



ccw

The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr



BLUE MARBLE

CCW Citizens Forum: Customers' views on water campaigns

Report on activity: November 2022 - January 2023

31st March 2023

ccw.org.uk

Foreword

In our forward work programme for 2022/2023, CCW committed to use a Citizens Forum to generate and test ideas as part of our campaign to help people make the connection between their use of water services at home and water in the natural environment.

Our Citizens Forum explored the different types of engagement, campaigning and messaging that resonated with people and resulted in action being taken. This is part of a wider ambition to develop a CCW-led campaign – or series of campaigns – to help people value water, and therefore engage in more considered use of their water and waste water services.

We tested a range of existing and past campaigns around water use and disposal of items down sinks and toilets, in order to get a clearer understanding of what types of campaign were most persuasive, as well as where campaigns were having a limited impact. This allowed us to produce a ‘communications rulebook’ alongside this report, which sets out an evaluation framework to determine ‘what works’ for water-saving and waste water campaigns.

A key finding was that there is still a widespread lack of awareness when it comes to linking personal water use with wider environmental impact: ultimately, most people are unaware of the actual reason why we need to use less water, even those familiar with and practicing water-saving behaviours like turning the tap off when cleaning their teeth. Moreover, when seeking to influence specific behaviours like disposing of wipes as well as fats, oils and greases, most people still do not make the link between their everyday actions at the sink or toilet and sewer blockages and flooding. These are challenges that need to be tackled by the water sector when setting out on campaigns to change consumer behaviours.

More positively, when looking at effective and persuasive messengers, the report made clear that, whilst there were examples that demonstrated the potential power of messengers from outside the water sector, water companies do have the credibility to talk directly to their customers about the issues that directly impact their operations and networks, if messaging is sufficiently honest, clear and, wherever possible, consistent.

These findings, together with our communications rulebook, show how water companies can take the lead in reaching out more effectively to a wider audience, helping consumers to understand both how their daily use of these services affects the environment as well as easy steps they can take to change their behavior and in doing so help protect it.

Contents

1 **Research methodology**

2 **Identifying barriers to behaviour change**

3 **Developing future campaigns**

4 **Appendix: Communication evaluation**

5 **Appendix: Communications rulebook**

Executive Summary / 1

It is increasingly important that the water industry can use communications effectively.

Effective communications will motivate people to think differently about how they use clean water and what they flush and put down the drain. This research project has sought to understand where the industry sits in terms of its ability to influence the public via campaigns and communications – and where other third parties are better placed to do so. Central to the project has been exploring how consumers respond to a wide-ranging set of recent communications.

There is no one size fits all approach.

The brief was also to understand what messages, interventions or straplines are most effective in overcoming barriers to change, to help water companies, and the water sector more widely, develop more

effective campaigns. However there are no simple solutions to engineering behavioural change – and the one size fits all approach will not work here. Furthermore, in investigating the different behaviours (water use, disposal of fats, oils and greases etc.), it is apparent that the starting point and strategy for developing campaign strategies is going to be different depending on the behaviour we are trying to target.

Campaigns need reenergising to instigate a cultural change regarding how we value water.

In terms of water saving, we have observed (in this and many other research projects) that most people are unaware of the actual reason why we need to use less water. They might be familiar with and practising norms such as turning the tap off when teeth cleaning – but the majority of people still take water for

granted. Most of the campaigns that water companies use to promote water saving are tactical, designed for a ‘mass market’ – good for reminding and reinforcing habits but not forcing cultural change about how we value water. The research has included some communications examples that do seek to ‘enlighten’ their audience with high quality executions and emotive content – notably, however, not originating from water companies. To reenergise water saving campaigns, water companies need to adopt the same discipline of brand strategy, being single-minded in the campaign’s long term aims, and consistent in how the message is conveyed across channel and to key target audiences.

Executive Summary / 2

Fat, oil and grease disposal and flushing behaviours present a different challenge.

While most people can imagine how they could save water, there is much more ignorance about flushing and disposing behaviours – and specifically the consequences of pipe blockages. Campaigns need to overcome the major barrier that disposing down plug holes and toilets is incredibly easy – and the alternatives (especially to dealing with FOGs) are not well known. There are many ‘stop the block’ campaigns used across the industry and some were explored in this research. However these appeared to have moderate relevance as most people do not make the link between their everyday actions at the sink or toilet and sewer flooding; or they think others, namely product manufacturers, need to eliminate the problem.

While some campaign examples sought to highlight the impact of sewer misuse on people and the environment – again a more strategic approach to motivating sustained change – these examples had layered messages relating to plastic pollution, use of reusable or plastic-free products that tended to confuse people.

The research also highlighted low levels of knowledge about how water use and the environment are linked.

Although there is a growing awareness of the industry’s link to causing river pollution. The industry is going to find it harder to be a credible voice in promoting pro-environmental behaviours in the context of negative media however it is increasingly important for water companies to communicate about environmental stewardship. This requires

brand building: creating both corporate and consumer-facing communications that are authentic, based on business activities and performance. Campaigns about local environments can have strong emotional pull which appears to be an untapped area for water companies.

Executive Summary / 3

It's important for water companies to tread carefully and ensure they are not highlighting their own inefficiencies.

The research considered the role of the 'messenger' and specifically where water companies have credibility and where other 'messengers' would be more effective. Water companies have the credibility to talk directly to their customers and consumers whenever the problem/behaviour relates to the water company operation (e.g. blocked pipes). However, credibility is tested when customers perceive they are being asked to act differently because of water company inefficiency (e.g. leakage). The fundamental need to reduce water use is a national issue: examples show the potential power of national and/or non-water messengers to shift the cultural view on the value of water.

Research methodology

Background

This project sits at the heart of CCW's 'People and the Environment' work programme and will be used to develop compelling campaign messages to influence 'good' behaviours on what to flush; the disposal of fats, oils and grease (FOG); and water saving campaigns.

In a nutshell, this project convened a Citizens Forum of 80 consumers to enable a dialogue designed to explore new ways of communicating about a range of behaviours – and how to connect these water related behaviours with environmental factors.

CCW appointed us to recruit and set up a dialogue with household water consumers to develop and test messages about:

1. Reducing water use in the home and garden.
2. Disposing Fats, Oils and Greases into bins instead of down the kitchen sink.
3. Disposing non-biodegradable items (such as baby wipes and cotton buds) into a bin and not down the toilet.
4. Understanding and assessing the safety and quality status of rivers and coastal waters they use (messaging/tools development)

Key objectives

**To understand how
a broad range of
consumers respond
to campaign ideas**

**To explore and
diagnose how
different creative
ideas work in
different contexts**

**To identify the
ingredients of the
most resonant
behaviour change
campaigns – and
whether typologies
emerge that could
help target
campaigns**

Objectives

Specific areas explored:

