

Accent

+

Affinity Water

Acceptability and Affordability Testing Quantitative Fieldwork

Final Report

18th September, 2023

Prepared by: Accent, 3 Orchard Place, London SW1H 0BF

Contact: Julian Hollo-Tas
E-mail: Julian.hollo-tas@accent-mr.com
Telephone: 020 8742 2211



Registered in London No. 2231083, Accent Marketing & Research Limited, Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

CONTENTS

1	Executive Summary	1
1.1	Assurance Statement	1
1.2	Methodology and Fieldwork	1
1.3	Summary of Results	1
2	INTRODUCTION	3
2.1	Background	3
2.2	Objectives	3
2.3	Report Structure	4
2.1	Economic/media backdrop	4
3	METHODOLOGY	5
3.1	Introduction	5
3.2	Sampling and approach	5
3.3	Cognitive testing	10
3.4	Fieldwork dates	11
3.5	Data processing	11
4	FINDINGS	13
4.1	Introduction	13
4.2	HH Demographics	14
4.3	NHH Demographics	15
4.4	HH Financial Temperature Check	16
4.5	NHH Financial Temperature Check	17
4.6	Affordability	18
4.7	HH Affordability	18
4.8	NHH Affordability	21
4.9	Acceptability	23
4.10	HH Acceptability	23
4.11	NHH Acceptability	24
4.12	Intergenerational Phasing	25
4.13	Performance commitments	25
4.14	Enhancement cases	26
APPENDIX A	Adherence to Ofwat’s standards for high quality customer research	
APPENDIX B	Additional Information	
APPENDIX C	Limitations	
APPENDIX D	Fieldwork Materials	
APPENDIX E	Questionnaire (Online version)	
APPENDIX F	Questionnaire (Paper version)	

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Assurance Statement

This fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the “Guidance for water companies: testing customers’ views of the acceptability and affordability of PR24 business plans” document issued by Ofwat and CCW (“the guidance”).

1.2 Methodology and Fieldwork

937 interviews were achieved overall. 878¹ Household (HH) interviews were conducted, mainly via a “push to web” approach (i.e. invitation to complete online). 269 of these were in the “Affinity Anglian” area (where Affinity provides water services and Anglian wastewater) and 518 in the “Affinity Thames” area. 455 interviews were generated by an email approach (164 in the Affinity Anglian area and 291 in the Affinity Thames area), 332 by post (105 in the Affinity Anglian area and 227 in the Affinity Thames area).

150² Non-Household (NHH) interviews were conducted (51 in Affinity Anglian area and 99 in Affinity Thames area). They were split 133 by NHH panel (46 in Affinity Anglian area and 87 Affinity Thames area), and 17 by CATI (5 in the Affinity Anglian area and 12 in Affinity Thames area).

1.3 Summary of Results

Economic Outlook

The economic situation for households in particular was found to be tough – with 42% of households reporting having had at difficulty with paying household bills. 11% of households stated that it was very or fairly difficult to manage financially. This increased to 50% when including those just “getting by”. 41% of HH participants expect their financial situation to worsen in the next few years.

The economic situation for businesses seemed almost as pressured – with 22% of NHH participants reporting at least some difficulty paying bills and 48% finding it difficult to manage financially now. The outlook was better though, with 55% of businesses expecting the situation to improve and just 11% expecting it to worsen.

Affordability

Overall affordability figure was low, at 19%.

¹ Against an Ofwat/CCW mandated minimum of 500

² Against an Ofwat/CCW mandated minimum of 100 (for WOCs)

Just 17% of HH participants said the bill increases would be very or fairly easy to afford. Lower income households found the bills particularly unaffordable, with 81% of households with an income of £10,400-£15,999 finding the increases very or fairly difficult to afford. Affordability was higher amongst metered users (19%) than unmetered users (16%). In a non-mandated additional question added towards the end of the survey, affordability measured after the participants have seen the business plan remained at 17% (however we do see a shift in those that say it would be difficult towards the middle ground of neither nor).

The overall affordability figure rises to 29% for NHH participants (rising to 37% once participants have seen the business plan, implying that potentially initial unprompted affordability may not be entirely accurate for this audience).

Acceptability

Acceptability of the plan was much higher than affordability at 72% overall. 72% of Household participants found the plan acceptable (either fairly or very). The main reasons for HH participants not finding the plan acceptable were financially driven; Company profits were too high (47%), Companies rather than the customers should pay for the plan (33%) and the bill increase being seen as expensive (31%) being the top three responses.

Acceptability of the plan amongst NHH participants was marginally higher, with 75% of businesses finding the plan acceptable. There were too few NHH participants finding the plan unacceptable to be able to provide robust analysis into the reasons.

Top Priorities for investment

Reducing leakage was the top water related investment priority for both HH participants (54%) and NHH participants (57%), although it should be noted that amongst NHH participants, reducing water interruption time was chosen more than double the amount of times (21%) than by household customers (9%).

Of the 3 enhancement cases (Water Resources management, Improving Water Treatment and National Environment Programme for Water), Water Resource Management was the clear priority of both audiences – with 49% of HH participants and 50% of NHH participants choosing it as being most important.

Intergenerational Fairness

Both HH and NHH audiences would prefer increases to start sooner and be better spread across different generations of bill payers (44% and 72% of responses respectively).

A remarkably large proportion of HH customers (37%) said they didn't know enough to answer – potentially indicating the difficulty of the choice in the current financial circumstances.

Just 19% of HH participants, and 11% of NHH participants, chose to delay increases and pass more of them on to younger and future bill payers.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

All water and wastewater companies are required to test the acceptability and affordability of their Business Plans with their customers before submitting in October 2023 their plans for the upcoming Price Review (PR24).

Affinity Water are mandated to conduct testing (of both the acceptability of their water plan, and the affordability of both their water plan and the wastewater services provider's waste plan (using values provided by the wastewater company)), in areas which make up more than 10% of their customer base (namely the Affinity Thames, and Affinity Anglian, areas).

To ensure a standardised approach is used across the industry, Ofwat and CCW have produced guidance on how this research should be undertaken. This guidance has been designed to facilitate consistency and comparability between companies (e.g. question language, methodologies, approach taken to inflation, the degree to which participants are informed, clarity on least cost vs. proposed options, inclusion of vulnerabilities, different futures, single affordability scheme).

Accent was commissioned to carry out the quantitative component of Affinity Water's Acceptability and Affordability Testing (AAT) research with their customers. This report represents the findings from the research.

2.2 Objectives

The overarching objective of this research is to measure customer support for the PR24 Business Plan

More specifically, the research aims to:

- Ensure that customers' priorities and preferences are driving Affinity Water PR24 investment plan decisions where appropriate
- Provide evidence to demonstrate that customers consider the forecast bill impacts to be acceptable, including on affordability, levels of service and operational risk in the short and long term
- Demonstrate that the engagement with customers reflects the potential affordability impacts
- Measure intergenerational fairness attitudes when it comes to bill increases and investment
- Follow the prescribed Ofwat/CCW guidance

Accent conforms to the requirements of the quality management system ISO 20252:2019.

2.3 Report Structure

This document is the report on the quantitative stage of the Acceptability and Affordability testing for Affinity Water. This report describes survey design and methodologies alongside customers' view on the Acceptability and Affordability of Affinity Water' AMP8 business plan.

2.1 Economic/media backdrop

This research was conducted against a backdrop of difficult circumstances for the economy, and with the water industry repeatedly making headline news for negative reasons.

Since late 2021, a large proportion of the UK population have been feeling the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. This has meant that households typically have less disposable income and Affinity Water customers may be feeling more financially squeezed than normal.

In May 2023 (and in reaction to public anger regarding stories of water companies releasing raw sewage into the UK waterways, a number of actions were taken within the industry.

- A number of water service provider CEOs (Yorkshire Water, Thames Water and South West Water) declined to accept their usual bonuses (water company exec bonuses having been subject to much media scrutiny and public discontent) due to poor performance.
- A joint apology was offered to the public for not acting quickly enough to prevent sewage spills, with a promise to increase investment to prevent spills in future to £10bn by 2030. However, some criticism was received due to this increased investment being funded by customers' bills.

At the end of June the CEO of Thames Water resigned, it was revealed that the company was in £14bn of debt and there were fears it was on the verge of collapse. On August 9th the news headlines featured 6 water companies (including Affinity Water) which could be facing £800m lawsuits over allegations of underreporting pollution incidents and overcharging customers.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Generally speaking the methodology was heavily prescribed, by the “Guidance for water companies: testing customers’ views of the acceptability and affordability of PR24 business plans” document issued by Ofwat and CCW (“the guidance”).

Having said that, the guidance changed and was clarified frequently throughout the research period. In all respects (unless documented within this report) the guidance in effect at the time was consistently followed.

Affinity Water’s Independent Challenge Group was informed and consulted throughout the research process, including inception, design, and fieldwork (particularly on parts of the research where the guidance was not specific, there was room for interpretation, or in the rare instance that it was thought best not to follow the guidance on a particular issue).

3.2 Sampling and approach

Household (HH) sampling

The Affinity Water area was treated as two locations, both of which are supplied water services only by Affinity Water – the first location is the area supplied waste services by Thames Water (Affinity Thames), and the second by Anglian Water (Affinity Anglian). These are the only supply areas that meet the criteria for selection under Ofwat/CCW’s guidance (namely that they make up over 10% of Affinity Water’s customer base)

The target number of interviews was set to 750³. This was split 500 Affinity Thames, 250 Affinity Anglian (recognising both the dominant nature of Affinity Thames in terms of customer percentage, but also the need to obtain a reliable sample size for Affinity Anglian).

The guidance specified that a random sample of domestic customers was to be approached and asked to take part in the research. Where the water company has an email address for a selected property, the approach was to be made by email. Where the company does not have an email address for the property, the approach was to be made by letter. A £10 incentive (in the form of either a high street retail voucher or a donation to WaterAid) was offered to all participants to encourage participation. Primarily, the recruitment used a push-to-web approach with online survey links and QR codes provided in the letter and email invitations. Participants were also offered the opportunity to make accessibility requests (including requesting a paper version of the questionnaire to fill in and post back – 49 such requests were received and honoured (31 in the Affinity Thames area, 18 in the Affinity Anglian area)).

³ The minimum sample size listed in the guidance issued by Ofwat and CCW was 500.

The guidance mandates that areas of differing deprivation (as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)) be boosted or suppressed by certain percentages, to account for lower response rates amongst more deprived areas and their importance in the research. The process by which this component of the guidance was followed, was to effectively convert the percentage given in the guidance to a “boost factor”, to sample by IMD decile naturally (using a consistent assumed response rate) and then adjust the number of selections by the boost factor. Where the IMD decile was not known, no boost was applied. The calculations used to define the universe for the research (and from which all sub-sampling was conducted), follows:

Affinity Thames:

Customer split	IMD Decile	Ofwat adjustment factor	Properties	Percentage:	ideal interview % split	ideal interview n split	Assumed baseline response rate	Sample to be drawn (unadjusted)	Sample to be drawn (adjusted)
4.63%	1	1.25	4102	0.34%	0.34%	2	4%	43	53
	2	1.25	51656	4.28%	4.28%	21	4%	536	670
	3	1.1	96687	8.02%	8.02%	40	4%	1003	1103
19.34%	4	1.1	136457	11.32%	11.32%	57	4%	1415	1556
	5	1	154317	12.80%	12.80%	64	4%	1600	1600
24.79%	6	1	144481	11.98%	11.98%	60	4%	1498	1498
	7	0.9	126892	10.53%	10.53%	53	4%	1316	1184
21.50%	8	0.9	132254	10.97%	10.97%	55	4%	1371	1234
	9	0.75	155641	12.91%	12.91%	65	4%	1614	1210
29.32%	10	0.75	197825	16.41%	16.41%	82	4%	2051	1538
	Unknown	1	5223	0.43%	0.43%	2	4%	54	54
	TOTAL		1205535			500		12500	11701

Affinity Anglian:

Customer split	IMD Decile	Ofwat adjustment factor	Properties	Percentage:	ideal interview % split	ideal interview n split	Assumed baseline response rate	Sample to be drawn (unadjusted)	Sample to be drawn (adjusted)
12.69%	1	1.25	11807	6.83%	6.83%	17	4%	427	534
	2	1.25	10122	5.86%	5.86%	15	4%	366	458
20.55%	3	1.1	15631	9.04%	9.04%	23	4%	565	622
	4	1.1	19882	11.50%	11.50%	29	4%	719	791
21.02%	5	1	16411	9.50%	9.50%	24	4%	594	594
	6	1	19916	11.52%	11.52%	29	4%	720	720
19.55%	7	0.9	19209	11.12%	11.12%	28	4%	695	625
	8	0.9	14576	8.43%	8.43%	21	4%	527	474
25.54%	9	0.75	23774	13.76%	13.76%	34	4%	860	645
	10	0.75	20372	11.79%	11.79%	29	4%	737	553
0.65%	Unknown	1	1117	0.65%	0.65%	2	4%	40	40
	TOTAL		172817			250		6250	6055

This ensured that the selection (a) matched the profile of the two Affinity Water supply areas area, and (b) boosted each IMD decile appropriately in line with the guidance.

Sample Exclusions were kept to a minimum:

- Starting universe was all active accounts as of 31st May 2023
- Deceased accounts excluded

- Excluded top & bottom 0.5% of bill amounts to remove erroneous bills or tenant associations (anything above £10k or below -£10k)
- No other exclusions

No quotas were set (in line with the Ofwat and CCW guidance).

Household (HH) Fieldwork

An initial sample was drawn from the universe, based on a much more optimistic response rate (just under 5%, based on previous comparable work), to ensure we did not invite more participants than was necessary. The proportions by IMD decile as defined above, were maintained. Records with an email address were sent a single email, records without, a letter.

Responses to these mailings follow:

Affinity Anglian Initial Mailing				
		IAs wanted	250	
		Assumed %	4.64%	
		n=	5392	
IMD Decile	Sampled	email	postal	
1	475	247	228	
2	407	216	191	
3	553	309	244	
4	703	379	324	
5	528	290	238	
6	641	352	289	
7	556	303	253	
8	422	237	185	
9	574	353	221	
10	491	307	184	
Unknown	42	24	18	
Total records sampled	5392	3017	2375	
Interviews from initial mailing*	269	164	105	
Conversion rate of initial mailing	4.99%	5.44%	4.42%	

* = 4 postal responses were received at fieldwork end. These were paper versions, requested by participants, included in these figures.

In the Affinity Anglian area, we exceeded the full target of 250 interviews and hence did not require, nor therefore send, any reminders.

Affinity Thames Initial Mailing			
		IAs wanted	500
		Assumed %	4.81%
		n=	10406
IMD Decile	Sampled	email	postal
1	47	27	20
2	595	358	237
3	980	602	378
4	1384	782	602
5	1423	828	595
6	1333	782	551
7	1053	621	432
8	1097	627	470
9	1076	635	441
10	1368	785	583
Unknown	48	31	17
Total records sampled	10404	6078	4326
Interviews from initial mailing	461	244	217
Conversion rate of initial mailing	4.43%	4.01%	5.02%

The Affinity Thames area mailing did not achieve quite the same response rate and fell slightly short. It was assessed that to reach the target of 500 interviews, a small reminder would be required. Reminders were drawn in the same IMD proportions as used throughout. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to send any postal reminders so this small final reminder was sent to email households only.

Affinity Thames email reminder			
		IAs wanted	50
		Assumed %	4.07%
		n=	1230
IMD Decile	Sampled	email	postal
1	6	6	0
2	70	70	0
3	116	116	0
4	164	164	0
5	168	168	0
6	157	157	0
7	124	124	0
8	130	130	0
9	127	127	0
10	162	162	0
Unknown	6	6	0
TOTAL	1230	1230	0
IAs from email Reminder *	57	47	10
Conversion rate of email reminder	4.64%	3.82%	
Running total (& final) Interviews	518	291	227
Conversion Rate Overall	4.98%	4.79%	5.25%

* = 10 additional postal responses were received at fieldwork end. These were paper versions, requested by participants.

Non Household (NHH) sampling and fieldwork

A target of 150 Non-household interviews was set⁴, 100 in Affinity Thames area, 50 in the Affinity Anglian area. NHH bill-payers were recruited from a mix of sample sources, and interviewed by a variety of means:

Commercial panel (online):

Quest Mindshare (a specialist NHH panel) was used for this component. A total of 87 interviews were obtained via this method in the Affinity Thames area, and 46 interviews in the Affinity Anglian area.

Purchased business lists (CATI):

Sample of appropriate businesses was purchased from Sample Answers. Participants were contacted by phone and recruited to take part. All participants viewed materials (including the bill graph and service enhancement slides) at the time of interview. 12 interviews were achieved via this means in the Affinity Thames area. Sample statistics follow:

No. In Sample	Exhausted	Still Live	Unused	Recruited (inc. Lost)	Interviewed
1593	424	1169	551	14	12

5 interviews were achieved via this means in the Affinity Thames area. Sample statistics follow:

No. In Sample	Exhausted	Still Live	Unused	Recruited (inc. Lost)	Interviewed
796		156	106	6	5

Thus, 150 NHH interviews were conducted (99 in Affinity Thames, 51 in Affinity Anglian).

Survey

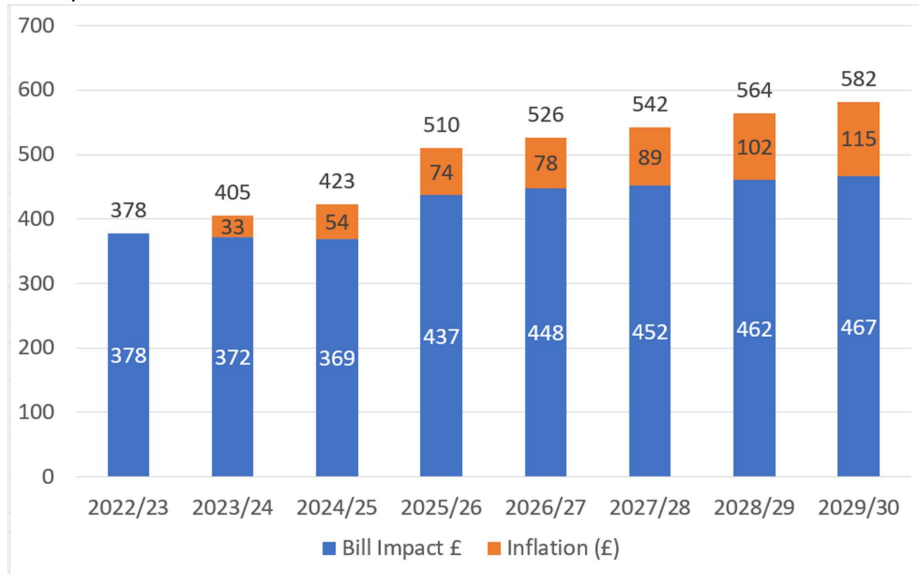
The questionnaire itself was generally tightly prescribed and in the main was implemented precisely as mandated.

The exception to this, was the bill chart graph, where following cognitive feedback it was decided that it would benefit comprehension if a total (of bill impact plus inflation) were added above each bar on the graph showing the impact of the plan on bills. This was added with the approval of Affinity Water's Independent Challenge Group.

