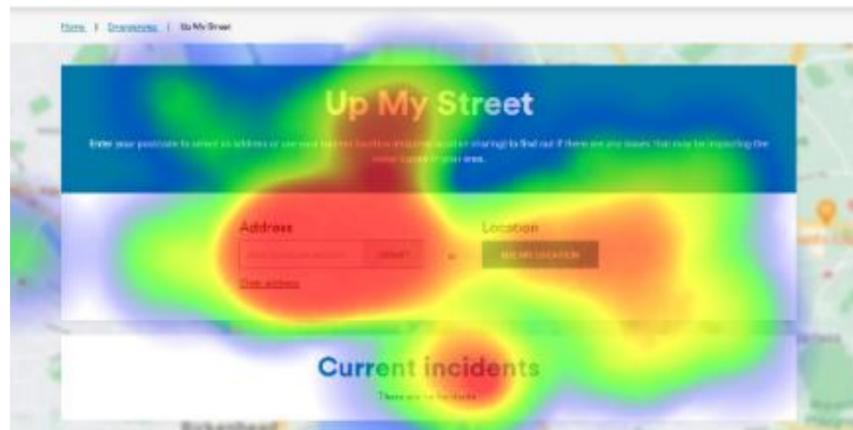
**Location**

## Current incidents

There are no incidents

# Heatmapping tool – Up my street

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



95 likes



Respondents liked this tool as they can find specific information they might need

*"It makes it simple to find issues in my area"*

*"Assuming that entering my postcode gives relevant information this is straightforward"*

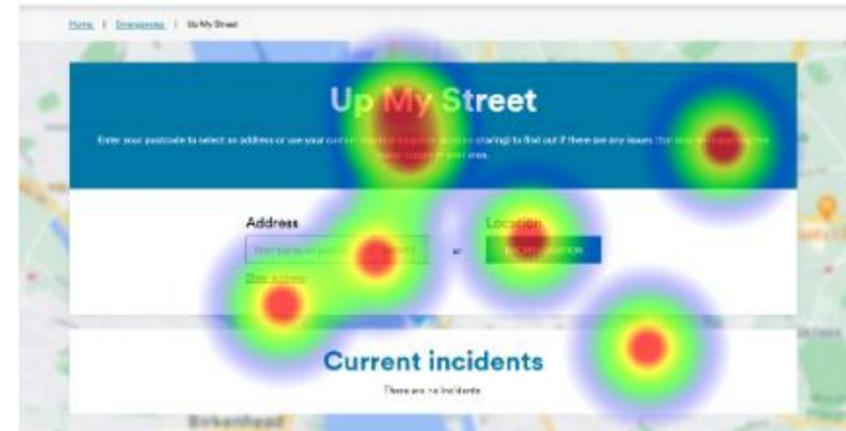
*"I would use this if there was a problem"*

Respondents found this tool easy to understand and use

*"Simple and easy to use"*

*"I like that its not overcomplicated"*

*"Clear to understand and act"*



9 dislikes



One respondent disliked that there was no option to add or report an issue

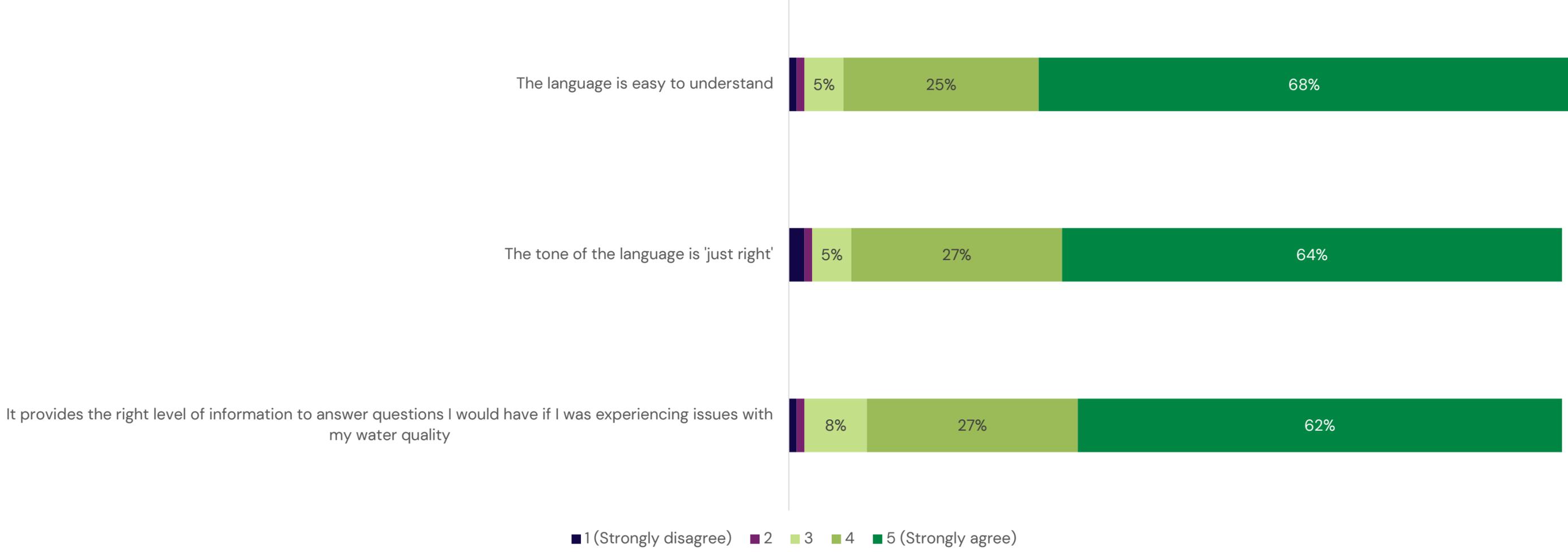
*"No option to add or report an issue"*

Another respondent disliked the page title and suggested it be 'issues in your area'

*"Would prefer if this said something more specific like 'Issues in your area!'"*

# 65% of respondents were in strong agreement that the language in this section was easy to understand, this was followed by 64% who felt the tone of the language is 'just right'.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(248)



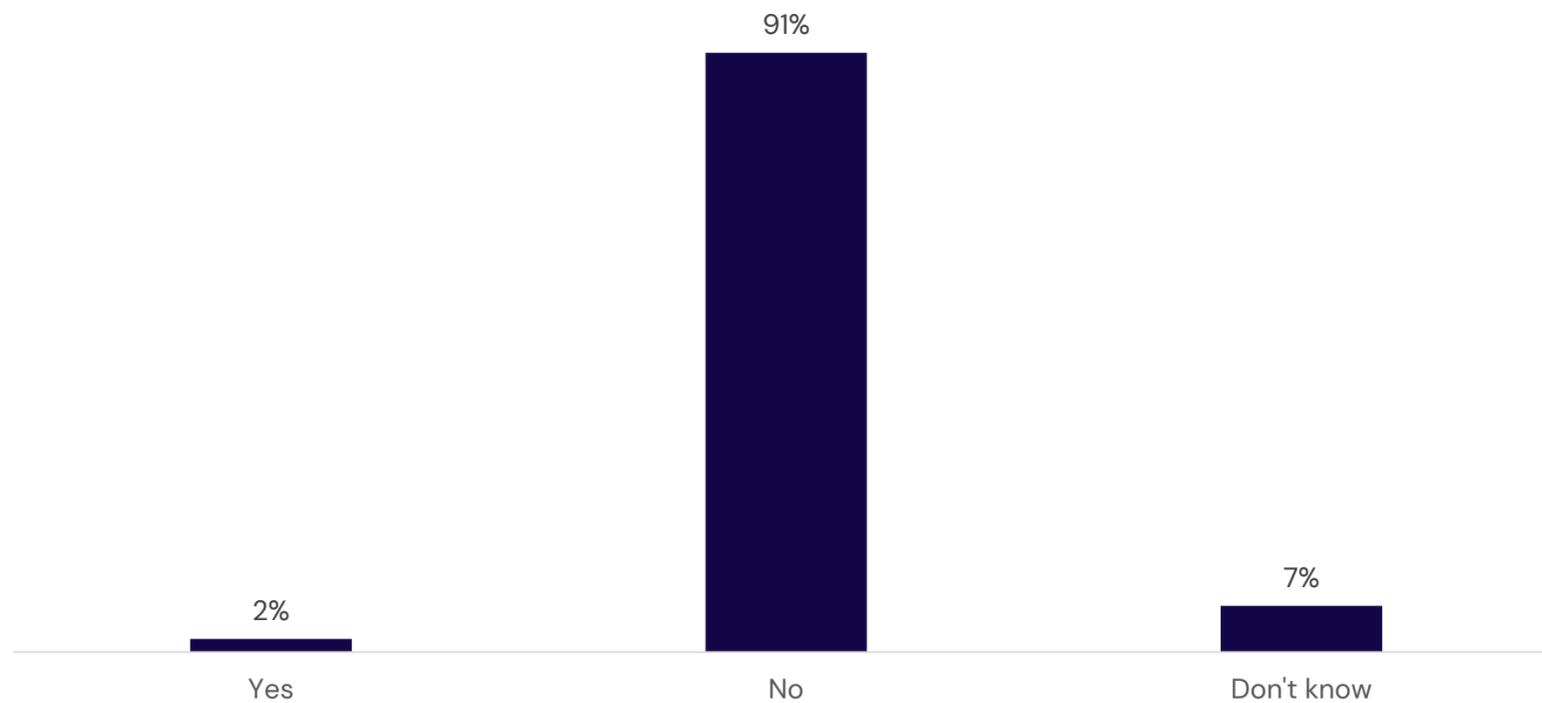
# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.6      | 4.6                | 4.6        | 4.8        | 4.8   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 4.6 | 4.6  | 4.6    | 4.6     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.8     | 4.5      | 4.6                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.6 | 4.6  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.5       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.5        | 4.6        | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

**91% of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from this section of the webpage. 7% were unsure, with just 2% who felt there was content missing. Respondents who felt there was content missing suggested an option to report should be included (17%); further information if there is no problem in the area (17%); and, issues in surrounding areas also be identified.**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage?

(248)



#### **Option to report (1)**

*"Option to report"*

#### **Further information if no problem in the area (1)**

*"Should say what to do if there isn't a problem showing in your area"*

#### **Identify surrounding issues (1)**

*"If there were issues on surrounding streets [like a burst watermain leading to flooding of streets nearby] these should also be mentioned"*

# Preventing slime and staining

[Home](#) | [Help & Support](#) | [Your water supply](#) | [Your water](#) | Keep your home slime and stain-free

## Preventing slime and staining in your kitchen and bathroom

### Top tips to keep slime and stain-free

Slime (black jelly like substance), stains and mould (various colours from pink, red to black) are caused by organisms that breed in damp, warm environments in your home. Generally conditions found in **bathrooms and kitchens**, their occurrence isn't an indication of a problem with the water supply. It's caused by the growth of common bacteria, other microorganisms, or airborne mould around the home; all worsened by poor ventilation.

Read below to find out how you can ensure the water you drink, cook with and wash in is of the very best quality.



#### Look after your sink

Sinks need a lot of looking after as we use them all the time. Regularly wipe down in between uses, making sure that there's no build-up of dirt and slime. Pay special attention to the tap spout and overflow hole at the back of the sink as this is where staining often occurs.



#### Shower head

We don't want to look up when we're in the shower to see a dirty showerhead. Simply scrub with an old toothbrush dipped in water to remove any staining or grime, rinse and wipe with a clean cloth.



#### Start at the top

Wet bathroom dust and a slimy build up will cling to surfaces. Use a mop to reach the top of your wall tiles to make the job much easier. Start at the top and work your way down.



#### Look after your bathroom cleaning equipment

Not only do we need to clean the bathroom, but we also need to think what we are using to clean, such as cleaning cloths and toilet brushes! Use a separate cloth for the loo seat and pedestal, and keep your toilet brush germ free! Always use clean cloths and wash after using. Make sure you're not cleaning with dirty equipment or hanging them over your sink or taps.



#### Keep it dry

Good ventilation really helps, turn on your extractor fan to get rid of any condensation, as bacteria loves damp places. Opening the window helps too, but not if it's cold! Dry off areas with an adsorbent cloth instead.

One great piece of bathroom cleaning equipment (but not essential) is a window vac. This will help to remove condensation and water from shower screens, bathroom tiles and windows to reduce moisture and discourage a slimy build up.



#### Tile grout

We often get pink and dark staining on grout and sealant that can be tricky to clean. An old toothbrush with a mild bleach solution should do the trick, always remember to wear gloves and protect your clothes from bleach.

## More about slime and staining

### Common places to find slime and staining in your home

- On the inside of cold water taps
- Around the base of tap fittings
- In shower heads and on shower curtains
- On tiles in the bathroom/shower area
- In and around drains and plugholes
- In toilet cisterns and toilet bowls
- In refrigerator drip trays
- In dehumidifiers
- In washing machines, particularly around the powder drawer and the rubber seals

### Prevent or remove slime and staining

- Make sure affected areas are well ventilated.
- Clean the inside of the tap or around the base of the tap with a small brush dipped in a mild solution of bleach.
- After cleaning the tap, run the water for a few moments to remove any remaining disinfectant.
- Use a squeegee to wipe water off walls and glass around your shower and bath to prevent mould or stain growth.
- To keep your toilet in top condition – use bleach to get rid of any slime or mould in your loo, scrub with a toilet brush until sparkling.
- Kitchen surfaces or bathroom fittings (tiles etc.) can be wiped with a household cleaner or mild bleach solution that will kill the bacteria or other microorganisms
- Make sure you follow manufacturers cleaning instructions to ensure you don't cause any damage.
- To prevent possible contamination do not leave items such as flannels and dishcloths on the tap to dry and never allow food or animals to come into contact with taps.
- Remove any residues left by cleaning products, soap, shampoo, hairspray or deodorants as they can provide a source of food which encourages growth of bacteria or other microorganisms.
- Repair dripping taps to avoid staining on baths and basins.

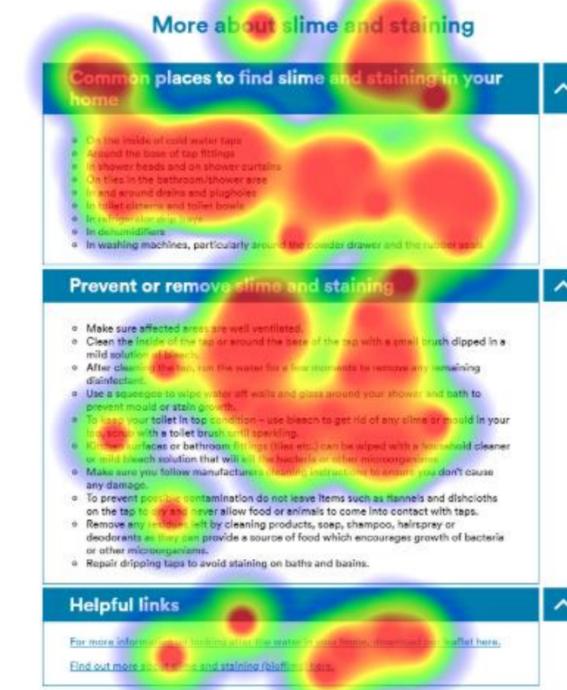
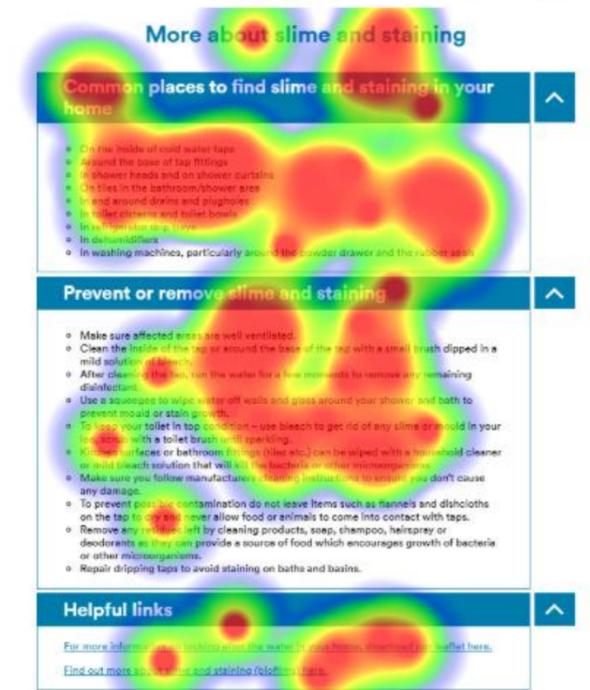
### Helpful links

[For more information on looking after the water in your home, download our leaflet here.](#)

[Find out more about slime and staining \(biofilms\) here.](#)

# Heatmapping tool – Preventing slime and staining

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



Respondents liked that the heading was clear and eye-catching

“Nice clear with coloured font”

“I like the heading is captivating and eye catching”

Respondents liked the use of infographics alongside useful tips

“Nice infographics”

“Good visuals and information”

“I like that the page gives clear tips on looking after your sink to keep it clean and prevent blockages.”

Respondents liked that this section also provided key detailed information and practical advice

“Good practical advice”

“Excellent information combined with the remedies an excellent page”

One respondents disliked the tone of the introduction, suggesting that it could be misconstrued and call people’s housekeeping into question

“Interesting comments, but I could understand that some people feeling upset because their housekeeping prowess is being called into question. Maybe it should be reworded so that it cannot be misconstrued.”

Respondents found issue generally with the size of the font used in the section with infographics

“Text is far too small”

“Small font”

Some respondents found the latter section of this webpage too lengthy and crowded, though they did not doubt the need for this information

“Rather lengthy sections.”

“Lots of bullet points – a bit crowded, but information is necessary”

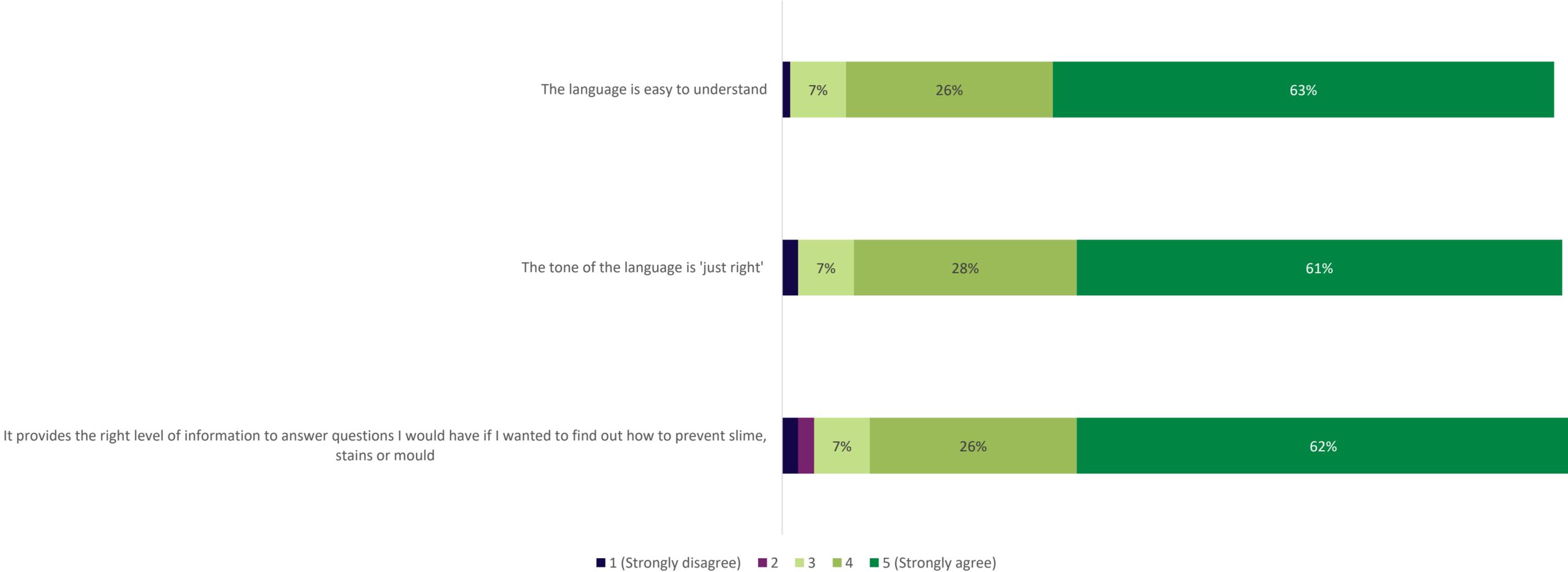
273 likes

38 dislikes



# 63% of respondents strongly agree that both the language was easy to understand and that it provides the right level of information to answer questions they might have if they wanted to find out how to prevent slime, stain or mould.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

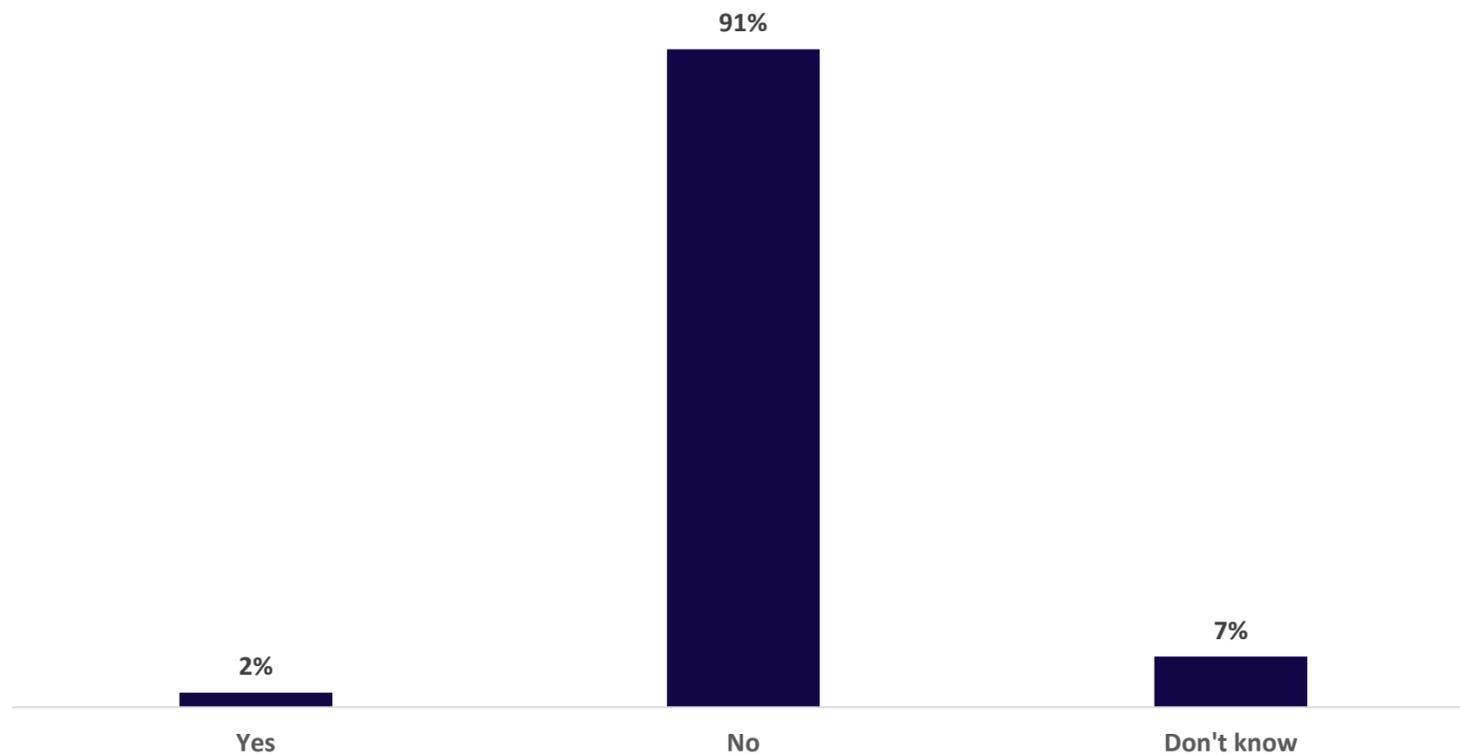


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.6        | 4.7   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.6    | 4.6     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.3        | 4.6        | 4.8   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.6    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

The majority (91%) of respondents did not feel that there was any content missing from this section of the webpage, while 7% were unsure, just 2% felt the content was lacking. Respondents who felt the content was lacking suggested there be more imagery included in the webpage (40%); the information should be reduced (20%); and that specific information on limescale should be added (20%).

