



The voice for water consumers
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Priority Services Register (PSR) Customer Survey

December 2025

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Foreword



In June this year, water companies published their final vulnerability strategies, setting out how they plan to support customers who need extra help. We are committed to evaluating how these strategies are being implemented, including understanding people's experiences of being on their company's Priority Services Register (PSR).

To support this aim, we commissioned this research to assess whether water companies' vulnerability strategies—and Ofwat's vulnerability guidance—are delivering improved outcomes for customers who require additional support.

The research explores:

- Customers' awareness of the support they can expect from being on the PSR
- Whether they received help when they needed it
- Their satisfaction with the support provided
- Feedback on their experiences and areas for improvement

Overall satisfaction is high, with over two-thirds of customers very or fairly satisfied. However, some customers reported dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of setting clear expectations and delivering on them.

Findings show that more needs to be done to ensure customers understand they are on the PSR and what additional support they will receive. Continued communication will play a key part in this: since joining the PSR only 28% of those surveyed said their company had contacted them with information about available services to which they were entitled.

Encouragingly, almost half of customers first heard about the PSR through their water supplier, and there is evidence of cross-sector collaboration, with some learning about the register from their energy supplier. This demonstrates a positive commitment by water companies to raise awareness and work with others to do so.

This report provides a baseline of current customer experiences on the PSR. It will form part of our wider evidence base to track progress in future years and ensure that outcomes for those who need extra help continue to improve.

Objectives, sample and methodology



Objectives

CCW wants to understand:

- Awareness of the Priority Services Register (PSR)
- Experience of those on the PSR, with a particular focus on those who have received PSR services due to supply disruptions.
- Potential areas for improvement of the PSR, both in terms of communication, and the service provided

Sample and methodology



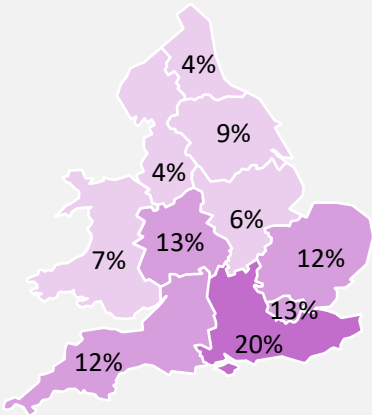
10-minute online survey

1,000 people who said they were registered on the PSR, with minimum targets of 30 in each water company area

Conducted 1st to 16th October

Male	Female
54%	46%

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
4%	9%	11%	11%	10%	28%	26%



Affinity	Anglian	Bournemouth	Bristol	Cambridge	Dwr Cymru	Essex	Hafren	Northumbrian	Portsmouth
39	105	18*	32	15*	44	34	27*	42	26*
Severn	South East	South Staffs	South West	Southern	SES	Thames	UU	Wessex	Yorkshire
123	41	46	35	54	52	107	40	38	91

Executive Summary (1)



In terms of the profile of those on the PSR surveyed in this research, over half are certain of being on the register. The most common qualifiable characteristic of those on the PSR is being of pensionable age.



Understanding of what the PSR is for and the services it provides are high, with many registrants able to correctly identify that the register is for those who would be vulnerable in the event of water supply disruption, and that services include the supply of bottled water, and advanced notice of disruption. However, some hold misconceptions around priority restoration of services and financial support with bills as a service offered.



Almost half of those on the PSR first heard about the scheme through their water supplier, though there is also some evidence of cross-supplier communication, with some being informed of the register by their energy supplier. In terms of how many got on the PSR, self-registration was the most common method, though some were recommended registration by their water supplier. There is variation in the lengths of time people have been on the PSR, with a third having been on the register up to 2 years and almost a quarter having been on the scheme longer than 5 years.

Executive Summary (2)



2 in 5 of those on the register have been contacted by their water company since being on the PSR, and over a quarter have experienced events of disruption, with planned work or maintenance being the most common event, in which the services would have been of use to them. Of those who experienced disruption, nearly half received regular updates and advanced notice.



Additional services that the PSR could provide that would be beneficial to those on the register centered around more frequent communications with progress updates, and greater links to community support for those who are on the PSR during supply disruption to provide more support. There was also some reference to financial support, suggesting that there are misconceptions around what services the PSR is actually able to provide.



Satisfaction with the support received on the PSR during supply disruption is high, with many feeling their water supplier couldn't have done anything more with the support they offered. There were some suggestions for how to improve the support received, however, with references again to a need for more frequent updates on when the disruption will end and greater organisation of alternative water sources during prolonged disruptions. Despite some areas of improvement needed, the majority of those on the PSR would recommend the scheme, suggesting that the overall experience is a positive one.