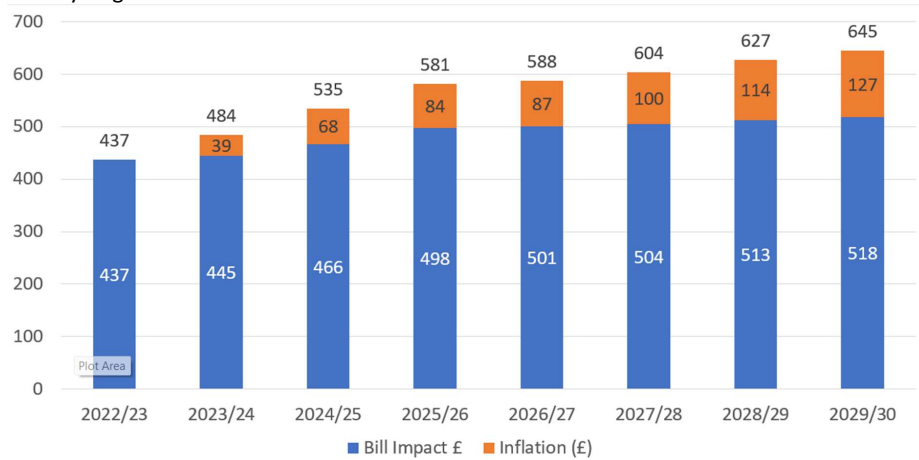
⁴ The minimum NHH sample size listed in the guidance for WOCs was 100.

Examples follow (based on the average bill amount, and showing the actual increases tested (the difference being accounted for by the respective contributions of the respective wastewater services providers, to the total bill):

Affinity Thames



Affinity Anglian



3.3 Cognitive testing

Comprehensive cognitive testing was carried out. 11 HH and 9 NHH cognitive interviews were carried out Zoom with the participant filling in the online survey and an Accent

moderator observing and probing. Findings were presented to Affinity’s ICG, and all changes resulting from the cognitive testing process were implemented with ICG approval. Full report can be found in Appendix H.

3.4 Fieldwork dates

Household and Non-Household interviews took place simultaneously. Fieldwork commenced on the 21st of July 2023 and closed on the 31st of August.

3.5 Data processing

Once fieldwork was completed, the resulting dataset was cleaned to remove poor quality responses (including speeders, straight liners, multiple responses from the same IP address and those providing poor quality verbatim).

As mandated by Ofwat, data was checked to ensure that no interview was completed in a time of less than 1/3 of the median interview duration.

Weighting

SPSS was used to run RIM weighting (Random Iterative Methods, or “Raking”).

HH survey responses were weighted to the following targets:

Age Band	Affinity Anglian	Affinity Thames
18-24	8.20%	10.00%
25-34	14.20%	17.30%
35-44	15.60%	18.90%
45-54	17.50%	17.90%
55-64	17.20%	15.40%
65-74	14.30%	10.80%
75+	13.00%	9.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

Gender	Affinity Anglian	Affinity Thames
Female	51.30%	50.90%
Male	48.70%	49.10%
	100.00%	100.00%

Ethnicity	Affinity Anglian	Affinity Thames
Asian	3.90%	20.90%
Black	2.00%	5.80%
Mixed	2.70%	3.90%
Other	0.90%	4.50%
White	90.50%	64.90%
	100.00%	100.00%

IMD Decile	Affinity Anglian	Affinity Thames
1	5.1%	0.5%
2	4.7%	3.9%
3	7.6%	7.4%
4	9.2%	10.2%
5	9.5%	11.2%
6	12.8%	11.2%
7	10.7%	9.8%
8	12.0%	10.7%
9	14.2%	12.5%
10	12.6%	16.4%
NA	1.6%	6.2%
	100.0%	100.0%

NHH survey responses were weighted to the following targets (using BEIS (2022) data on regional employment size distributions):

size	Affinity Anglian	Affinity Thames
Micro (0~9)	86.80%	88.90%
Small (10~49)	10.80%	9.00%
Medium (50 ~249)	2.10%	1.90%
Large (250+)	0.30%	0.20%
	100.00%	100.00%

Once individual data sets had been weighted, they were merged by area (so Affinity Thames HH with Affinity Anglian HH, and Affinity Thames NHH with Affinity Anglian NHH) to the following proportions (reflecting the split in the number of properties served in the two areas):

Affinity Anglian	Affinity Thames
12.54%	87.46%

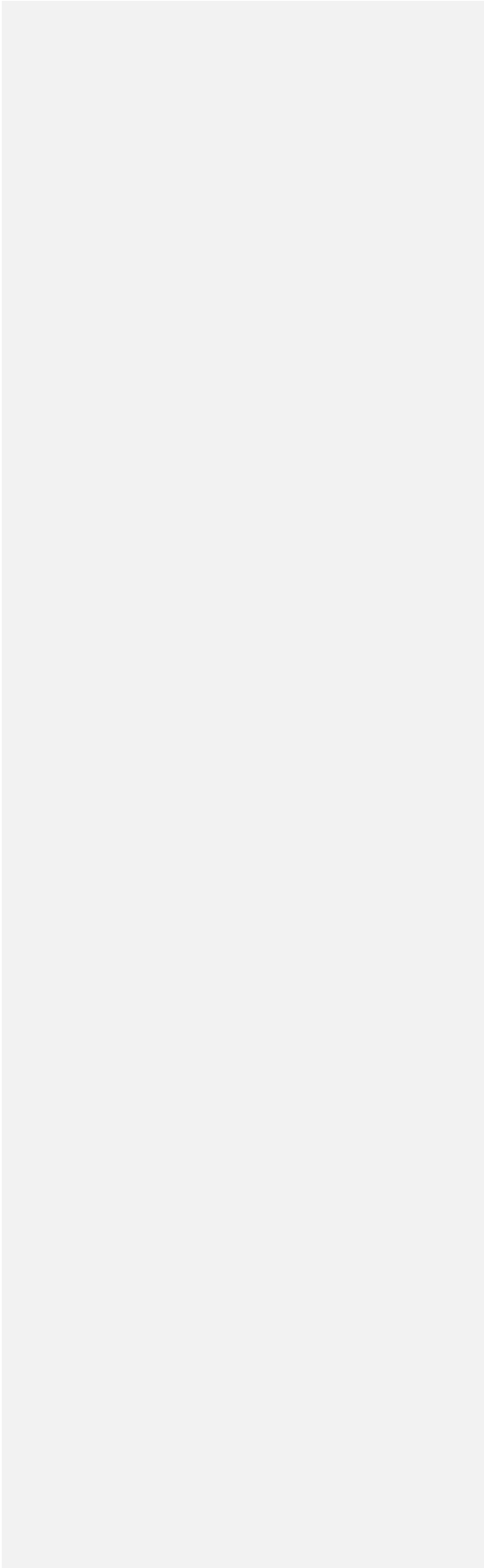
Finally, the HH and NHH datasets were merged to the following proportions based on total water usage of the two customer types:

2022-23	MI/d	%
Total household consumption	611.6	78.6%
Total business consumption	166.6	2140.0%

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The following section of this report details the findings of the study.



4.2 HH Demographics

787 Affinity Water customers took part in the Acceptability and Affordability Testing research. 269 in the Affinity Anglian area and 518 in the Affinity Thames area. 455 responded to our email invitation and 332 to our postal invitations. This is how their profiles fell out (pre weighting). Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

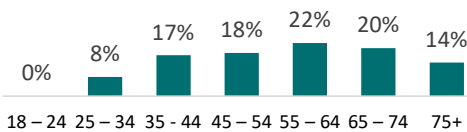
Gender



Female 45% **Male 53%**
1% prefer not to say

Census = 51% female, 49% male

Age



Census = 19% 18-29, 57% 30-64, 24% 65+.

Ethnicity

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	74%
Any other White background	6%
Indian	5%
Irish	2%
Pakistani	2%
Any other Asian background	2%
White and Asian	1%
Any other Mixed background	1%
Chinese	1%
Caribbean	1%
African	1%

Census = 90% white/6% Asian/2% mixed/1% black.

IMD decile

1	3%
2	3%
3	9%
4	14%
5	9%
6	14%
7	11%
8	10%
9	11%
10	15%
Unknown	1%

Social Grade

AB	42%
C1C2	31%
DE	15%
Not stated	12%

Census = 20% AB/52% C1C2/29% DE.

Vulnerability

... is disabled or suffer(s) from a debilitating illness	14%
... have/has a learning difficulty	4%
... relies on water for medical reasons	5%
... is visually impaired	2%
... am/is over the age of 75 years old	14%
... speaks English as a second language	7%
... is deaf or hard of hearing	8%
... is a new parent	4%
None of these apply to me	51%
Prefer not to say	6%

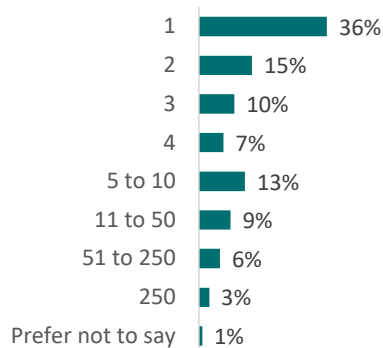
4.3 NHH Demographics

235 Affinity Water business customers took part in the Acceptability and Affordability Testing research. 159 were reached through specialised business panel and 57 through retailers. This is how their profiles fell out. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

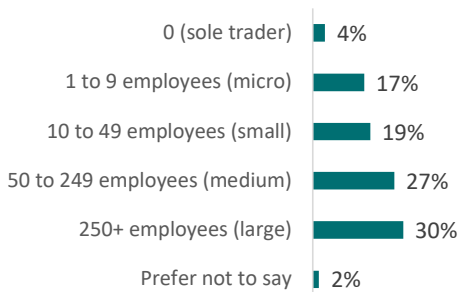
Main use of water on premises

For normal domestic use for your organisation`s customers and employees	82%
For the supply of services your organisation provides	43%
For an ingredient or part of the product or service your organisation provides	27%
For the manufacturing process which is essential to the running of your organisation	1%
None of the above	1%

Number of business sites



Number of employees



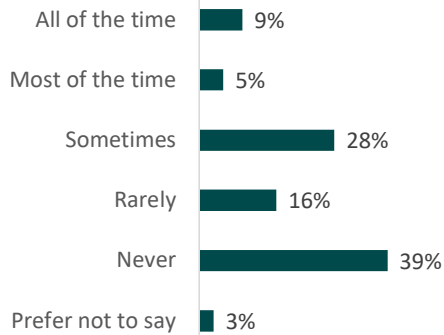
Industry

Wholesale and retail trade	12%
Hotels & catering	10%
IT and Communication	8%
Education	8%
Construction	7%
Human health and social work activities	7%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	7%
Manufacturing	5%
Transport and storage	5%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	5%
Energy or water service & supply	4%
Finance and insurance activities	4%
Real estate activities	3%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1%
Mining and quarrying	1%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	1%
Public administration and defence	1%
Other service activities	3%
Other	7%
Prefer not to say	2%

4.4 HH Financial Temperature Check

- Close to 2 in 5 (39%) of those we spoke to say they Never struggle to pay their bill, however more than that (42%) do. This is especially the case for females, of whom 61% say they struggle to pay at least sometimes compared to 24% of males, this is a statistically significant difference. Also in the case of SEG DE where 79% say they are struggling to pay at least sometimes. A significantly higher proportion than those in SEG AB (33%) and C1C2 (35%).

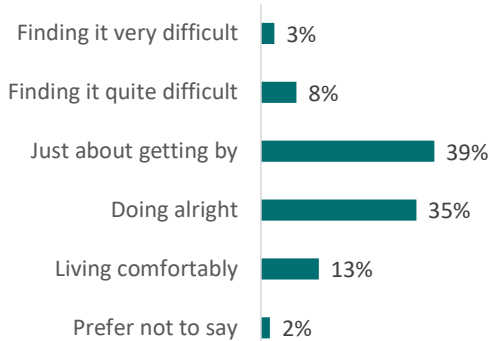
Figure 1. Q9 Thinking about your finances over the last year, how often, if at all, has your household struggled to pay at least one of its bills.



Base: All HH participants weighted base (736)

- Given the current financial situation of the nation it is perhaps unsurprising half (50%) of the household participants we spoke to are finding it difficult to manage financially or are just about getting by. Again, females (68%) are significantly more likely to be struggling to manage financially compared to (34%) males. Alongside these 61% of those that self-selected as vulnerable and 83% of SEG DE also struggle managing their finances – significantly so compared to those non vulnerable (37%) and other social grades (AB 37%; C1C2 - 49%)

Figure 2. Q10 Overall, how well would you say you are managing financially now?

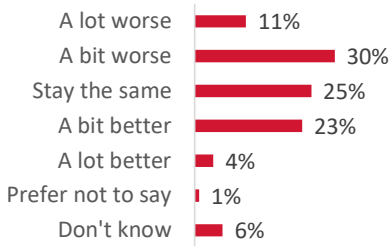


Base: All HH participants weighted base (736)

- 2 in 5 households (41%) expect their financial situation to worsen in the next few years.

- This increases to 46% among those that are already struggling to pay their bills
- The expectancy of a worsening financial situation is very similar among both genders (40% females and 42% males). However, females are significantly more positive about their future with 34% saying they expect their financial situation to get better compared to males 20%.

Figure 3 Q11 Thinking about your household's/organisation's financial situation over the next few years up to 2030, do you expect it to get?

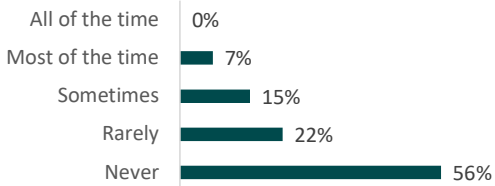


Base: All HH participants weighted base (736)

4.5 NHH Financial Temperature Check

- Over half (56%) of businesses say they Never struggle to pay their bills, but less than a quarter do have some difficulty paying their bills (22%).

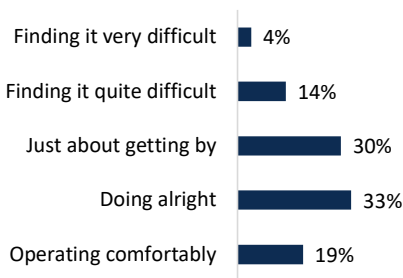
Figure 4. Q9 Thinking about your finances over the last year, how often, if at all, has your organisation struggled to pay at least one of its bills.



Base: All NHH participants weighted base (201)

- Almost half (48%) of businesses are operating with financial difficulty with just 19% saying they are operating comfortably.

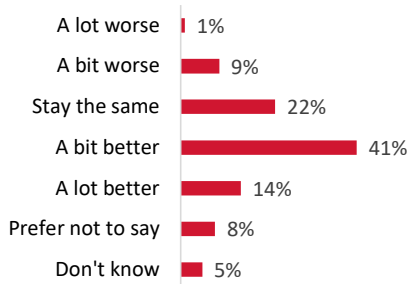
Figure 5. Q10 Overall, how well would you say your organisation is managing financially now?



Base: All NHH participants weighted base (201)

- Over half the businesses (55%) of businesses expect their financial situation to improve in the years to come and just over 1 in 10 (11%) expect it to worsen.

Figure 6 Q11 Thinking about your household/organisation's financial situation over the next few years up to 2030, do you expect it to get



Base: All NHH participants weighted base (201)

4.6 Affordability

- Affordability of the proposed business plan was low at 19% overall. Just 17% of households and 29% of non-households said the increases would be fairly or very easy to afford.
- When broken down by service areas surveyed affordability looks like this:
 - In the Affinity – Anglian service area overall affordability sits at 20%. Only 16% of households and 34% of non-households said the increases would be fairly or very easy to afford.
 - In the Affinity Thames service area overall affordability sits at 19%. Only 17% of households and 29% of non-households said the increases would be fairly or very easy to afford.

4.7 HH Affordability

- Currently, 42% of households can afford their existing water and sewerage bills fairly or very easily.
- Only 17% of household customers thought that the proposed bill would be fairly or very easy to afford.
 - The affordability figure does not change for households if we look at the method of invitation to the survey. Only 17% say that the proposed bill would be fairly or very easy to afford regardless of whether they were invited to take part in the survey via an email or a postal letter.
 - There is however a significant difference by type of invitation in the number of customers that say it will be very or fairly difficult to afford the proposed bill. Only 38% of those invited by email say it would be very/fairly difficult compared to a significantly higher 50% of those that have been invited via postal letters.

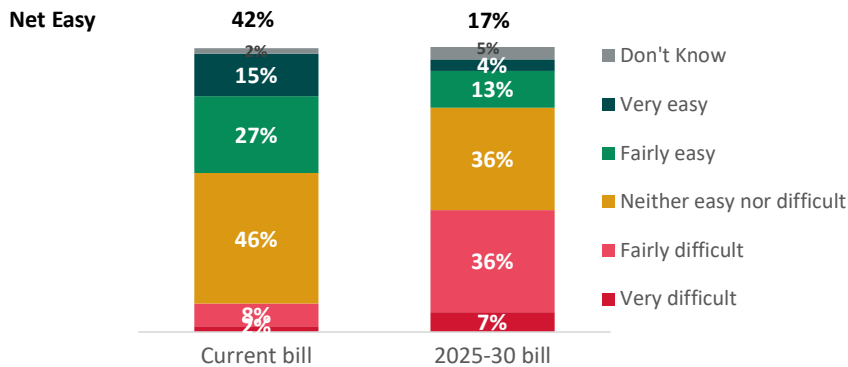


Figure 7. Q13 How easy or difficult is it for you to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill? Q14 How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: All HH participants weighted base (736)

- The affordability of the water and sewage bill is likely to become problematic for those that are already struggling financially (those finding it very or quite difficult to manage financially). 56% say they are finding it very or fairly difficult to pay their current water bill, however this number increases to 83% when asked about the 2025-30 bill.
- As expected, affordability of the future bill will become more problematic for those on the lower end of the income scale. Specifically difficult for those earning under £16,000. These households are significantly more likely to find their future bills fairly/very difficult to afford compared to any household earning above that amount.
 - The percentage of participants saying that they would find their bill very or fairly difficult to afford decreased almost in a linear manner with the increase of income, however it spiked again among those earning £52,000-£72,799.

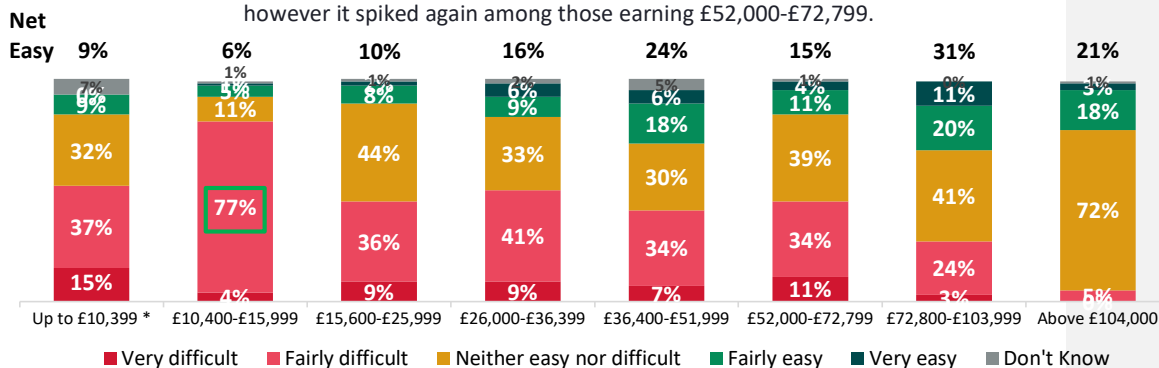


Figure 8. Q14 How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills?

Base: All HH participants weighted base Up to £10,000 (36)*, £10,400-£15,999 (96), £15,400- 25,999 (73) £26,000-£36,600 (69), £36,400-£51,999 (94), 52,000 £72,799 (63), £72,800-£103.999 (63), Above 104,000 (78)

*Caution low base – results indicative only

Denotes significantly higher

- Perceived affordability of the future bill is higher among those customers that have a water meter compared to those that don't, however this is not significant. 19% of those with a water meter say they would find it easy to pay the bill in the future compared to 16% of those that currently don't have a meter.