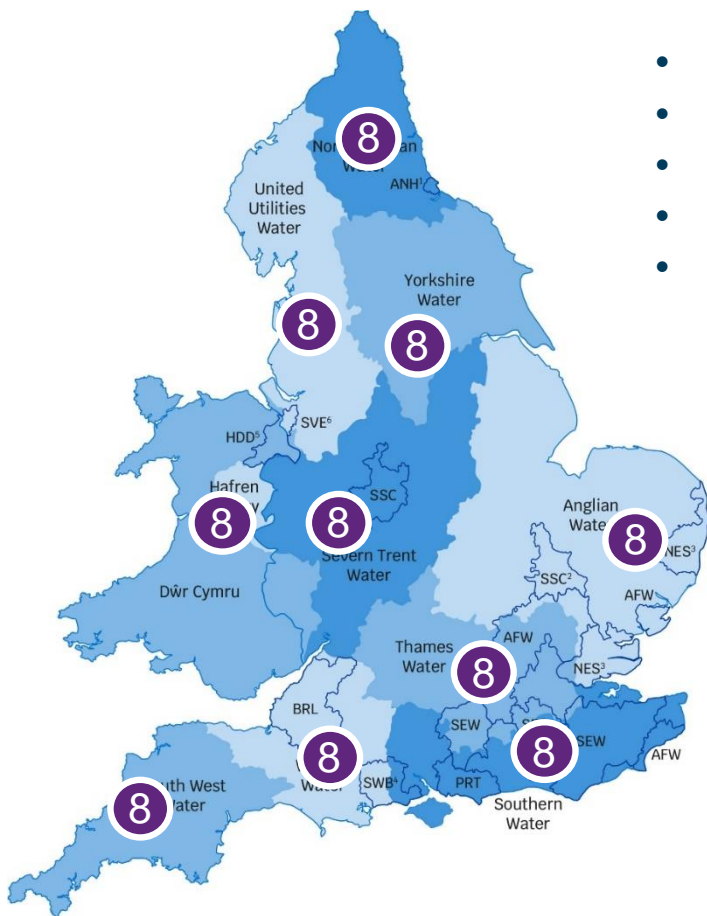
1. The types of engagement, campaigning and messaging about water, FOGs and/or flushing have resonated with participants in the past, especially any that resulted in the change of habits and behaviours.
2. Whether practical intervention programs (such as issuing water saving devices, and/or fat traps or offering discounts on those items) encourage households to change their habits.
3. The type of communications from local water companies that encourage 'good' behaviour in relation to water usage or FOGs/flushing.
4. Whether other organisations are better placed to deliver water related messages and/or whether collaborative messages would be effective.
5. How effective existing creative approaches in resonating with consumers about water/FOGs/flushing.
6. Find out how far lifestyles are a barrier to adopting good water habits, and 'sink habits'.
7. Whether different typologies of consumers respond to communications differently - and in what context.
8. Determine what drives behavioural changes besides saving money.
9. Determine how timing, channel and types of messages work in different contexts.
10. Highlighting any regional differences (eg Wales vs. England)*.
11. Identifying any tools and sources of environmental information and who provides that (eg river and coastal water quality).

Overview of Sample



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

- Sample drawn from 10 water company areas
- Sample from both the WaSCs and WOCs in the region
- We recruited a Citizens Panel of 80 respondents: 8 consumers per region
- We completed the project with 74 completes
- Fieldwork took place between November 2022 and January 2023



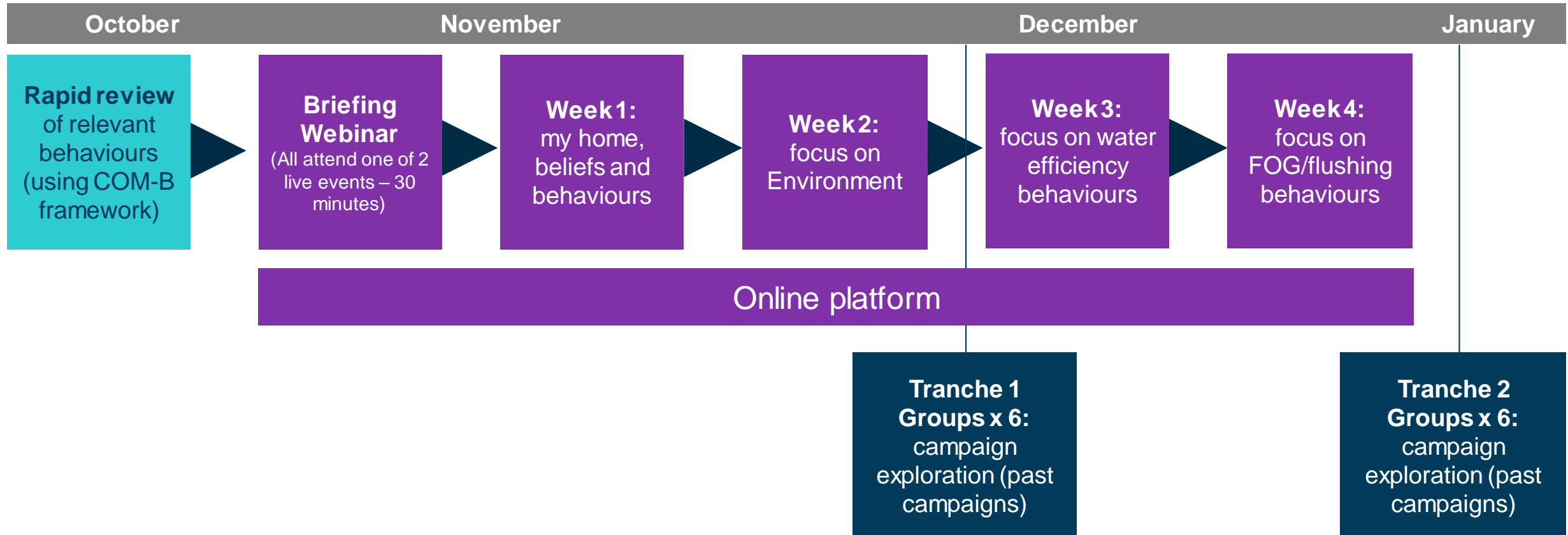
Each region to reflect a cross section of the quotas below:

	Future <30	30 - 45	45 - 60	60+	
AB	5	5	5	5	20
C1C2	5	5	5	5	20
DE	5	5	5	5	20
Vulnerable	5	5	5	5	20
	20	20	20	20	80

Other quotas applied across the sample to reflect population profile

- Approx. 60% metered (48 metered, 32 unmetered)
- Even mix of gender
- Approx 20% live in rural areas (16 rural, 64 urban)
- Mix of environmental attitudes (using 'green' scale)
- Mix of bill payers and non bill payers
- Mix of household composition

Overview of Methodology



Overview of Methodology

October

November

December

January

Rapid review
of relevant
behaviours
(using COM-B
framework*)

At the start of the project, we conducted a **rapid evidence review** of relevant behaviours. Within this review we look at:

- Past campaigns
- Campaign evaluation reports

We used the COM-B model of behaviour change as a framework to document what is already understood about individual behaviours.