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**More imagery (2)**

*"It would be better with less text & more graphics as examples"*

*"Images"*

**Less information (1)**

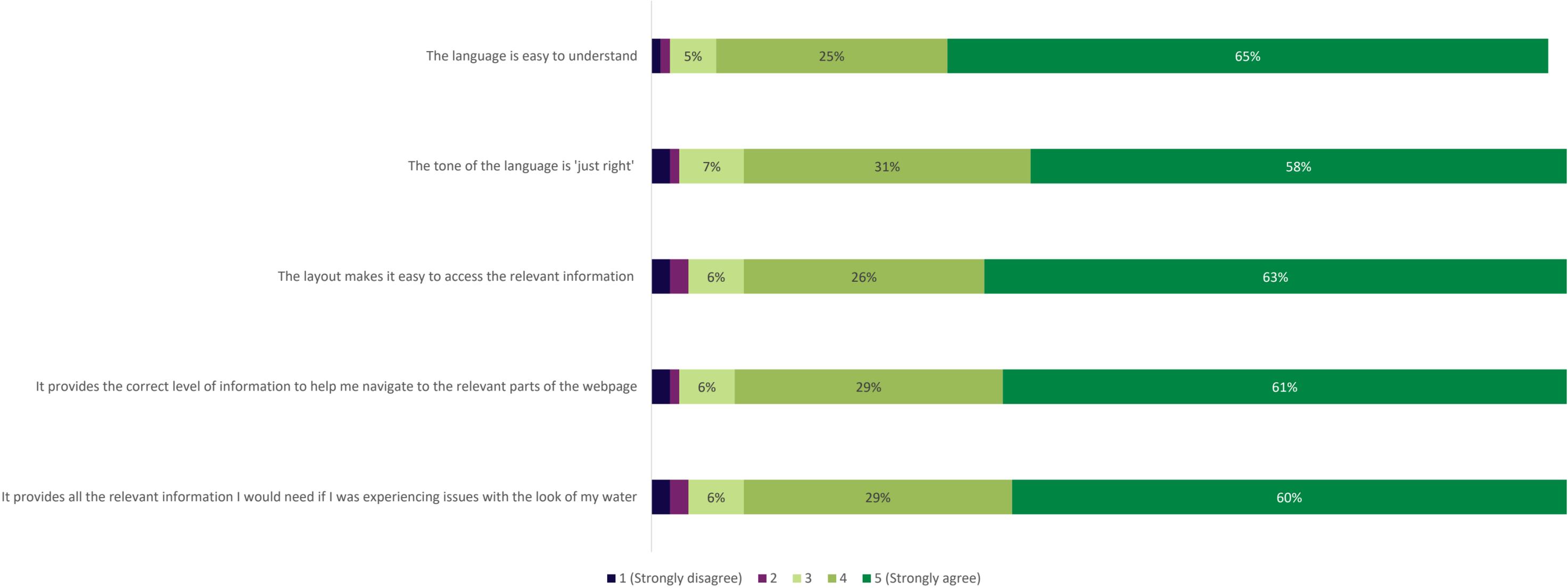
*"I actually think there is so much information here it would put many off reading it"*

**Specific limescale information (1)**

*"How to remove limescale in a hard water area"*

# Overall, high rates of agreement were observed across all statements, with language and level of information to help navigate receiving the highest rate.

Taking all into account, using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements after reviewing this section of the webpage? (248)

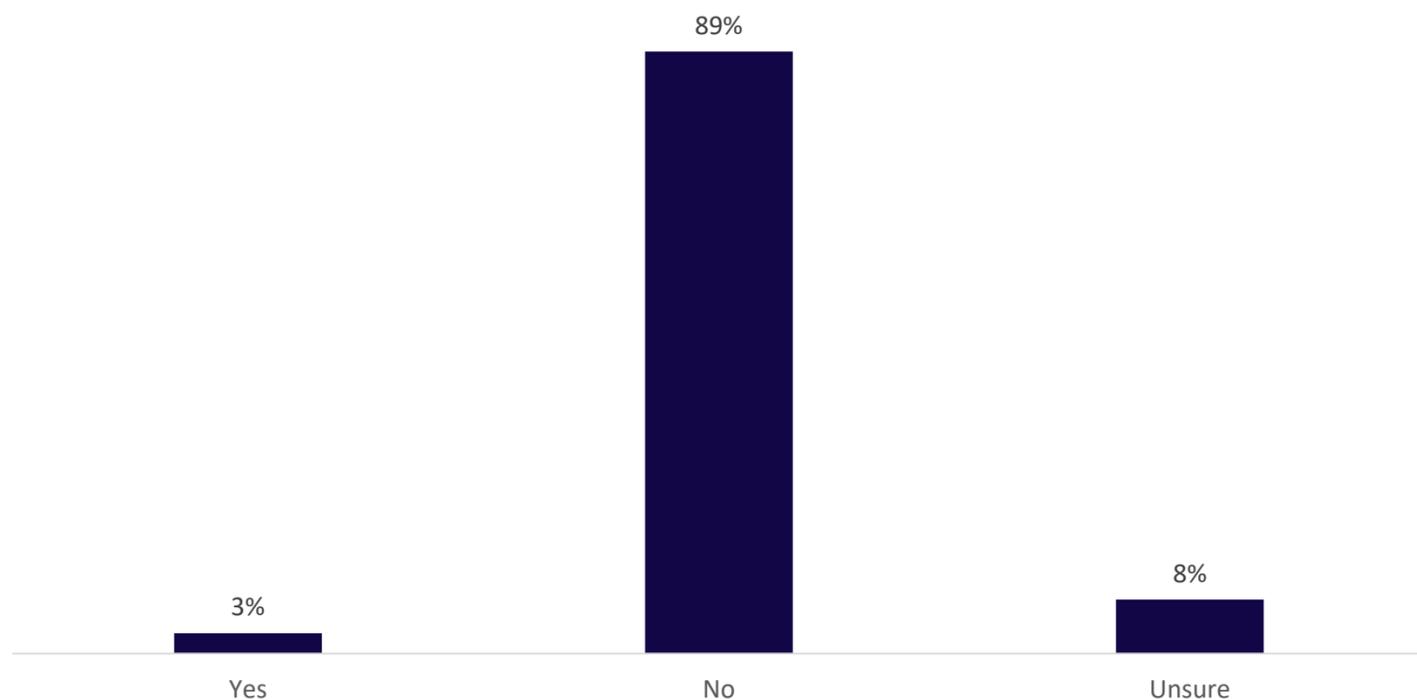


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.5      | 4.6                | 4.5        | 4.6        | 4.7   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.6  | 4.6    | 4.5     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.6     | 4.5      | 4.4                | 4.3        | 4.5        | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.7     | 4.5      | 4.4                | 4.4        | 4.7        | 4.7   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

**89% of respondents did not feel that there was any content missing. 8% were unsure, while 3% felt some content was lacking. Of the 3% who felt content was missing, respondents suggested an option for 'none of the above' (25%); better webpage organisation (13%); and confirmation of that UU has contacted Environment agency (13%) be included.**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



#### Option for 'none of the above' (2)

*"A none of the above link"*

*"What to do if I have a problem which is not covered by any of the options"*

#### Improved webpage organisation (1)

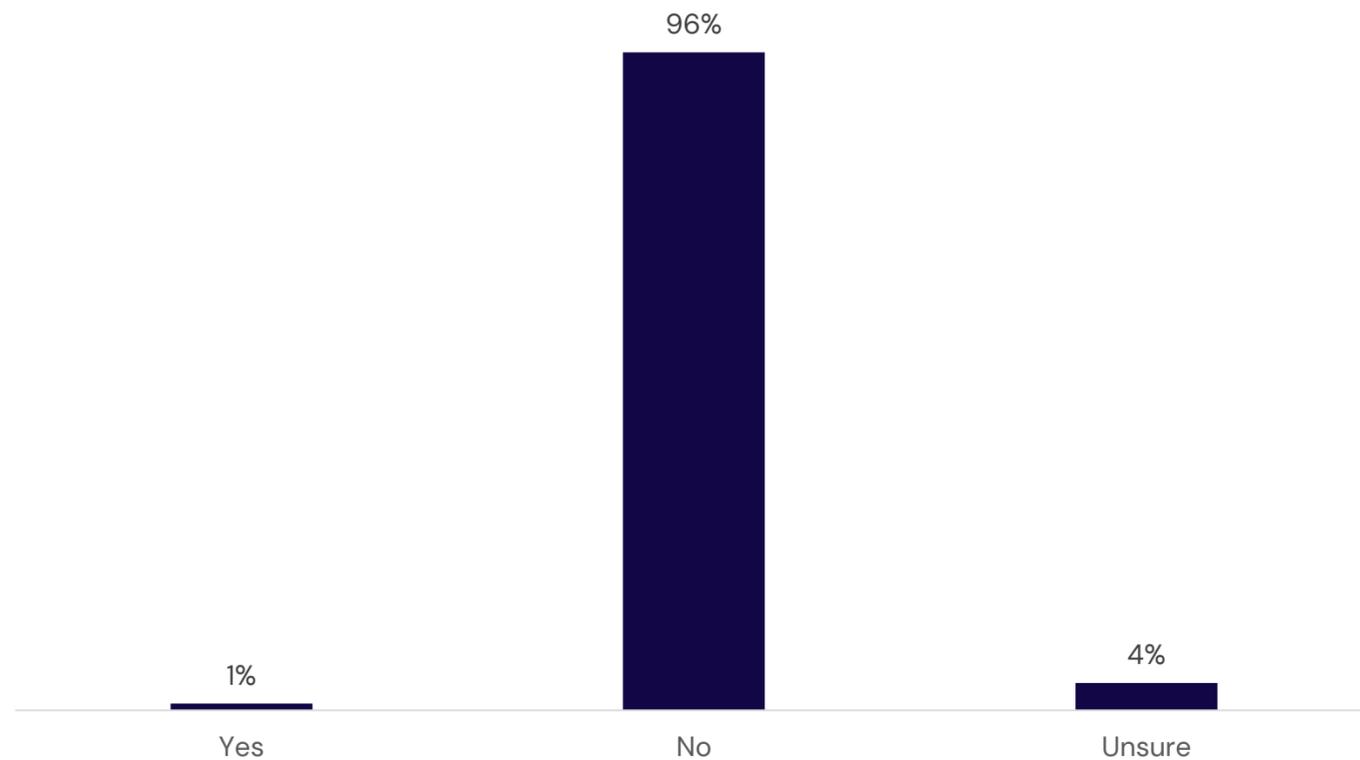
*"It would be better to have the link to the problems in your area at the beginning and then split the following sections into scenario-based examples with the likely causes, whether safe to drink or not & further action needed against each with a far more prominent warning where the problem may result in harm to health"*

#### Specific limescale information (1)

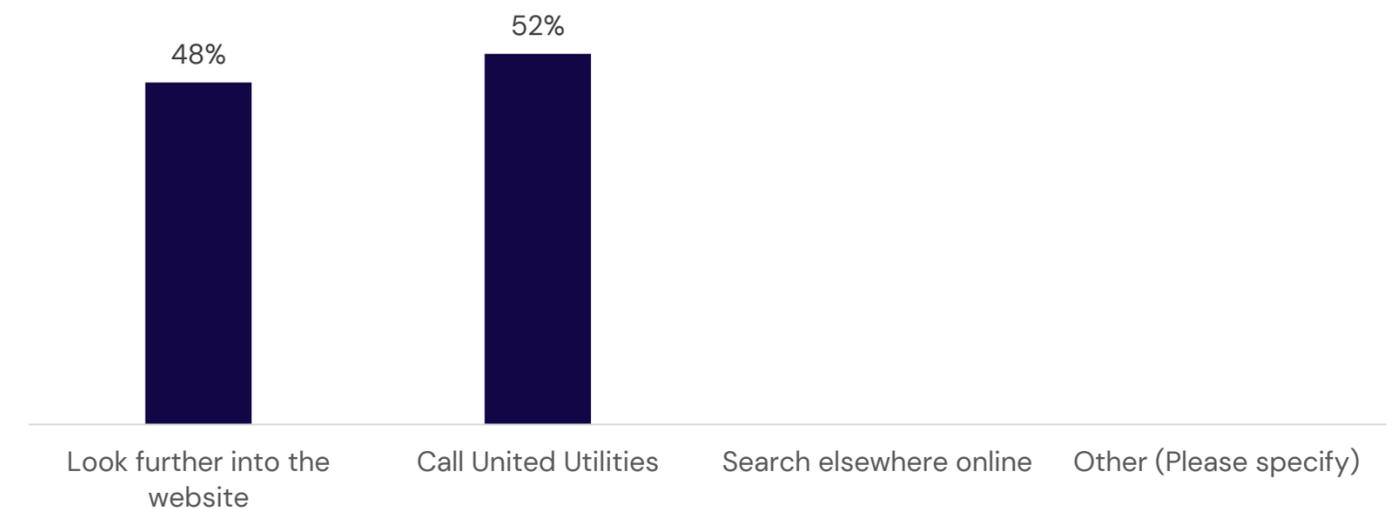
*"How to remove limescale in a hard water area"*

The majority (96%) understood the webpage, while 4% were unsure, just 1% of respondents found something on the webpage that they did not understand. For those who did not understand an aspect of the webpage, no suggestions were made in this instance. Though when asked, respondents said they would call united utilities for any missing information (52%), or look further into the website (48%).

Is there anything on this webpage that you did not understand?  
(248)



Where might you go to find any missing information? (2)



# 'My water looks different'

(UX testing)



**When asked their initial thoughts on the webpage, respondents felt positively about the contents, praising the layout and simple information. There was a clear consensus that respondents agreed with all statements asked. Respondents felt there were no improvements to be made.**

*"I thought it was well laid out and easy to follow and find your way around via the links and info provided"*

*"Very easy to navigate along with any information you may require."*

*"It was clearly laid out and gave several options as to why this may be the case then a breakdown of each issue to follow"*

*"The layout is simple and straight forward, was easy to navigate and gain information. The wording wasn't over Complicated and easy to understand - the advice was very handy."*

*"Easy to navigate , self explanatory , clear instructions, easy to use"*

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements after reviewing this section of the webpage? (5) (Mean)

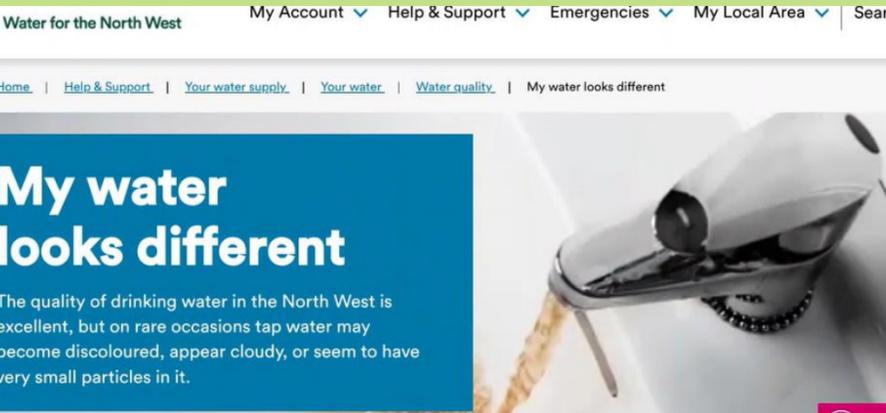


UX testing respondents responded very positively to this webpage, suggesting that it was easy to navigate and understand; and respondents valued the added tool to identify local issues. There were no negative comments for the webpage, although one respondent mentioned that elderly who are unfamiliar with tech may need support understanding the webpage.

Smooth navigation



*"I think I'd know where to go if my water was looking iffy... its self-explanatory"*

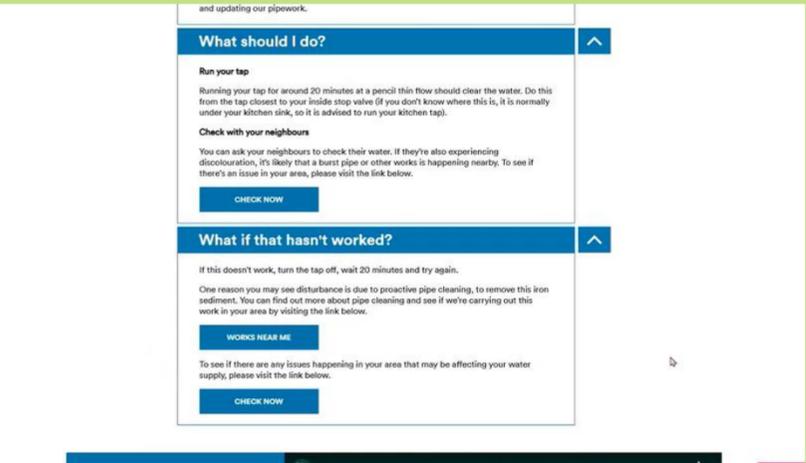


*"It's easy to find, it's easy to go into the sections"*

Easy to understand

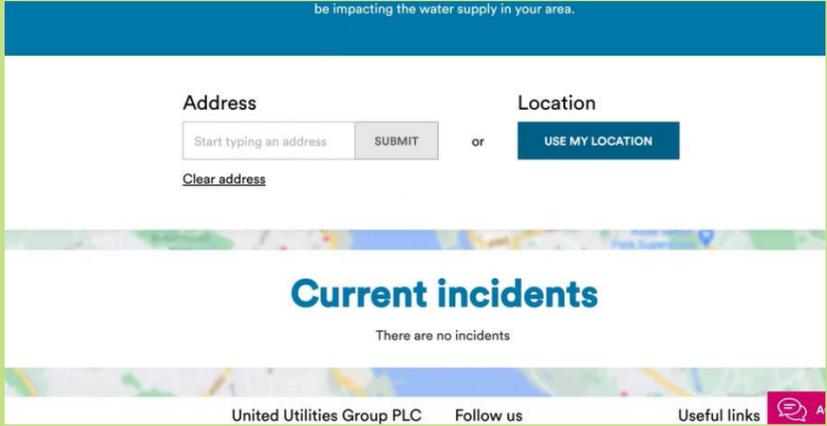


*"It's really easy to understand"*



*"It gives an explanation... again it's pretty straightforward"*

Identifying local issues is valuable



*"I know there's no work going on round here, but that's good that it could narrow it down"*



*"It's easy enough, just put in your postcode and see if there's any works going on"*

# My water looks different – Feedback findings

## Heatmap analysis

- Respondents generally found this section of the webpage **easy to read and understand**, they praised the layout of each section for being **logical and easily digestible**.
- Respondents liked the **colour scheme and use of imagery** in this section, some specifically praised the **use of real-life images** as a good reference point when compared to cartoon icons.
- Some found issue that **sections appeared too lengthy**, and important information e.g. health and safety information did not stand out enough in heavy text. The majority of criticism in this section was around the **formatting of the page**.
- The 'Up my street' page was particularly praised as a helpful tool.

## Analysis of scores

- Across the majority of this section, 'the language is easy to understand' received the highest rate of agreement compared to other statements, with the 'tone is just right' generally following a close second. Scores were consistent across sections of the webpage.
- 'It provides the right level of information needed to understand X' was generally lowest scoring across all sections. When asked if there was content missing, under 10% agreed that there was, though valuable suggestions were made, including: contact information; more imagery; and, actions/advice if issues persist.

## UX testing

- All UX testing participants highlighted the webpage's intuitive navigation, clear content, and the added value of the tool for identifying local issues. No negative feedback was reported, aside from a suggestion that older users may require additional support to navigate the page.

'My water  
smells/tastes unusual'

(Route B)



# My water smells/tastes unusual

[Home](#) | [Help & Support](#) | [Your water supply](#) | [Your water](#) | [Water quality](#) | Unusual taste or smell

## Unusual taste or smell

We work round the clock to make sure your tap water is clean and drinkable at all times. Very occasionally, our customers contact us to let us know that their tap water has an unusual taste or smell.