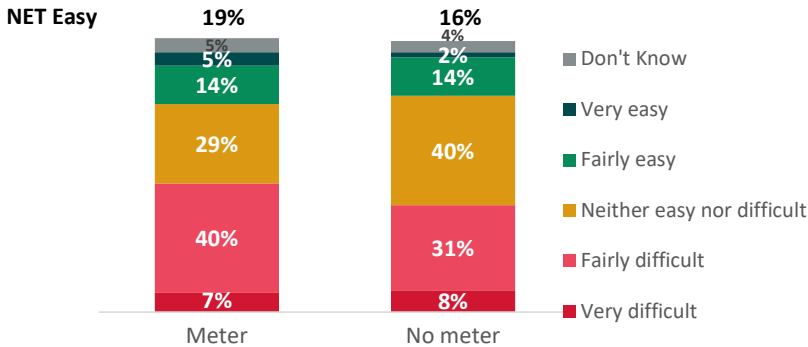


Figure 9. Q14 How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: : All HH participants weighted base with meters (488) and HH with No meter (173)

- Affordability is significantly lower among households that have members with any vulnerability at 12% (Net Very/fairly easy) compared to households without vulnerable members at 24%.
- These households are also significantly more likely to find the bill Fairly/very difficult to pay (52%) compared to those without a vulnerable members (33%).
- When looking at vulnerability by type* we see those that are considered vulnerable for medical reasons are significantly more likely to say they will find these bills fairly/very difficult (75%) compared to those considered vulnerable because of communication (53%) or life stage (25%).

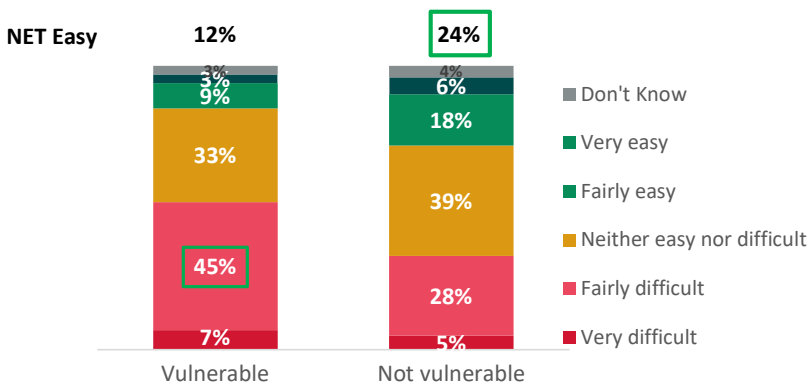


Figure 10. Q14 How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: All HH weighted base with vulnerable members (360) and HH with no vulnerable members (328) *Details of conditions listed under each vulnerability can be found in Appendix E

- 17% continue to say the proposed bill would be fairly or very easy to afford after seeing the business plan, however we do see a shift in those that say it would be difficult towards the middle ground of neither nor

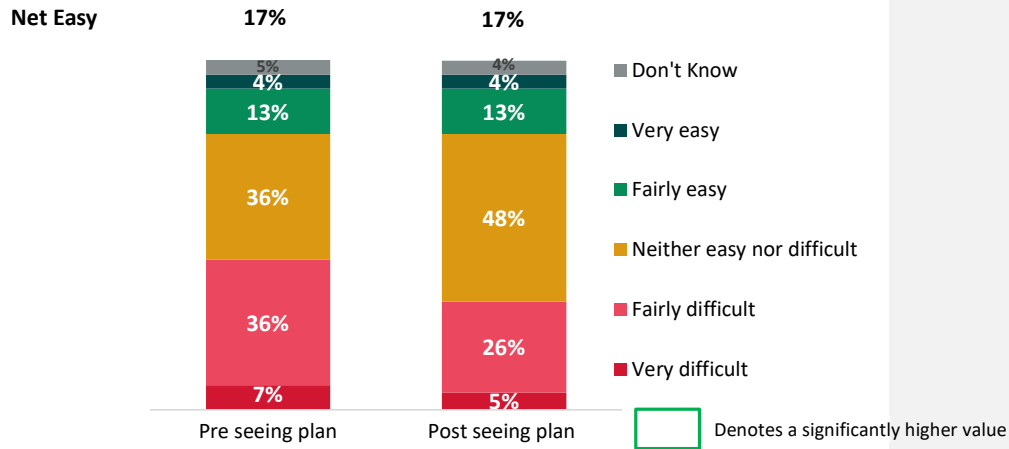


Figure 11. Q14. How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you or your company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? Q35b. Knowing what you know now about how that money is intended to be used, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you or household/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: All household participants weighted base pre plan (736); post plan (703)

4.8 NHH Affordability

- Affordability is higher among the NHH population compared to the HH.
- Over half of businesses (50%) find their bills easy or very easy to afford. This however drops down to 30% when thinking about the future bill.

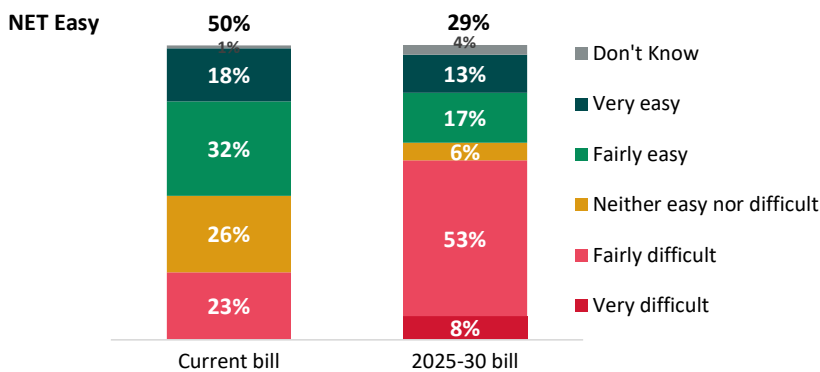


Figure 12. Q13 How easy or difficult is it for your company/organisation to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill? Q14 How easy or difficult do you think it would be for your

company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: All NHH participants weighted base (201)

- Like HH participants, metered businesses seemed more resilient to bill increases
- Unmetered businesses base is low, therefore results are indicative only – please interpret with caution

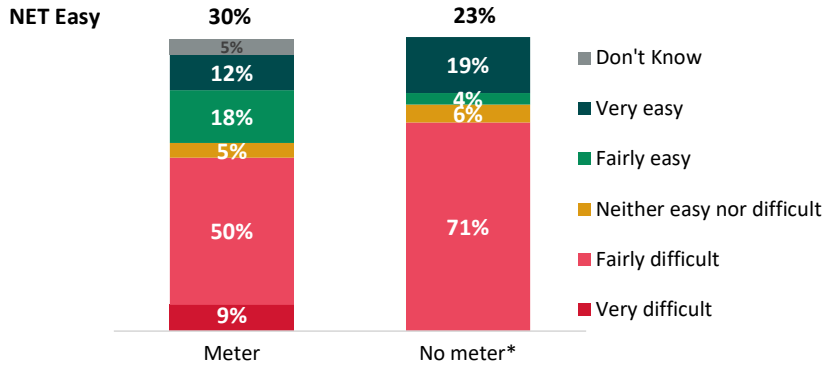


Figure 13. Q14. How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you or your company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: All NHH participants weighted base with (175) and without (24)* water meters

- Affordability of proposed bill is at 29% pre seeing the plan, but this increases to 37% after participants have seen the plan.

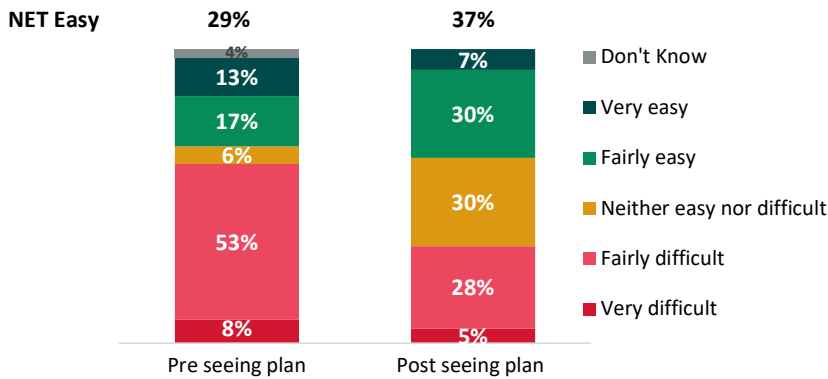


Figure 14. Q14. How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you or your company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? Q35b. Knowing what you know now about how that money is intended to be used, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you or household/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? Base: All NHH participants weighted base pre- plan (201); post plan (192)

4.9 Acceptability

- Acceptability of the proposed business plan was high at 72% overall (with 72% of households and 75% of non-households saying the plan was acceptable or completely acceptable).

4.10 HH Acceptability

- Close to three quarters (72%) of Affinity Water customers we spoke to found the proposed plan acceptable.
 - A slightly higher percentage of females (79%) than males (66%) found the plan acceptable, the difference was significant

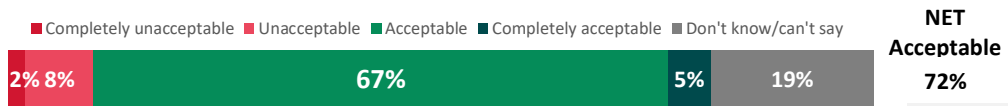


Figure 15. Q32 Based on everything you have seen and read about Affinity Water' proposed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you? Base: All HH participants weighted base (736)

Reasons for unacceptability

- Perhaps unsurprisingly given the recent coverage in the media, many customers (47%) have chosen company profits as their top reason for unacceptability.
- This is followed by the expectation that water companies should pay it themselves (33%), and the bill increases were too expensive (31%)



Figure 16. Q33. What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water services are unacceptable? Base: All HH participants weighted base that felt proposals were unacceptable (68)

Reasons for acceptability

- Customers that found the plan acceptable, support what Affinity Water is trying to do long term (59%), feel like their plans are focusing on the right services (32%) and they are doing what is best for their customers (29%)

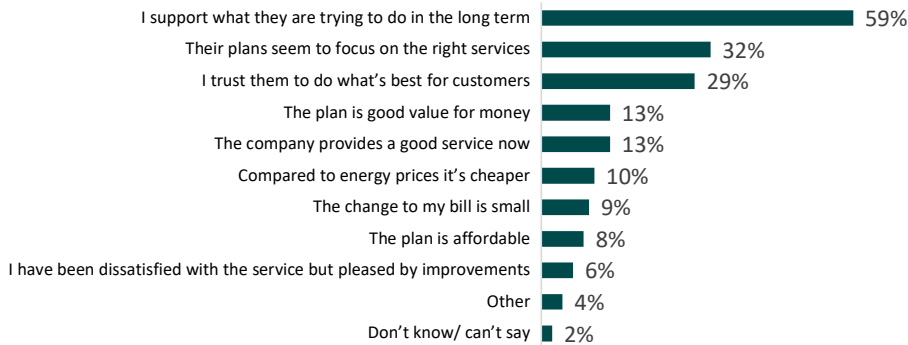


Figure 14 Q34. What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water supply are acceptable? Base: All HH participants that felt proposals were acceptable (528)

4.11 NHH Acceptability

- Acceptability is a slightly higher among NHH compared to HH. 75% of the businesses we spoke to found the proposed business plan acceptable

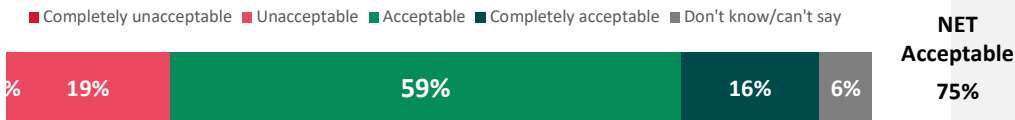


Figure 15. Q32 Based on everything you have seen and read about Affinity Water' proposed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you? Base: All NHH participants weighted base (201)

Reasons for unacceptability

- Only 19% of NHH participant felt the proposed plan was unacceptable, this equates to a number of 38 participants. This base is too low and not robust enough to be reported on in a meaningful way.

Reasons for acceptability

- Similarly to HH customers, businesses find the plan acceptable because they feel the plan focuses on the right services (33%) and that Affinity provides a good service now (22%) as well as the change is perceived to be small (21%)

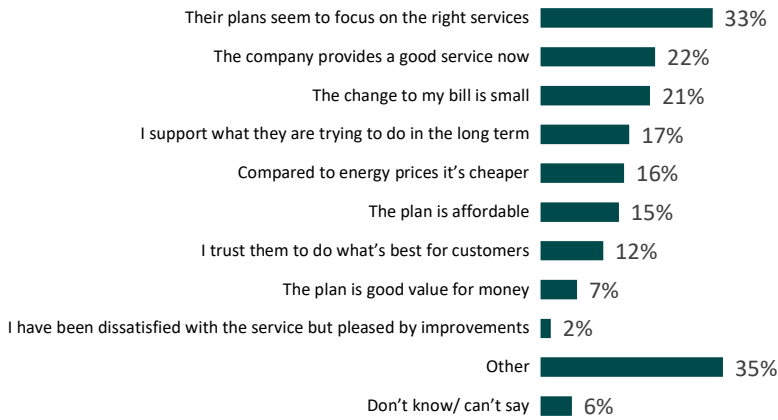


Figure 16 Q34. What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water supply are acceptable? Base: All NHH participants weighted base that felt proposals were acceptable (150)

4.12 Intergenerational Phasing

- NHH seem less reluctant than Household customers for the price increases to be put onto future customers
 - Over a third (37%) of household customers were unable or unwilling to answer the question compared to only a 17% of businesses
- For both businesses and household customers, the preferred phasing option amongst those able to choose was for an immediate increase in bills rather than a delay

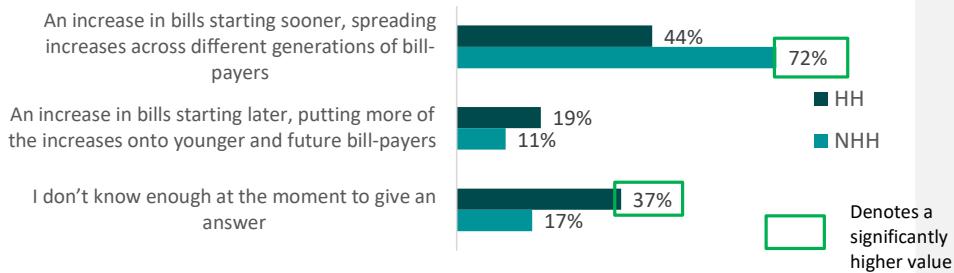


Figure 17 Q35. Long term investment by Affinity Water will require an increase in customer bills. Bills could increase in different ways over time. Which one of the following options would you prefer? Base: All HH participants weighted base (736) and all NHH participants weighted base (201)

4.13 Performance commitments

There has been a real engagement from both household and non-household customers with the performance commitments as the majority have been able to choose an option at these questions. Only 7% of the household and 2% of the non-household customers weren't able to choose an option.

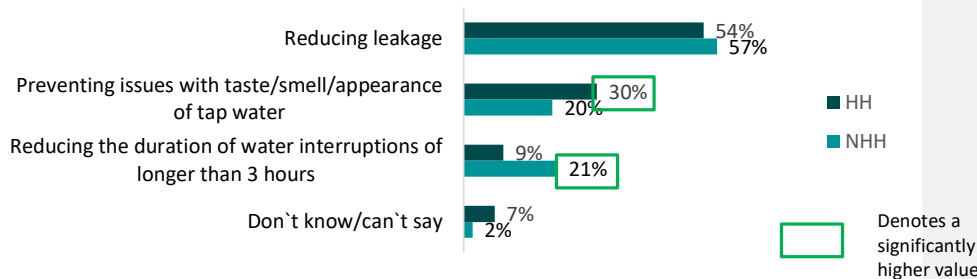


Figure 18. Q19. Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you? Base: All HH participants weighted base (736) and all NHH participants weighted base (201)

- Preventing leaks was chosen as the most important performance commitment by household customers and non-household customers alike
- Preventing issues with the quality of water were equally rated significantly more important for household customers (30%) compared to non-household (20%)
 - This was significantly higher among those vulnerable (35%) than not (28%) and females (34%) compared to males (27%).

Unsurprisingly, reducing the duration of interruption was rated significantly more important by non-household customers (21%) compared to household customers (9%).

4.14 Enhancement cases

There has been a notable engagement from participants with the enhancement cases of the business plan as only 8% of HH customer weren't able to make a decision. All NHH customers were able to answer this question.

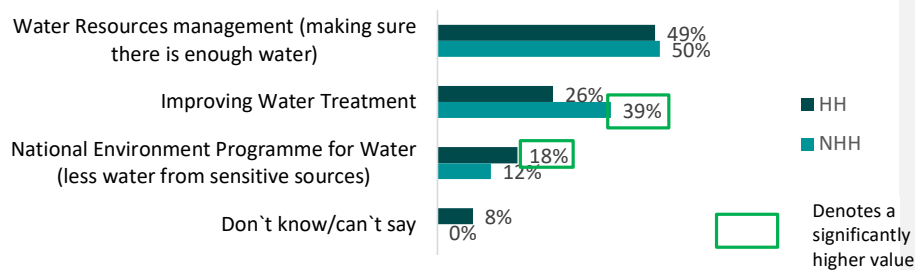
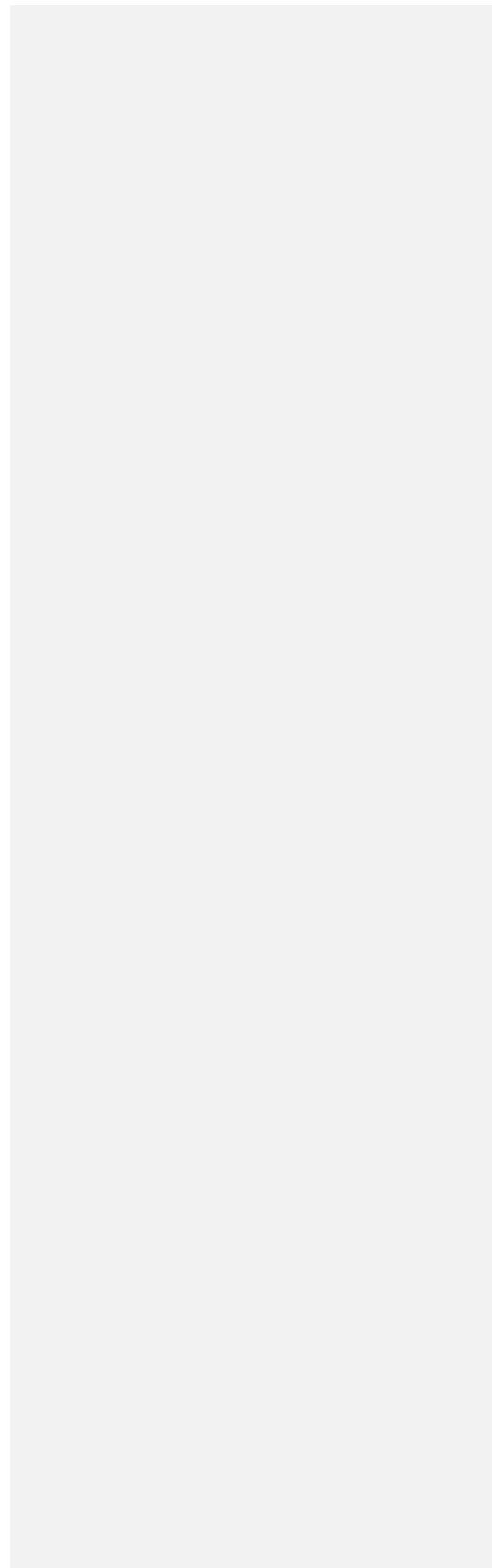


Figure 18. Q27. Based on what you have just read, which of these four parts of the business plan is the most important to you? Base: ? Base: All HH participants weighted base (736) and all NHH participants weighted base (201)

- With the effect of climate change becoming more apparent in the recent years perhaps it is unsurprising that Water Resources Management was chosen as the most important enhancement case by half of both household and non-household customers.
 - A significantly higher proportion of males (53%) have chosen this as top, compared to females (45%)
- Improving Water Treatment was significantly more important to business customers (39%) than to household customers (26%).
 - Improvement Water treatment is significantly more important to females (30%) than males (22%) and to those in vulnerable Households (31%) compared to those who are not (21%)
- The National Environment Programme for Water is ranked third but is significantly more important to household customers compared to non-household
 - This is significantly more important to those that do not have a meter (22%) compared to those that do (15%).