Overview of Methodology

October

November

December

January

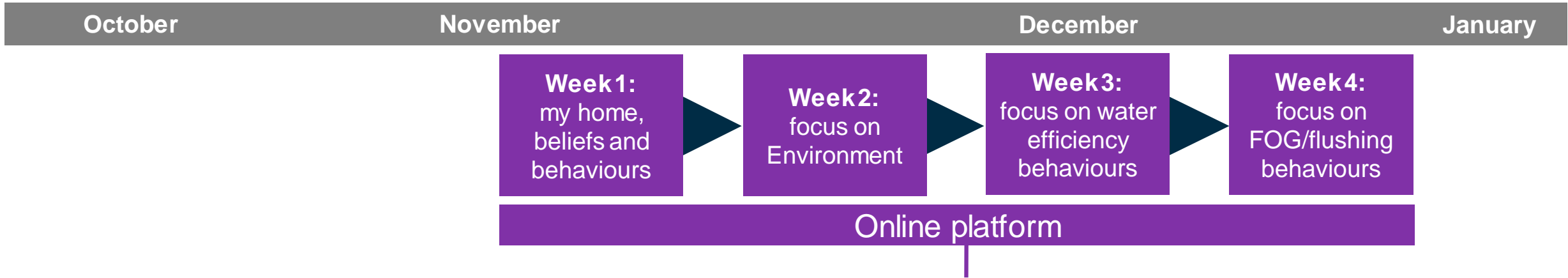
Briefing Webinar

(All attend one of 2 live events – 30 minutes)

We convened **2 x webinars** prior to the online community to allow the panel to come together at the outset to be briefed on the project.

The webinar was interactive and engaging to help participants feel involved in the project from the beginning. Members of the CCW team attended the webinar to introduce CCW and allow participants to hear from them directly.

Overview of Methodology



We ran an **online platform** with our 80 respondents over a 4-week time period.

Each week we launched 30 minutes' worth of tasks for respondents to answer/complete. We alternated the type of task (discussion vs survey vs creative evaluation) to maintain engagement and ensure respondents weren't overwhelmed with information.

Moderators closely monitored the forum throughout, encouraging participation and probing for more details where needed.

Overview of Methodology



The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

October

November

December

January

Tranche 1
Groups x 6:
campaign
exploration (past
campaigns)

Tranche 2
Groups x 6:
campaign
exploration (past
campaigns)

For the **90-minute online discussion groups**, we split our sample into 2, with half participating in Tranche 1 of groups and the other half participating in Tranche 2 of groups.

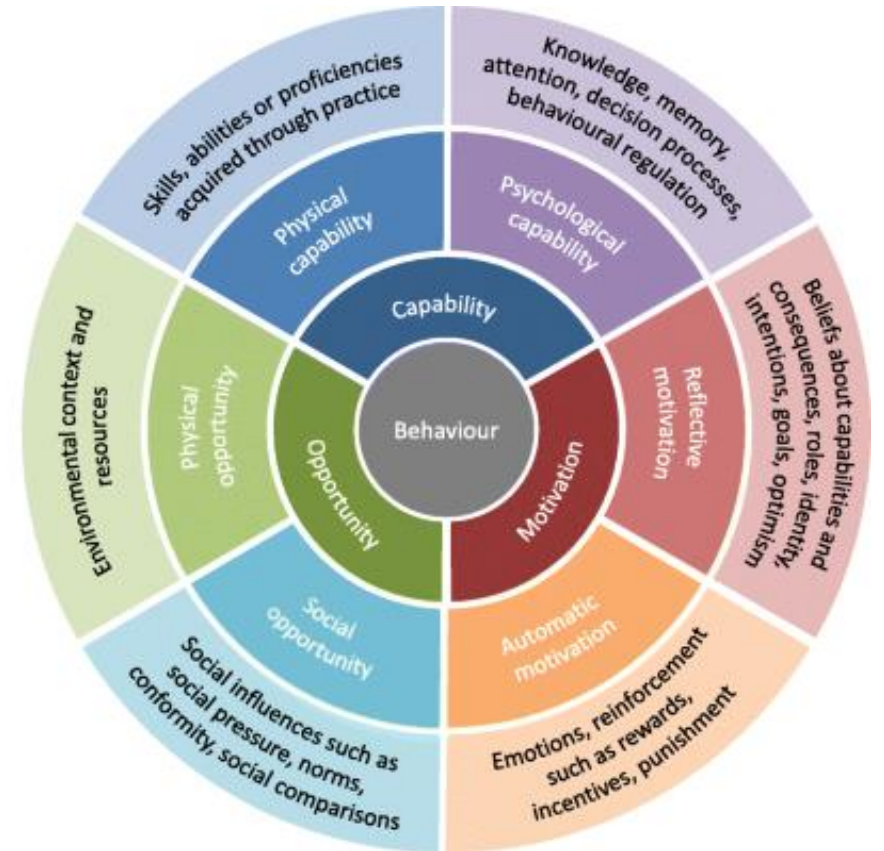
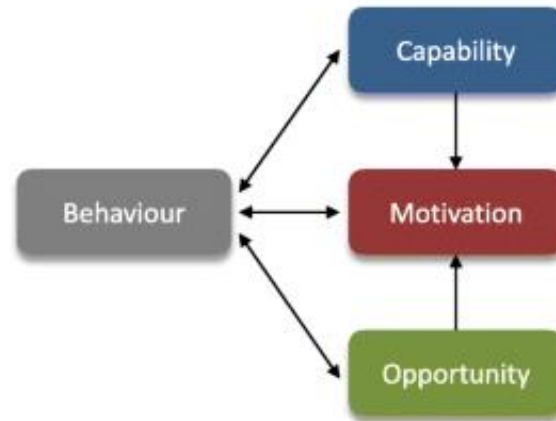
The materials chosen for testing during the groups were a combination of those received as part of a request to the industry and those found by us – we aimed to provide a variety of different campaign materials from different organisations. During Tranche 2, we worked with Community Research who were running a desktop review of communications campaigns for CCW; they provided us with a variety of campaigns to test.

Identifying barriers to behaviour change

This section covers the contextual insight gathered from analysing barriers to behaviour change using the COM-B model during the evidence review stage and the online community stage.

The COM-B model

The COM-B model is based on the theory that, for an individual to carry out any behaviour, they must have **capability**, **opportunity** and **motivation**. We will use this model as an analytical tool across all the behaviours of interest in this research.





What's working?

- Idea of saving water not completely alien - understanding that being careful with usage is the right thing to do
- Many water saving behaviours not particularly challenging to do
- Some have ingrained habits:
 - Turning tap off when brushing teeth
 - Only using dishwasher/washing machine when full
 - Reducing number of baths

- **Misconceptions and not knowing what to do can form barriers**
 - Many not sure what they are doing wrong – **don't feel like they are wasting water / they are already doing everything they can**
 - If being informed to do something you think you already do (but in reality, don't do), it's easy to ignore
 - **Lack of knowledge of water resource context and need to reduce usage:** eg climate change doesn't affect water resource, water resource not a UK issue.
 - Misconceptions include: dishwashers less water efficient than by hand, hosepipe bans stop when weather is wet
- **High water use activities provide valued benefits** for people
 - Eg long showers for mental health, hair/skincare, to keep warm in winter
- **Interventions might be useful:**
 - Free water-saving items appealing – 'fit eco showerhead and forget about it'. Need to raise awareness that devices are available
 - BUT be mindful of tat – don't want things they won't use and end up in landfill. Products/devices need to be good quality

"To be honest I didn't realise how much using water affects the future - I may seem uneducated but I really didn't. I am hugely concerned about this and definitely going to change my living habits..."



What's working?