The most common causes of taste and smell issues are down to the pipework in your home or extended periods of infrequent use of your water supply.

Follow our advice below to quickly identify the cause and how to resolve it.

### Quick Tip

Fill up a clean glass that smells normal to you with water from your cold kitchen tap, then take it to another room (or even outside) and take a smell.

If the smell disappears, then it is likely that the issue isn't with the water itself.



|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|  <h4>Chemicals</h4> <p>Sometimes your water may have a 'chemical' or 'medicinal' taste to it – click below to find out why.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p>   |  <h4>Metallic or bitter</h4> <p>There are a few reasons why your water may have a 'metallic' or 'bitter' taste to it – find out what to check if this is the case.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p> |  <h4>Chlorine</h4> <p>Find out what may be causing your water to smell like swimming pool water.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p>                                 |  <h4>Earthy or musty</h4> <p>If your water appears to have an earthy or musty taste, click here to find out more.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p>                                |
|  <h4>Eggy or sewage</h4> <p>If your water appears to smell eggy or of sewage, click here to find out what might be happening.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p> |  <h4>Fuel or oil</h4> <p>If you suspect that the taste or smell you are experiencing is more like 'fuel' or 'oil', please follow our advice here.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p>                  |  <h4>My water has changed</h4> <p>If your water has 'changed', find out why this has happened and what you can do to resolve it.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p> |  <h4>My water looks different</h4> <p>If your water appears discoloured, cloudy or has bits in it, click here to see what could be causing this.</p> <p><a href="#">FIND OUT MORE</a></p> |

# Heatmapping tool – My water smells/tastes unusual

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



Respondents liked that the introduction was clear and provided information needed to move on

*"Images clear and text to the point"*

*"It has the info you need to move on"*

Respondents liked the layout and use of imagery, making it easy to identify which link to follow

*"I like the look and layout of all these tiles"*

*"I really like how there are multiple images so you can easily know which ones to select and look at without having to read all of the information"*

*"Like the simplicity of each icon to narrow down your search"*



Some respondents found issue with the wording used in the introduction, highlighting that it sounded unprofessional and a shift of blame

*"Feels like there is a blame shift on to the customer"*

*"I don't like the wording of "down to" I think it should be more professional and clear."*

*"This seems a bit patronising"*

Respondents disliked the use of a child as the image to represent this section, with many feeling it unrelated to the issue

*"Don't like the picture of the child and its sideways and not relevant to the comments on the piece"*

*"Overpowering image of child again at top of article seems irrelevant to context of article itself"*

273 likes

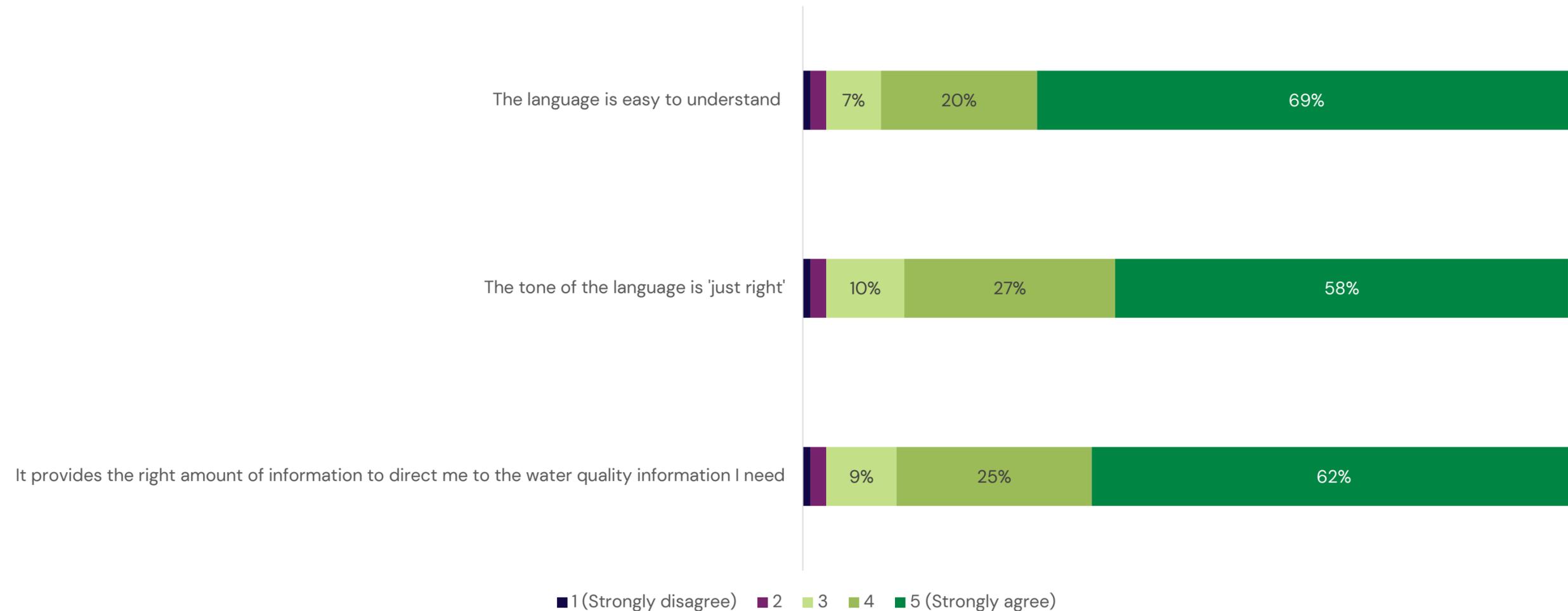


38 dislikes



Similarly to the previous webpage, this landing page was positively received with over 85% of respondents agreeing/strongly agreeing with all statements. Respondents were more likely to agree that the language is easy to understand (89%), with a lower rate agreeing that the tone of the language is 'just right' (85%).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

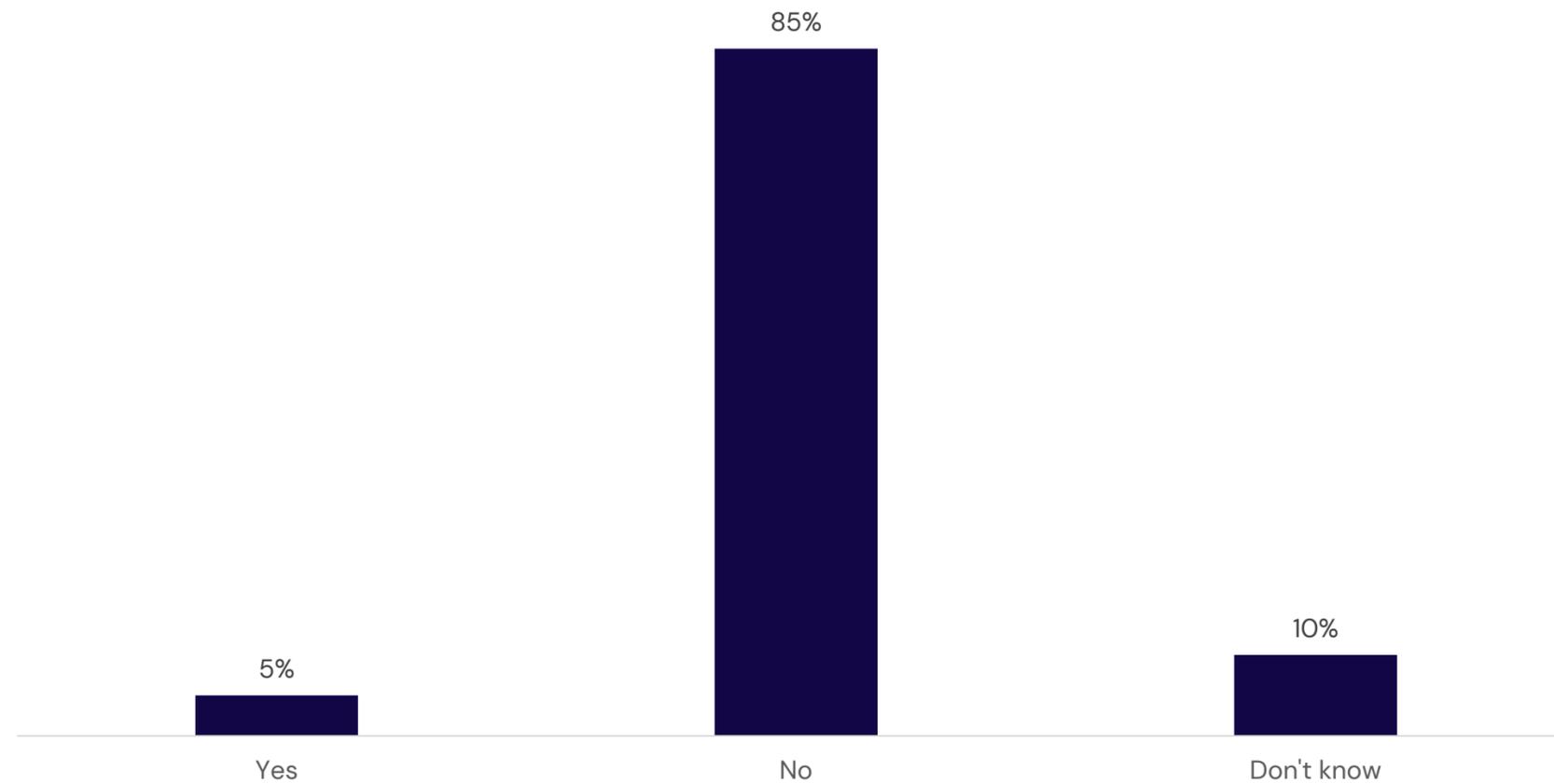


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.4      | 4.6                | 4.6        | 4.5        | 4.9   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.5   | 4.6 | 4.6  | 4      | 4.6     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.4     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.4        | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.5 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.4        | 4.6   | 4.6   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.5 | 4.4  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

**85% of respondents did not feel that any content was missing from this section. 10% were unsure, while 5% felt there was content missing. Of those who felt content was missing suggestions included: revised formatting (18%); contact information (18%); more imagery (9%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Revised formatting (2)**

*"The print is too light and certain points should be emphasised"*

*"A proper title in big letters to grab attention"*

**Contact information (2)**

*"There should be a telephone number included"*

*"You must provide a telephone number so that you can speak to a human"*

**More imagery (1)**

*"Visuals for those who may struggle to understand"*

# Chemicals or medicinal

## Chemicals or medicinal

Sometimes your water may seem to have a 'chemical' taste to it. This can occur due to a breakdown of the water pipes inside your house, rather than the water itself.

### Why is this happening?

A 'chemical' taste or smell to your water is due to the interaction between the water and rubber or plastic fittings in your appliances or taps. This interaction can cause small amounts of substances to dissolve into the water, causing the taste or smell, regardless of the age of the fittings.

### What are the common causes?

Places where this can happen are:

- **Appliance hoses:** Rubber or plastic hoses connected to appliances can cause chemical or 'TCP-type' tastes, especially if fitted before your taps.
- **Tap fittings and water tank pipes:** Rubber and plastic used in tap washers or pipes that provide drinking water can also affect the taste of your water. Because the 'break-up' of these washers isn't a continuous process, the taste may come and go.
- **Kettle seals:** A taste noticeable only in hot drinks is often caused by seals or coverings in the kettle, particularly in newer models. Boiling the kettle a couple of times and rinsing thoroughly before use can help reduce this.

A 'chemical' taste or smell can also happen when pipes are not used for extended periods of time - such as between tenancy moves or when on holiday.

- **Standing water in pipes:** Water that has been sitting in pipes for several hours is more likely to pick up tastes from plumbing materials, especially if plastic or rubber components are present.

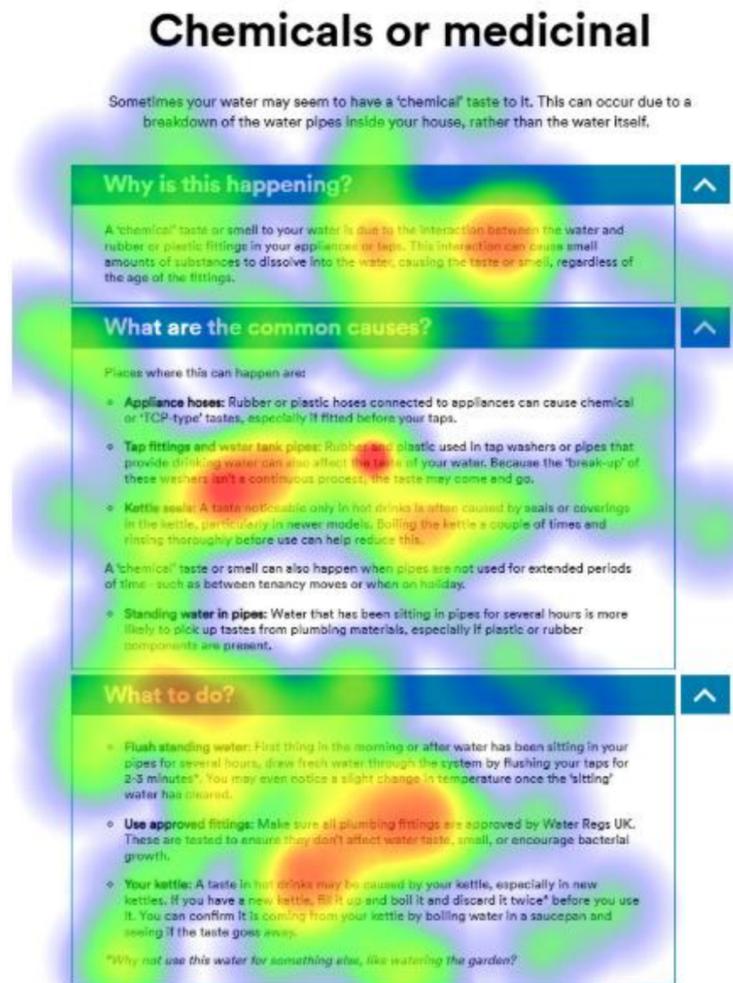
### What to do?

- **Flush standing water:** First thing in the morning or after water has been sitting in your pipes for several hours, draw fresh water through the system by flushing your taps for 2-3 minutes\*. You may even notice a slight change in temperature once the 'sitting' water has cleared.
- **Use approved fittings:** Make sure all plumbing fittings are approved by Water Regs UK. These are tested to ensure they don't affect water taste, smell, or encourage bacterial growth.
- **Your kettle:** A taste in hot drinks may be caused by your kettle, especially in new kettles. If you have a new kettle, fill it up and boil it and discard it twice\* before you use it. You can confirm it is coming from your kettle by boiling water in a saucepan and seeing if the taste goes away.

*\*Why not use this water for something else, like watering the garden?*

# Heatmapping tool – Chemicals or medicinal

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



109 likes



Respondents liked the depth of explanation that came with this section

*"I like the way the issues here in the entire section have been explained and the most common causes in an easy to understand format"*

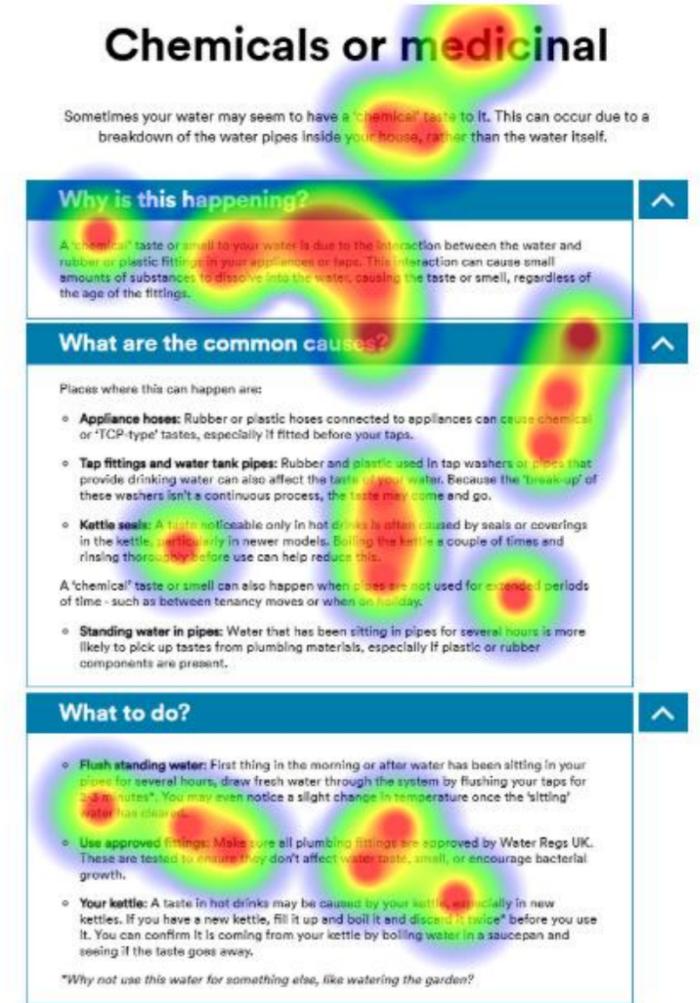
*"It gives a full explanation of what the causes are"*

Respondents praised the clarity of the layout

*"I like the look and layout of all these tiles"*

*"I really like how there are multiple images so you can easily know which ones to select and look at without having to read all of the information"*

*"Like the simplicity of each icon to narrow down your search"*



33 dislikes



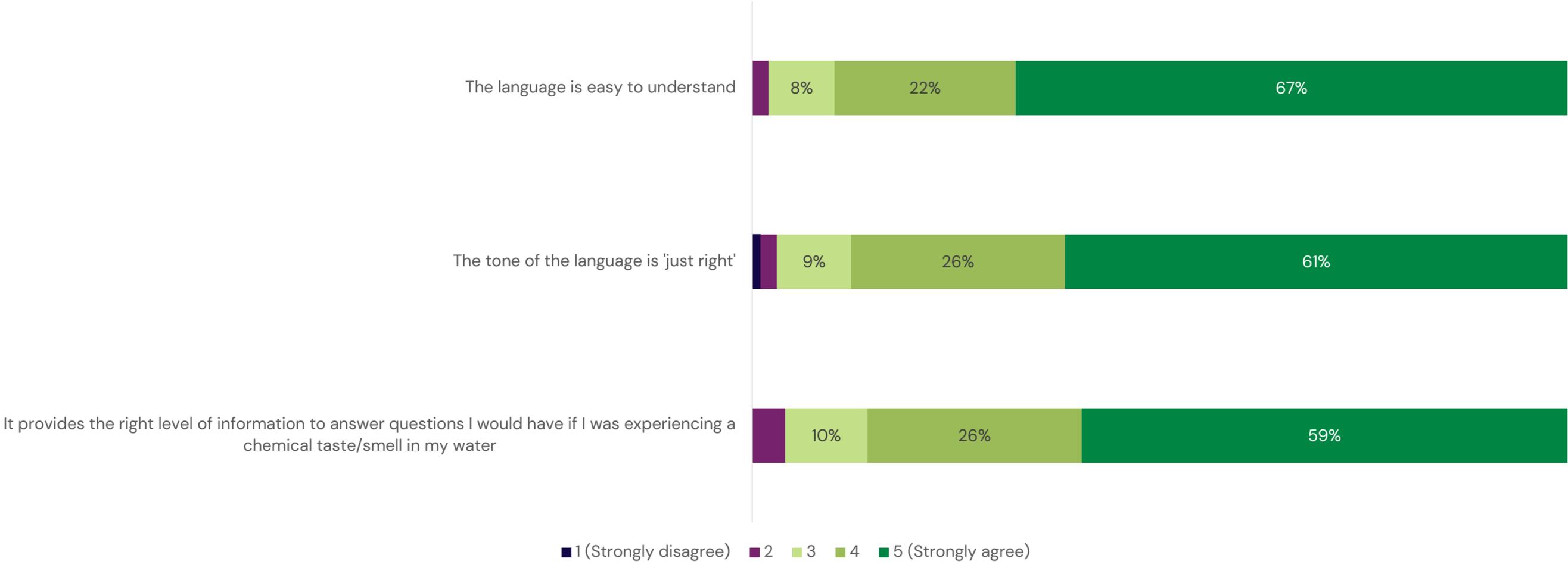
Some respondents found issue with the layout of this section, suggesting there is too much information and can come across as complicated

*"There is too much information and it is not separated enough, the sections should be more distinct and the wording within should be highlighted."*

*"Seems a complicated description"*

**Most respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the language of this section was easy to understand (89%). There was a slightly higher rate of disagreement with the statement 'It provides the right level of information to answer questions I would have if I was experiencing a chemical taste or smell in my water.'**

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

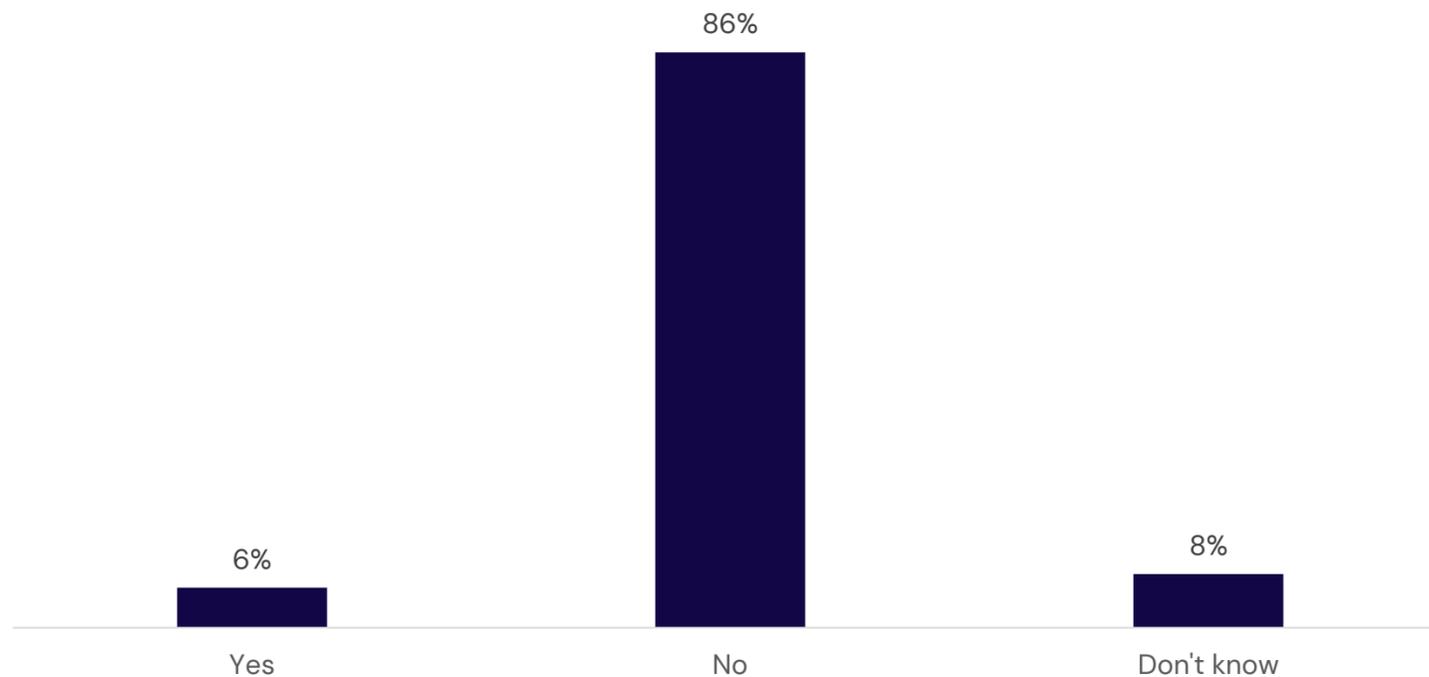


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.4     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.6        | 4.7   | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.6   | 4.6 | 4.5  | 4.6    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.4     | 4.2      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.4    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.5     | 4.2      | 4.4                | 4.4        | 4.4        | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3 | 4.5  | 4.3    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

**Most respondents felt that there was no content missing from this section of the webpage (86%). 8% were unsure, while 6% felt that something was missing. Respondents suggested the webpage should include contact information (23%); actions if issue persists (23%); and more imagery (8%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



### **Contact information (3)**

*"A follow up link or telephone number for these possible problems"*

*"Extra information or a helpline or further fixes if these don't work"*

### **Actions if issue persists (3)**

*"What to do if that doesn't solve the issue"*

*"What to do if its something different"*

### **More imagery (1)**

*"I would include images as it's too much writing"*

# Bitter or metallic

## Bitter or metallic

A metallic taste or smell is usually caused by your pipework or tanks. There are a few different ways in which it can affect your water.