APPENDIX A

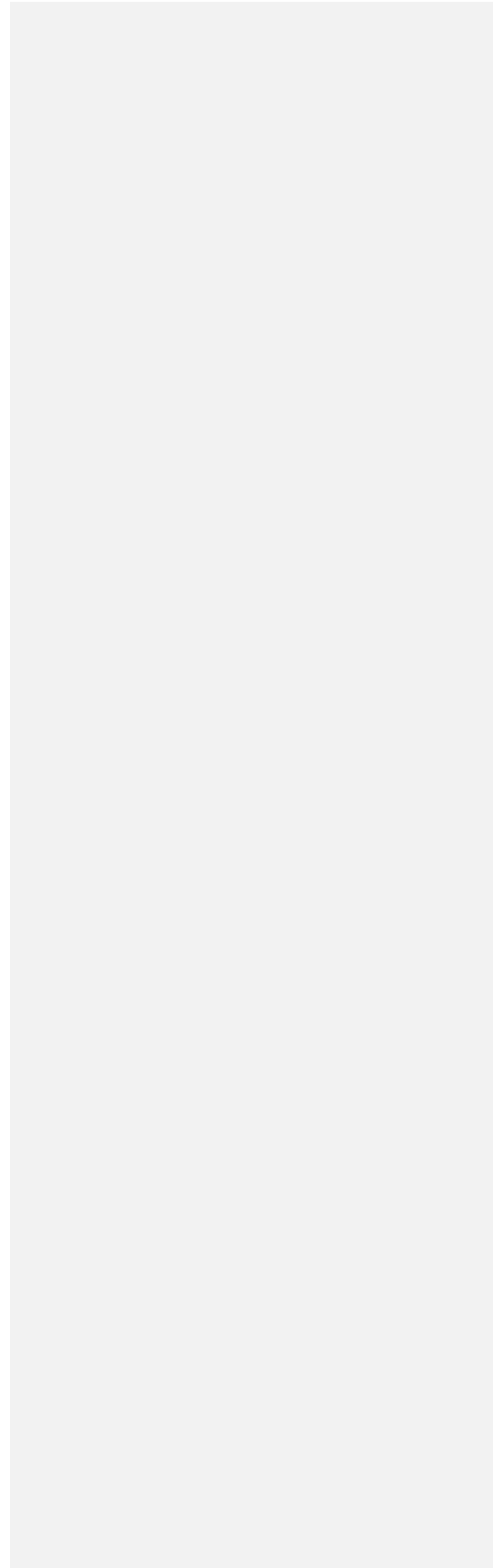
Adherence to Ofwat's standards for high quality customer research



Requirement	How the study has adhered
■ Useful and contextualised	Research objectives aligned to PR24 and undertaken in accordance with Ofwat & CCW's published guidance.
■ Neutrally designed	Outside of the prescribed Ofwat guidance, every effort has been made to ensure that the research is neutral and free from bias. All elements of design were checked and challenged by Affinity Water's ICG. Where there is the potential for bias, this has been acknowledged in the report.
■ Fit for purpose	Research undertaken in accordance with Ofwat & CCW's published guidance. Cognitive testing was carried out to ensure the complex subject matter was presented in the questionnaire in a way which was as understandable and engaging as possible for respondents. Visual stimulus was created in order to aid participant understanding of the proposed plan.
■ Inclusive	Household and business customers were represented. Lower IMD deciles were over-sampled and higher IMD deciles under-sampled, to compensate for lower response rates. The response rates were monitored across a range of demographics to ensure representation, although the prescribed methodology prevents any interventions in this regard. Accommodation was made for any accessibility requests (including paper/postal versions, large print, high contrast print), via a freephone number.
■ Continual	This research builds on the foundation of the qualitative work and contributes towards the ongoing development of policy and plans.
■ Independently assured	All research was conducted by Accent, an independent market research agency. Affinity Water collaborated with their Independent Challenge Group, who reviewed all research materials and provided a check and challenge approach on the method and findings. Third line assurance by Sia.
■ Shared in full with others	The research will be published and shared on the Affinity Water website.
■ Ethical	Research conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society code of conduct and conforming to the requirements of ISO 20252:2019. Accent and Affinity Water were subject to strict data protection protocols.

APPENDIX B

Additional Information

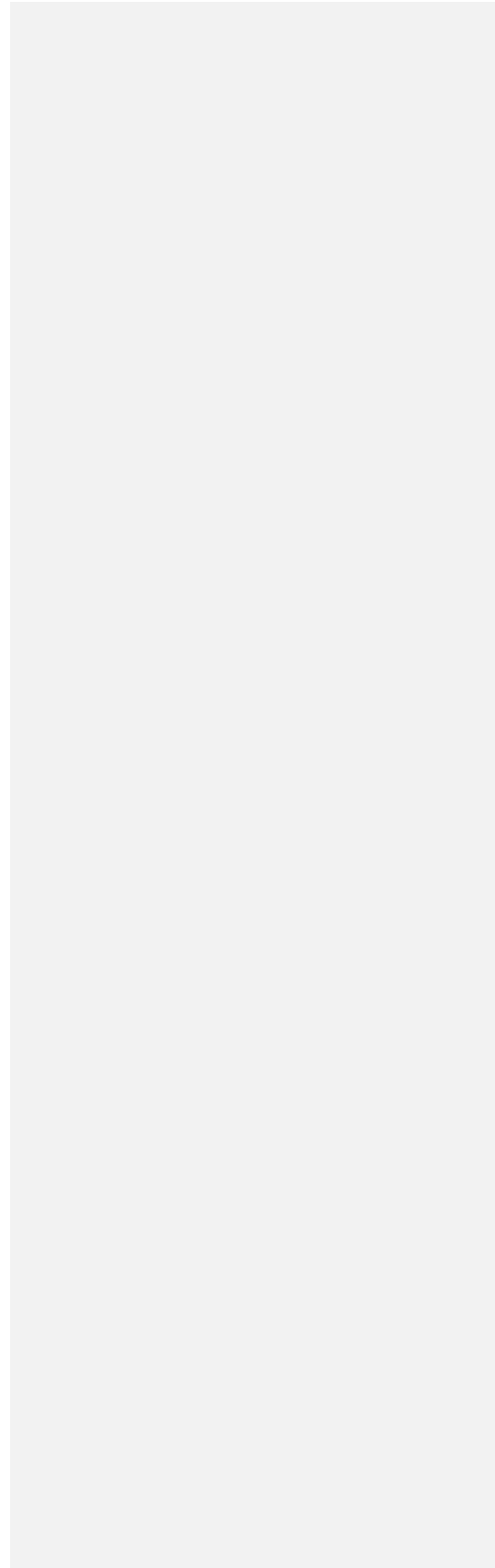


The following information on **Quantitative** work is available upon request:

- The fieldwork method (e.g. in-person, telephone or online, individual or group interviews, synchronous or asynchronous),
- The target group and sample selection methods,
- Assessment of sample representation of target population and respective implications,
- The sampling method, including size of planned and achieved sample, reasons for differences in planned and achieved and how any problems in this respect were dealt with,
- Response rate where probability samples were used and its definition and calculation method,
- Participation rate where non-probability samples were used,
- The number of interviewers or moderators, if applicable,
- The fieldworker/moderator validation methods, if applicable,
- The questionnaires, any visual exhibits or show cards, and other relevant data collection documents,
- The weighting procedures, if applicable,
- Any methods statistical analysis used,
- The estimating and imputation procedures, if applicable,
- The results that are based on subgroups and the number of cases used in subgroup analysis,
- Variance and estimates of non-sampling errors or indicators thereof (when probability samples are used).

APPENDIX C

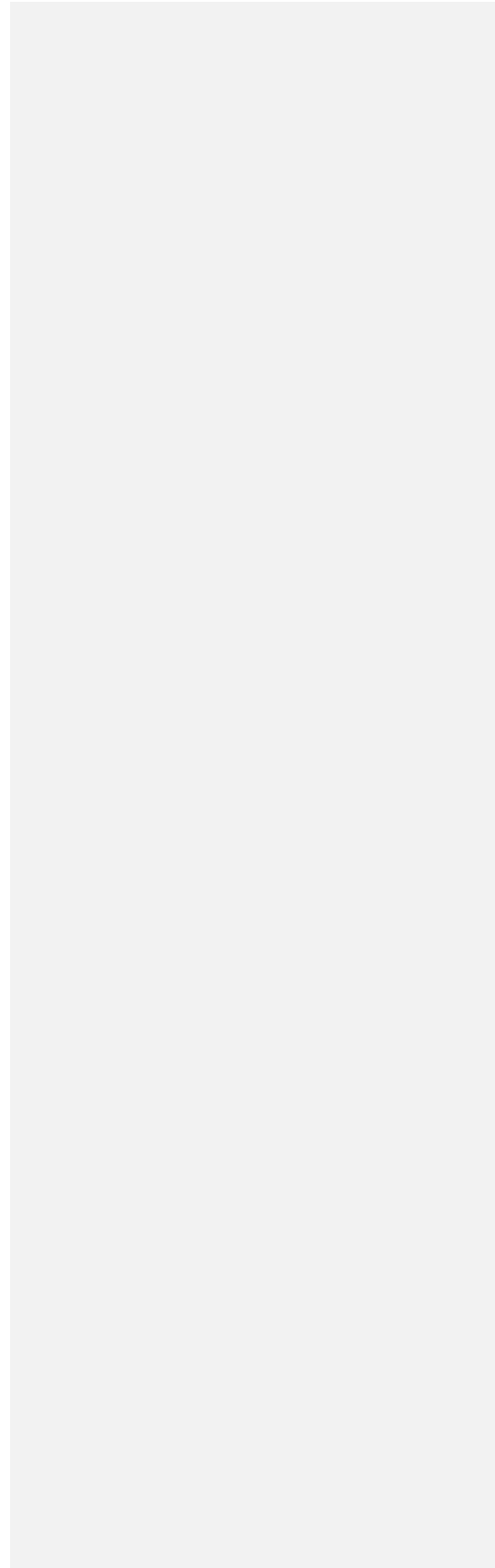
Limitations



Limitation	Impact
Small NHH sample size has resulted in some subset analysis not being possible	Analysis into (for example) non-acceptability of the plan amongst NHH participants, was not possible.
Recruiting NHH participants via CATI proved challenging	A low percentage of the NHH sample consists of CATI participants.
Small NHH participants are unlikely to be in scope (either by not having a dedicated business water supply, or by being in serviced offices with inclusive water)	The NHH sample is skewed towards larger organisations.
Some undesirably high weighting values were evident	The HH sample was (as a result of the prescribed methodology) heavily skewed towards older participants therefore the youngest age groups attracted some undesirably high weights (precluding reliable analysis into that age category in particular. Similarly, micro NHH were not represented particularly well in the sample (due to the prevalence of small businesses that do not have a dedicated NHH water supply, which made them ineligible for participation) and were weighted up more than might otherwise have been desirable. Impact to the overall affordability & acceptability figures was minimal.

APPENDIX D

Fieldwork Materials



Postal invitation – Affinity Anglian area

Name
Address

AffinityWater

Accent

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Unique ID number: XXXX
PIN: 0000

Dear Sir/Madam

Water services research: complete a survey and receive a £10 voucher

This letter has been sent to you by Accent (an independent market research company) on behalf of Affinity Water, the organisation which supplies water for customers in your local area.

We are looking for people to complete a survey about their views on water and sewerage services. The research will be used to help Affinity Water plan investment in their service from 2025 and will influence your future water services and bills.

Anyone who is eligible to take part and completes the full 15 minute survey will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey.

How to take part

The questionnaire will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You can check your eligibility to participate, and complete the survey online by entering the following link or scanning the QR code: <https://acsvy.com/3598aasurvey> and entering your Unique ID (XXXX) and PIN (0000).

Alternatively, you can fill the survey in by pen and paper. To request a paper version of the survey (or if you have any other accessibility requests) please call FREEPHONE 0800 099 6593. You will be asked to leave your name and the 4 digit unique ID number (XXXX) and PIN (0000). We will send a paper version of the survey by post, and include a FREEPOST return envelope for you to post it back.

The final date for us to receive completed surveys (including paper submissions) is **13th August 2023**. Affinity Water will be very grateful if you are able to complete the survey, but taking part is completely optional.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the research team at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

Yours faithfully



Julian Hollo-Tas, on behalf of the study team



Registered in London No. 2231051. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

Postal invitation – Affinity Thames area

Name
Address

AffinityWater **Accent**

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Unique ID number: XXXX
PIN: 0000

Dear Sir/Madam

Water services research: complete a survey and receive a £10 voucher

This letter has been sent to you by Accent (an independent market research company) on behalf of Affinity Water, the organisation which supplies water for customers in your local area.

We are looking for people to complete a survey about their views on water and sewerage services. The research will be used to help Affinity Water plan investment in their service from 2025 and will influence your future water services and bills.

Anyone who is eligible to take part and completes the full 15 minute survey will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey.

How to take part

The questionnaire will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You can check your eligibility to participate, and complete the survey online by entering the following link or scanning the QR code: <https://acsvv.com/3598atsurvey> and entering your Unique ID (XXXX) and PIN (0000).



Alternatively, you can fill the survey in by pen and paper. To request a paper version of the survey (or if you have any other accessibility requests) please call FREEPHONE 0800 099 6593. You will be asked to leave your name and the 4 digit unique ID number (XXXX) and PIN (0000). We will send a paper version of the survey by post, and include a FREEPOST return envelope for you to post it back.

The final date for us to receive completed surveys (including paper submissions) is **13th August 2023**. Affinity Water will be very grateful if you are able to complete the survey, but taking part is completely optional.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the research team at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

Yours faithfully

Julian Hollo-Tas, on behalf of the study team



Registered in London No. 2331083. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

Email invitation

AffinityWater

Accent

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Dear #name#

Water services research: complete a 15-minute online survey and receive a £10 voucher

This email has been sent to you by Accent (an independent market research company) on behalf of Affinity Water, the organisation which supplies water and sewerage for customers in your local area.

We are looking for people to complete a survey about their views on water and sewerage services. The research will be used to help water companies plan investment in their service from 2025 and will influence your future water services and bills. The research is being conducted under the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that any answers you give will be treated in confidence.

Anyone eligible, who completes the survey, will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a Love2Shop voucher). Alternatively we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey.

Click here to check eligibility, and to take part.

(The survey is best undertaken on a tablet or a PC. If you do use a smartphone you can switch between desktop mode and mobile mode at any time by clicking the button at the bottom of the screen)

Alternatively, you can fill the survey in by pen and paper. To request a paper version of the survey (or if you have any other accessibility requests) please fill in a request form [here](#). We will send a paper version of the survey by post, and include a FREEPOST return envelope for you to post it back.

The final date for us to receive completed surveys is **30th of July 2023**. Affinity Water will be very grateful if you are able to complete the survey, but taking part is completely optional.

If you have any questions about the research, please do reach out to us at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

With best wishes,

Julian Hollo-Tas
Project Manager.



Registered in London No. 2231083. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC2Y 2AB

Reminder – Affinity Anglian area

Name
Address

AffinityWater

Accent

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Unique ID number: XXXX
PIN: 0000

Dear Customer

Water services research: still time to complete a survey and receive a £10 voucher

This letter has been sent to you by Accent (an independent market research company) on behalf of Affinity Water, the organisation which supplies water for customers in your local area.

We are looking for people to complete a survey about their views on water and sewerage services. The research will be used to help Affinity Water plan investment in their service from 2025 and will influence your future water services and bills.

Anyone who is eligible to take part and completes the full 15 minute survey will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey.

How to take part

The questionnaire will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You can check your eligibility to participate, and complete the survey online by entering the following link or scanning the QR code: <https://acsvy.com/3598aasurvey> and entering your Unique ID (XXXX) and PIN (0000).



The final date for us to receive completed surveys is 13th August 2023.

Affinity Water will be very grateful if you are able to complete the survey, but taking part is completely optional.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the research team at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

Yours faithfully

Julian Hollo-Tas,
on behalf of the study team



Registered in London No. 2231083. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

Reminder – Affinity Thames area

Name
Address

AffinityWater **Accent**

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Unique ID number: XXXX
PIN: 0000

Dear Sir/Madam

Water services research: complete a survey and receive a £10 voucher

This letter has been sent to you by Accent (an independent market research company) on behalf of Affinity Water, the organisation which supplies water for customers in your local area.

We are looking for people to complete a survey about their views on water and sewerage services. The research will be used to help Affinity Water plan investment in their service from 2025 and will influence your future water services and bills.

Anyone who is eligible to take part and completes the full 15 minute survey will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey.

How to take part

The questionnaire will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You can check your eligibility to participate, and complete the survey online by entering the following link or scanning the QR code: <https://acsw.com/3598atsurvey> and entering your Unique ID (XXXX) and PIN (0000).



Alternatively, you can fill the survey in by pen and paper. To request a paper version of the survey (or if you have any other accessibility requests) please call FREEPHONE 0800 099 6593. You will be asked to leave your name and the 4 digit unique ID number (XXXX) and PIN (0000). We will send a paper version of the survey by post, and include a FREEPOST return envelope for you to post it back.

The final date for us to receive completed surveys (including paper submissions) is **13th August 2023**. Affinity Water will be very grateful if you are able to complete the survey, but taking part is completely optional.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the research team at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

Yours faithfully

Julian Hollo-Tas, on behalf of the study team



Registered in London No. 2231083. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

Paper version cover – Affinity Anglian area

Name
Address

AffinityWater Accent

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Unique ID number: XXXX
PIN: 0000

Dear Customer,

Water services research: your requested survey

Thank you for requesting a paper version of the survey we are conducting for Affinity Water. Please find it attached. This pack should contain:

- (1) This letter
- (2) A paper version of the survey
- (3) A reply envelope (pre-paid: no stamp required)

Anyone who is eligible to take part and completes the full 15 minute survey will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid.

How to take part

Just post the completed survey back by the date stated. Or, you can also still check your eligibility to participate, and complete the survey online, by entering the following link or scanning the QR code: <https://acsvy.com/3598aasurvey> and entering your Unique ID (XXXX) and PIN (0000).