- Most behaviours are day to day so can become second nature relatively quickly
- It's socially acceptable to 'save' – no question that it is the right thing to do to be more careful with the water you're using and not be wasteful

- **Introducing additional behaviours can be time consuming**
 - Some water intensive behaviours do save time and make things easier eg having a washing routine like turning on dishwasher every night no matter whether it's completely full
- **Some water saving behaviours take additional effort**
 - Water saving activities can feel like extra effort even if small – turning tap off when brushing teeth, collecting water when tap is running etc
 - More about mental effort of remembering to do it
- Often a **struggle to get whole family on board** – need help to convince others that saving water is worthwhile
- **Some behaviours seen as socially unacceptable** – eg not flushing loo

"It would be socially embarrassing to have a dirty toilet."



What's working?

- Quick wins with clear instructions on what to do provide an easy route – people will be more likely to act
- Linking actions to personal and environmental benefits is highly motivating
- Comparisons can encourage good behaviours eg knowing you're using more water than your neighbour/the average household

- **Difficult to see personal benefits of saving water - what's in it for me?**
 - Incentives for reducing usage could motivate
- **Saving money not always motivating:**
 - Saving on water bill from using less water often a small amount
 - If tied in with energy bills (and cost of living crisis) can be more effective
- **Environmental reasons can be motivating** but people need to understand the specific positive impact on nature/wildlife, particularly in local area
- Understanding where they sit in the wider context can be motivating
 - Am I using more than average? How much am I saving compared to before?
- **Idea that 'other' people or businesses waste water reduces motivation**
 - Seeing / hearing about water leaks can reduce motivation
 - Bad press about water companies can undermine motivation – don't like to be told to change behaviour given water companies' reputation
- **When hygiene feels compromised, motivation can drop**
 - eg not flushing the loo, bathing less or for less time, washing clothes on shorter washes or less frequently

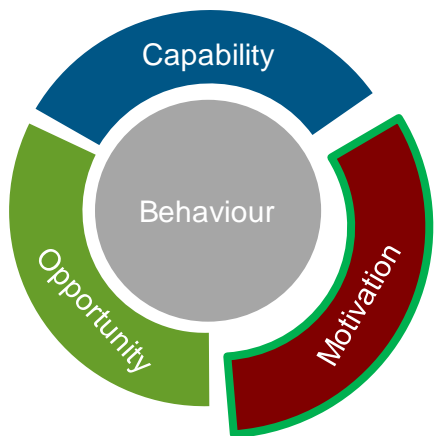
"I think if we had something that showed how much it costs for a bath, running tap for washing up etc then my family would be more likely to adopt these behaviours."

"I always wonder, doing these small changes, whether its actually having a big effect compared to big companies' usage."

What resonates...



Government of Balearic Islands
Can a Suitcase make you think?
Video campaign

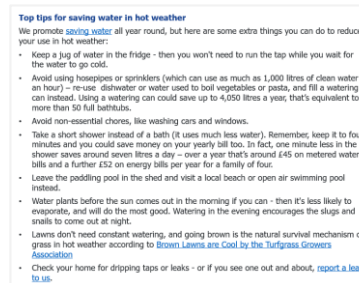


Example of water saving creating **motivation**:

- Clear motive to save water
- Everybody being told on arrival: responsibility of ALL
- Documentary style gives reality: people like me

Ad provides ideas for what to do – but these are self-evident to most (shorter showers etc)

What doesn't resonate...



Southern Water
Top tips for saving water in hot weather *Webpage*

Example of water saving lacking **motivation**:

- Content includes multiple and varied tips on **how** to save
- But doesn't highlight what the benefits are (for you, for the environment)
- Heavy text format is easy to ignore – overwhelming and unengaging

Ad shows what to do but doesn't convince on why you should do it





What's working?

- Limited knowledge and tools in this area – not a lot working well

- **There is a distinct lack of knowledge around water quality and water pollution**
 - For many, this isn't something they've thought about before
- **When it comes to river water quality, most assume what you see is what you get**
 - If the river looks clean/clear, it's probably good quality water
 - Conversely, if the river looks muddy, it's assumed that the water is poor quality (when we know this isn't always the case)
- **When prompted to find information on river quality, many found the data difficult to interpret**
 - Most found information was written for experts and wasn't 'accessible' to the average person
- **There is no well-known authority to provide information on water quality and water pollution**

"The water isn't very clean and has a lot of sewage spilling into it. I also didn't realise that it had so much sewage spilling into it; last year raw sewage was reported to have spilled into the river Nene 312 times in the Peterborough area."



What's working?

- Opportunities to act are limited; action relies quite heavily on right place and right time

- **Within communities, people generally aren't taking action to protect rivers and local environments against water pollution**
 - Generally, not a societal norm to be aware of pollution levels of local river
 - There aren't (known) prevalent groups or organisations facilitating action in this space
- **Where people know that there are problems, they often don't know what needs to be done to fix them**
- **When alerted to actions, they can be inconvenient (eg reporting signs of polluted waters)**
 - Reporting is difficult in terms of logistics, convenience and knowledge of what to report, as well as limited channels for doing so
 - General sense that the average person is not equipped to deal with this issue as it's for 'experts'

"I'd like all things electrical as we're always on our phones and laptops. A short 1 min summary of what's happening and what I can do will have a huge impact."



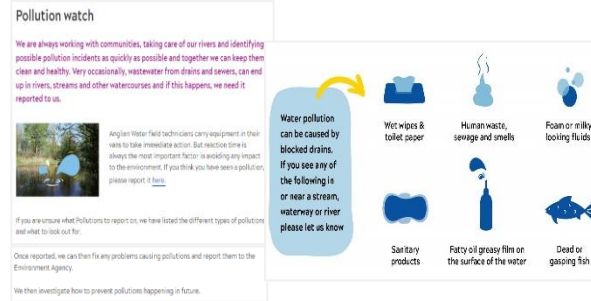
What's working?

- People do care about the environment and consider it important
- Around half of our sample said the water quality of their local river is important to them
 - This was significantly higher for older participants – most of those aged 60+ years said it was very important to them

- **As most are unaware of the issues with river quality in their area or in general, there is limited motivation for changes to be made**
 - Even once aware, however, in the context of other issues (esp environmental) this does not take priority – often because the impact of low quality river water is not well understood
- **For some, river/water quality doesn't feel like a customer responsibility**
 - Most expect water companies to be taking charge and taking action against polluted waterways

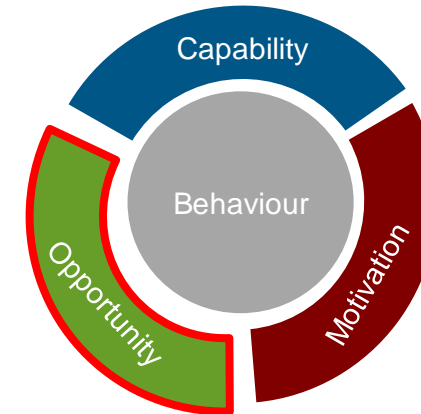
"I was shocked by the extreme news reports about [the local river]; drying up, flooding, people getting poorly from it. This makes me worry for the effect on the surrounding area or on wildlife.."

What resonates...



Anglian Water
Pollution Watch
Webpage

What doesn't resonate...



Example of environmental action campaign overcoming capability barriers:

- Clearly educates about problem of polluted waterways and provides instructions of how to report problems
- Uses diagrams to highlight key culprits in a way that's visual and easy to absorb

Example of environmental action campaign lacking opportunity:

- Limited practical options for how to report – doesn't explain the process well nor does it provide a variety of ways to do it
- Impractical in the context of typical life; in reality, would be difficult to report when pollutants are spotted eg mid way through a walk



What's working?