### Why is this happening?

- If your cold water pipe runs too close to your hot water pipe, it will warm up your cold water and cause it to pick up traces of substances like copper.
- In large buildings with long lengths of pipework and low water flows, the water has to travel through more pipes before it reaches your tap. This can cause a metallic taste or smell.
- If your water has been standing in pipes for long periods of time, the smell or taste can come from the metal that's used in your pipework (such as copper or zinc).

Occasionally glasses or cups that have been through a dishwasher may retain traces of detergents which can also lead to a bitter taste.

Customers sometimes identify the taste of chlorine as metallic. [Click here for advice on chlorine taste and smell.](#)

### What to do?

**Run your tap:** Doing this for a few minutes will bring fresh water into your property and flush the system. This will usually resolve the metallic taste or smell. Instead of letting the water go to waste, why not collect it to water your plants with.

**Check your storage tank:** If you have a water storage tank, it's also worth checking what it's made from and what condition it's in as this could be behind the taste or smell.

**Check your hot and cold water pipes aren't too close to each other:** You or a plumber should check that they aren't touching. If they are too close together, you may need to insulate or 'lag' your water pipes to stop the transfer of heat.

# Heatmapping tool – Bitter or metallic

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.

Respondents liked the clear advice in this section

*“Very good advice”*

*“It gives a detailed explanation of what to do”*

Respondents praised the option to redirect for further information

*“Good option to redirect”*

*“Good to offer link to alternative page”*

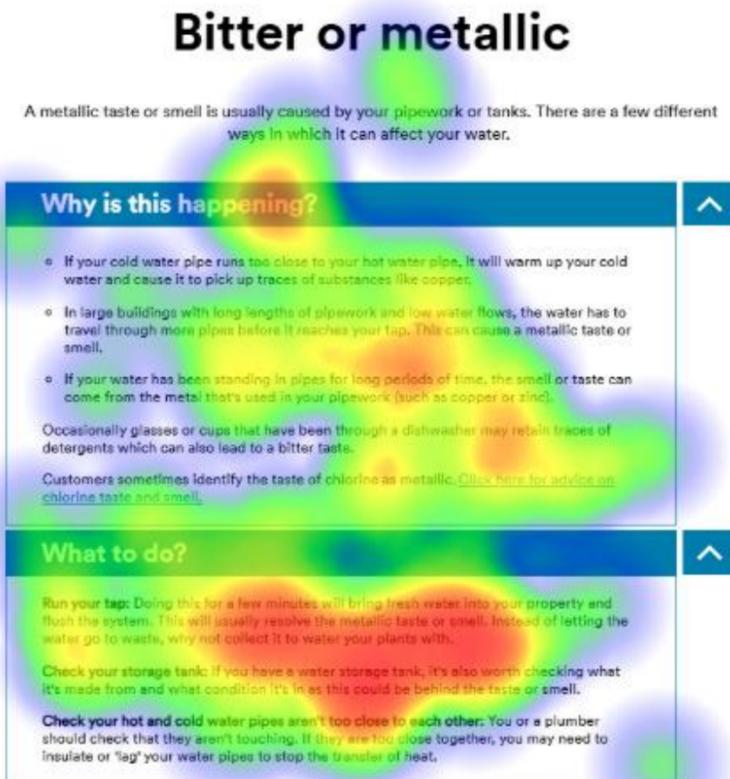
Customers also liked the layout of the page and use of bold fonts

*“I like how the writing in bold stands out so it’s easy to know which section to start reading”*

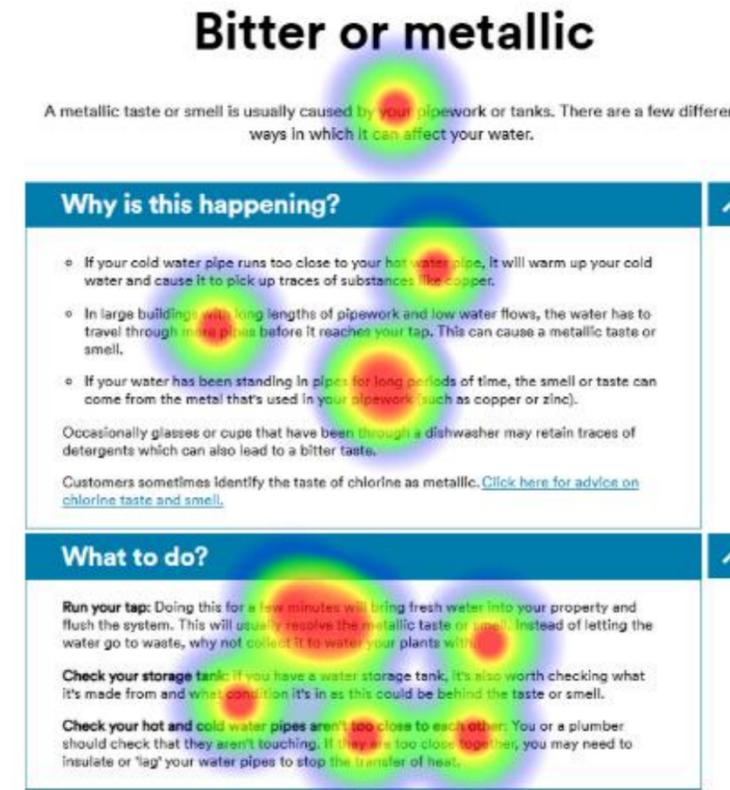
*“Good layout”*

One respondent found issue with the tone used in this section, highlighting a lack of accountability from UU.

*“It feels a little like a cop out. A bit like blaming the customer for something they really have no control over.”*



99 likes

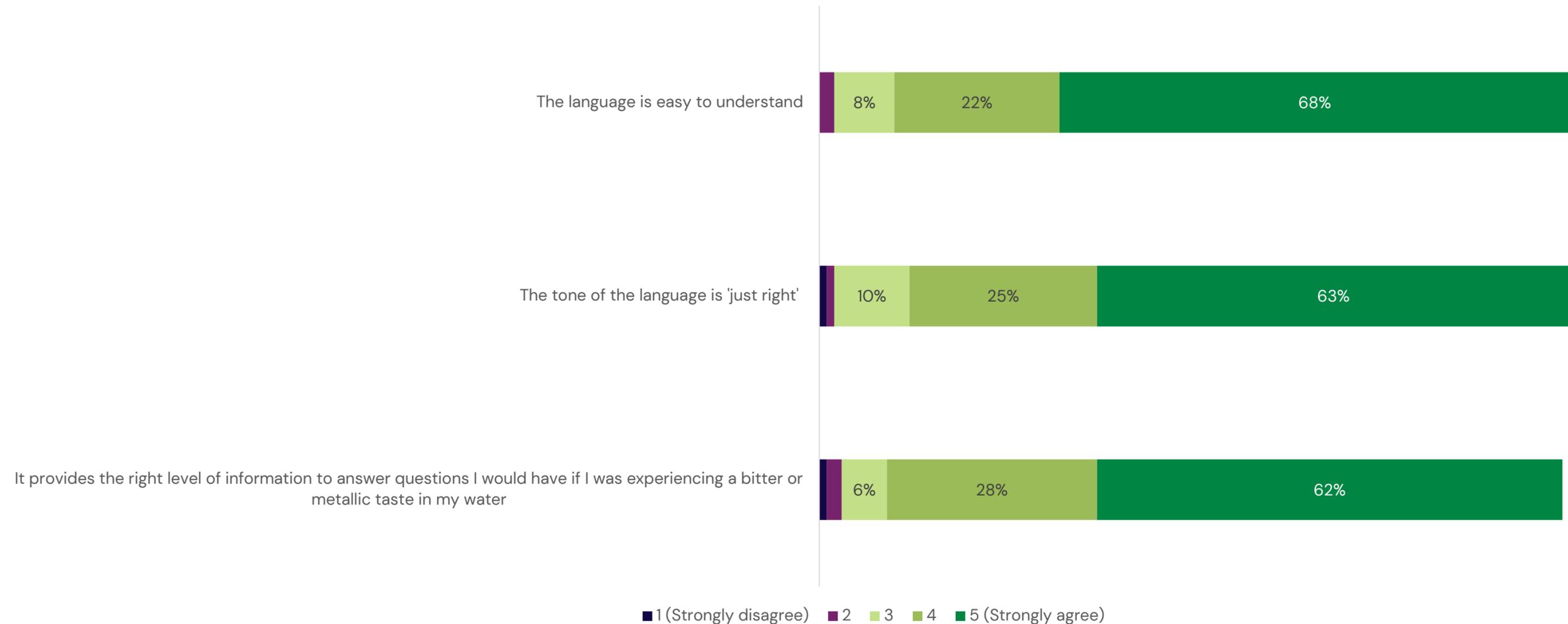


13 dislikes



**For this section, the highest level of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed was observed for the statement, 'The language is easy to understand' (91%), this was closely followed by those who felt it provides the right level of information to answer any questions (90%).**

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

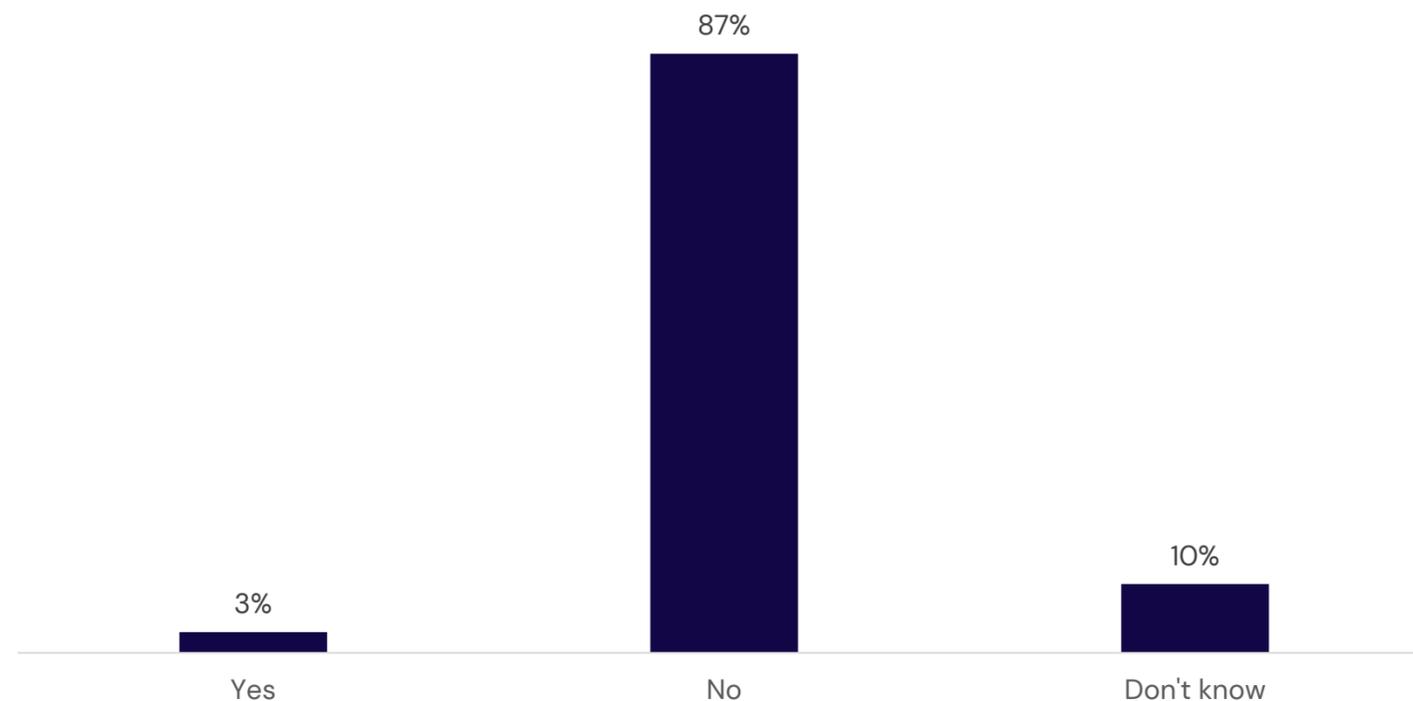


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.8     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.7        | 4.7   | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.8   | 4.6 | 4.5  | 4.6    | 4.6     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.4     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.5        | 4.5        | 4.7   | 4.5   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

**3% of respondents felt there was content missing from this section of the webpage. 10% were unsure, while 87% did not feel any content was missing. Respondents who felt that there was content missing suggested that the webpage required further information if issue persists (38%); contact information (13%); and, health and safety advice (13%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Information if issue persists (3)**

*"What to do if none of the actions mentioned make any difference"*

*"What to do if all suggestions given don't work"*

**Contact information (1)**

*"A telephone number if the problem is not resolved"*

**Health and safety advice (1)**

*"Section with something like 'I've drunk some, should I worry?'"*

## Chlorine

What to do if your water tastes or smells like swimming pool water. Simply use the arrows below to expand the section containing the information you need.

### Why is this happening?



Chlorine is legally required to be added to your water to ensure the water we provide you is wholesome. It is added during the final stage of the water treatment process and is closely monitored.

Chlorine levels are kept well within recommended limits and are not harmful.

Some customers may notice this more than others if they are sensitive to the taste or smell.

### What are the common causes?



The taste and smell of chlorine can be stronger:

- If you live nearby to one of our treatment works facilities (The closer you are, the more noticeable it may be).
- When flow through the main increases, for example in the mornings and evenings when many people use their taps at once, during a burst, or when the fire service draws large volumes of water, the chlorine can reach you more quickly and has less time to dissipate.
- A nearby water main has been replaced and the new main doesn't 'absorb' chlorine in the way the old main did.

### What to do?

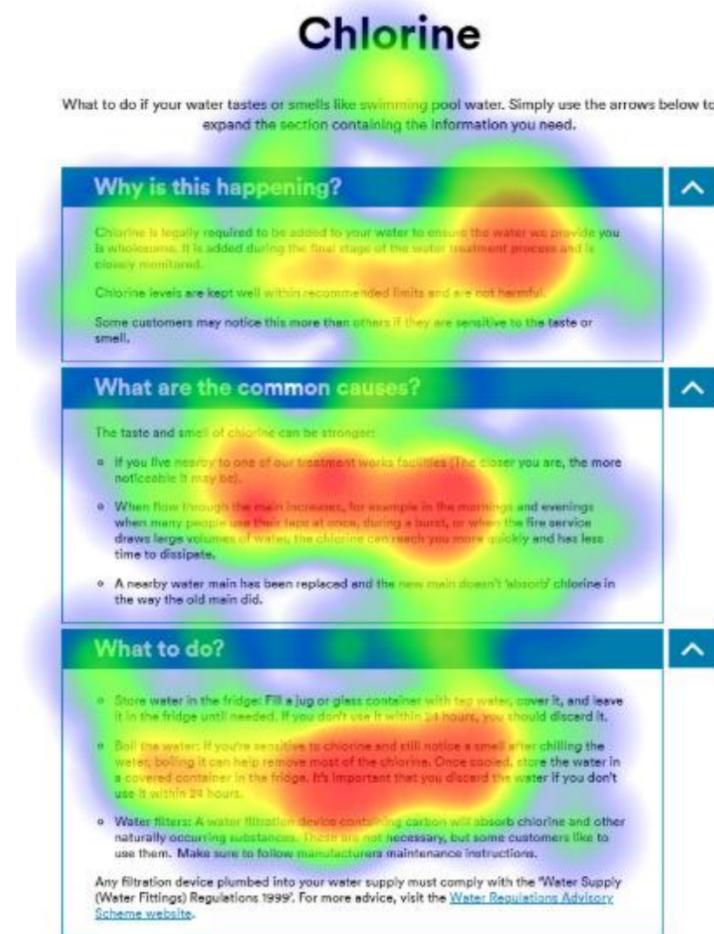


- Store water in the fridge: Fill a jug or glass container with tap water, cover it, and leave it in the fridge until needed. If you don't use it within 24 hours, you should discard it.
- Boil the water: If you're sensitive to chlorine and still notice a smell after chilling the water, boiling it can help remove most of the chlorine. Once cooled, store the water in a covered container in the fridge. It's important that you discard the water if you don't use it within 24 hours.
- Water filters: A water filtration device containing carbon will absorb chlorine and other naturally occurring substances. These are not necessary, but some customers like to use them. Make sure to follow manufacturers maintenance instructions.

Any filtration device plumbed into your water supply must comply with the 'Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999'. For more advice, visit the [Water Regulations Advisory Scheme website](#).