Please note: the final date for us to receive completed surveys (including paper submissions) is Monday 14th August 2023.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the research team at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

Yours faithfully

Julian Hollo-Tas, on behalf of the study team



Registered in London No. 2231083. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB

Paper version cover – Affinity Thames area

Name
Address

AffinityWater

Accent

3 Orchard Place
London
SW1H 0BF

Unique ID number: XXXX
PIN: 0000

Dear Customer,

Water services research: your requested survey

Thank you for requesting a paper version of the survey we are conducting for Affinity Water. Please find it attached. This pack should contain

- (1) This letter
- (2) A paper version of the survey
- (3) A reply envelope (pre-paid: no stamp required)

Anyone who is eligible to take part and completes the full 15 minute survey will receive a £10 voucher (an Amazon voucher, an **M&S** voucher or a **Qone4All** voucher). Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid.

How to take part

Just post the completed survey back by the date stated. Or, you can also still check your eligibility to participate, and complete the survey online, by entering the following link or scanning the QR code: <https://acsvv.com/3598atsurvey> and entering your Unique ID (XXXX) and PIN (0000).



Please note: the final date for us to receive completed surveys (including paper submissions) is Monday 14th August 2023.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the research team at affinitywatersurvey@accent-mr.com or 0800 099 6593.

Yours faithfully

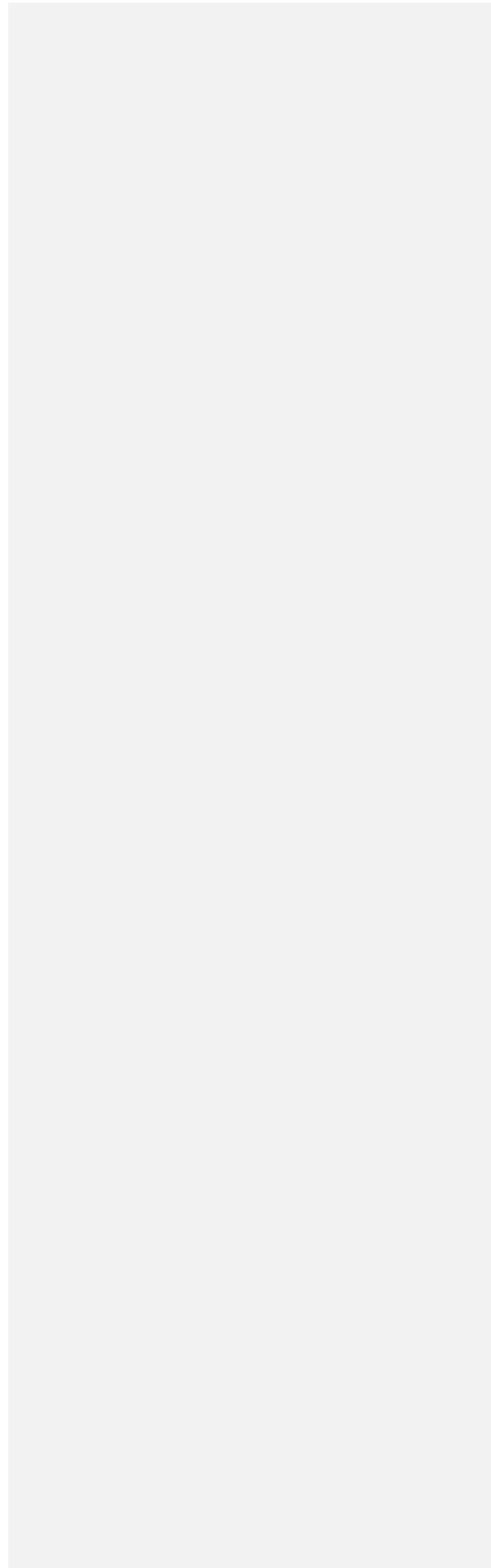
Julian Hollo-Tas, on behalf of the study team



Registered in London No. 2311083. Accent Marketing & Research Limited. Registered Address: 30 City Road, London, EC2Y 5DA

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire (Online version)





Acceptability and Affordability Testing

Thank you very much for agreeing to complete this on-line survey which is being conducted by Accent, an independent research agency. This survey is designed to help Affinity Water, your water and wastewater service provider, to understand your views on how affordable and acceptable their future plans are.

We will just ask you a couple of questions to check that you are eligible to take part in this research.

NOT PANEL: Anyone completing the survey will be eligible for a £10 voucher (either an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey.

Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of Market Research Society. If you would like to confirm Accent's credentials type Accent in the search box at: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/researchbuyersguide>.

You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to and you may terminate the interview at any point.

IF MOBILE DEVICE SHOW: This survey is best undertaken on a tablet or a PC. If you do use a smartphone you can switch between desktop mode and mobile mode at any time by clicking the button at the bottom of the screen.

Scoping questions

Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at <https://www.accent-mr.com/privacy-policy/>.

Please do not include names, addresses, or other personal data in your responses to any questions, unless asked to do so.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes

No **THANK AND CLOSE**

IF HH: Do you or any of your close family work in market research or for a water company?

Yes **THANK & CLOSE**

No

IF HH: How old are you?

OPEN TEXT RESPONSE BOX

Prefer not to say **THANK AND CLOSE**

DP PLEASE CODE INTO THE FOLLOWING:

Under 18 **THANK AND CLOSE**

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75+

Prefer not to say **THANK AND CLOSE**

IF HH: Are you solely or jointly responsible for paying your household's water and sewerage bill?

Yes

No, I am not responsible for paying the bill **THANK AND CLOSE**

Don't know **THANK AND CLOSE**

Are you currently charged for water through a water meter?

Yes

No

Don't know

Affinity Water is your water supplier, and [#wastesupplier#] is responsible for your sewerage services. Does this sound right?

Yes **GO TO MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE**

No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Don't know **GO TO MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE**

IF NHH: Are you solely or jointly responsible as the decision maker for your organisation's water and sewerage service at any of its premises?

Yes

No **THANK AND CLOSE**

IF NHH: Is Affinity Water responsible for the water services at your organisation?

Yes

No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Don't know **THANK AND CLOSE**

Q8A **IF NHH:** When answering this questionnaire, we would like you to think only about sites your organisation might have that are in the Affinity Water area. Is that OK?

Yes

No **THANK AND CLOSE**

Main Questionnaire

Thank you, I can confirm you are in scope for the survey. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

For convenience you can stop and return to complete the questionnaire as many times as you wish, although once submitted you will not be able to enter again.

Affordability

We are now going to ask you some questions about your **[IF HH]** household's/**[IF NHH]** organisation's financial situation.

Thinking about your finances over the last year, how often, if at all, **[IF HH]** have you struggled to pay at least one of your household bills? **[IF NHH]** has your organisation struggled to pay at least one of its bills? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR PREFER NOT TO SAY**

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to say

Overall, how well would you say **[IF HH]** you are/**[IF NHH]** your organisation is managing financially now? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR PREFER NOT TO SAY**

- [IF HH]** Living/**[IF NHH]** Operating comfortably
- Doing alright
- Just about getting by
- Finding it quite difficult
- Finding it very difficult
- Prefer not to say

Thinking about your **[IF HH]** household's/ **IF NHH]** your organisation's financial situation over the next few years up to 2030, do you expect it to get: **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR PREFER NOT TO SAY**

- Please select one answer only*
- A lot worse
 - A bit worse
 - Stay the same
 - A bit better
 - A lot better

Prefer not to say
Don't know

IF NHH: How much are you currently paying for your water and sewerage services bill, each year?

[Open-ended answer] **DP PLEASE ADD TEXT BOX**
Don't know

How easy or difficult is it for **[IF HH]** you **[IF NHH]** your company/organisation to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill: **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR PREFER NOT TO SAY**

Please select one answer only

Very easy
Fairly easy
Neither easy nor difficult
Fairly difficult
Very difficult
Don't know

Q13A **IF NHH:** In order for us to move on | would now like you to | look at an individualised graph, mapping out what future water bills may look like for your organisation under the plans Affinity Water have.

Commented [SS1]: Query the phraseology of 'I need you to look at' ?

Commented [AB2R1]: Text formatted

Please could you go to LINK TBC

You should see a thank you note, then on the next page somewhere to put your annual water bill amount into. Please enter the bill for all sites your company operates in the Affinity Water area. An estimate is absolutely fine.

Interviewer note, do not proceed until they have gone to the website and put in their bill amount. Only then can you proceed. You must not proceed without them seeing these materials.

Looking at web page
Cannot proceed now **Open appointment box**

□ Proposed changes to your water/sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030.

The next set of questions are about proposed changes to your water & sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030. The chart below shows these changes. It also shows how inflation may impact on your bill, based on the Bank of England's inflation forecasts.

Water bills change each year in line with inflation.

Inflation is the increase in prices paid for goods and services over time. Household incomes also change over time.

- *If your household income keeps up with inflation (ie. increases at the same rate), then you are likely to notice little difference in what you are paying for things.*
- *If inflation increases by a faster rate than your household income, then you are likely to have less money to go around.*
- *If your household income increases by a faster rate than inflation, then you are likely to have more money to go around.*

The Bank of England aims to keep inflation at 2%, but it has recently been much higher than this. As well as changing by inflation each year, bills change by an amount set by Ofwat (the water regulator) as part of their price review process every five years.

The proposed bills you will see from 2025 to 2030 include the Bank of England forecasts for inflation from 2025 to 2030, and proposed amounts to cover the investment in water and sewerage services needed over the next few years.

The following chart shows the expected increase in your water/sewerage bill over the next few years.

The blue part of each column is what the underlying change to your bills would look like if there were no inflation. The orange part is what inflation will add on top. So your actual bill would be the two parts added together.

The figure above each bar represents the total expected bill amount (the blue plus the orange)



IF Social Tariff Customer (from sample): This bill profile is based on the financial support scheme you are currently on.

How easy or difficult do you think it would be for **[IF HH]** you **[IF NHH]** your company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult **HH ONLY GO TO Q15**
- Fairly difficult **HH ONLY GO TO Q15**
- Very difficult **HH ONLY GO TO Q15**
- Don't know

[IF HH ONLY] IF 0= 3,4,5 Which of the following do you think you would need to do to pay for the increase in your water bills between 2025 and 2030 **MULTICODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

- Shopping around more
- Spending less on food shopping and essentials
- Spending less on non-essentials
- Cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle
- Eat out less
- Using less fuel such as gas or electricity in my home
- Using less water
- Using my savings
- Using credit more than usual, for example, credit cards, loans or overdrafts
- Ask family and friends for financial support
- Other, please specify [OPEN RESPONSE] **DP PLEASE ADD TEXT BOX**
- Don't know

Acceptability

We are now going to ask you some questions about your views on your water company's business plan. Water companies are required to put together business plans for each five year period. The plan we are showing you is for 2025- 2030.

The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of "Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours".

Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours



If a water supply is interrupted without warning for more than 3 hours, it would not be possible to draw water from the taps or flush the toilet; it may be necessary to buy bottled water. Sometimes business operations may be affected.

Duration without water for more than 3 hours by minutes per property.

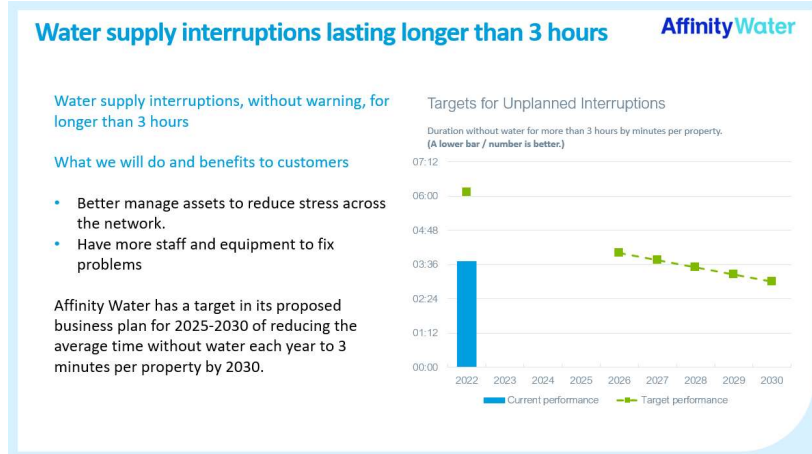
Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has met its target for this metric last year

Affinity are ranked 5th of 17 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (number of minutes over 3 hours)	
Portsmouth	00:02:21	<p>Better performance</p>   <p>Poorer performance</p>
Bristol	00:02:31	
SES Water	00:02:58	
South Staffs & Cambridge	00:03:15	
Affinity	00:03:43	
Wessex	00:04:12	
United Utilities	00:07:58	
Southern	00:09:22	
Anglian	00:09:48	
Yorkshire	00:10:38	
Thames	00:11:03	
Northumbrian	00:11:45	
Severn Trent	00:12:39	
South West	00:13:40	
Welsh Water	00:16:12	
Hafren Dyfrdwy	00:37:28	
South East	01:12:33	

The following slide shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:



The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “Reducing leaks”.

Reducing leaks

Leaks can affect customers directly if their water supply is affected. They are sometimes unnoticed if underground. But leakage is often seen in the media and has a cost to people on their bills and a cost to the environment

Leakage per property per day.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has not met its target for this metric last year
Affinity are ranked 12th of 19 companies on this measure

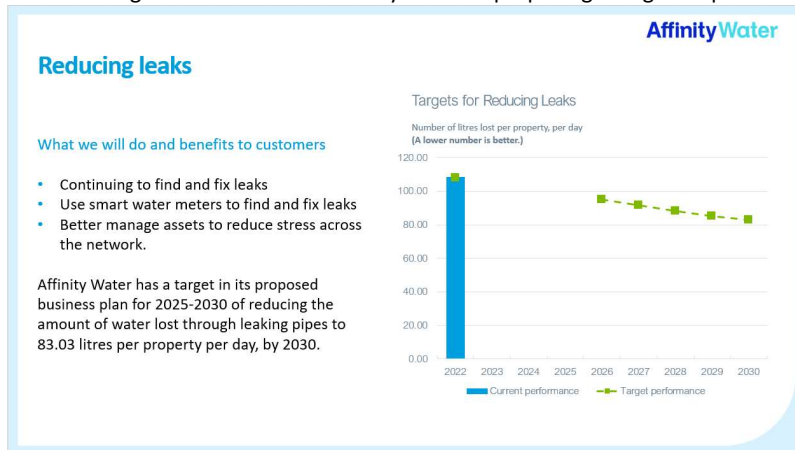
Company	Performance (litres per day)
Bristol	65.04
Northumbrian	76.4
Portsmouth	77.02
SES Water	78.68
Anglian	80.18
Southern	83.17
South East	87.63
Cambridge	90.67
Wessex	103.29
South West	107.71
Northumbrian	108.3
Affinity	108.65
South Staffs	113.45
Severn Trent	119.66
Yorkshire	122.91
United Utilities	124.21
Hafren Dyfrdwy	131.01
Thames	151.51
Welsh Water	158.8

Better performance



Poorer performance

The following chart shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:



The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “appearance, taste, and smell, of tap water”.

Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

Tap water may look discoloured or taste/smell different to usual. Although still safe to drink, people may prefer bottled water as a precaution until it returns to normal.

Number of customer contacts received regarding incidents, per 1,000 properties.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has not met its target for this metric last year	
Affinity are ranked 4th of 17 companies on this measure	
Company	Performance (number of contacts)
Portsmouth	0.41
Thames	0.49
SES Water	0.58
Affinity	0.73
South Staffs & Cambridge	0.76
Severn Trent	0.93
Northumbrian	0.97
Anglian	1.03
Yorkshire	1.09
Southern	1.1
Wessex	1.17
South East	1.34
Bristol	1.38
South West	1.55
Hafren Dyfrdwy	1.71
United Utilities	1.79
Welsh Water	2.38

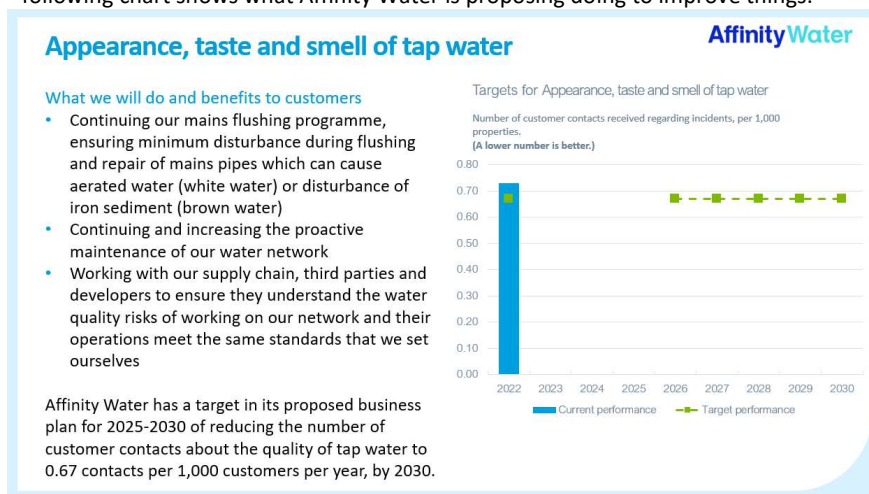
Better performance



Poorer performance

The

following chart shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:




Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

Please select one answer only

- Reducing the duration of water interruptions of longer than 3 hours
- Reducing leakage

Preventing issues with taste/smell/appearance of tap water
Don't know/can't say

The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan



National Environment Programme for Water

Taking less water from sensitive sources

The services that water companies provide must comply with environmental laws

Water companies have a programme of work to meet these laws, which includes:

- Not taking too much water from rivers and the ground.
- Treating water to a standard that does not harm the natural environment.
- Some of the places that Affinity is allowed to take water from are close to rare types of river called chalk streams - a unique habitat and are valuable for sensitive species of animals and plants

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We are either reducing the amount of water we take from these aquifers or stopping using them as sources – this means we then need to look for alternative ways to supply water to our customers

Affinity Water has a target of reducing abstraction by 22 million litres in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030.

The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan

Water Resources Management

Making sure there is enough water available in the future

The services that water companies provide must comply with environmental laws in England/Wales, as well as UK/Welsh Government policy.

Water companies have a programme of work to meet these laws, which includes:

- Making sure there is enough water available to protect the natural environment as well as providing a public water supply.

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We help customers reduce their usage, reduce leakage and bring in new supply sources such as storing more water or transferring water from outside of the region.

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan to have the chance of standpipes/rota cuts in a drought – likelihood 1in 100 years for 2025-2030.

The following slide describes the final additional components of Affinity Water's business plan

Improving Water Treatment

Improving water treatment

Water companies must meet legal requirements for the quality and safety of drinking water.

This includes improving water treatment works to deal with changing conditions in the rivers due to weather and ensuring treatment is improved to remove things such as nitrates and chemicals (eg PFAS*) that we are now required by law to monitor and remove.

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We will carry out upgrades to water treatment works- the upgrades will give us increased ability to remove more of the contaminants from the water under a greater range of river water quality conditions and remove the chemicals that we are now required to.

Affinity Water has identified these targets in their proposed business plan for 2025-2030.

Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

Please select one answer only

National Environment Programme for Water (less water from sensitive sources)
Water Resources management (making sure there is enough water)
Improving Water Treatment
Don't know/can't say

Based on everything you have seen and read about Affinity Water's proposed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

Please select one answer only

Completely acceptable **GO TO 0**
Acceptable **GO TO 0**
Unacceptable **GO TO 0**
Completely unacceptable **GO TO 0**
Don't know/can't say

IF 0=3 or 4 What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water services are unacceptable? **MAXIMUM 2 ANSWERS, RANDOMISE**

Please choose up to two answers only

The bill increases are too expensive
Company profits are too high
Companies should pay for service improvements
I expect better service improvements
The plan is poor value for money
Compared to energy prices it is more expensive
I am dissatisfied with current services
The plans don't focus on the right services
I won't be able to afford this
I don't trust them to make these service improvements
Other 1, please specify [OPEN RESPONSE] **DP PLEASE ADD TEXT BOX**
Other 2, please specify [OPEN RESPONSE] **DP PLEASE ADD TEXT BOX**
Don't know/ can't say

IF 0=1 OR 2 What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water supply are acceptable? **MAXIMUM 2 ANSWERS, RANDOMISE**

Please choose up to two answers only

The plan is good value for money
The plan is affordable
Compared to energy prices it's cheaper
Their plans seem to focus on the right services
The company provides a good service now
I support what they are trying to do in the long term
The change to my bill is small
I trust them to do what's best for customers

I have been dissatisfied with the service recently but am pleased that they are making improvements
Other 1, please specify [OPEN RESPONSE] **DP PLEASE ADD TEXT BOX**
Other 2, please specify [OPEN RESPONSE] **DP PLEASE ADD TEXT BOX**
Don't know/ can't say

Long term investment by Affinity Water will require an increase in customer bills. Bills could increase in different ways over time. For example, there could be increases now for current bill payers, or bigger increases in the long term for future generations. Which one of the following options would you prefer? **SINGLECODE**

Please select one answer only

An increase in bills starting sooner, spreading increases across different generations of bill-payers
An increase in bills starting later, putting more of the increases onto younger and future bill-payers
I don't know enough at the moment to give an answer

Q35B At the start of this interview, you were shown the following prediction for bill increases, and you said it would be #insert answer from q14# to afford these increases.



PN.DISPLAY SAME GRAPH AS before

Knowing what you know now about how that money is intended to be used, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for **[IF HH]** you **[IF NHH]** your company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

HH ONLY: Household Demographic

Thank you. Now just a few questions to check that we are speaking to people of all types.

In which of the following ways do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- I identify in another way
- Prefer not to say

Please indicate which one of the following best describes the profession of the chief income earner in your household

- Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Established doctor, Solicitor, Board Director in a large organisation (200+ employees), top level civil servant/public service employee)
- Intermediate managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, Solicitor, Board director small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principle officer in civil service/local government)
- Supervisory or clerical/ junior managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Office worker, Student Doctor, Foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson, etc)
- Skilled manual work** (e.g. Skilled Bricklayer, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bus/Ambulance Driver, HGV driver, AA patrolman, pub/bar worker, etc)
- Semi or unskilled manual work** (e.g. Manual worker, apprentice to skilled trade, Caretaker, Park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant)
- Housewife/Househusband
- Unemployed
- Retired **GO TO 0**
- Student
- Prefer not to say

IF 0=RETIRED ASK Does the main income earner have a state pension, a private pension or both?

- State only
- Private only
- Both
- Prefer not to say

IF 0= PRIVATE OR BOTH ASK: How would you describe the main income earner's occupation type before retirement?

Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative (e.g. Established doctor, Solicitor, Board Director in a large organisation (200+ employees), top level civil servant/public service employee)

Intermediate managerial/ professional/ administrative (e.g. Newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, Solicitor, Board director small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principle officer in civil service/local government)

Supervisory or clerical/ junior managerial/ professional/ administrative (e.g. Office worker, Student Doctor, Foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson, etc)

Skilled manual work (e.g. Skilled Bricklayer, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bus/ Ambulance Driver, HGV driver, AA patrolman, pub/bar worker, etc)

Semi or unskilled manual work. (e.g. Manual worker, apprentice to skilled trade, Caretaker, Park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant)

None of these

Prefer not to say

Which of the following apply to you? We would like to collect this to ensure that a variety of particular needs are represented in the study, but you do not need to answer if you do not wish to. This information will not be shared with any third party and will be destroyed within 12 months of project completion. **MULTICODE**

Please select all that apply

I or another member of my household is disabled or suffer(s) from a debilitating illness **CODED AS MEDICAL VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household have/has a learning difficulty **CODED AS MEDICAL VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household relies on water for medical reasons **CODED AS MEDICAL VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household is visually impaired (ie struggles to read even with glasses) **CODED AS COMMUNICATIONS VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household am/is over the age of 75 years old **CODED AS LIFE STAGE VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household speaks English as a second language **CODED AS COMMUNICATIONS VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household is deaf or hard of hearing **CODED AS COMMUNICATIONS VULNERABILITY**

I or another member of my household is a new parent **CODED AS LIFE STAGE VULNERABILITY**

None of these apply to me

Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background **SINGLECODE**

Please select one answer only

WHITE

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other White background

MIXED

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background

ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background

OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

Arab

Any other ethnic group

Prefer not to say

Which of the following bands does your household income fall into from all sources before tax and other deductions? **SINGLECODE**

Up to £199 a week/Up to £10,399 a year

From £200 to £299 a week/From £10,400 to £15,599 a year

From £300 to £499 a week/From £15,600 to £25,999 a year

From £500 to £699 a week/From £26,000 to £36,399 a year

From £700 to £999 a week/From £36,400 to £51,999 a year

From £1,000 to £1,399 a week/From £52,000 to £72,799 a year

From £1,400 to £1,999 a week/From £72,800 to £103,999 a year

£2,000 and above a week/£104,000 and above a Year

Don't know

Prefer not to say

GO TO 0

NHH only: Demographic Questions

How does your organisation mainly use water at its premises? **MULTICODE**

Please select all that apply

For the manufacturing process which is essential to the running of your organisation (eg to power machinery, agricultural production etc)

For the supply of services your organisation provides (eg cleaning services etc)

For an ingredient or part of the product or service your organisation provides (eg food or drink, chemical, cosmetics manufacturer etc)

For normal domestic use for your organisation's customers and employees (eg customer toilets, supply of drinking water)

None of the above

Don't Know

How many sites in the UK does your organisation operate from?

1

2

3

4

5-10

11-50

51-250

250

Prefer not to say

How many employees does your organisation have in the UK?

0 (sole trader)

1 to 9 employees (micro)

10 to 49 employees (small)

50 to 249 employees (medium)

250+ employees (large)
Prefer not to say

Which of the following best defines the core activity of your organisation?

Agriculture, forestry and fishing
Mining and quarrying
Energy or water service & supply
Manufacturing
Construction
Wholesale and retail trade (including motor vehicles repair)
Transport and storage
Hotels & catering
IT and Communication
Finance and insurance activities
Real estate activities
Professional, scientific and technical activities
Administrative and Support Service Activities
Public administration and defence
Education
Human health and social work activities
Arts, entertainment and recreation
Other service activities
Other (please specify)
Prefer not to say

Classification Questions

IF NON PANEL: We mentioned that there would be a £10 incentive for completing this survey. This incentive will be administered by Accent, within 4 weeks.

This can be sent as an Amazon, Marks & Spencer or One4All voucher by email. Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Which would you prefer?

Amazon voucher by email COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS
M&S Voucher by email COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS
One4All by email COLLECT EMAIL ADDRESS
Donation to Water Aid

If you have any queries about your incentive, please contact us on 0131 220 8770.

Thank you. Would you be willing to be contacted again if we need to clarify any of the answers you have given today?

Yes
No

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential.

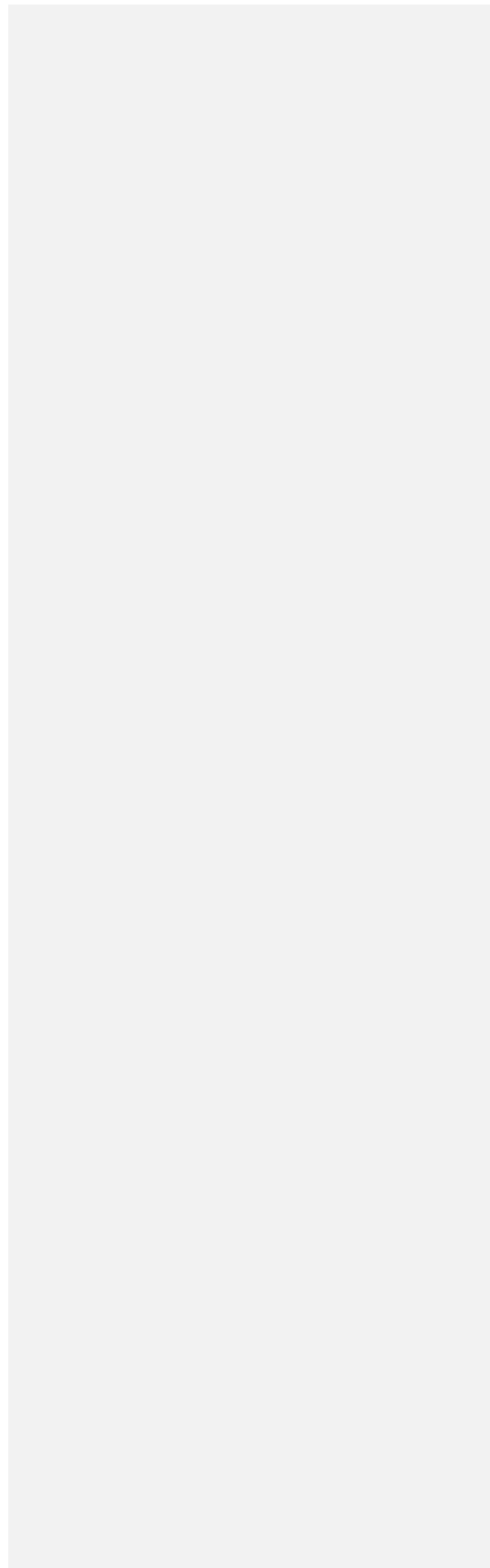
CATI ONLY Interviewer Confirmation

I confirm that this interview was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential

Yes
No

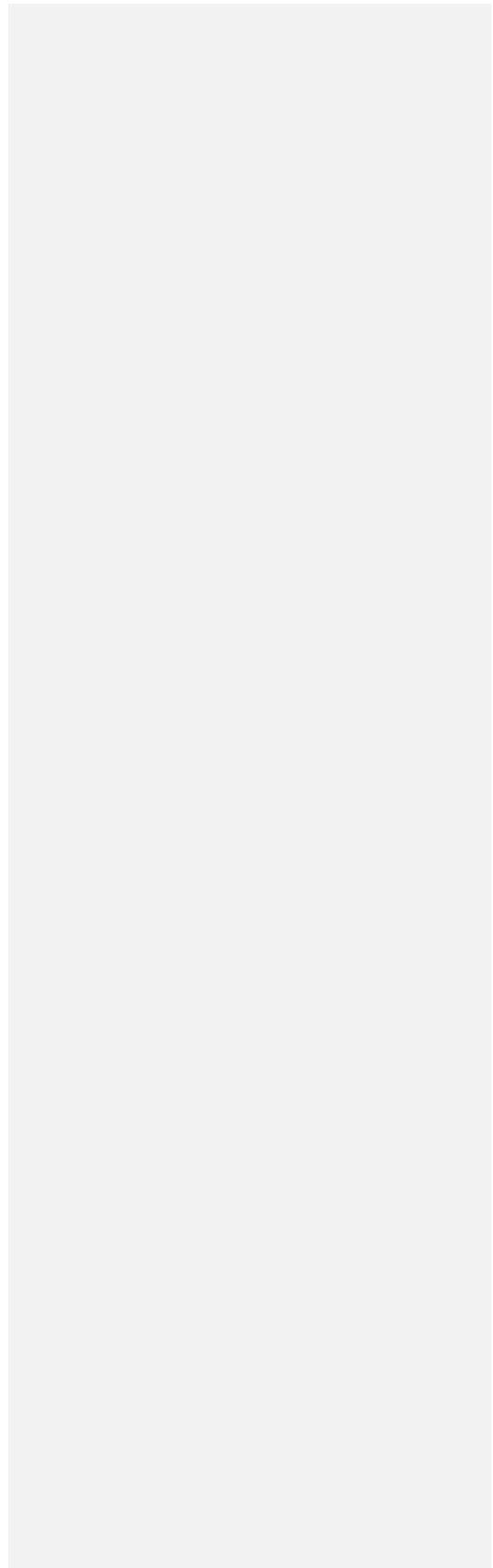
QEND [IF HH] Affinity Water offers help to qualifying low-income households that are struggling to afford their water and wastewater bills. More information about this can be found here: <https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/billing/struggling-to-pay>

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential.



APPENDIX F

Questionnaire (Affinity Anglian area - Paper version)





Acceptability and Affordability Testing

Thank you very much for agreeing to complete this survey which is being conducted by Accent, an independent research agency. This survey is designed to help Affinity Water, your water and wastewater service provider, to understand your views on how affordable and acceptable their future plans are.

We will just ask you a couple of questions to check that you are eligible to take part in this research.

Anyone who passes the qualification questions and completes the entire survey will be eligible for a £10 voucher (either an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey. Please note, your answers must reach us by the **13th of August 2023** to qualify for this incentive.

Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of Market Research Society. If you would like to confirm Accent's credentials, you can phone the Market Research Society on 0800 975 9596.

You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to and you may terminate the interview at any point.

When completing the survey please start from Question 1 (Q1) in the Qualification section.

If at any point in the qualification section you find **"Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here."** written next to the answer you have selected, this means you are not eligible to take part in this survey. If this happens – thank you very much for your time, but you are not eligible to take part and should stop.

If you have answered the question in the qualification section without that message appearing next to any of your answers please go to the "Main questionnaire" and follow the questionnaire order

Qualification questions

Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at <https://www.accent-mr.com/privacy-policy/>.

Please do not include names, addresses, or other personal data in your responses to any questions, unless asked to do so.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes

No **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Do you or any of your close family work in market research or for a water company?

Yes **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

No

How old are you?

Please enter your age on the line below

Under 18 **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Prefer not to say **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Are you solely or jointly responsible for paying your household's water and sewerage bill?

Yes

No, I am not responsible for paying the bill **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Don't know **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Are you currently charged for water through a water meter?

Yes

No

Don't know

Affinity Water is your water supplier, and Anglian Water is responsible for your sewerage services. Does this sound right?

Yes

No **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Don't know

Thank you, if you have reached this point without having been told to stop, we can confirm you are in scope for the survey. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Main Questionnaire

Affordability

We are now going to ask you some questions about your household's financial situation.

Thinking about your finances over the last year, how often, if at all, have you struggled to pay at least one of your household bills?

Please select one answer only

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to say

Overall, how well would you say you are managing financially now?

Please select one answer only

- Doing alright
- Just about getting by
- Finding it quite difficult
- Finding it very difficult
- Prefer not to say

Thinking about your household's financial situation over the next few years up to 2030, do you expect it to get

Please select one answer only

- A lot worse
- A bit worse
- Stay the same
- A bit better
- A lot better
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

How easy or difficult is it for you to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill:

Please select one answer only

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

□ Proposed changes to your water/sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030.

Please now refer to the separately included graph

The next set of questions are about proposed changes to your water & sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030. The chart provided shows these changes. It also shows how inflation may impact on your bill, based on the Bank of England's inflation forecasts.

Water bills change each year in line with inflation.

Inflation is the increase in prices paid for goods and services over time. Household incomes also change over time.

- *If your household income keeps up with inflation (ie. increases at the same rate), then you are likely to notice little difference in what you are paying for things.*
- *If inflation increases by a faster rate than your household income, then you are likely to have less money to go around.*
- *If your household income increases by a faster rate than inflation, then you are likely to have more money to go around.*

The Bank of England aims to keep inflation at 2%, but it has recently been much higher than this. As well as changing by inflation each year, bills change by an amount set by Ofwat (the water regulator) as part of their price review process every five years.

The proposed bills you will see from 2025 to 2030 include the Bank of England forecasts for inflation from 2025 to 2030, and proposed amounts to cover the investment in water and sewerage services needed over the next few years.

The attached chart shows the expected increase in your water/sewerage bill over the next few years.

The blue part of each column is what the underlying change to your bills would look like if there were no inflation. The orange part is what inflation will add on top. So your actual bill would be the two parts added together.

The figure above each bar represents the total expected bill amount (the blue plus the orange)

If you currently receive financial support with your water bill, please note that this bill profile is based on the financial support scheme you are currently on.

Once you have read the above, and referred to the attached chart, please continue on the following page.

How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills?

Please select one answer only

Very easy **Please skip question 12**

Fairly easy **Please skip question 12**

Neither easy nor difficult **Please go to Question 12**

Fairly difficult **Please go to Question 12**

Very difficult **Please go to Question 12**

Don't know

Please only answer this question if you have selected neither easy nor difficult, fairly difficult or very difficult at Question 11 (Q11 above)

Which of the following do you think you would need to do to pay for the increase in your water bills between 2025 and 2030

Please select all that apply

- Shopping around more
- Spending less on food shopping and essentials
- Spending less on non-essentials
- Cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle
- Eat out less
- Using less fuel such as gas or electricity in my home
- Using less water
- Using my savings
- Using credit more than usual, for example, credit cards, loans or overdrafts
- Ask family and friends for financial support
- Other, please specify
: _____
- Don't know

Acceptability

We are now going to ask you some questions about your views on your water company's business plan. Water companies are required to put together business plans for each five year period. The plan we are showing you is for 2025- 2030.

The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours”.

Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours

If a water supply is interrupted without warning for more than 3 hours, it would not be possible to draw water from the taps or flush the toilet; it may be necessary to buy bottled water. Sometimes business operations may be affected.

Duration without water for more than 3 hours by minutes per property.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has met its target for this metric last year

Affinity are ranked 5th of 17 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (number of minutes over 3 hours)
Portsmouth	00:02:21
Bristol	00:02:31
SES Water	00:02:58
South Staffs & Cambridge	00:03:15
Affinity	00:03:43
Wessex	00:04:12
United Utilities	00:07:58
Southern	00:09:22
Anglian	00:09:48
Yorkshire	00:10:38
Thames	00:11:03
Northumbrian	00:11:45
Severn Trent	00:12:39
South West	00:13:40
Welsh Water	00:16:12
Hafren Dyfrdwy	00:37:28
South East	01:12:33



The following slide shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:

Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours

Water supply interruptions, without warning, for longer than 3 hours

What we will do and benefits to customers

- Better manage assets to reduce stress across the network.
- Have more staff and equipment to fix problems

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030 of reducing the average time without water each year to 3 minutes per property by 2030.

Targets for Unplanned Interruptions

Duration without water for more than 3 hours by minutes per property. (A lower bar / number is better.)

Year	Performance (minutes)
2022 (Current)	03:36
2026 (Target)	03:36
2027 (Target)	03:24
2028 (Target)	03:12
2029 (Target)	03:00
2030 (Target)	02:30

The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “Reducing leaks”.

Reducing leaks

Leaks can affect customers directly if their water supply is affected. They are sometimes unnoticed if underground. But leakage is often seen in the media and has a cost to people on their bills and a cost to the environment

Leakage per property per day.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has not met its target for this metric last year
Affinity are ranked 12th of 19 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (litres per day)
Bristol	65.04
Northumbrian	76.4
Portsmouth	77.02
SES Water	78.68
Anglian	80.18
Southern	83.17
South East	87.63
Cambridge	90.67
Wessex	103.29
South West	107.71
Northumbrian	108.3
Affinity	108.65
South Staffs	113.45
Severn Trent	119.66
Yorkshire	122.91
United Utilities	124.21
Hafren Dyfrdwy	131.01
Thames	151.51
Welsh Water	158.8



The following chart shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:

AffinityWater

Reducing leaks

What we will do and benefits to customers

- Continuing to find and fix leaks
- Use smart water meters to find and fix leaks
- Better manage assets to reduce stress across the network.

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030 of reducing the amount of water lost through leaking pipes to 83.03 litres per property per day, by 2030.

Targets for Reducing Leaks

Number of litres lost per property, per day
(A lower number is better.)