- Leaving FOG to cool then scraping in bin or absorbing with kitchen towel is easy to do for many
- Most will not put large quantities of FOG down the sink (eg if shallow or deep frying food) main issue is around daily use / small quantities of FOG

- For some, the **practicalities of correctly disposing of FOG can feel a little laborious:**
 - **Disposing of FOG down the drain is incredibly easy**, especially in small amounts
 - **Steps to correctly dispose FOG required take extra time and effort** (letting FOG cool then scaping in bin / absorbing with kitchen towel or pouring into jar/pot then disposing)
- **Belief that fine to put small amounts of FOG down the drain:**
 - Idea that washing up liquid and hot water emulsifies oil so doesn't congeal
- As incorrect behaviours are incredibly easy to do, **reminders to dispose of FOG properly can be useful**
- **Some unaware that they should not flush hair, tampons, or wipes**
 - A few stated they only flush wipes that say 'flushable' on the pack

"I used to do this sometimes but sometimes it was just easier and quicker to wash it away."



What's working?

- Letting FOG cool and scraping into bin requires no specific items to do - but only works with certain FOG
- Absorbing oil also easy as most have kitchen towel at home - but only works with small quantities of FOG
- Installing plug strainer for hair is easy – ‘fit and forget’

- Sometimes **need specific items to dispose of FOG and unflushables correctly:**
 - Kitchen towel or jar/pot for FOG; plug strainer for hair; toilet bin for wipes and tampons
 - Though not always an issue as widely available
- **Concerns about not recycling glass jars/pots if using to collect FOG and putting in bin**
 - Suggestions of biodegradable containers
- For some, **smell** of oil collected in glass jar or scraped into bin can be **off putting**, affecting motivation
- **No sense of widespread ‘social norms’** around correct disposal of FOG and other unflushables
 - Sense of social responsibility often present after being informed of damage that FOG and unflushables can do

“I get most of the oil off with the towel then wash with a little detergent and hot water. It's as clean but a whole lot of fat hadn't gone into the system.”



What's working?

- Once informed, knowing about damaging effects of disposing of FOG and unflushables down the drain is enough motivation to change behaviours
- Experiencing issues due to FOG and unflushables motivates behaviour change – sharing bad experiences may motivate others

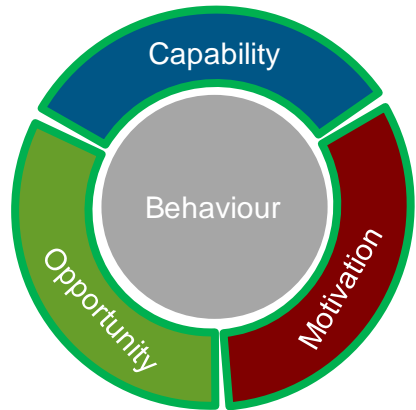
- **No instant proof or sign that changing to good FOG and unflushable disposal behaviours makes things better**
 - Process to reach serious consequences takes a long time, and may never affect main offenders
 - Some have experienced blockage issues due to FOG and unflushables in the past which provides motivation
- **Feels like a small issue** – not aware that a small amount can make a big difference when added up
- **Once negative consequences of putting FOG and unflushables down the drain is known, this is highly motivating**
 - But most do not think of it on a daily basis
 - Especially with sentiment of 'a little won't matter'

"It does take a bit longer to collect the oil with a kitchen towel and then throw it in the bin but after learning about how much it damages the pipes I will continue doing so.."

What resonates...



Anglian Water
Keep it clear coastal
campaign
Video



Example of FOG/Flushing campaign creating capability, opportunity and motivation:

- Clearly shows what to do and what not to do and outlines the consequences if not adhered to
- Behaviour suggested act as reminders rather than introducing new behaviours with major challenges
- Positive and humorous tone is encouraging and motivating – all doing our part to keep our beaches clean

What doesn't resonate...



Southern Water, CCW
The Unflushables
Video

Example of FOG/Flushing campaign lacking capability:

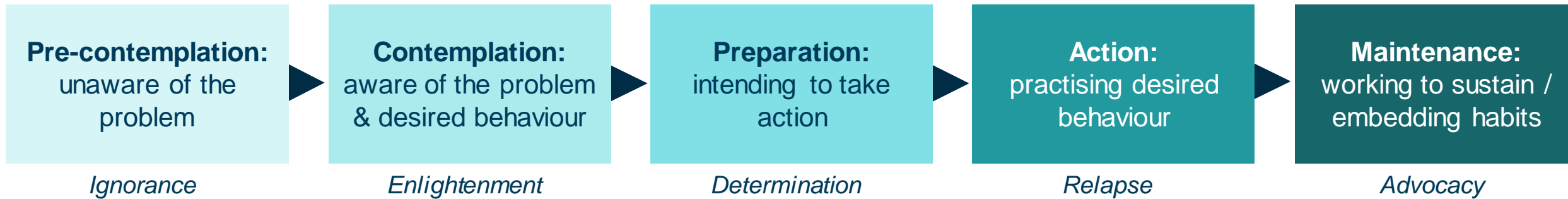
- Though the consequences of sewer misuses are clearly highlighted, customers are left without a clear call to action
- Creative execution doesn't land well, and distracts from the 'do's and don'ts' messages which are not clearly laid out



Developing future campaigns

Review of communications

Behaviour change models help us to see how communications examples are working:

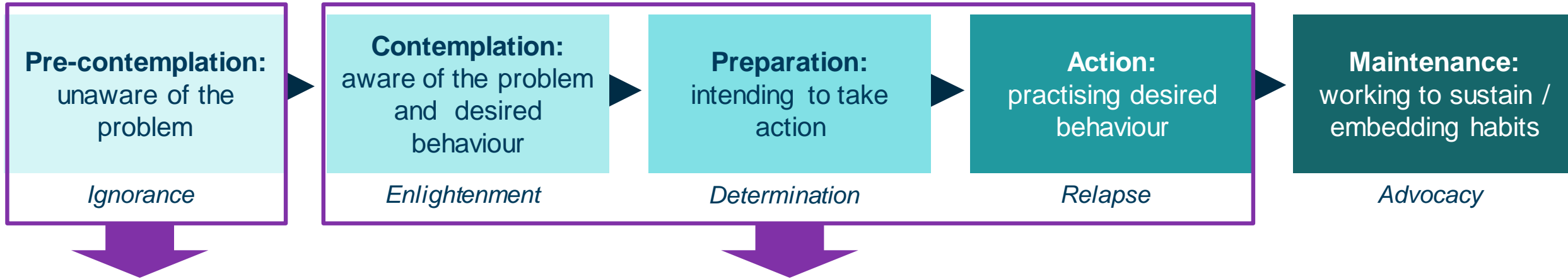


It is essential to match behaviour change interventions to people's stages. For example, if an individual is in the pre-contemplation stage it is important to raise their awareness about a behaviour in order for them to contemplate making a behaviour change.

Without intervention, consumers remain stuck in the early stages due to a lack of motivation to move through the stages. Campaigns need to help individuals progress through the stages.

We have identified in this research that consumers generally are at different stages for water vs FOGs vs flushing behaviours.