# Heatmapping tool – Chlorine

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



Respondents liked the clear information in this section, and praised that it doesn't assume knowledge of chlorine

*"Doesn't assume knowledge of what chlorine is"*

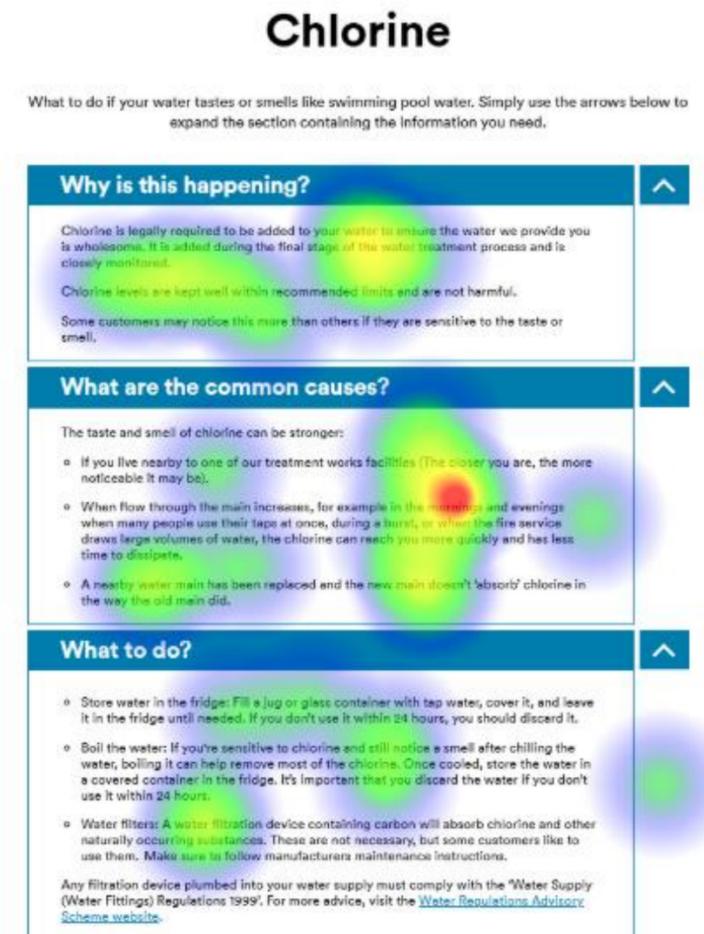
*"It tells you everything you need to know about what to do"*

Respondents liked the layout of this section

*"Clear information heading"*

*"Clear section"*

112 likes



Respondents disliked that there was a clarity around some particular pieces of information e.g. health and safety

*"Should clarify that this isn't dangerous or unhealthy"*

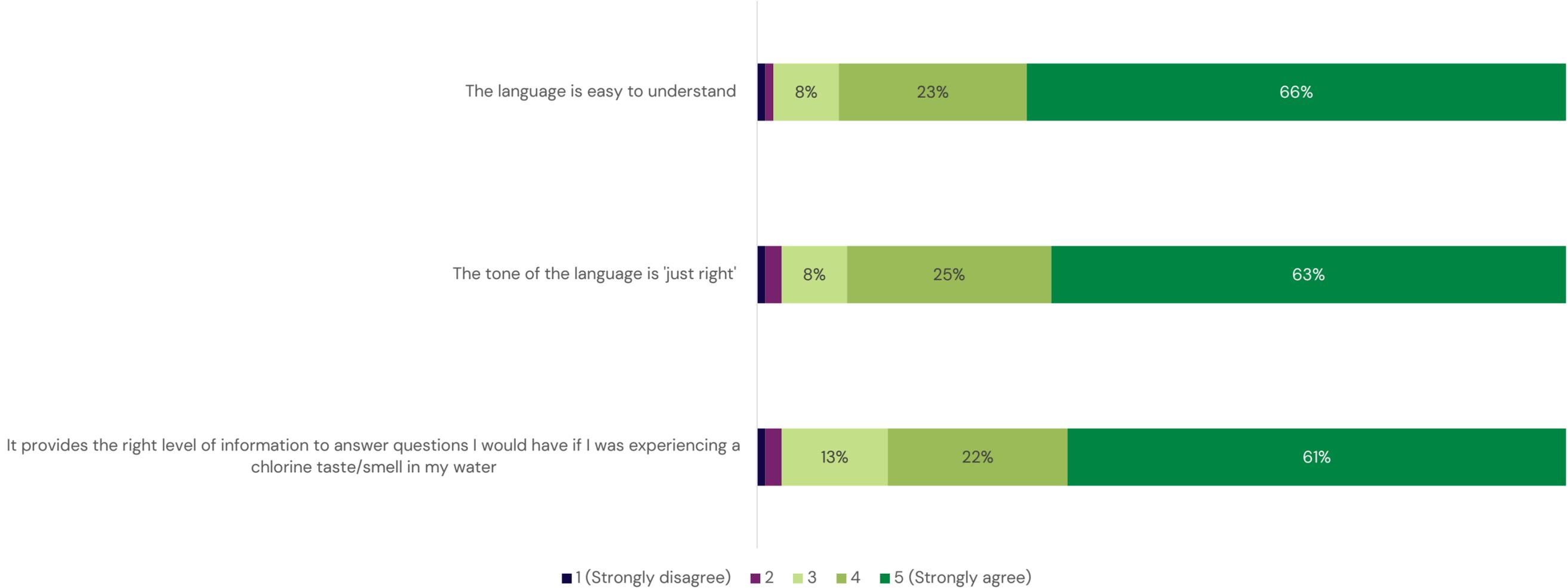
*"No indication if this is dangerous"*

31 dislikes



# Respondents were more likely to agree/strongly agree that the language in this section was easy to understand (89%).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

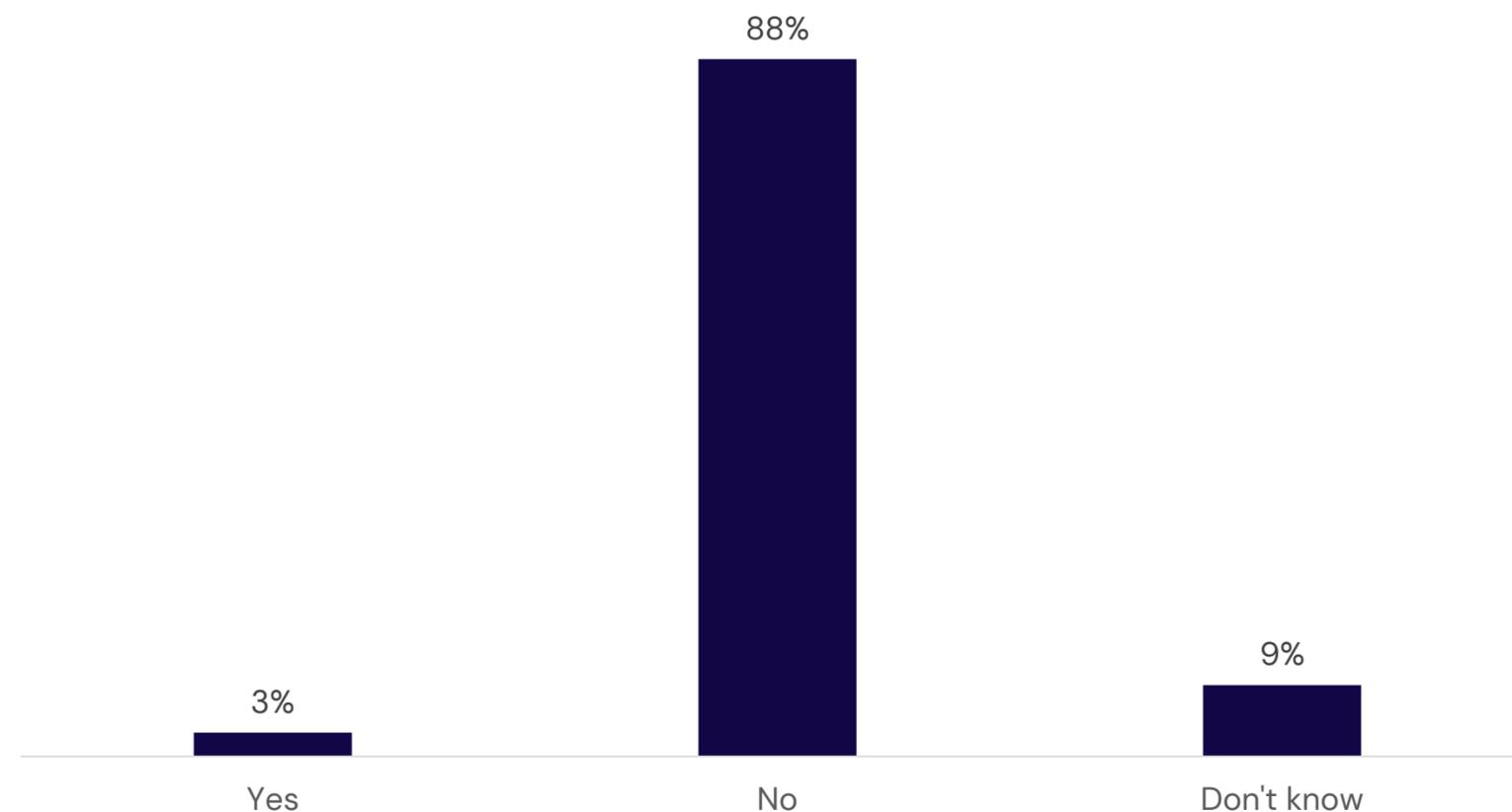


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.7        | 4.7   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.6  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.5     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.6        | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 4.4 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.5     | 4.2      | 4.4                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3 | 4.4  | 4.4    | 4.3     | 4.4       |

**88% of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from this section. While 9% were unsure, 3% agreed that there was content missing. Of that 3%, suggestions included more health and safety information (25%); UU's role and responsibility with issue (13%); and contact information (13%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Health and safety information (2)**

*"Is it dangerous?"*

*"Why the chlorine is safe and what to do if you're very sensitive"*

**United Utilities role and responsibility (1)**

*"Any responsibility UU might have to resolve – will that new main improve or will the customer have to deal with making their water drinkable permanently"*

**Contact information (1)**

*"Contact number"*

# Earthy or musty

## Earthy or musty

An earthy or musty taste or smell can either be caused by how your property is structured, or where your water is originally sourced from.

Follow our advice below to quickly identify the cause and how to resolve it.

### Why is this happening?

Long lengths of pipework in large buildings, or pipes that feed into infrequently used taps, water can become stagnant. This can cause a stale or pond-like smell or taste.

An earthy or musty taste and/or smell can sometimes be caused by the harmless algae bacteria or other organic matter in the river or reservoir where your water is sourced from.

### What are the common causes?

- **Standing water in pipes:** Water that has been sitting in household plumbing for long periods can take on tastes or smells from the pipe materials.
- **Microbial growth:** Organisms can grow on washers, inside pipes, or within taps, especially if they are not regularly cleaned or used.
- **Pipework layout:** Certain materials or configurations, such as hot and cold pipes running closely together, can encourage bacterial growth, which may affect water quality.
- **Blocked waste pipes:** Smells from your sink plughole may be due to blocked waste pipework and can become noticeable only when the tap is running.

### What to do?

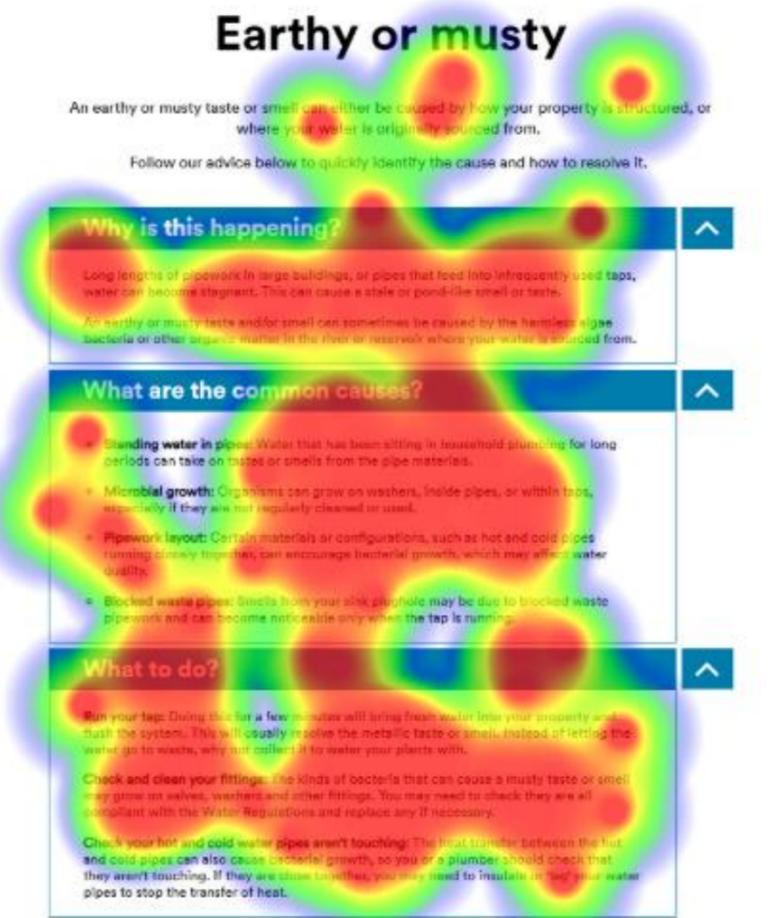
**Run your tap:** Doing this for a few minutes will bring fresh water into your property and flush the system. This will usually resolve the metallic taste or smell. Instead of letting the water go to waste, why not collect it to water your plants with.

**Check and clean your fittings:** The kinds of bacteria that can cause a musty taste or smell may grow on valves, washers and other fittings. You may need to check they are all compliant with the Water Regulations and replace any if necessary.

**Check your hot and cold water pipes aren't touching:** The heat transfer between the hot and cold pipes can also cause bacterial growth, so you or a plumber should check that they aren't touching. If they are close together, you may need to insulate or 'lag' your water pipes to stop the transfer of heat.

# Heatmapping tool – Earthy or musty

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



97 likes



Respondents liked the clear explanations included in this section, many found the section informative

*"Gives a good explanation of the causes"*

*"Informative and helpful advice"*

Respondents liked the layout of the section with the use of bold to outline key information

*"I like the way the tips are shown here in an easy to understand and read format"*

*"I like the bullet points and bold as it makes the page more interesting"*

*"It is well laid out and logical"*



31 dislikes

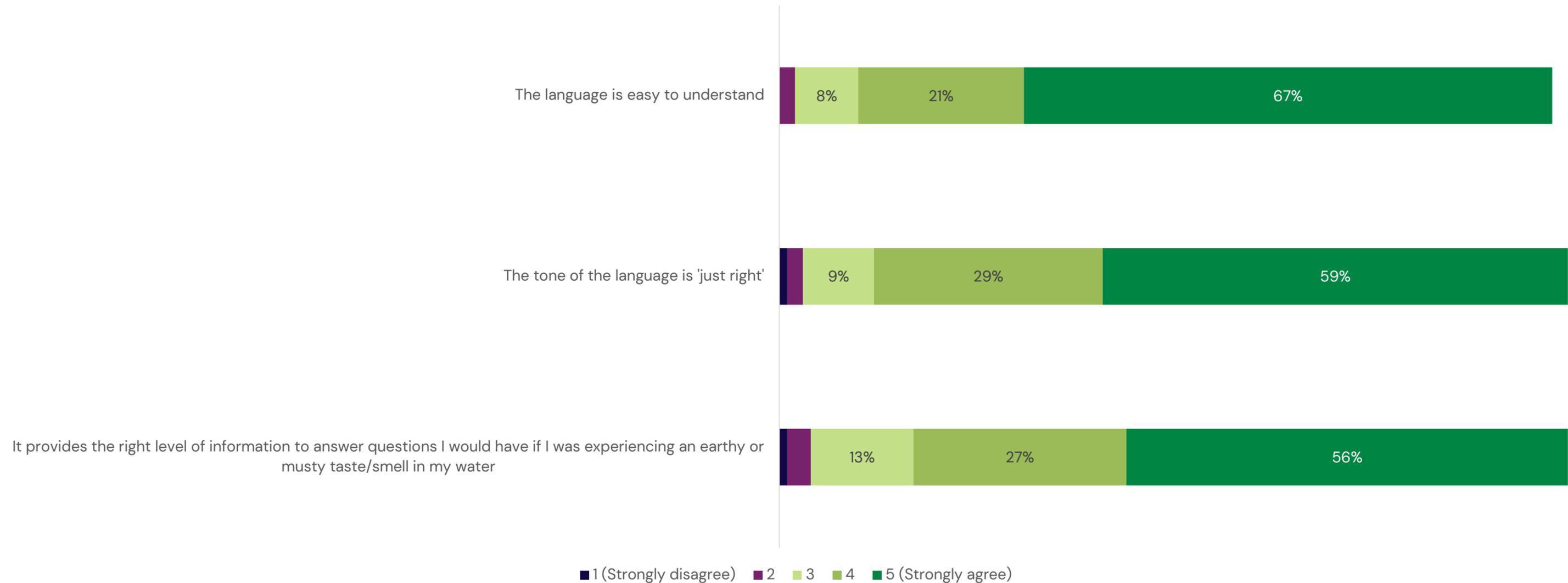


One respondent found issue with the tone used in this section, highlighting a lack of accountability from UU.

*"The reason seems to always be the customers fault"*

# The highest rate of those who agreed/strongly agreed was observed with those who felt that the language was easy to understand and the tone is 'just right' (88% respectively).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(248)

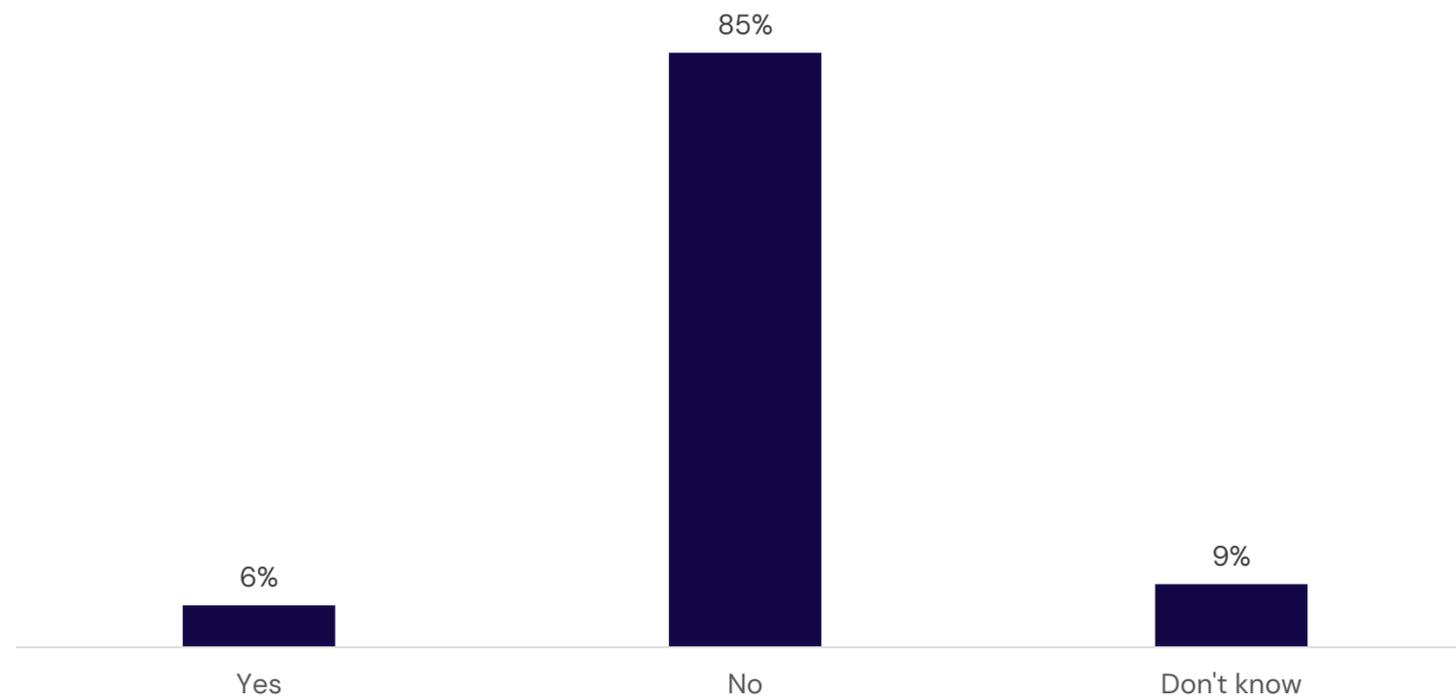


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.5        | 4.6        | 4.9   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.6     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.5     | 4.2      | 4.5                | 4.3        | 4.5        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.4 | 4.5  | 4.4    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.4     | 4.2      | 4.4                | 4.3        | 4.4        | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4     | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.3 | 4.4  | 4.3    | 4.3     | 4.4       |

**85% of respondents did not feel any content was missing from this section of the webpage. While 9% were unsure, 6% felt the content was lacking. Of those who felt there was content missing, 20% suggested the inclusion of contact information; 13% suggested an option for 'none of the above'; and, where to find information on water regulation (13%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



### Contact information (3)

*"Contact number"*

*"A telephone number or another link"*

### Options for 'none of the above' (2)

*"What to do if you try the above actions and they don't make a difference"*

*"If none of those apply how to get in touch with someone"*

### Water regulation information (2)

*"How to find water regulations"*

*"Links to water regulation info"*

# Eggy or sewage

## Eggy or sewage

It is a very common misconception when customers detect an eggy or sewage smell when using or drinking water, that the water itself is the cause. More often, it is a nearby plughole or drain, that is causing the smell.

There is a quick and simple test you can do at home which normally establishes where the smell may be coming from.

### Quick Test

- Choose a glass container and before you fill it up, make sure it smells normal to you (this ensures your dish washer hasn't left a smell on the glass).
- Then fill up the glass from your cold kitchen tap (To ensure you are testing the water at its point of entry to your property).
- Take this glass of water to a room that has no drains or water supply in it and take a smell of the water.
- By doing this, you have completely isolated the water from any interfering smells and will be able to pinpoint the problem.
- If the smell disappears, then it is likely that the issue isn't with the water itself.

### What to do next

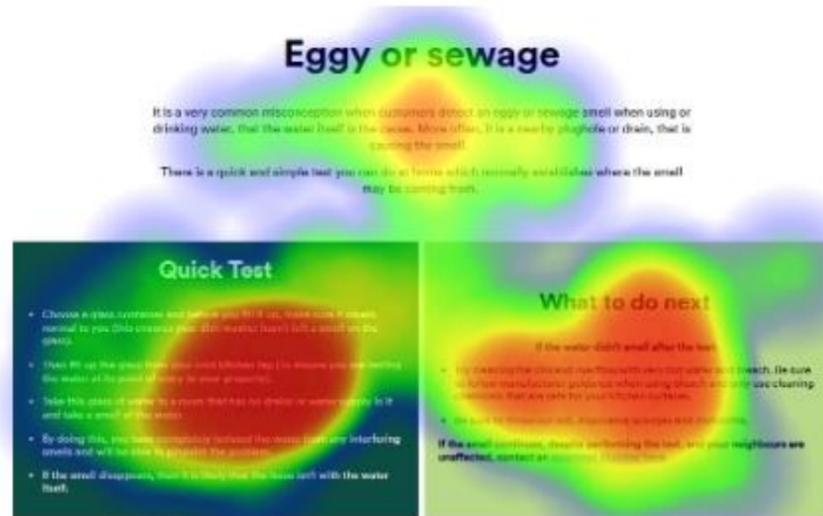
#### If the water didn't smell after the test:

- Try cleaning the sink and overflow with very hot water and bleach. Be sure to follow manufacturer guidance when using bleach and only use cleaning chemicals that are safe for your kitchen surfaces.
- Be sure to throw out old, disposable sponges and dishcloths.

If the smell continues, despite performing the test, and your neighbours are unaffected, contact an [approved plumber here](#).

# Heatmapping tool – Earthy or musty

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



85 likes



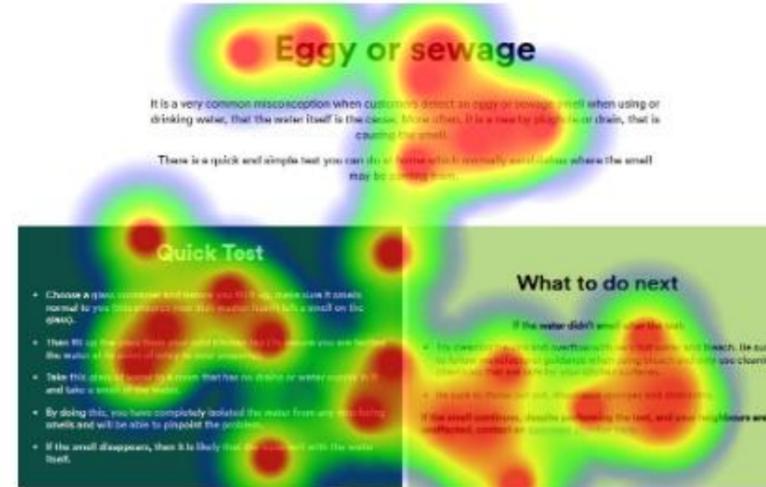
Respondents liked the clear explanation and guidance included in this section, many found the section helpful

*"I like all of this section. It is clear, informative and helpful"*

*"I like that it is engaging, easy to understand and offers good solutions"*

Respondents liked the use of contact information

*"I like that there is a way to contact for help if all of the tips and advice have been tried with no luck"*



25 dislikes



Some respondents found issue with the tone used in this section, highlighting a lack of accountability from UU.