Year	Current Performance (litres per day)	Target Performance (litres per day)
2022	108.65	-
2023	-	-
2024	-	-
2025	-	-
2026	-	95.00
2027	-	92.00
2028	-	89.00
2029	-	86.00
2030	-	83.03

The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “appearance, taste, and smell, of tap water”.

Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

Tap water may look discoloured or taste/smell different to usual. Although still safe to drink, people may prefer bottled water as a precaution until it returns to normal.

Number of customer contacts received regarding incidents, per 1,000 properties.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has **not** met its target for this metric last year

Affinity are ranked **4th** of 17 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (number of contacts)
Portsmouth	0.41
Thames	0.49
SES Water	0.58
Affinity	0.73
South Staffs & Cambridge	0.76
Severn Trent	0.93
Northumbrian	0.97
Anglian	1.03
Yorkshire	1.09
Southern	1.1
Wessex	1.17
South East	1.34
Bristol	1.38
South West	1.55
Hafren Dyfrdwy	1.71
United Utilities	1.79
Welsh Water	2.38

Better performance



Poorer performance

The following chart shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:

Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

AffinityWater

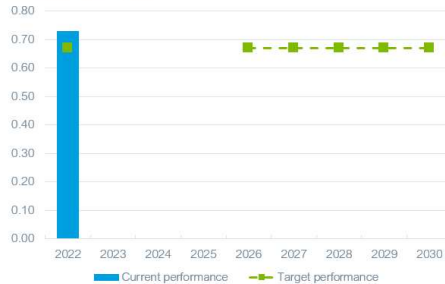
What we will do and benefits to customers

- Continuing our mains flushing programme, ensuring minimum disturbance during flushing and repair of mains pipes which can cause aerated water (white water) or disturbance of iron sediment (brown water)
- Continuing and increasing the proactive maintenance of our water network
- Working with our supply chain, third parties and developers to ensure they understand the water quality risks of working on our network and their operations meet the same standards that we set ourselves

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030 of reducing the number of customer contacts about the quality of tap water to 0.67 contacts per 1,000 customers per year, by 2030.

Targets for Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

Number of customer contacts received regarding incidents, per 1,000 properties.
(A lower number is better.)



Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

Please select one answer only

- Reducing the duration of water interruptions of longer than 3 hours
- Reducing leakage
- Preventing issues with taste/smell/appearance of tap water
- Don't know/can't say

The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan

AffinityWater

National Environment Programme for Water

Taking less water from sensitive sources

The services that water companies provide must comply with environmental laws
Water companies have a programme of work to meet these laws, which includes:

- Not taking too much water from rivers and the ground.
- Treating water to a standard that does not harm the natural environment.
- Some of the places that Affinity is allowed to take water from are close to rare types of river called chalk streams - a unique habitat and are valuable for sensitive species of animals and plants

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We are either reducing the amount of water we take from these aquifers or stopping using them as sources – this means we then need to look for alternative ways to supply water to our customers

Affinity Water has a target of reducing abstraction by 22 million litres in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030.

The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water's business plan

AffinityWater

Water Resources Management

Making sure there is enough water available in the future

The services that water companies provide must comply with environmental laws in England/Wales, as well as UK/Welsh Government policy.

Water companies have a programme of work to meet these laws, which includes:

- Making sure there is enough water available to protect the natural environment as well as providing a public water supply.

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We help customers reduce their usage, reduce leakage and bring in new supply sources such as storing more water or transferring water from outside of the region.

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan to have the chance of standpipes/rota cuts in a drought – likelihood 1 in 100 years for 2025-2030.

The following slide describes the final additional components of Affinity Water's business plan

AffinityWater

Improving Water Treatment

Improving water treatment

Water companies must meet legal requirements for the quality and safety of drinking water.

This includes improving water treatment works to deal with changing conditions in the rivers due to weather and ensuring treatment is improved to remove things such as nitrates and chemicals (eg PFAS*) that we are now required by law to monitor and remove.

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We will carry out upgrades to water treatment works- the upgrades will give us increased ability to remove more of the contaminants from the water under a greater range of river water quality conditions and remove the chemicals that we are now required to.

Affinity Water has identified these targets in their proposed business plan for 2025-2030.

Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you?

Please select one answer only

- National Environment Programme for Water (less water from sensitive sources)
- Water Resources management (making sure there is enough water)
- Improving Water Treatment
- Don't know/can't say

Based on everything you have seen and read about Affinity Water's proposed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you?

Please select one answer only

- Completely acceptable **GO TO Q23**
- Acceptable **GO TO Q3**
- Unacceptable **GO TO Q22**
- Completely unacceptable **GO TO Q22**
- Don't know/can't say

Answer is you selected Unacceptable or Completely unacceptable at question 21 (Q21 above)

What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water services are unacceptable?

Please choose up to two answers only

- The bill increases are too expensive
- Company profits are too high
- Companies should pay for service improvements
- I expect better service improvements
- The plan is poor value for money
- Compared to energy prices it is more expensive
- I am dissatisfied with current services
- The plans don't focus on the right services
- I won't be able to afford this
- I don't trust them to make these service improvements
- Other 1, please specify

Other 2, please specify

Don't know/ can't say

Answer is you selected Acceptable or Completely acceptable at question 21 (Q21 above)

What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water supply are acceptable?

Please choose up to two answers only

- The plan is good value for money
- The plan is affordable
- Compared to energy prices it's cheaper
- Their plans seem to focus on the right services
- The company provides a good service now
- I support what they are trying to do in the long term
- The change to my bill is small
- I trust them to do what's best for customers

I have been dissatisfied with the service recently but am pleased that they are making improvements

Other 1, please specify

Other 2, please specify

Don't know/ can't say

Long term investment by Affinity Water will require an increase in customer bills. Bills could increase in different ways over time. For example, there could be increases now for current bill payers, or bigger increases in the long term for future generations. Which one of the following options would you prefer?

Please select one answer only

An increase in bills starting sooner, spreading increases across different generations of bill-payers

An increase in bills starting later, putting more of the increases onto younger and future bill-payers

I don't know enough at the moment to give an answer

On the attached sheet (the graph, used at Q14), you were shown a prediction of your water bill.

Knowing what you know now about how that money is intended to be used, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills?

Please select one answer only

Very easy

Fairly easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Fairly difficult

Very difficult

Don't know

Household Demographic

Thank you. Now just a few questions to check that we are speaking to people of all types.

In which of the following ways do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- I identify in another way
- Prefer not to say

Please indicate which one of the following best describes the profession of the chief income earner in your household

- Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Established doctor, Solicitor, Board Director in a large organisation (200+ employees), top level civil servant/public service employee)
- Intermediate managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, Solicitor, Board director small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principle officer in civil service/local government)
- Supervisory or clerical/ junior managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Office worker, Student Doctor, Foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson, etc)
- Skilled manual work** (e.g. Skilled Bricklayer, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bus/Ambulance Driver, HGV driver, AA patrolman, pub/bar worker, etc)
- Semi or unskilled manual work** (e.g. Manual worker, apprentice to skilled trade, Caretaker, Park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant)
- Housewife/Househusband
- Unemployed
- Retired **GO TO Q38**
- Student
- Prefer not to say

Answer if you have selected retired at question 27 (Q27 above)

Does the main income earner have a state pension, a private pension or both?

- State only
- Private only **GO TO Q39**
- Both **GO TO Q39**
- Prefer not to say

Answer if you have selected private only or Both at question 28 (Q28 above)

How would you describe the main income earner's occupation type before retirement?

- Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Established doctor, Solicitor, Board Director in a large organisation (200+ employees), top level civil servant/public service employee)
- Intermediate managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, Solicitor, Board director small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principle officer in civil service/local government)
- Supervisory or clerical/ junior managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Office worker, Student Doctor, Foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson, etc)
- Skilled manual work** (e.g. Skilled Bricklayer, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bus/ Ambulance Driver, HGV driver, AA patrolman, pub/bar worker, etc)
- Semi or unskilled manual work**. (e.g. Manual worker, apprentice to skilled trade, Caretaker, Park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant)

- None of these
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following apply to you? We would like to collect this to ensure that a variety of particular needs are represented in the study, but you do not need to answer if you do not wish to. This information will not be shared with any third party and will be destroyed within 12 months of project completion.

Please select all that apply

- I or another member of my household is disabled or suffer(s) from a debilitating illness
- I or another member of my household have/has a learning difficulty
- I or another member of my household relies on water for medical reasons
- I or another member of my household is visually impaired (ie struggles to read even with glasses)
- I or another member of my household am/is over the age of 75 years old
- I or another member of my household speaks English as a second language
- I or another member of my household is deaf or hard of hearing
- I or another member of my household is a new parent
- None of these apply to me
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background

Please select one answer only

WHITE

- English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

MIXED

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background

ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background

OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following bands does your household income fall into from all sources before tax and other deductions?

- Up to £199 a week/Up to £10,399 a year
- From £200 to £299 a week/From £10,400 to £15,599 a year
- From £300 to £499 a week/From £15,600 to £25,999 a year
- From £500 to £699 a week/From £26,000 to £36,399 a year
- From £700 to £999 a week/From £36,400 to £51,999 a year
- From £1,000 to £1,399 a week/From £52,000 to £72,799 a year
- From £1,400 to £1,999 a week/From £72,800 to £103,999 a year
- £2,000 and above a week/£104,000 and above a Year
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

We mentioned that there would be a £10 incentive for completing this survey. This incentive will be administered by Accent, within 4 weeks.

This can be sent as an Amazon, Marks & Spencer or One4All voucher. Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Which would you prefer?

- Amazon voucher
- M&S Voucher
- One4All
- Donation to Water Aid

If you have any queries about your incentive, please contact us on 0131 220 8770.

Thank you. Would you be willing to be contacted again if we need to clarify any of the answers you have given today?

- Yes
- No

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential.

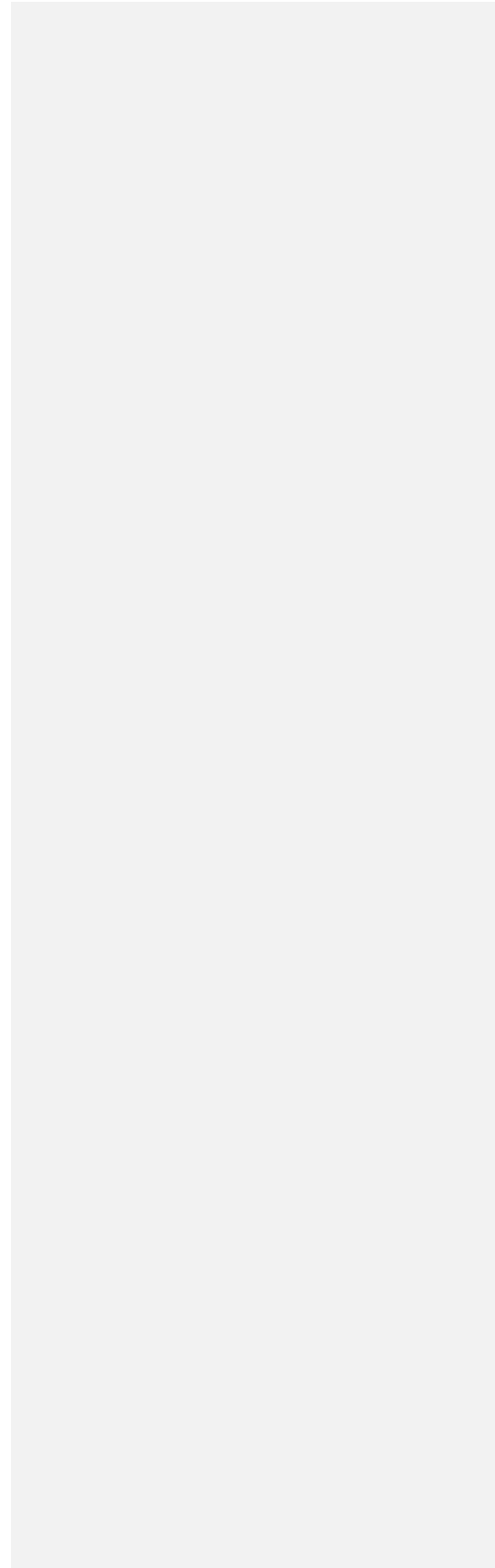
Affinity Water offers help to qualifying low-income households that are struggling to afford their water and wastewater bills. More information about this can be found here:

<https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/billing/struggling-to-pay>

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential.

APPENDIX G

Questionnaire (Affinity Thames area - Paper
version)





Acceptability and Affordability Testing

Thank you very much for agreeing to complete this survey which is being conducted by Accent, an independent research agency. This survey is designed to help Affinity Water, your water and wastewater service provider, to understand your views on how affordable and acceptable their future plans are.

We will just ask you a couple of questions to check that you are eligible to take part in this research.

Anyone who passes the qualification questions and completes the entire survey will be eligible for a £10 voucher (either an Amazon voucher, an M&S voucher or a One4All voucher). Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Details on how to claim your voucher are given at the end of the survey. Please note, your answers must reach us by the **13th of August 2023** to qualify for this incentive.

Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of Market Research Society. If you would like to confirm Accent's credentials, you can phone the Market Research Society on 0800 975 9596.

You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to and you may terminate the interview at any point.

When completing the survey please start from Question 1 (Q1) in the Qualification section.

If at any point in the qualification section you find **"Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here."** written next to the answer you have selected, this means you are not eligible to take part in this survey. If this happens – thank you very much for your time, but you are not eligible to take part and should stop.

If you have answered the question in the qualification section without that message appearing next to any of your answers please go to the "Main questionnaire" and follow the questionnaire order

Qualification questions

Any data collected over the course of this interview that could be used to identify you, such as your name, address, or other contact details, will be held securely and will not be shared with any third party unless you give permission (or unless we are legally required to do so). Our privacy statement is available at <https://www.accent-mr.com/privacy-policy/>.

Please do not include names, addresses, or other personal data in your responses to any questions, unless asked to do so.

Do you agree to proceeding with the interview on this basis?

Yes

No **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Do you or any of your close family work in market research or for a water company?

Yes **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

No

How old are you?

Please enter your age on the line below

Under 18 **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Prefer not to say **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Are you solely or jointly responsible for paying your household's water and sewerage bill?

Yes

No, I am not responsible for paying the bill **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Don't know **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Are you currently charged for water through a water meter?

Yes

No

Don't know

Affinity Water is your water supplier, and Thames Water is responsible for your sewerage services. Does this sound right?

Yes

No **Thank you for your time, it is not possible for your survey responses to be included – please stop here.**

Don't know

Thank you, if you have reached this point without having been told to stop, we can confirm you are in scope for the survey. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Main Questionnaire

Affordability

We are now going to ask you some questions about your household's financial situation.

Thinking about your finances over the last year, how often, if at all, have you struggled to pay at least one of your household bills?

Please select one answer only

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Prefer not to say

Overall, how well would you say you are managing financially now?

Please select one answer only

- Doing alright
- Just about getting by
- Finding it quite difficult
- Finding it very difficult
- Prefer not to say

Thinking about your household's financial situation over the next few years up to 2030, do you expect it to get

Please select one answer only

- A lot worse
- A bit worse
- Stay the same
- A bit better
- A lot better
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

How easy or difficult is it for you to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill:

Please select one answer only

- Very easy
- Fairly easy

- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult
- Don't know

Proposed changes to your water/sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030.

Please now refer to the separately included graph

The next set of questions are about proposed changes to your water & sewerage bill for the years 2025-2030. The chart provided shows these changes. It also shows how inflation may impact on your bill, based on the Bank of England's inflation forecasts.

Water bills change each year in line with inflation.

Inflation is the increase in prices paid for goods and services over time. Household incomes also change over time.

- *If your household income keeps up with inflation (ie. increases at the same rate), then you are likely to notice little difference in what you are paying for things.*
- *If inflation increases by a faster rate than your household income, then you are likely to have less money to go around.*
- *If your household income increases by a faster rate than inflation, then you are likely to have more money to go around.*

The Bank of England aims to keep inflation at 2%, but it has recently been much higher than this. As well as changing by inflation each year, bills change by an amount set by Ofwat (the water regulator) as part of their price review process every five years.

The proposed bills you will see from 2025 to 2030 include the Bank of England forecasts for inflation from 2025 to 2030, and proposed amounts to cover the investment in water and sewerage services needed over the next few years.

The attached chart shows the expected increase in your water/sewerage bill over the next few years.

The blue part of each column is what the underlying change to your bills would look like if there were no inflation. The orange part is what inflation will add on top. So your actual bill would be the two parts added together.

The figure above each bar represents the total expected bill amount (the blue plus the orange)

- If you currently receive financial support with your water bill, please note that this bill profile is based on the financial support scheme you are currently on.

Once you have read the above, and referred to the attached chart, please continue on the following page.

How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills?

Please select one answer only

Very easy **Please skip question 12**

Fairly easy **Please skip question 12**

Neither easy nor difficult **Please go to Question 12**

Fairly difficult **Please go to Question 12**

Very difficult **Please go to Question 12**

Don't know

Please only answer this question if you have selected neither easy nor difficult, fairly difficult or very difficult at Question 11 (Q11 above)

Which of the following do you think you would need to do to pay for the increase in your water bills between 2025 and 2030

Please select all that apply

- Shopping around more
- Spending less on food shopping and essentials
- Spending less on non-essentials
- Cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle
- Eat out less
- Using less fuel such as gas or electricity in my home
- Using less water
- Using my savings
- Using credit more than usual, for example, credit cards, loans or overdrafts
- Ask family and friends for financial support
- Other, please specify
: _____
- Don't know

Acceptability

We are now going to ask you some questions about your views on your water company's business plan. Water companies are required to put together business plans for each five year period. The plan we are showing you is for 2025- 2030.

The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours”.

Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours

If a water supply is interrupted without warning for more than 3 hours, it would not be possible to draw water from the taps or flush the toilet; it may be necessary to buy bottled water. Sometimes business operations may be affected.

Duration without water for more than 3 hours by minutes per property.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has met its target for this metric last year

Affinity are ranked 5th of 17 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (number of minutes over 3 hours)	
Portsmouth	00:02:21	Better performance ↑ ↓ Poorer performance
Bristol	00:02:31	
SES Water	00:02:58	
South Staffs & Cambridge	00:03:15	
Affinity	00:03:43	
Wessex	00:04:12	
United Utilities	00:07:58	
Southern	00:09:22	
Anglian	00:09:48	
Yorkshire	00:10:38	
Thames	00:11:03	
Northumbrian	00:11:45	
Severn Trent	00:12:39	
South West	00:13:40	
Welsh Water	00:16:12	
Hafren Dyfrdwy	00:37:28	
South East	01:12:33	

The following slide shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:

Water supply interruptions lasting longer than 3 hours

AffinityWater

Water supply interruptions, without warning, for longer than 3 hours

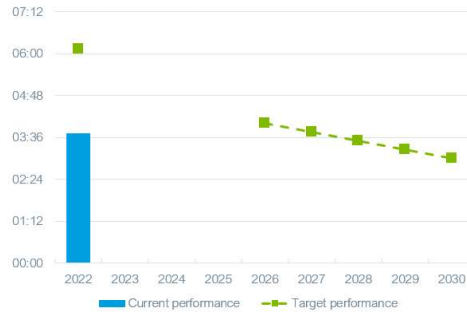
What we will do and benefits to customers

- Better manage assets to reduce stress across the network.
- Have more staff and equipment to fix problems

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030 of reducing the average time without water each year to 3 minutes per property by 2030.

Targets for Unplanned Interruptions

Duration without water for more than 3 hours by minutes per property. (A lower bar / number is better.)



The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “Reducing leaks”.