Changing the mindset



- Most consumers are unaware of the fundamental reasons why we need to use less water:
 - changing climate
 - risk of drought
 - associated environmental threats
 - mandated reduction of water use
- Every research debrief reports that **‘we take water for granted’**
- Despite this, many people display some adherence to ‘good’ water saving behaviour and some habits are well known (though we don’t know how closely followed these are)
- However, based on more general human instinct not to be wasteful, ignorance of the more fundamental problem is a major barrier to change
 - Most think their behaviour is already ‘good’; few appreciate the need to use less water
 - New cultural norms like daily showers are widening the gap between ‘good’ attitudes and actual behaviours

Pre-contemplation:
unaware of the problem

Contemplation:
aware of the problem and desired behaviour

Preparation:
intending to take action

Action:
practising desired behaviour

Maintenance:
working to sustain / embedding habits

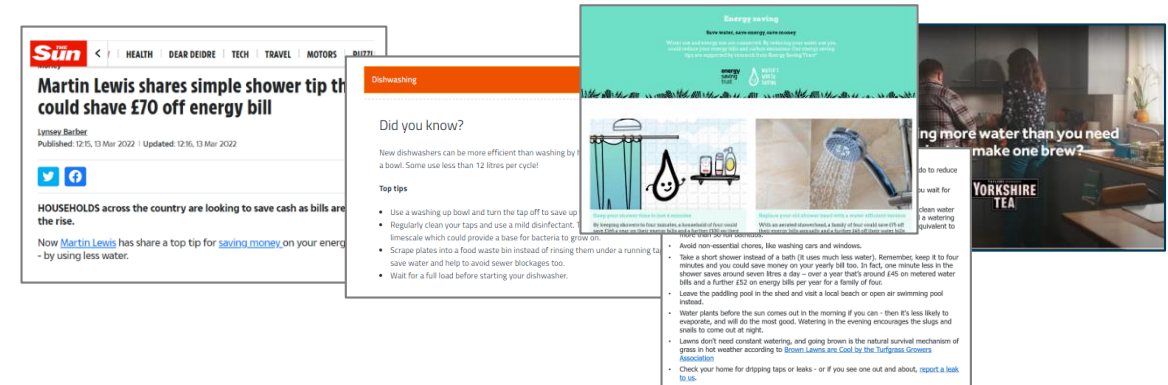
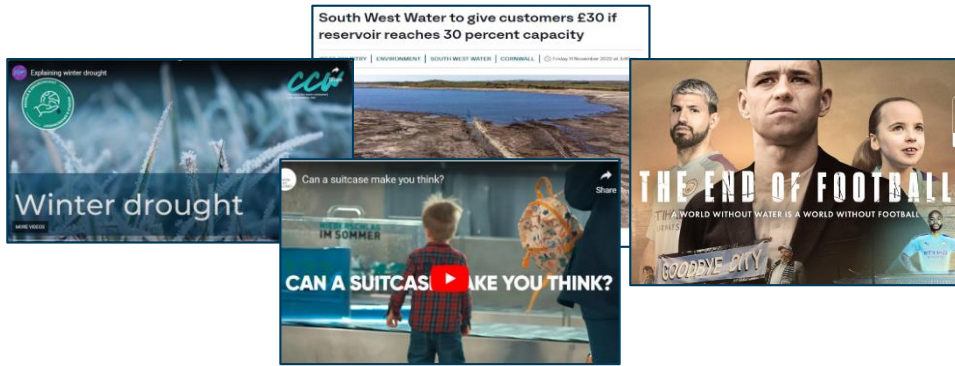
Ignorance

Enlightenment

Determination

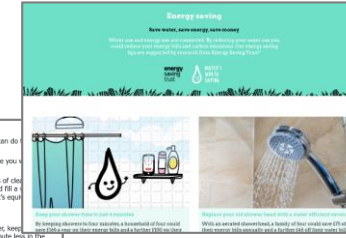
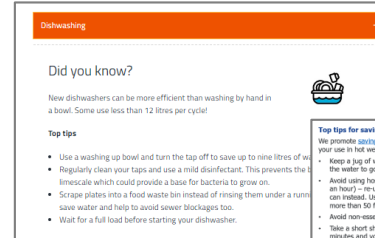
Relapse

Advocacy



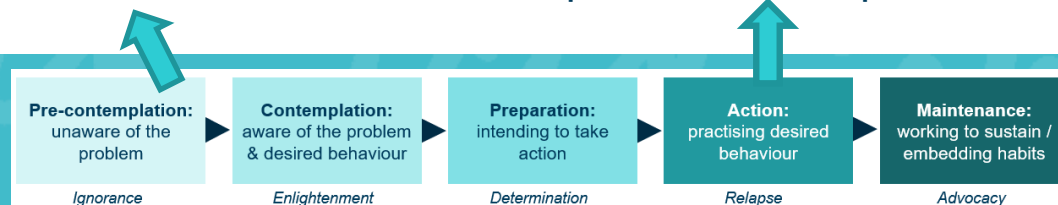
- Some of the research examples aiming to enlighten consumers about the fundamental reason to use less water: emotive; storytelling; illustrating the impact of NOT changing
- Few examples from the industry

- Most examples are providing consumers with the practical know-how to make changes
- Primarily from water companies



- These ‘enlightening’ examples have a **broader strategy to change hearts and minds**
- There is a role for non water company messengers to make this a national issue, lend gravitas and reach a wider audience
- However these examples too niche
 - A campaign coming from Man City/Xylem is confusing – what is their stake in all of this?
 - CCW is an ‘invisible’ organisation for the average person

- Water company communications (used in this research) about water saving were generally **tactical in nature**, offering hints and tips
- There is no obvious targeting
- Campaigns that focus on money saving are relatable only to bill payers, metered, those looking for (small) savings
- Tone and style more ‘public information’ and appropriate for website content
- These examples should support wider (creative) campaigns but alone are not going to move consumers through the behaviour change process
- Anglian Water’s ‘Love Every Drop’ (not evaluated in the research) is a positive counterpoint to these examples



Issue



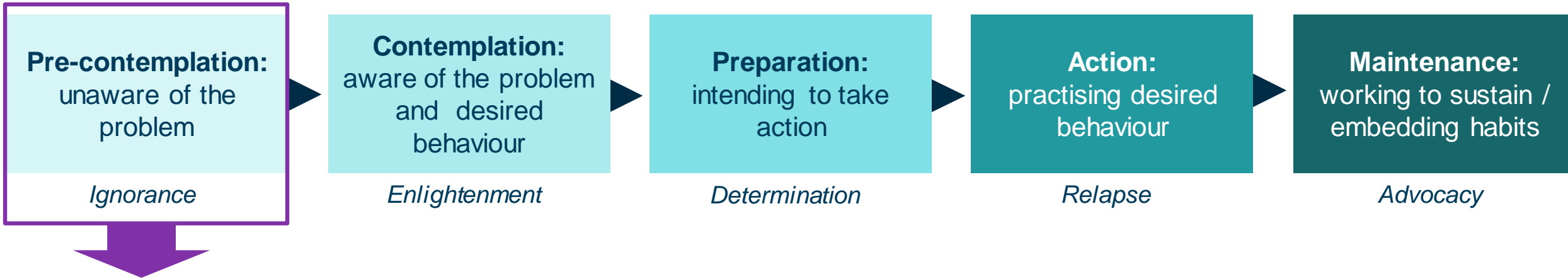
- Changing the national mindset about water needs to begin with enlightening consumers about the fundamental problem
- Currently the industry is using 'tactical' campaigns which have limited impact in the absence of 'determination' to change