*"Rather presumptuous and trying to blame the customer!"*

*"a bit patronising!"*

*"suggests no chance it could be a UU problem"*

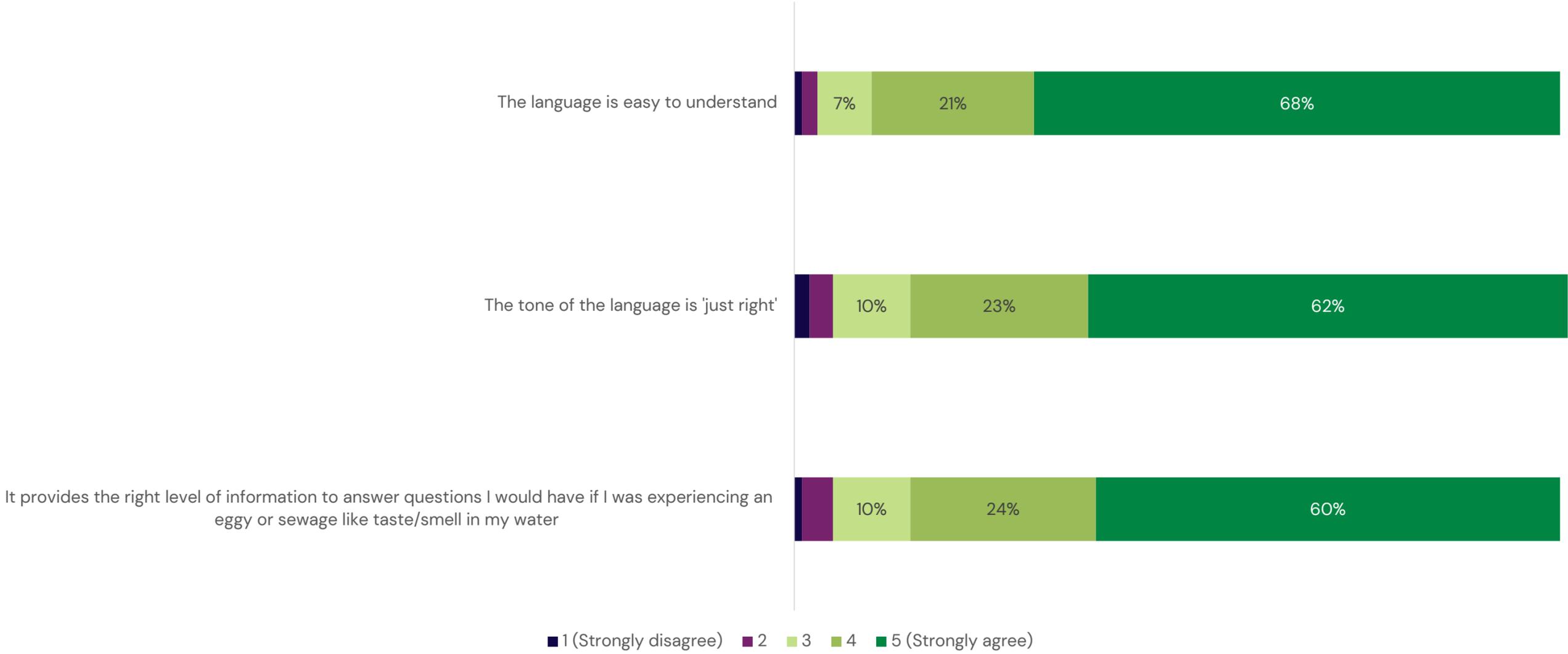
*"I think the tone of this whole page is wrong considering how much water companies have been responsible for dumping sewage"*

One respondent pointed out that the headings should be at the same level

*"Headings should be in the same level"*

# Most respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the language was easy to understand (89%) and that the tone was just right (85%).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)



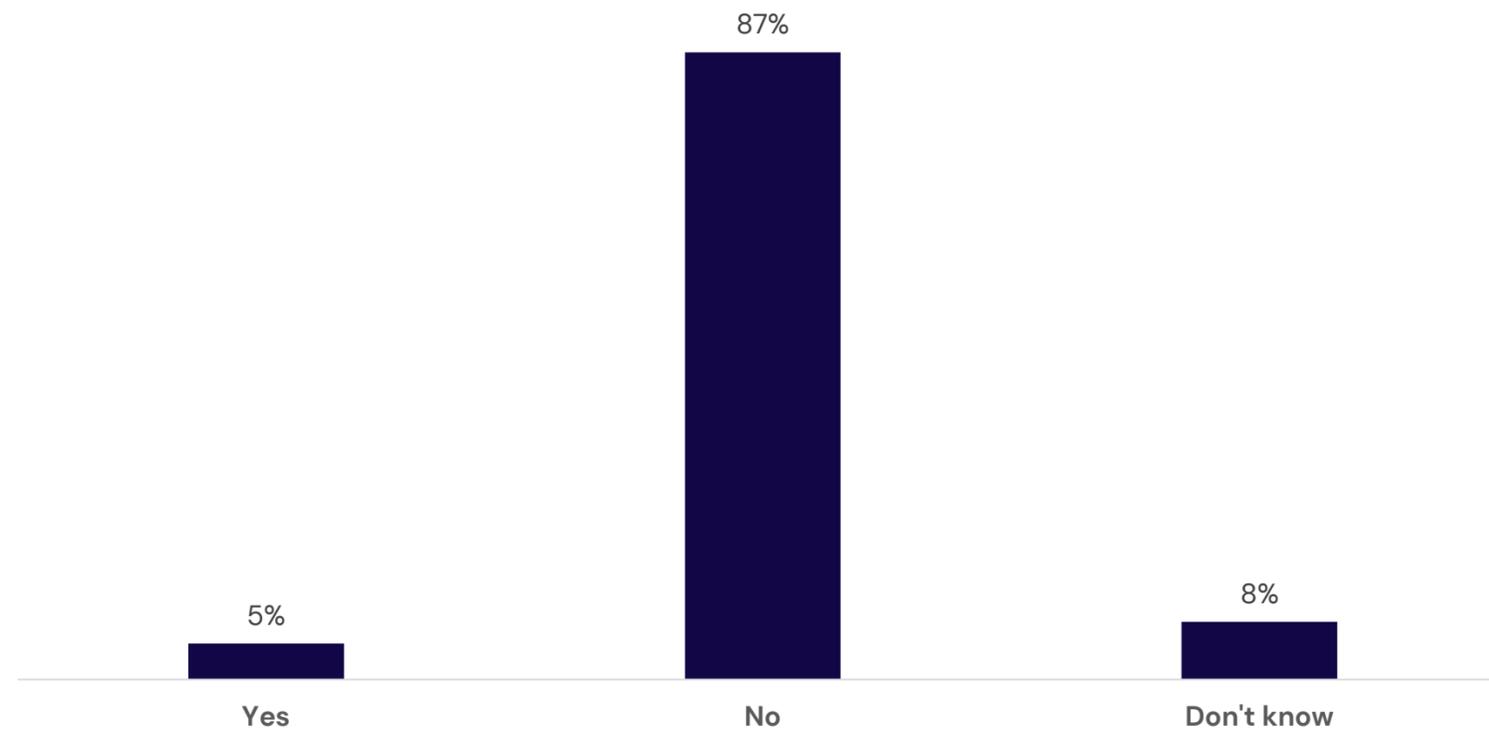
# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.6        | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.7   | 4.6 | 4.6  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.4     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.4        | 4.4        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.3 | 4.5  | 4.3    | 4.4     | 4.5       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.3     | 4.4      | 4.4                | 4.4        | 4.4        | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.2   | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.3 | 4.5  | 4.3    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

37. Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

**87% of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from the webpage. While 8% were unsure, 5% felt that some content was lacking. Of the 5% respondents suggested the content should include: more of United Utilities' role and responsibility in the issue (27%); information if the issue persists (18%); and more imagery (9%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage?  
(248)



**UU role and responsibility (3)**

*"When UU might take any responsibility"*

*"What they [UU] are going to do about it"*

**Options if issue persists (2)**

*"What to do if problem persists"*

*"What to do if it persists"*

**More imagery (1)**

*"Perhaps simple graphics to enhance the information"*

## Fuel or oil

Petrol or diesel taste or smell can also be described as oil, rubber, aromatic, bituminous, tarry, tar, tarmac, turpentine, white spirit or coal.

If there is a petrol or diesel taste or smell to the water coming from your kitchen tap, **please call our friendly team on [0345 672 3723](tel:0345 672 3723).**

### Why is this happening?

Your private supply pipe owned by the property owner, that supplies you with water from our main, travels under your driveway or garden before entering the property. Sometimes, this can even travel down the side of your building before entering the back of the property.

If your property has an oil heating system, it is common for small leaks or spills from your tank to sink into the ground, and leach through plastic water pipes and into your water supply.

Similarly, if your driveway has an oil or fuel spill stain on it, regardless of how old it is, it is likely that this oil has sunk into the ground and started leaching into plastic water pipes and into your water supply.

### What are the common causes?

If you experience this issue, please check if any of the following common causes apply to you:

- If you have had any work done in your home (for example, on the heating system)
- If you have any oil fired heating/storage tanks
- If you have had any historic oil or fuel leaks (for example, a car or motorbike leaking oil or fuel on your driveway)

### What to do?

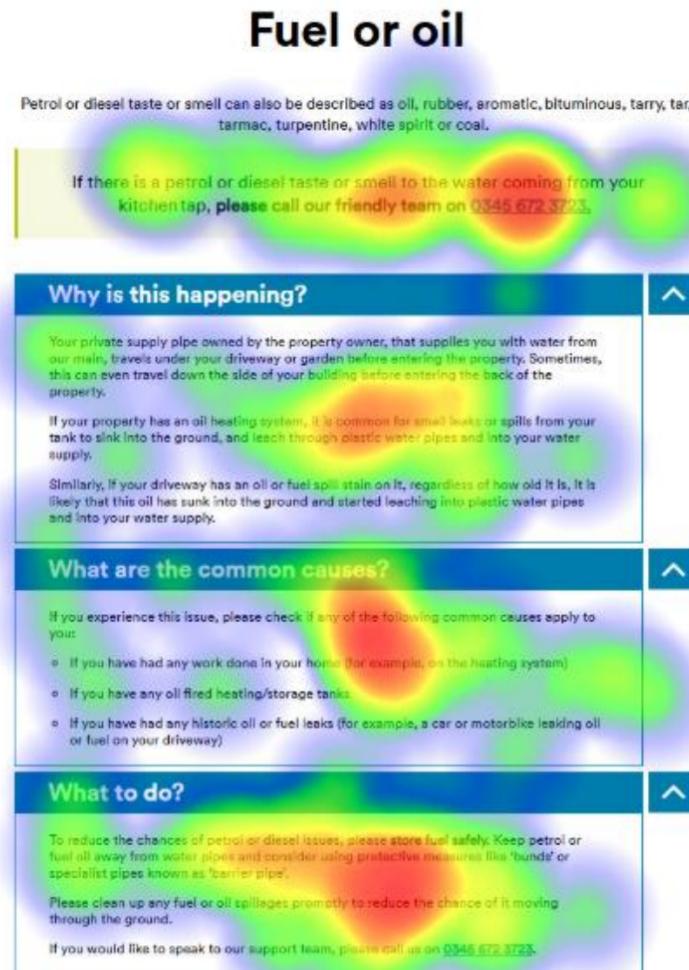
To reduce the chances of petrol or diesel issues, please **store fuel safely**. Keep petrol or fuel oil away from water pipes and consider using protective measures like 'bunds' or specialist pipes known as 'barrier pipe'.

Please clean up any fuel or oil spillages promptly to reduce the chance of it moving through the ground.

If you would like to speak to our support team, please call us on [0345 672 3723](tel:0345 672 3723).

# Heatmapping tool – Fuel or oil

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



Respondents liked that the contact number was clear and provided at the beginning

*"I like the page overall with the useful advice provided and the fact the number to call for assistance is readily available at the top of the page"*

*"good to be able to contact quickly about this"*

*"Assures me someone will listen to my problem"*

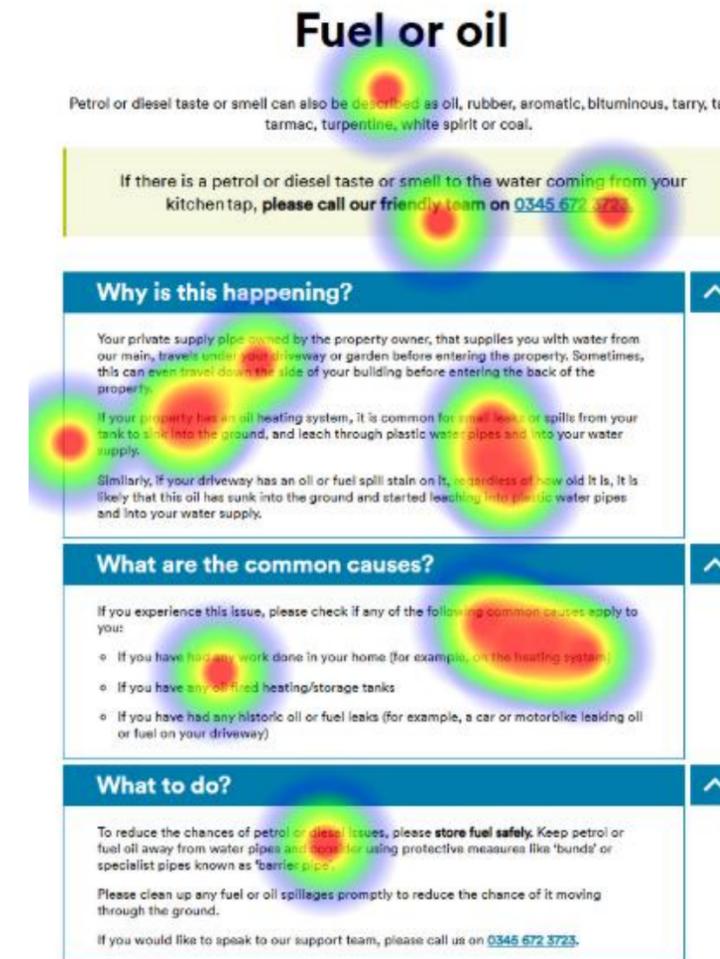
Respondents liked that the causes of the problem were clearly outlined

*"It helps to know what could be causing the problem"*

*"I like the bullet points and bold as it makes the page more interesting"*

*"Gives good information"*

98 likes



One respondent found issue with the tone used in this section, highlighting a lack of accountability from UU.

*"Everything feels like the blame is being pushed to someone else"*

Another respondent suggested the layout is not visually appealing

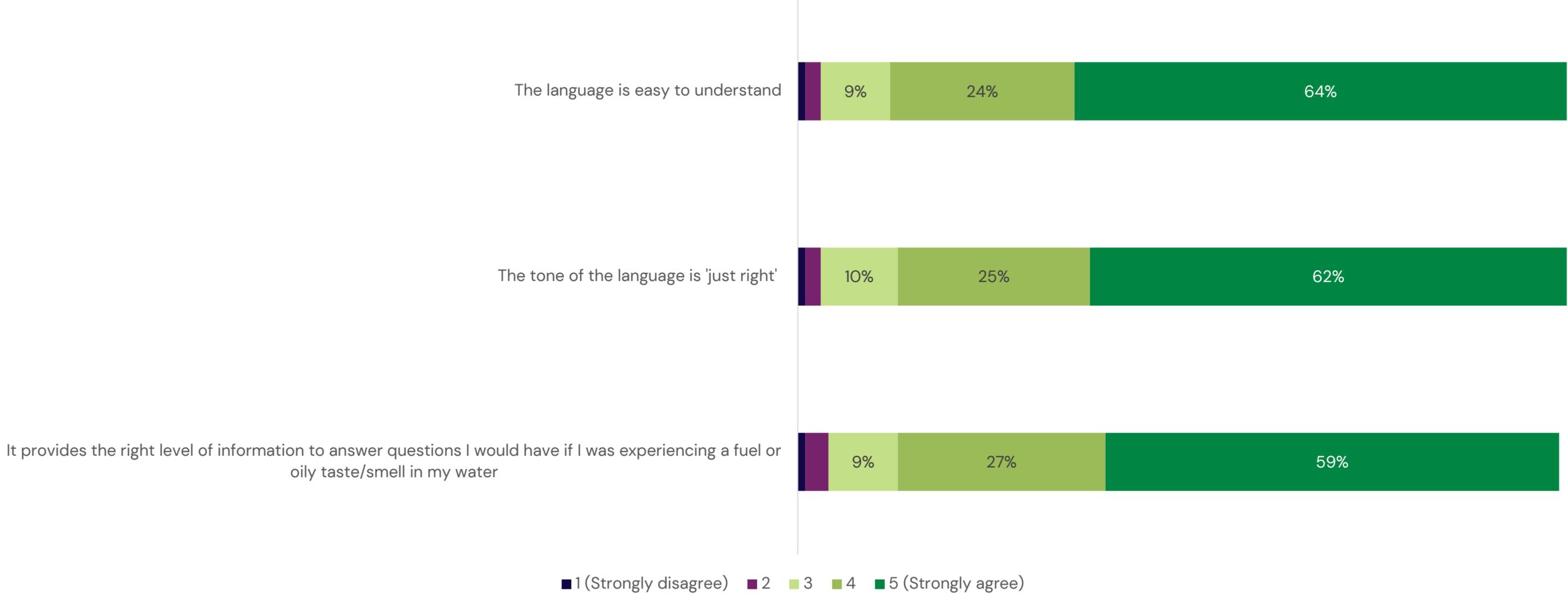
*"It looks like all of the others, with the same reasons, it's not visually appealing"*

19 dislikes



# 88% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the language in this section was easy to understand and 87% felt the tone of the language is 'just right'.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (248)

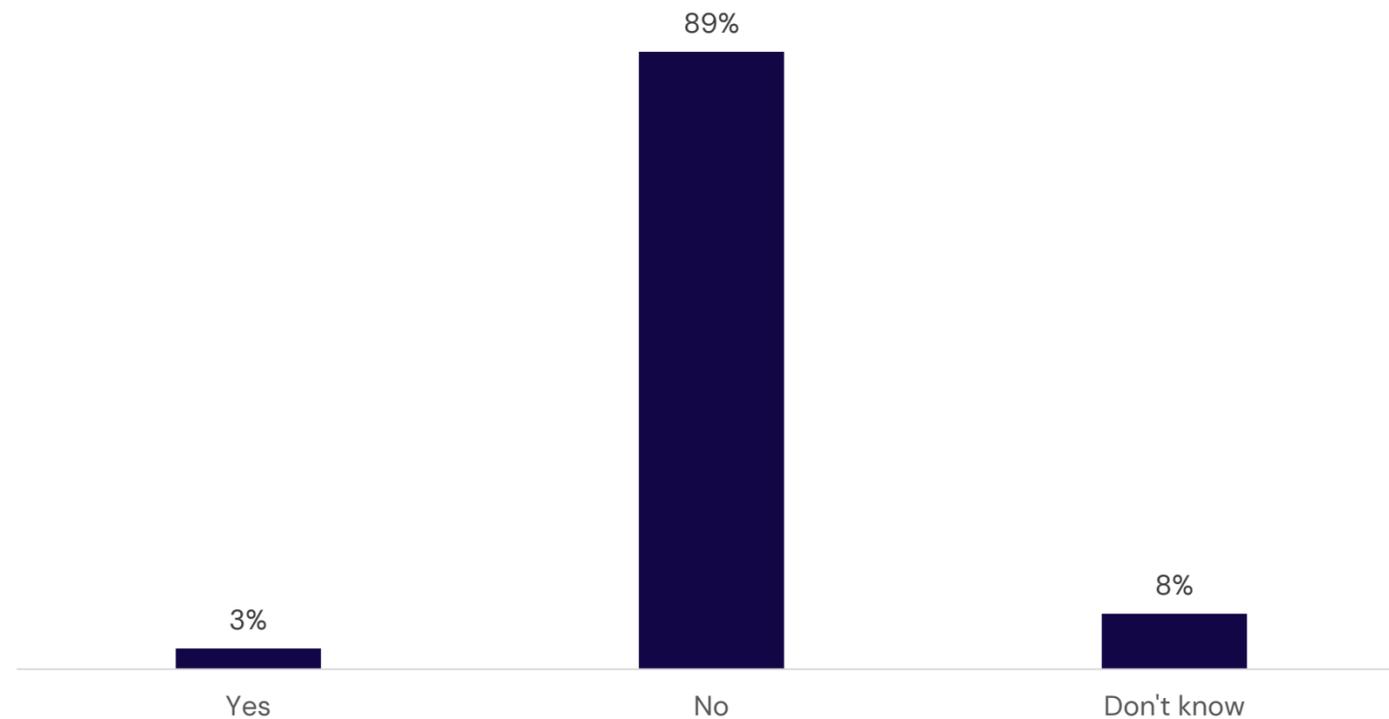


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.5     | 4.5      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.5        | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.6   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.4     | 4.3      | 4.4                | 4.5        | 4.5        | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.4    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.4     | 4.4      | 4.4                | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.1   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.4 | 4.4  | 4.4    | 4.4     | 4.4       |

**89% of respondents felt that there was no content missing from this section of the webpage. While 8% were unsure, 3% felt there was something missing from the content. Of the respondents who felt that content was lacking, 25% suggested more visual imagery be included; 13% suggested more customer support; and, 13% suggested contact information.**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



### More imagery (2)

*"Small diagrams or pictures to show what the water would look like"*

*"Some imagery to break up the text heavy nature of the letter"*

### Customer support (1)

*"Perhaps more help could be given to the customer"*

### Contact information (1)

*"Other options than calling the helpline if none of the circumstances apply to your situation"*

# My water has changed

## My water has changed

We sometimes get contacted by customers who describe their water as having “changed”. You can use the arrows below to expand the section containing the information you need.