Reducing leaks

Leaks can affect customers directly if their water supply is affected. They are sometimes unnoticed if underground. But leakage is often seen in the media and has a cost to people on their bills and a cost to the environment

Leakage per property per day.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity has not met its target for this metric last year
Affinity are ranked 12 th of 19 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (litres per day)
Bristol	65.04
Northumbrian	76.4
Portsmouth	77.02
SES Water	78.68
Anglian	80.18
Southern	83.17
South East	87.63
Cambridge	90.67
Wessex	103.29
South West	107.71
Northumbrian	108.3
Affinity	108.65
South Staffs	113.45
Severn Trent	119.66
Yorkshire	122.91
United Utilities	124.21
Hafren Dyfrdwy	131.01
Thames	151.51
Welsh Water	158.8

Better performance



Poorer performance

The following chart shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:

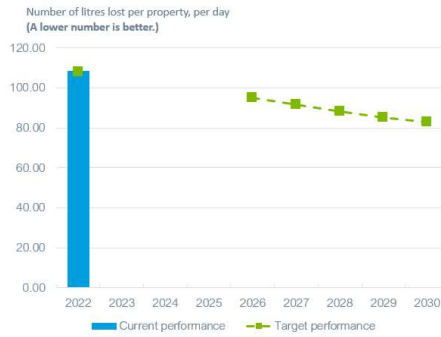
Reducing leaks

What we will do and benefits to customers

- Continuing to find and fix leaks
- Use smart water meters to find and fix leaks
- Better manage assets to reduce stress across the network.

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030 of reducing the amount of water lost through leaking pipes to 83.03 litres per property per day, by 2030.

Targets for Reducing Leaks



The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of “appearance, taste, and smell, of tap water”.

Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

Tap water may look discoloured or taste/smell different to usual. Although still safe to drink, people may prefer bottled water as a precaution until it returns to normal.

Number of customer contacts received regarding incidents, per 1,000 properties.

Companies with the lowest numbers perform better

Affinity **has not** met its target for this metric last year

Affinity are ranked 4th of 17 companies on this measure

Company	Performance (number of contacts)
Portsmouth	0.41
Thames	0.49
SES Water	0.58
Affinity	0.73
South Staffs & Cambridge	0.76
Severn Trent	0.93
Northumbrian	0.97
Anglian	1.03
Yorkshire	1.09
Southern	1.1
Wessex	1.17
South East	1.34
Bristol	1.38
South West	1.55
Hafren Dyfrdwy	1.71
United Utilities	1.79
Welsh Water	2.38

Better performance



Poorer performance

The following chart shows what Affinity Water is proposing doing to improve things:

Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

AffinityWater

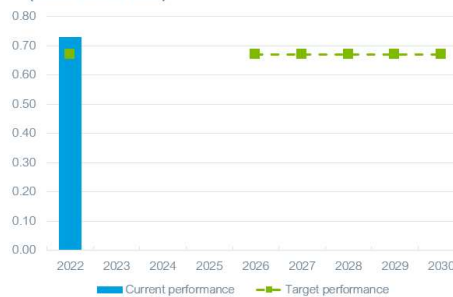
What we will do and benefits to customers

- Continuing our mains flushing programme, ensuring minimum disturbance during flushing and repair of mains pipes which can cause aerated water (white water) or disturbance of iron sediment (brown water)
- Continuing and increasing the proactive maintenance of our water network
- Working with our supply chain, third parties and developers to ensure they understand the water quality risks of working on our network and their operations meet the same standards that we set ourselves

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030 of reducing the number of customer contacts about the quality of tap water to 0.67 contacts per 1,000 customers per year, by 2030.

Targets for Appearance, taste and smell of tap water

Number of customer contacts received regarding incidents, per 1,000 properties.
(A lower number is better.)



Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you? **SINGLECODE, RANDOMISE WITH REVERSE ORDER EXCEPT FOR DON'T KNOW**

Please select one answer only

Reducing the duration of water interruptions of longer than 3 hours
Reducing leakage
Preventing issues with taste/smell/appearance of tap water
Don't know/can't say

The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan

AffinityWater

National Environment Programme for Water

Taking less water from sensitive sources

The services that water companies provide must comply with environmental laws
Water companies have a programme of work to meet these laws, which includes:

- Not taking too much water from rivers and the ground.
- Treating water to a standard that does not harm the natural environment.
- Some of the places that Affinity is allowed to take water from are close to rare types of river called chalk streams - a unique habitat and are valuable for sensitive species of animals and plants

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We are either reducing the amount of water we take from these aquifers or stopping using them as sources – this means we then need to look for alternative ways to supply water to our customers

Affinity Water has a target of reducing abstraction by 22 million litres in its proposed business plan for 2025-2030.

The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water's business plan

AffinityWater

Water Resources Management

Making sure there is enough water available in the future

The services that water companies provide must comply with environmental laws in England/Wales, as well as UK/Welsh Government policy.

Water companies have a programme of work to meet these laws, which includes:

- Making sure there is enough water available to protect the natural environment as well as providing a public water supply.

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We help customers reduce their usage, reduce leakage and bring in new supply sources such as storing more water or transferring water from outside of the region.

Affinity Water has a target in its proposed business plan to have the chance of standpipes/rota cuts in a drought – likelihood 1 in 100 years for 2025-2030.

The following slide describes the final additional components of Affinity Water's business plan

AffinityWater

Improving Water Treatment

Improving water treatment

Water companies must meet legal requirements for the quality and safety of drinking water.

This includes improving water treatment works to deal with changing conditions in the rivers due to weather and ensuring treatment is improved to remove things such as nitrates and chemicals (eg PFAS*) that we are now required by law to monitor and remove.

What we will do and benefits to customers

- We will carry out upgrades to water treatment works- the upgrades will give us increased ability to remove more of the contaminants from the water under a greater range of river water quality conditions and remove the chemicals that we are now required to.

Affinity Water has identified these targets in their proposed business plan for 2025-2030.

Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you?

Please select one answer only

- National Environment Programme for Water (less water from sensitive sources)
- Water Resources management (making sure there is enough water)
- Improving Water Treatment
- Don't know/can't say

Based on everything you have seen and read about Affinity Water's proposed business plan, how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you?

Please select one answer only

- Completely acceptable **GO TO Q23**
- Acceptable **GO TO Q3**
- Unacceptable **GO TO Q22**
- Completely unacceptable **GO TO Q22**
- Don't know/can't say

Answer is you selected Unacceptable or Completely unacceptable at question 21 (Q21 above)

What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water services are unacceptable?

Please choose up to two answers only

- The bill increases are too expensive
- Company profits are too high
- Companies should pay for service improvements
- I expect better service improvements
- The plan is poor value for money
- Compared to energy prices it is more expensive
- I am dissatisfied with current services
- The plans don't focus on the right services
- I won't be able to afford this
- I don't trust them to make these service improvements
- Other 1, please specify

Other 2, please specify

Don't know/ can't say

Answer is you selected Acceptable or Completely acceptable at question 21 (Q21 above)

What are the two main reasons that you feel the proposals for your water supply are acceptable?

Please choose up to two answers only

- The plan is good value for money
- The plan is affordable
- Compared to energy prices it's cheaper
- Their plans seem to focus on the right services
- The company provides a good service now
- I support what they are trying to do in the long term
- The change to my bill is small
- I trust them to do what's best for customers

I have been dissatisfied with the service recently but am pleased that they are making improvements

Other 1, please specify

Other 2, please specify

Don't know/ can't say

Long term investment by Affinity Water will require an increase in customer bills. Bills could increase in different ways over time. For example, there could be increases now for current bill payers, or bigger increases in the long term for future generations. Which one of the following options would you prefer?

Please select one answer only

An increase in bills starting sooner, spreading increases across different generations of bill-payers

An increase in bills starting later, putting more of the increases onto younger and future bill-payers

I don't know enough at the moment to give an answer

On the attached sheet (the graph, used at Q14), you were shown a prediction of your water bill.

Knowing what you know now about how that money is intended to be used, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for you to afford these water/sewerage bills?

Please select one answer only

Very easy

Fairly easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Fairly difficult

Very difficult

Don't know

Household Demographic

Thank you. Now just a few questions to check that we are speaking to people of all types.

In which of the following ways do you identify?

- Female
- Male
- I identify in another way
- Prefer not to say

Please indicate which one of the following best describes the profession of the chief income earner in your household

- Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Established doctor, Solicitor, Board Director in a large organisation (200+ employees), top level civil servant/public service employee)
- Intermediate managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, Solicitor, Board director small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principle officer in civil service/local government)
- Supervisory or clerical/ junior managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Office worker, Student Doctor, Foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson, etc)
- Skilled manual work** (e.g. Skilled Bricklayer, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bus/Ambulance Driver, HGV driver, AA patrolman, pub/bar worker, etc)
- Semi or unskilled manual work** (e.g. Manual worker, apprentice to skilled trade, Caretaker, Park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant)
- Housewife/Househusband
- Unemployed
- Retired **GO TO Q38**
- Student
- Prefer not to say

Answer if you have selected retired at question 27 (Q27 above)

- Does the main income earner have a state pension, a private pension or both?
- State only
 - Private only **GO TO Q39**
 - Both **GO TO Q39**
 - Prefer not to say

Answer if you have selected private only or Both at question 28 (Q28 above)

How would you describe the main income earner's occupation type before retirement?

- Higher managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Established doctor, Solicitor, Board Director in a large organisation (200+ employees), top level civil servant/public service employee)
- Intermediate managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, Solicitor, Board director small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principle officer in civil service/local government)
- Supervisory or clerical/ junior managerial/ professional/ administrative** (e.g. Office worker, Student Doctor, Foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson, etc)
- Skilled manual work** (e.g. Skilled Bricklayer, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bus/ Ambulance Driver, HGV driver, AA patrolman, pub/bar worker, etc)
- Semi or unskilled manual work.** (e.g. Manual worker, apprentice to skilled trade, Caretaker, Park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant)

- None of these
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following apply to you? We would like to collect this to ensure that a variety of particular needs are represented in the study, but you do not need to answer if you do not wish to. This information will not be shared with any third party and will be destroyed within 12 months of project completion.

Please select all that apply

- I or another member of my household is disabled or suffer(s) from a debilitating illness
- I or another member of my household have/has a learning difficulty
- I or another member of my household relies on water for medical reasons
- I or another member of my household is visually impaired (ie struggles to read even with glasses)
- I or another member of my household am/is over the age of 75 years old
- I or another member of my household speaks English as a second language
- I or another member of my household is deaf or hard of hearing
- I or another member of my household is a new parent
- None of these apply to me
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background

Please select one answer only

WHITE

- English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

MIXED

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background

ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background

OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following bands does your household income fall into from all sources before tax and other deductions?

- Up to £199 a week/Up to £10,399 a year
- From £200 to £299 a week/From £10,400 to £15,599 a year
- From £300 to £499 a week/From £15,600 to £25,999 a year
- From £500 to £699 a week/From £26,000 to £36,399 a year
- From £700 to £999 a week/From £36,400 to £51,999 a year
- From £1,000 to £1,399 a week/From £52,000 to £72,799 a year
- From £1,400 to £1,999 a week/From £72,800 to £103,999 a year
- £2,000 and above a week/£104,000 and above a Year
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

We mentioned that there would be a £10 incentive for completing this survey. This incentive will be administered by Accent, within 4 weeks.

This can be sent as an Amazon, Marks & Spencer or One4All voucher. Alternatively, we can donate your incentive to WaterAid. Which would you prefer?

- Amazon voucher
- M&S Voucher
- One4All
- Donation to Water Aid

If you have any queries about your incentive, please contact us on 0131 220 8770.

Thank you. Would you be willing to be contacted again if we need to clarify any of the answers you have given today?

- Yes
- No

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential.

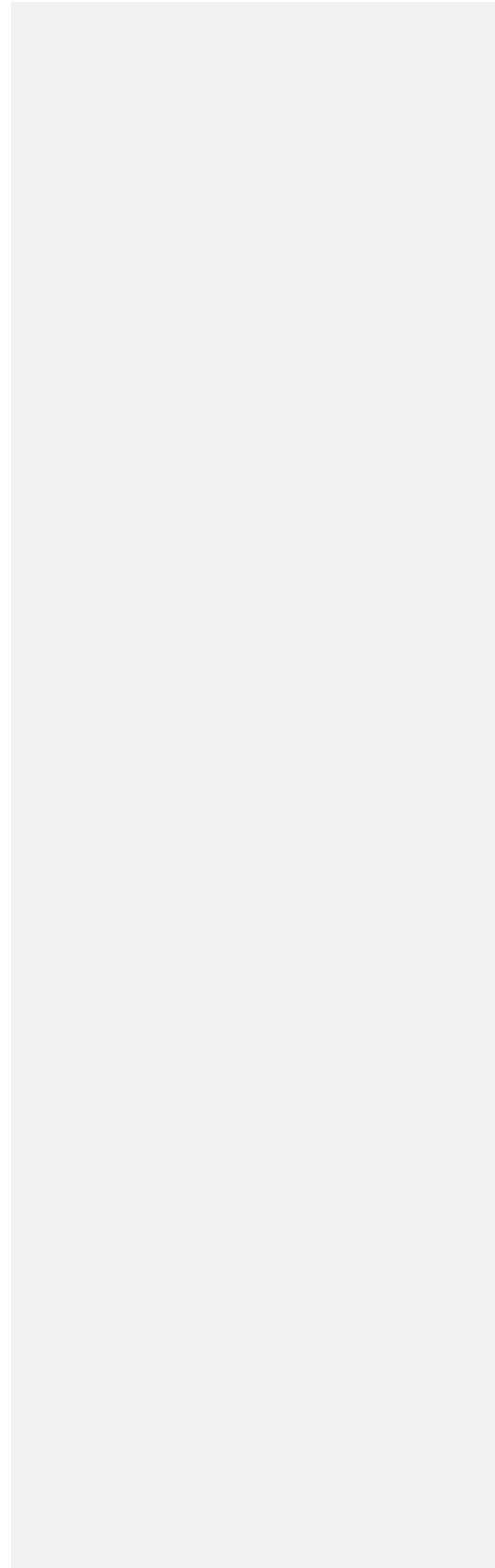
Affinity Water offers help to qualifying low-income households that are struggling to afford their water and wastewater bills. More information about this can be found here:

<https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/billing/struggling-to-pay>

Thank you. This research was conducted under the terms of the MRS code of conduct and is completely confidential.

APPENDIX H

Questionnaire (Affinity Thames area - Paper
version)



Question	Comments	Action
Q11. Thinking about your [IF HH] household's/ IF NHH] your organisation's financial situation over the next few years up to 2030, do you expect it to get...	Hard to answer up to 2030, it's a long time. (NHH participant) Depends on status of the business - how many sites, how long operating etc.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
Q13 How easy or difficult is it for [IF HH] you [IF NHH] your company/organisation to afford to pay your current water and sewerage bill:	One participant felt as though by answering this questions AW could use the data to put their charges up.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
Q13A (inflation text and bar chart)	It's a lot of information to read.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
	Not noticing the key for the graph (blue/orange).	
	Difficult to gauge increase by %.	
	Difficult to tell what the inflation % is each year.	
	A 40% increase over 6-7 years is outrageous.	
	AW are covering up the increase by not having annotation.	
Q14. How easy or difficult do you think it would be for [IF HH] you [IF NHH] your company/organisation to afford these water/sewerage bills	It's a lot of information to read.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
	Difficult to gauge over a long period and uncertainty with the cost of living and personal circumstances.	
	If other bills/spending go up by this much the answer is different.	
Q16. Unplanned Water Supply Interruptions. The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of "Unplanned Water Supply Interruptions", against both their target and also the other water companies.	Some participants felt as though it's something they have no choice over.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question. Nb. Since cognitive testing, Ofwat have released further instruction simplifying the charts and alleviating many of these comments.
	A lot of confusion around '..duration without water for more than 3 hours.'	
	One participant was good with graphs and figures	
	Not clear what graph is showing.	
	The % is confusing - % of what?	
	Some %'s difficult to see in the blue and red.	
	Couldn't find Affinity Water on the chart.	
	Don't understand why the interruption is unplanned	
Unsure how true chart is.		
Q17. The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of "Leakages", against both	Don't know what reduce stress means – reduce stress for who or what?	This is voluntary/changeable text so consider options.
	Chart %'s aren't very clear	Guidance mandated phrasing/question. Nb. Since cognitive testing,
Not clear why Affinity are performing badly.		

their target and also the other water companies.	Who sets the targets?	Ofwat have released further instruction simplifying the charts and alleviating many of these comments.
	What is the duration/timescale of leaks?	
	One participant thought if the % was higher it was better.	This is voluntary/changeable text so consider options.
	Why haven't Affinity mentioned upgrading/replacing pipes?	
	How do Affinity find and fix leaks?	
Q18. The following chart shows how Affinity Water are performing in the area of "Water Quality Contacts", against both their target and also the other water companies.	Does not like charts/figures.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question. Nb. Since cognitive testing, Ofwat have released further instruction simplifying the charts and alleviating many of these comments.
	Confusion over the term 'contacts' – what contacts?	
	Confusion over why the graph targets do not change.	
	A lot of information to have gone through at this point – information overload.	
	Takes too long to read and understand.	
	Difficulty finding what AW's target is.	
Q19. Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you	Participant wanted to choose all three options.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
Q24. The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan; National Environment Plan for Water	What does the title mean?	This is voluntary/changeable text so consider options.
	What code of conduct do they adhere to?	
	What does "reducing abstraction" mean?	
	hypocritical due to all the news about water companies releasing sewage into the rivers/seas	
	Unsure if 22 million litres is a lot for Affinity.	
	What are the 'alternative ways'?	
Q25. The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan; Water Resources management	Too general.	This is voluntary/changeable text so consider options.
	Are there issues related to taking water from other regions?	
	What are standpipes?	
Q26. The following slide describes one of the additional components of Affinity Water' business plan; Improving Water Treatment	Thought the information made it seem like the water wasn't safe before.	This is voluntary/changeable text so consider options.
	Felt as though we jump from topic to topic without linking ideas.	
	What are Affinity's targets?	
Q27. Based on what you have just read, which of these three parts of the business plan is the most important to you?	Participant wanted to choose all three options.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
Q32. Based on everything you have seen and read about Affinity Water's proposed business plan,	Participant wasn't sure whether to consider cost when answering.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
	Difficult to answer without know how AW have performed in previous years.	

how acceptable or unacceptable is it to you?	Without showing previous years participants felt AW must be on a downward trend.	
Q35. Long term investment by Affinity Water will require an increase in customer bills. Bills could increase in different ways over time. For example, there could be increases now for current bill payers, or bigger increases in the long term for future generations. Which one of the following options would you prefer?	Don't have enough information to answer.	Guidance mandated phrasing/question
	Felt like the choice did not matter because bills will always go up.	
	Wanted option for starting sooner AND spreading the cost	
Q35A At the start of this interview we showed you a graph that displayed how your combined water and waste bill might change over the next 7 years. Affinity Water are a "Water Only" company though, and so that graph included costs for waste services that Affinity do not provide and cannot control. The following graph shows just the water component of your bill (that is, the part provided by Affinity Water).	The bill shown looked very similar to the projected bill from the beginning of the survey.	No changes recommended
	Uncertainty around inflation and cost of living.	
	Cost is heavily linked to inflation.	
	Could not find the question within all the text.	
General	Participant thought it would take longer than 15 minutes to go through all the information.	No changes recommended
General	A common trend was that many customers wanted to see Affinity's performance over their last 5-year business plan. They also wanted to know why Affinity were performing poorly in several areas and what actions they have taken so far.	Guidance mandated questionnaire limits scope to respond to this feedback/request.