Need for a strategic approach

- Move beyond communications that mainly focus on single behaviours to campaigns designed to reframe consumer mindset (ie to care about wasting water)
- The strategy should be to drive new cultural norms about the way we think about water: NOT taking it for granted. Very broad target audience (everyone)
- Need to reenergise water efficiency campaigns: more story telling about the need to shift consumer and cultural mindset, not just hints and tips

Re-energising water efficiency campaigns

- Create campaigns against a single-minded strategy that can be applied across different behaviours
- Strengthen the link between actions and benefits (personal or environmental) as these are currently weak
- Consistency key to embedding message: campaign devices (tone of voice, straplines, characters, brand guidelines)
- More tactical messaging about specific behaviours requires tighter targeting and channel choice to have impact
- Tactical campaigns will have more traction in future when households can see the benefits of their actions via smart meters (a key tool for driving 'maintenance' and forming permanent habits)



- Understanding of the issues around flushing and disposing (FOGs) is not widespread; bad behaviours often out of ignorance rather than laziness/bad routines
- With **sewer blockages**, many can't visualise problem / and haven't experienced it (rare problem / happens elsewhere)
- With **FOGs**, people don't know what to do and need solutions; effort is a barrier when using the plug hole is so easy
- Low motivation for 'good' flushing/disposing (what's in it for me?)

Campaign examples

Pre-contemplation:
unaware of the problem

Ignorance

Contemplation:
aware of the problem and desired behaviour

Enlightenment

Preparation:
intending to take action

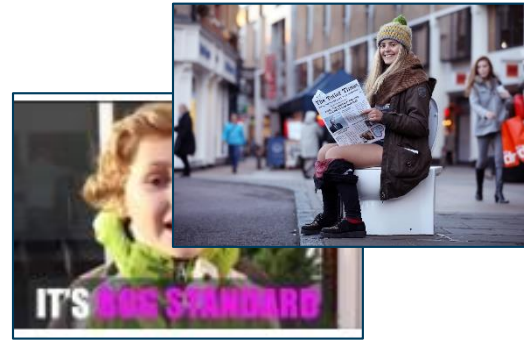
Determination

Action:
practising desired behaviour

Relapse

Maintenance:
working to sustain / embedding habits

Advocacy



- Examples aiming to enlighten consumers about the risk of blockages / environmental pollution

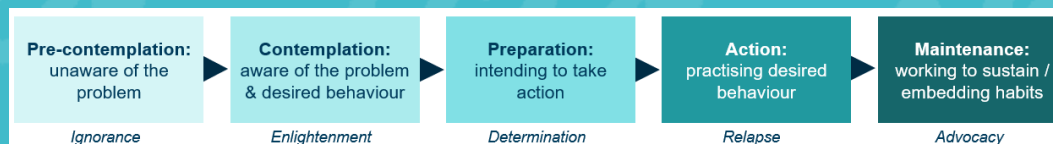
- Examples with tactical messaging: what to do and what not to do
- Primarily from water companies



Effectiveness of these campaigns undermined by executions:

- ‘Creating a monster’ Catalonian example goes some way to highlight the urgency/impact (but perplexes UK audience as style is specific to the culture)
- Plastic free periods: message confusion – is it because of the impact on natural environment and/or infrastructure of the water system?
- Unflushables: cartoon characters and longer form approach has potential to educate but humour mixed with serious messages came across as insensitive

- Blurred lines across these more tactical campaigns:
 - Plastic pollution vs sewer misuse behaviours (these are different issues to tackle)
 - Using bins and using reusable products (again, message gets confused)
- ‘Bin the Wipe’ (NWG) posters assume too much knowledge
 - Doesn’t provide clear solutions – bin the wipe or use reusable solutions?
 - In isolation the short, snappy strategy could cause confusion without enough info to clearly convey message



Issue



- This is a broad category: behaviour change relates to personal habits and purchasing choices
- Consumers feel more removed from the problem and won't necessarily benefit personally from new behaviours

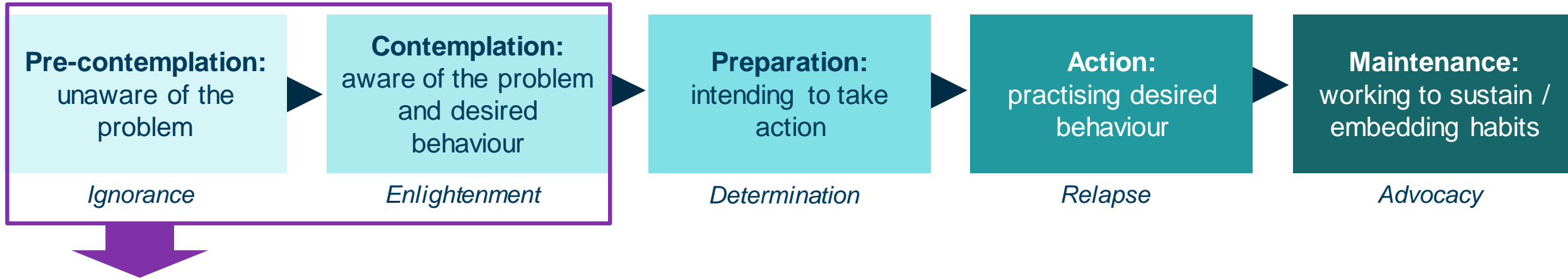
Campaigns that explain and encourage

- Campaigns need to both educate and encourage new norms – can't assume knowledge
- Making the link: our everyday actions can have a catastrophic impact; highlighting 'bad' behaviours and linking poor flushing and disposing with the anguish of blockages
- But don't just spotlight bad behaviours, communicate the good ones

Campaigns need to target specific behaviours

- There are easy solutions/alternatives/'hacks'
- Packaging symbols to help make good purchasing and disposing decisions
- Water companies have credibility and need to voice the message (it's their pipes)
- Visualise the problem – make it real (but use the right imagery: period blood is NOT the problem!)
- Size and impact of problem not understood hence requires a serious tone... and relatable
- Use straplines to be both memorable and instructive: Pee, Poo, Paper does this

Comms relating to consumer or industry behaviours?