### Why is this happening?



**Seasonal changes:** Seasonal changes also affect how our water tastes, because small tweaks may be needed in the treatment or distribution process

- In the summer months of high heat and low rainfall, we may need to boost water production by introducing a ‘blend’ of water from multiple sources. Although this may seem unusual, it will have received the same thorough testing as the water you are used to.
- To ensure we always provide you with great wholesome water, we perform meticulous checks and regular maintenance on all of our sites and assets. This sometimes means taking a Water Treatment Works ‘out of service’ temporarily and switching you to another supply source. This normally lasts a few weeks and is only the same water your neighbouring town or county will receive.

**Just moved home?** If you have moved house, even if it wasn’t far - your water may come from a different water source than you are used to – it may just take some time for you to get used to the new taste.

### What to do?



Sometimes, customers may notice that the hardness of their water has increased. This natural occurrence can sometimes cause scaling inside kettles, or marks in the shower.

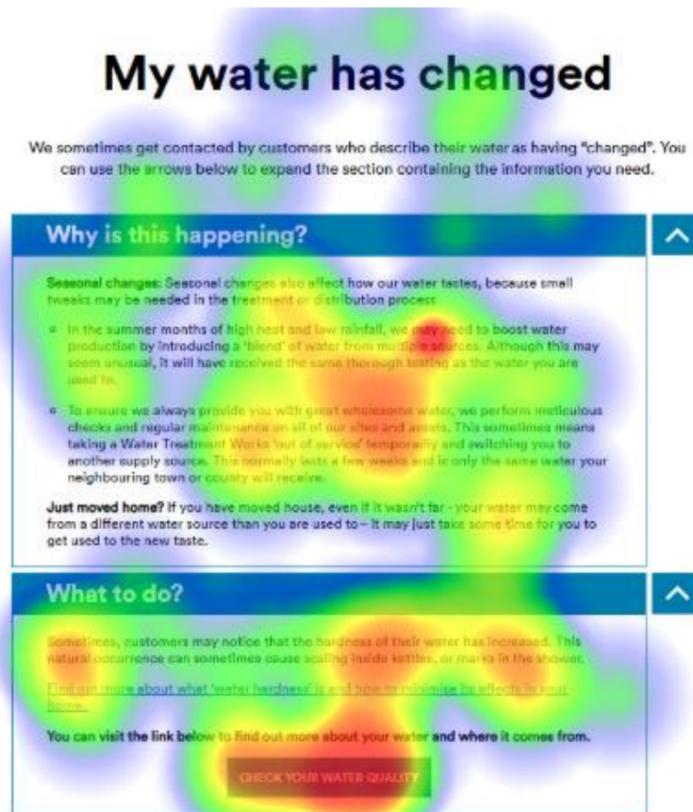
[Find out more about what ‘water hardness’ is and how to minimise its effects in your home.](#)

You can visit the link below to find out more about your water and where it comes from.

CHECK YOUR WATER QUALITY

# Heatmapping tool – My water has changed

Respondents were shown the banner of the webpage and asked to click on parts they liked/disliked and describe what about that specific area they liked or disliked. The images below show the overall heatmap results.



83 likes

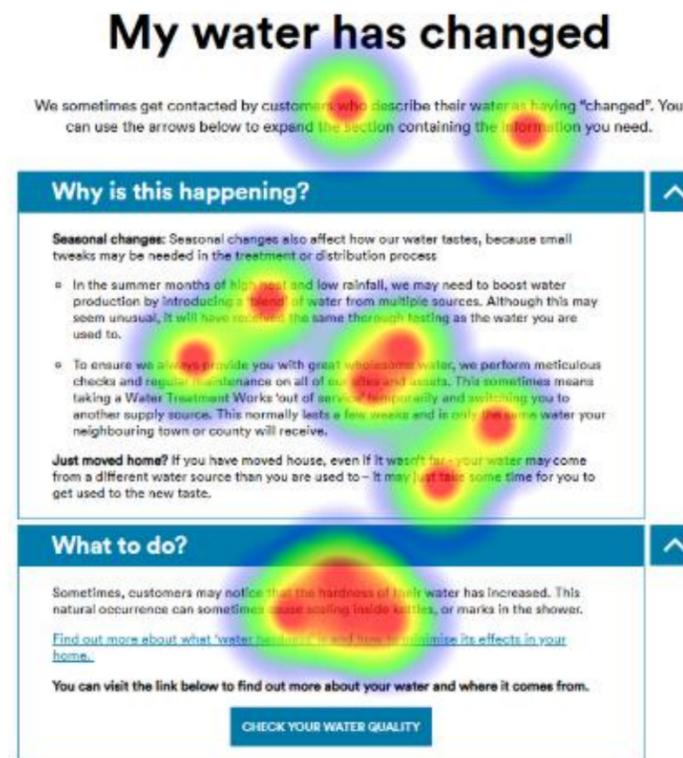


Respondents liked this section, with many finding it informative and providing good context that some may not already be aware of

*“Useful information to facilitate further exploration of the problem”*

*“It taught me something I never knew”*

*“Didn’t realise this could happen but good explanation”*



12 dislikes

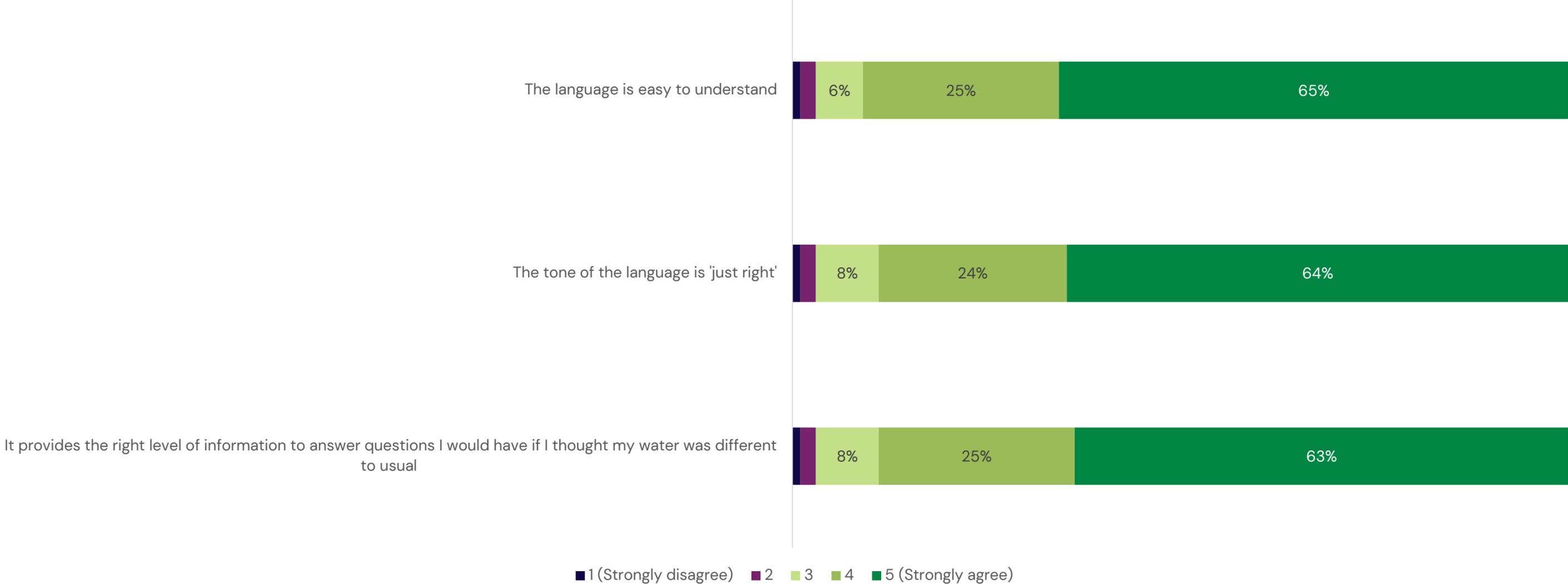


One respondent found the section too wordy

*“Too wordy with no pictures”*

# Levels of agreement were relatively consistent across all statements, with language seeing the highest rate of those who agree/strongly agree (90%).

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(248)

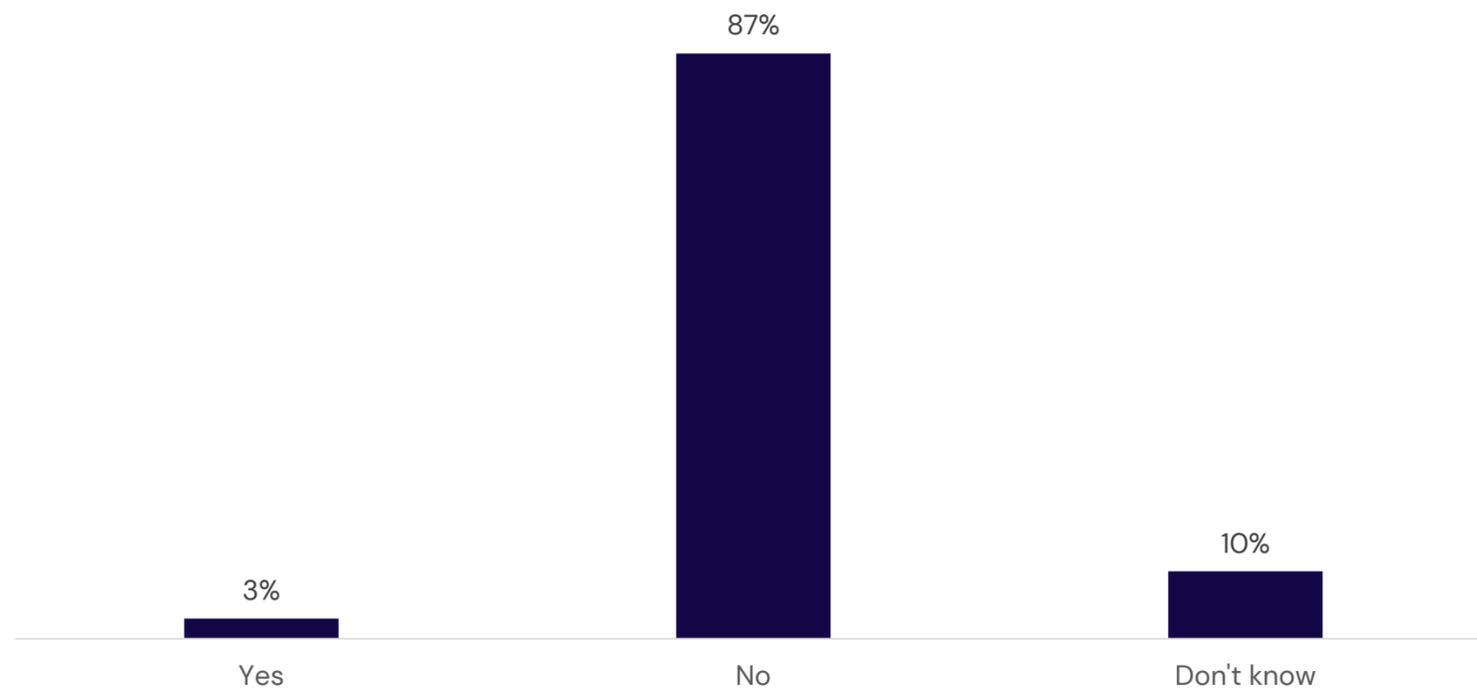


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|  | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|--|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand                                   | 4.7     | 4.3      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.5        | 4.6   | 4.5   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.6  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The tone of the language is just right                               | 4.5     | 4.2      | 4.5                | 4.5        | 4.6        | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.4   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.4 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| It provides the right level of context to understand the information | 4.5     | 4.4      | 4.4                | 4.5        | 4.5        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.4 | 4.5  | 4.4    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

**87% of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from this webpage. While 10% were unsure, 3% felt that the content was lacking. Of that 2%, respondents suggested that the content include: a contact number (33%); preventative measures (17%) and more customer support (17%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage?  
(248)



**Contact information (2)**

*"A telephone number"*

*"Contact number"*

**Preventative measures (1)**

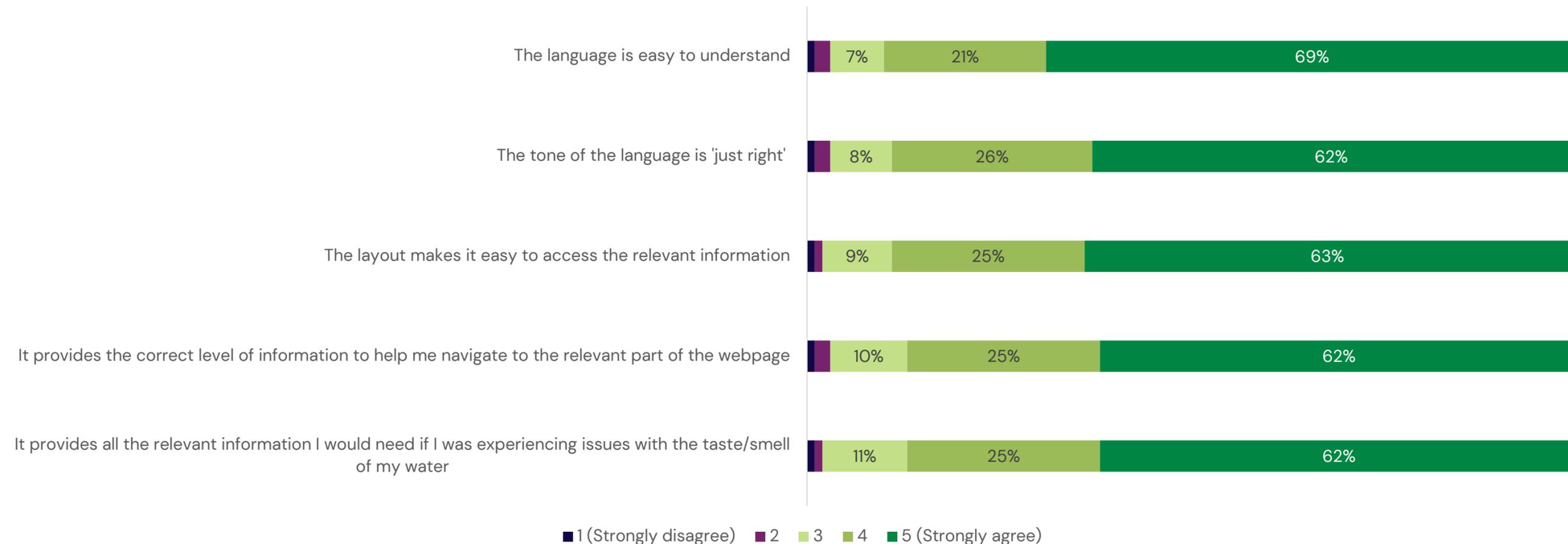
*"How to prevent scaling on our appliances due to hard water"*

**Customer support (1)**

*"Perhaps more help could be given to the customer"*

**Overall, the webpage was received positively by respondents. Respondents were more likely to agree/strongly agree that the language is easy to understand (90%), compared to all other statements. This was closely followed by those who felt the tone of the language is 'just right'.**

Taking all into account, using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements after reviewing this section of the webpage? (248)

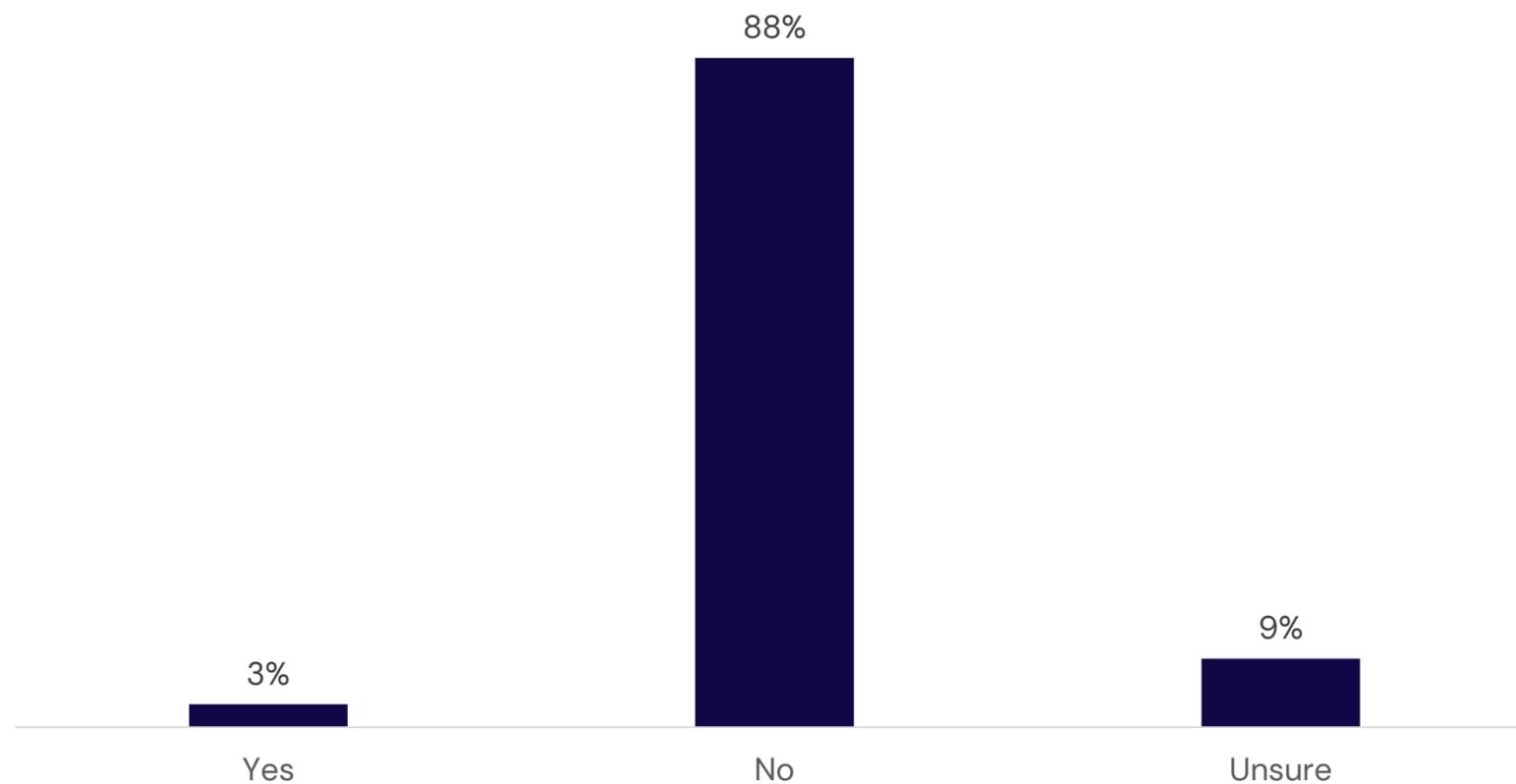


# A breakdown of mean scores is provided below.

|   | Cumbria | Cheshire | Greater Manchester | Lancashire | Merseyside | 18-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70+ | Male | Female | Metered | Unmetered |
|---|---------|----------|--------------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| The language is easy to understand  | 4.7     | 4.4      | 4.6                | 4.6        | 4.6        | 4.8   | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.6  | 4.6    | 4.6     | 4.6       |
| The tone of the language is just right  | 4.5     | 4.2      | 4.5                | 4.5        | 4.5        | 4.5   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| The layout makes it easy to access the relevant information   | 4.4     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.6        | 4.5        | 4.6   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.5    | 4.5     | 4.5       |
| It provides the correct level of information to help me navigate to the relevant part of the webpage                | 4.3     | 4.4      | 4.4                | 4.5        | 4.6        | 4.3   | 4.5   | 4.3   | 4.4   | 4.7   | 4.5 | 4.5  | 4.4    | 4.5     | 4.4       |
| It provides all the relevant information I would need if I was experiencing issues with the taste/smell of my water | 4.6     | 4.4      | 4.5                | 4.5        | 4.5        | 4.4   | 4.6   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 4.8   | 4.4 | 4.5  | 4.4    | 4.5     | 4.5       |

**Overall, the majority of respondents did not feel there was any content missing from this webpage, with 88% voting this way. 9% were unsure, while just 3% felt the content was lacking. Of the 3%, respondents suggested that more contact information be included (29%), as well as further customer support (14%) and UU's role in the issue (14%).**

Do you feel there is any content missing from this section of the webpage? (248)



**Contact information (2)**

*"A telephone number"*

*"Contact number"*

**Customer support (1)**

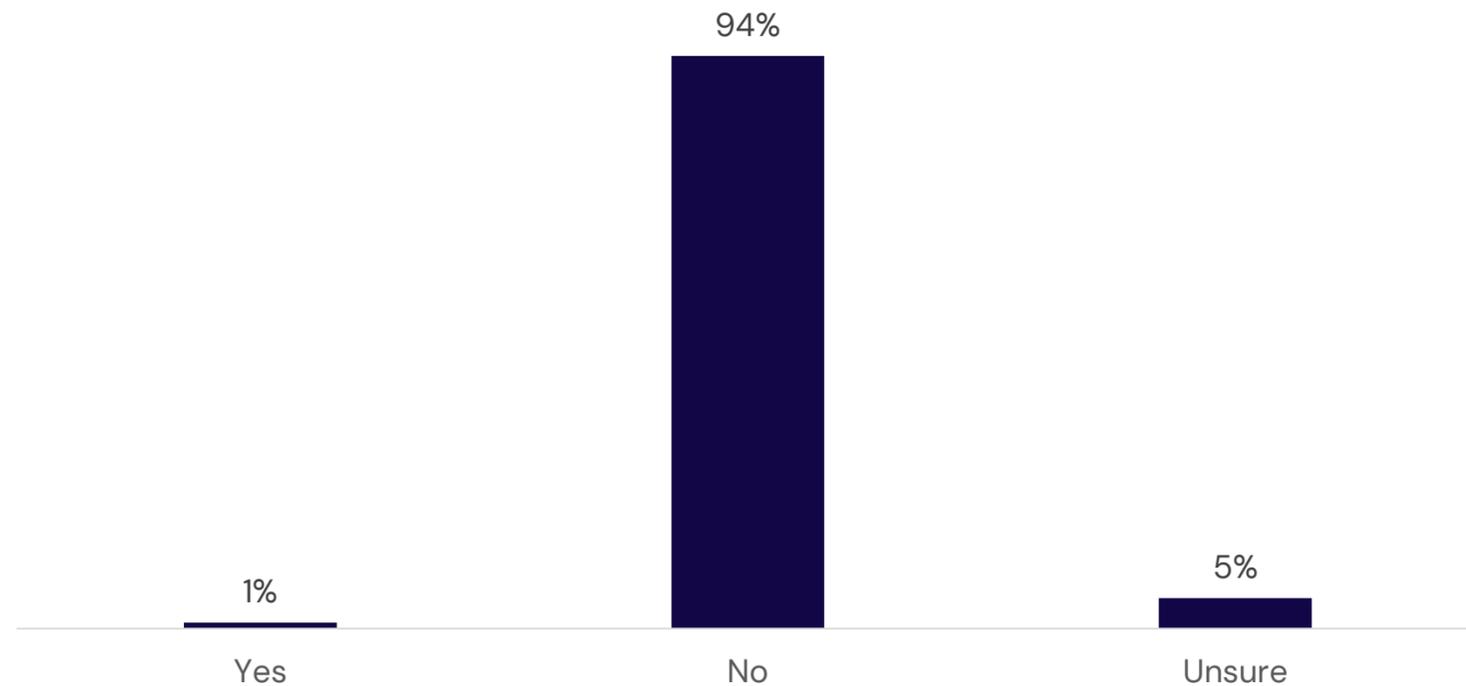
*"There should be more support given to the customer"*

**United Utilities' role and responsibility (1)**

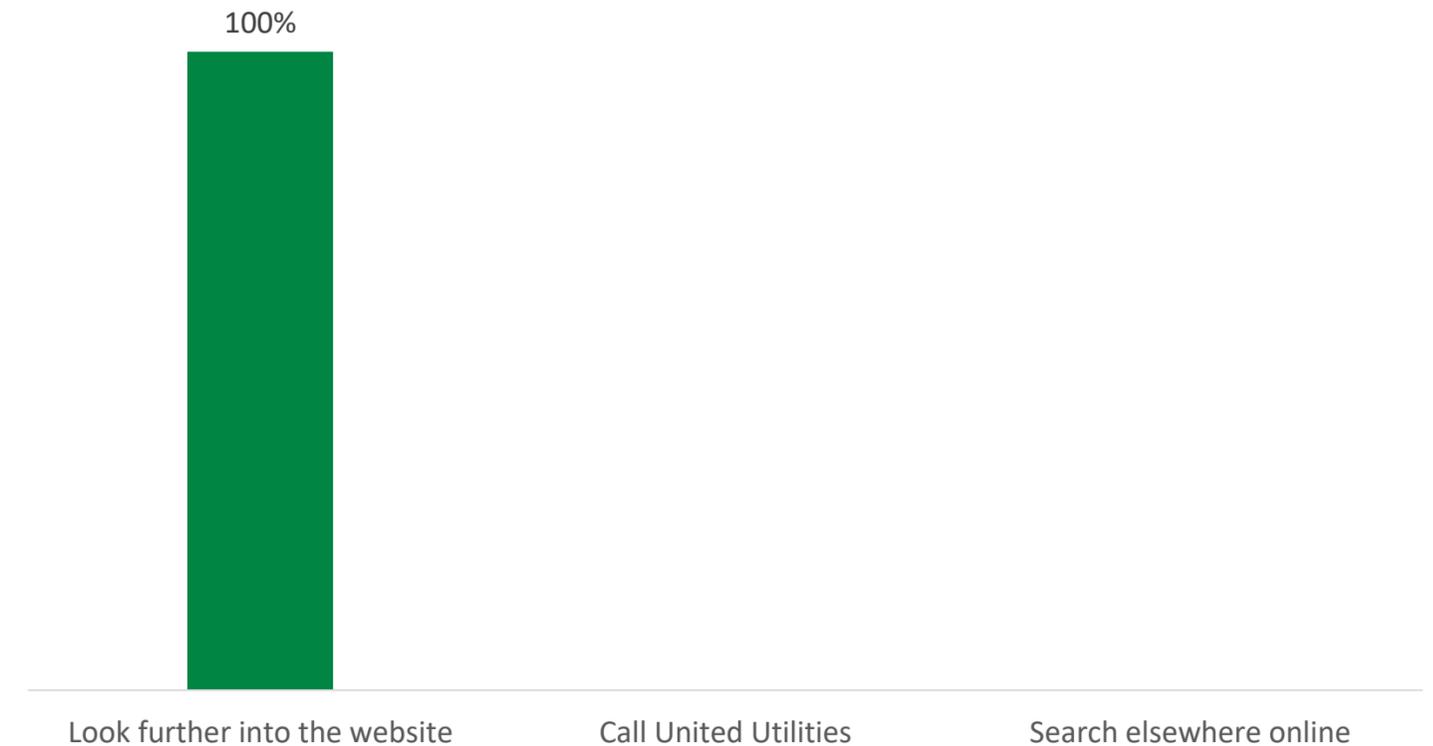
*"More reasons where the water company is responsible, it seems as though at every opportunity the water company is putting the blame on someone else"*

**Respondents largely understood the webpage (94%), with just 1% of respondents who found something they did not understand. 5% were unsure. Of that 1%, all respondents agreed that they would look further into United Utilities website for any missing information.**

Is there anything on this webpage that you did not understand?  
(248)



Where might you go to find any missing information? (2)



# 'My water smells/tastes unusual'

## UX testing



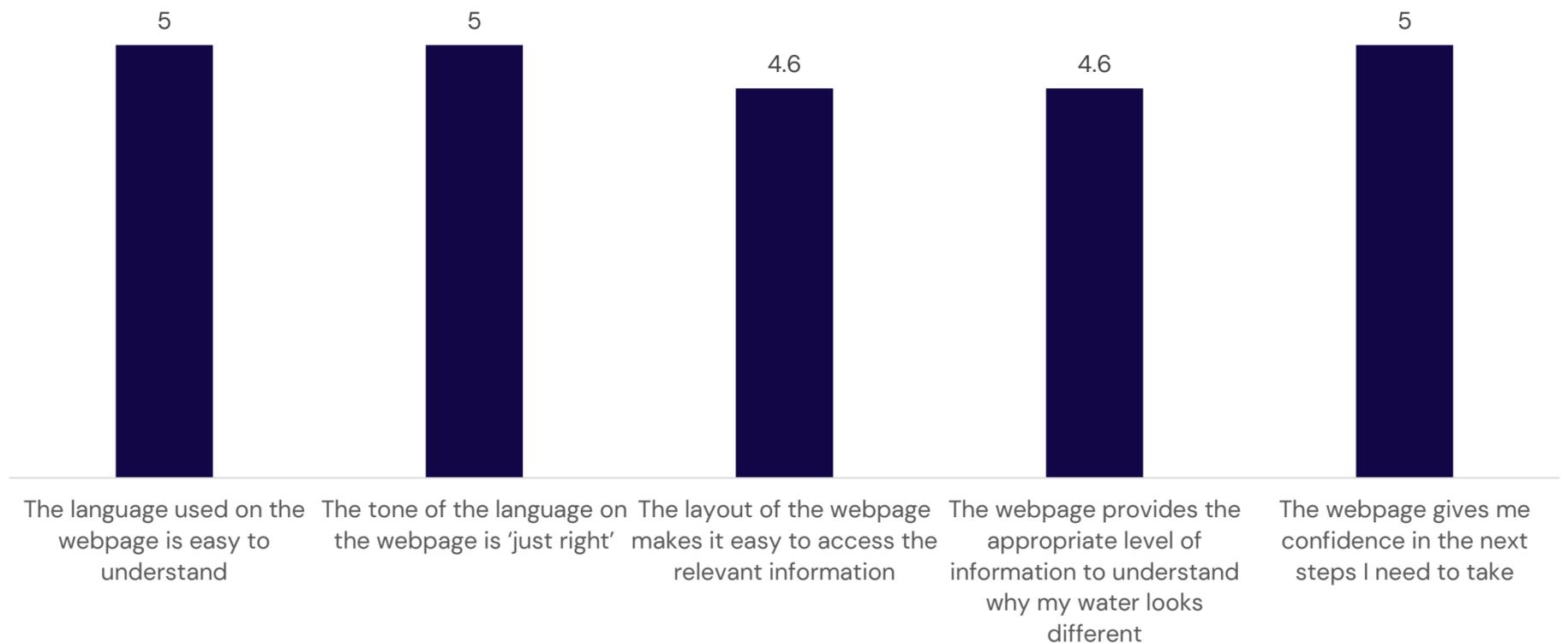
**When asked their initial thoughts on the webpage, respondents found the webpage clear and easy to understand, they praised the layout and use of imagery and videos as supporting media to the information. The mean scores were high reporting relatively consistent agreement across statements.**

*"I was pleasantly surprised. The page was well formatted and there were 8 clear options. Two of three I tested were supported by short watchable videos."*

*"I found the video's which Harley did was very informative, and easy to understand. She spoke clear. The website was easy to navigate"*

*"My initial thoughts on this webpage was that it was very clear and concise. I appreciated the visual images to go alongside the text, and also the additional videos too. I think it was helpful to list the potential causes of the water issues and also offer some solutions. Overall, if this was a webpage I needed I would be very happy to be directed to this page."*

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements after reviewing this section of the webpage? (3) (Mean)

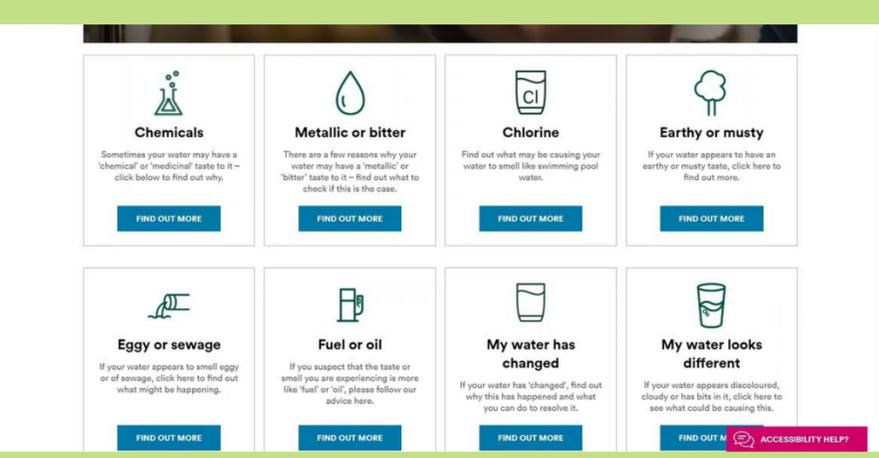
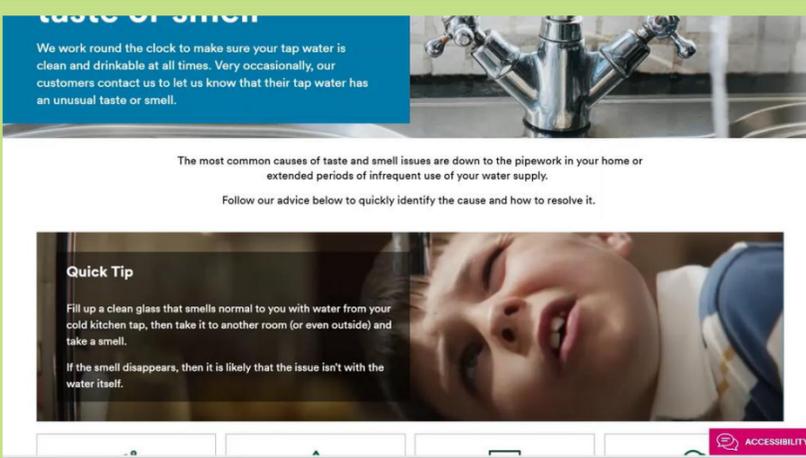
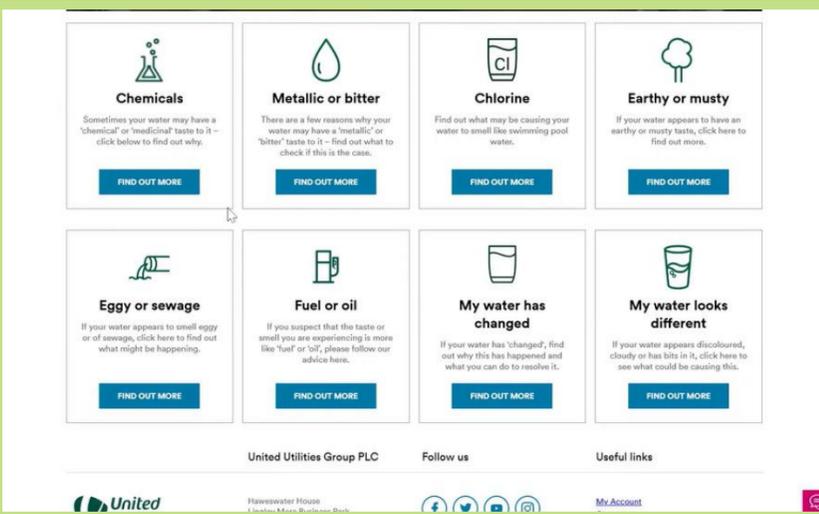


UX testing respondents were largely positive in their review of the webpage, praising its layout, ease of navigation and use of imagery. There were no negative comments made about the webpage.

Clear layout

Easy to navigate

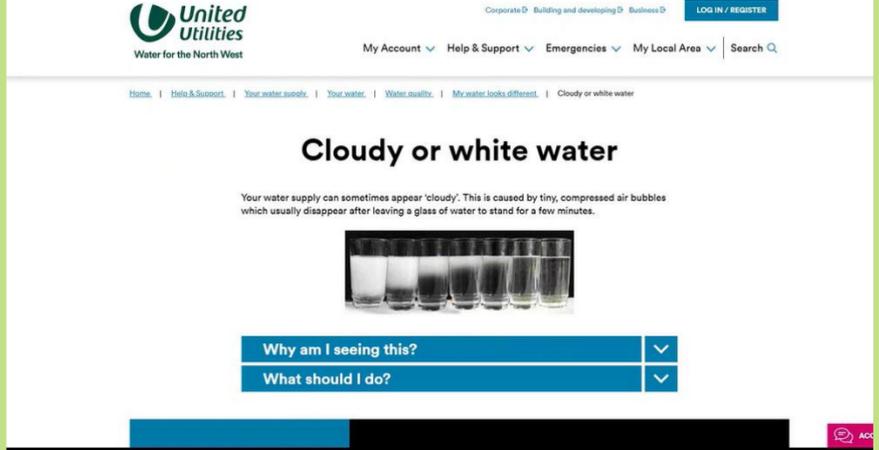
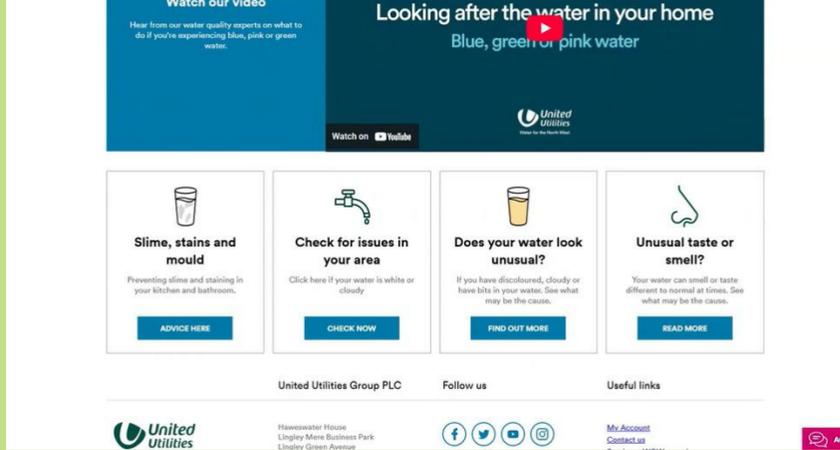
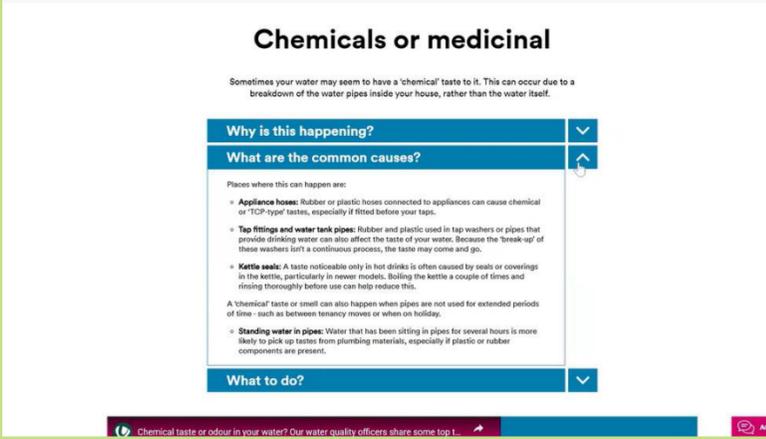
Imagery



"I like how these are presented.. in boxes and images, its in a bit-size way"

"It's really clear to me that if I keep scrolling down there will be some advice that can help me identify that cause and resolve it"

"I think the images support what the text is saying"



"It's good how you can hide the old ones [information drop down] so that you can focus on the answer to your question"

"I think I find it all quite easy to navigate and follow"

"It gives you a clear visual gage of what that can look like"

# My water smells/tastes unusual– Feedback findings

## Heatmap analysis

- Respondents generally found this section of the webpage **clear and easy to navigate, with icons providing necessary cues to move throughout the webpage.**
- Structured logically, respondents praised the **depth of information** and advice on each page, though some critiqued that **some sections were not visually appealing** – appeared too wordy and causing confusion.
- Where available, respondents praised the **use of clear contact numbers**, though it was mentioned that these could be added to all pages in the case that issues persist.
- Some respondents found issue with the tone used in certain pages, suggesting a lack of accountability from United Utilities.

## Analysis of scores

- Generally, ‘the language is easy to understand’ received the highest rate of agreement compared to other statements.
- Though marginally lower than other statements, ‘It provides the right level of information needed to understand X’ was generally lowest scoring across all sections. When asked if there was content missing, no more than 6% felt that there was. Suggestions from these respondents included: more specific health and safety information; contact numbers; and outline of UU’s role and responsibility regarding water quality issues.

## UX testing

- UX testing respondents praised the webpage for its **clear layout, ease of navigation and use of imagery** to act as a reference. There were no negative comments made about the webpage.

# Conclusions



# Conclusions

## Scoring patterns

- The highest scoring statement across both webpages was 'The language is easy to understand', often receiving more than 65% strongly agree
- 'It provides the right level of information needed to understand X' was often the lowest scoring statement – this may indicate some actionable detail and clarity in highlighted areas.

## UX Testing insights

- Across both webpages, participants praised smooth navigation, clear content and supportive imagery. Respondents particularly valued added tool for identifying local issues.
- There was no negative feedback, except a note that older users, unfamiliar with technology, may need support using the webpage.

## Positive themes identified across webpages

- **Clarity and easy of navigation:** Respondents consistently praised the webpages for being easy to read, clear and intuitive to navigate. Icons and logical structure were highlighted as helpful cues for moving through content
- **Language and tone:** Across all sections "The language is easy to understand" scored highest in agreement. Tone was generally well-received, though occasional feedback suggested it could feel patronizing or lacking accountability in some pages.
- **Use of visuals:** Imagery was valued as a visual cue to maintain interest and aid comprehension. Real-life images were preferred over icons in some cases. Colour schemes and layout were praised for making content digestible.

## Areas for Improvement

- **Formatting issues:** Common complaints included small font size, dense text, and insufficient emphasis on key points. Suggestions included more bold text, better spacing, and clearer section breaks.
- **Content Gaps:** While most respondents felt content was complete, 6–10% suggested improvements, such as: contact information on every page; more imagery; additional health and safety guidance; actions if issues persist beyond provided solutions; and clearer indication of United Utilities' role and responsibility.

# Demographics



# Demographics

| Total                                      | Unweighted |     | Weighted |     |
|--|------------|-----|----------|-----|
|  | Count      | %   | Count    | %   |
| <b>Gender</b>                              |            |     |          |     |
| Male                                       | 238        | 48% | 243      | 49% |
| Female                                     | 255        | 51% | 253      | 51% |
| <b>Age</b>                                 |            |     |          |     |
| 18-29                                      | 40         | 8%  | 40       | 8%  |
| 30-39                                      | 82         | 17% | 79       | 16% |
| 40-49                                      | 71         | 14% | 84       | 17% |
| 50-59                                      | 102        | 21% | 99       | 20% |
| 60-69                                      | 81         | 16% | 79       | 16% |
| 70+  | 119        | 24% | 114      | 23% |
| <b>Region</b>                              |            |     |          |     |
| Cheshire                                   | 66         | 13% | 69       | 14% |
| Cumbria                                    | 46         | 9%  | 45       | 9%  |
| Greater Manchester                         | 185        | 37% | 184      | 37% |
| Lancashire                                 | 101        | 20% | 99       | 20% |
| Merseyside                                 | 97         | 20% | 99       | 20% |
| <b>Meter status</b>                        |            |     |          |     |
| Metered                                    | 242        | 49% | 233      | 47% |
| Unmetered                                  | 253        | 51% | 263      | 53% |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>                           |            |     |          |     |
| White                                      | 419        | 84% | 422      | 84% |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic groups            | 10         | 2%  | 10       | 2%  |
| Black, Black British, Caribbean or African | 36         | 7%  | 35       | 7%  |
| Asian or Asian British                     | 18         | 4%  | 18       | 4%  |
| Other                                      | 1          | 0%  | 1        | 0%  |
| Prefer not to say                          | 12         | 2%  | 11       | 2%  |

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# The 'In the Flow' community



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**In the Flow** is our online research panel. It is an online community of over **1300** United Utilities customers who participate in research activities to help us understand what customers want and value.

There are lots of different ways we can engage with our customers, such as polls, discussion posts and surveys.

- Have you got an idea you want to test with real list customers?
- Do you have upcoming communications going out to customers that you want some feedback on?
- Do you want to gain some tailored customer insight on a subject before planning your next project?