- Low levels of knowledge about how water consumption and the environment are linked
- No awareness of river water quality information – and no associated actions
- Growing awareness of industry's link to causing river pollution (but behaviours perceived to relate more to the water companies, not consumers)

Campaign examples

Pre-contemplation:
unaware of the problem

Ignorance

Contemplation:
aware of the problem and desired behaviour

Enlightenment

Preparation:
intending to take action

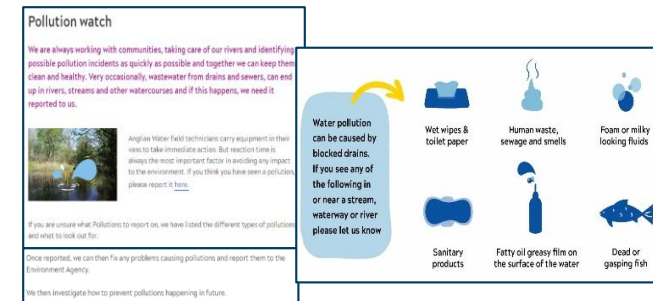
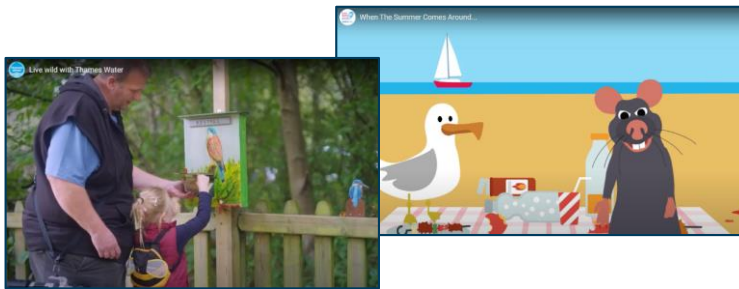
Determination

Action:
practising desired behaviour

Relapse

Maintenance:
working to sustain / embedding habits

Advocacy



- Anglian's *Keep it Clear* links consumer behaviour and pollution in the environment
- Thames Water promoting the benefits of its green wetland spaces (no behavioural message)

- Participatory campaign: report pollution to the water company

Issue



- This is separate to FOGs and flushing; the industry needs to communicate about its environmental stewardship
- Building credibility and knowledge before asking customers to participate in environmental campaigns

Water companies not currently explaining role in the environment

- Consumers don't know that water companies own and manage land – although many use and value their local reservoirs and wetlands
- Participatory campaigns (eg pollution reporting) leave some confused – are they simply passing responsibility?
- Current reputational damage of sewer discharges: image of water companies 'dumping' sewage and operational negligence – in the absence of wider perceptions of environmental protection

Role of campaigns

- Long term need for the water sector to a) educate b) increase visibility of environmental role and c) repair reputation
- This requires brand building: creating both corporate and consumer-facing communications that are authentic, based on business activities and performance
- Campaigns about local environments can have strong emotional pull: research suggests (by absence of examples) that this is an untapped area for water companies

Messenger – who has credibility?

Connected to water industry

CCW, City to Sea

- Lack of familiarity weakens the message – unless obvious what the motivation is

Water companies

- ✓ When message relates to their pipes and/or promoting behaviour that relates to sewer misuse
- Water saving comms are credible from companies but perceptions of leakage can undermine
- Reputational (brand) comms – but beware claims of greenwashing
- ✗ Participation (eg report pollution) – without context this looks like deferring responsibility

Unfamiliar

Known

Xylem, Natracare

- Creates confusion where campaign doesn't illuminate the motivation of the messenger

Yorkshire Tea, Man City, The Sun/Martin Lewis

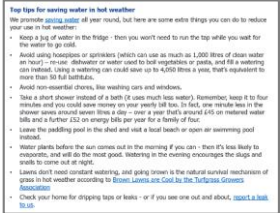
- ✓ Can lend credibility to messages – but only to those audiences who admire/'follow' the messenger
- ✓ A way to reach specific audiences – a good way to reach specific groups
- For others, link can be tenuous or confusing – unless part of (eco?) brand comms

No (obvious) water connection

How can the industry use communications more effectively?

Public information campaigns

No consumer targeting; primarily web content or simple social media ads. Minimal creative.



Campaigns that seek to change single specific behaviours. No specific targeting.

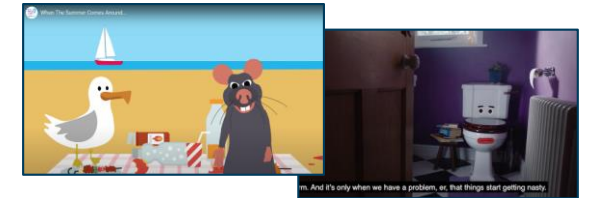


Campaigns designed for specific target groups – reflecting consumer trends, and using media channels accordingly



Brand communications

Campaigns that have strong creative and clear call to action; ability to communicate 'bigger' message about reasons to change



Currently, **most water company communications are generic**, not targeted to specific audiences. They focus on consumer actions that assume consumers are ready to change. Refocusing campaigns is necessary to create a more 'enlightened' public. Employing a more disciplined brand strategy approach will strengthen messenger credibility.

Some examples suggest water companies taking a **more strategic approach to communications**. Creative campaigns designed either to 'enlighten' and therefore create stronger motivation to change; or increasing relevance via targeting specific audiences and tapping into beliefs and trends.

Exploring typologies / 1

Figure 1 - Typologies.

		Care about water	
		3. Care about water but don't use it particularly carefully	1. Care about water and use it carefully
Don't use water carefully	D: Could do more		A: Concerned about future supplies
	E: Need more support		
	F: Underestimators		
	4. Don't care about water and don't use it carefully		2. Don't particularly care about water but use it carefully
	G: There'll always be water	B: Cost conscious	
	H: Confident of future solutions	C: Waste not want not attitude	
		Don't care about water	

This research supports the Community Research report on the complexity of attitudinal typologies

- *Attitudes to water don't always align to water related behaviours;* evidenced particularly around segment 3 (esp university educated Future customers)
- *Usage behaviour can't be predicted from attitudes;* many contextual factors affect the likelihood to engage in efficient/inefficient behaviour eg those with large gardens were more likely to view their high water usage as essential
- *Typologies are behaviour specific;* people fall into different typologies for different behaviours eg a highly water efficient shower user can happily own and frequently refill a paddling pool
- *Typologies cannot accurately reflect usage;* contradictions frequently exist in people's behaviour eg reuses water on plants, but also takes lots of baths to relax
- *Typologies can reflect demographic trends;* younger respondents more likely to care about water but don't use it carefully, older and metered more likely not to care about water but use it carefully
- *Some people need more support;* examples of misconceptions such as washing dishes by hand being more water efficient. Specific support around activities could be effective

Exploring typologies / 2

FOG behaviours are more directly linked to customer knowledge

- *There are no obvious typologies for waste water behaviour;* this relates more to awareness or lack of awareness of 'good' behaviours
- *Some very water efficient/climate aware respondents still carried out behaviours that could create blockages* due to a lack of knowledge – when creating typologies water saving and FOG should be considered separately
- *Need for support:* much more evident when talking about FOG

Segment differences?

- This research has reinforced the idea that there is not a single water/wastewater typology; instead effective behaviour change campaigns focus on specific actions and target specific consumer segments – with creative communications designed to attract the attention of those groups
- Similarly, we did not encounter regional differences (eg Welsh vs England) to the example communications - none of which had a Welsh dimension
- Where we saw differences by age or gender (highlighted in the appendix review of communications) this was usually in response to the creative execution and its relevance - most obviously when relating to period products and wipes but also for coastal dwellers and football fans



ccw

The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr



BLUE MARBLE

Thank you

Report Authors

Emma Partridge, Founding Director at Blue Marble Research: emma@bluemarblresearch.co.uk

Sonali Patel, Associate Director at Blue Marble Research: sonali@bluemarblresearch.co.uk

Oscar Maclagan, Senior Research Executive at Blue Marble Research: oscar@bluemarblresearch.co.uk

Evie Fleck, Research Executive at Blue Marble Research: evie@bluemarblresearch.co.uk



ccw.org.uk