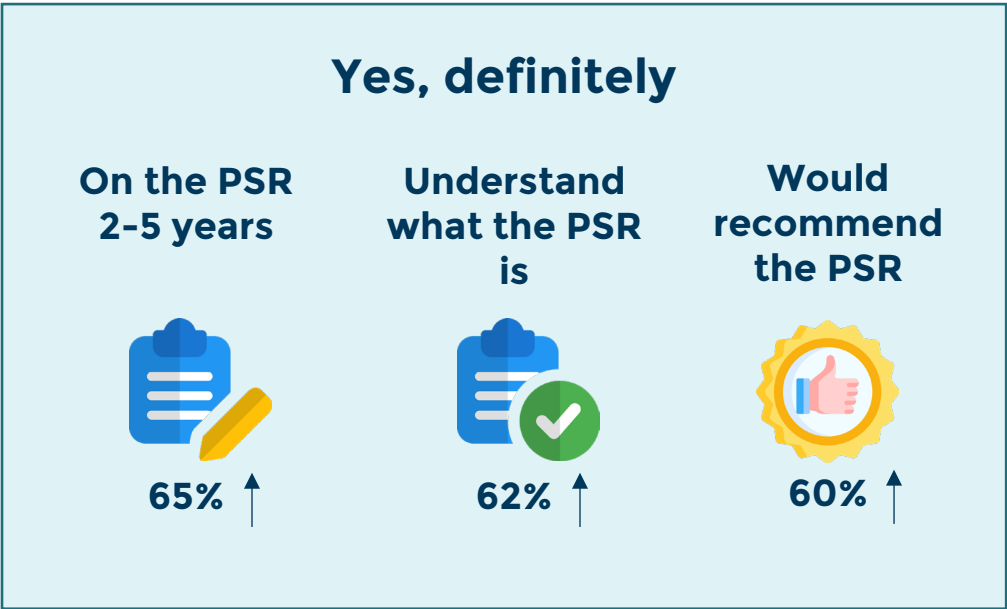
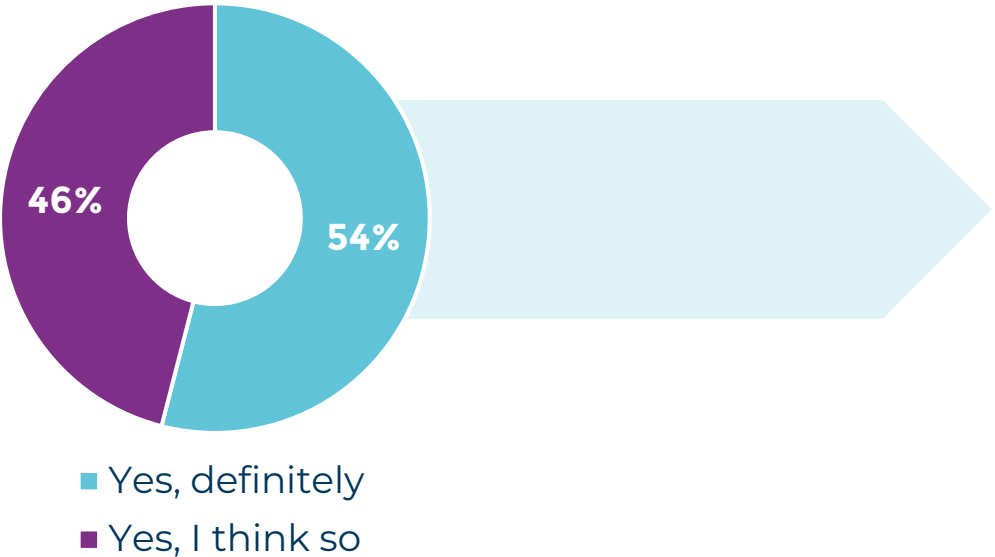
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PSR profile

Over half of respondents are certain of being on the PSR, with certainty highest among longer-term registrants



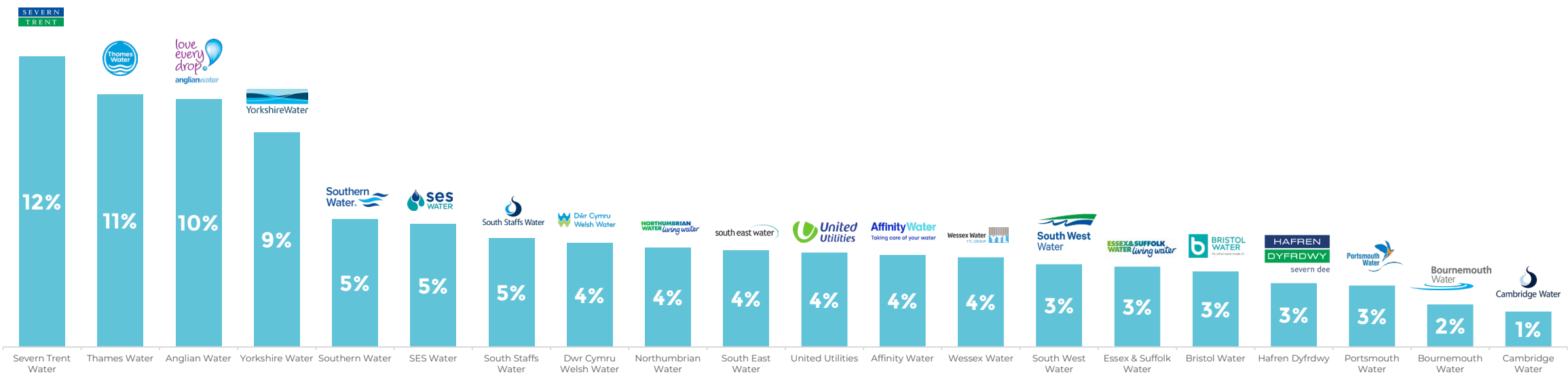
A1. Are you on the Priority Services Register for water services?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



The majority of our PSR sample are in the largest water providers



Are you on the Priority Services Register for water services?
Base: all respondents who are 'Yes, definitely' on the PSR (n=546)



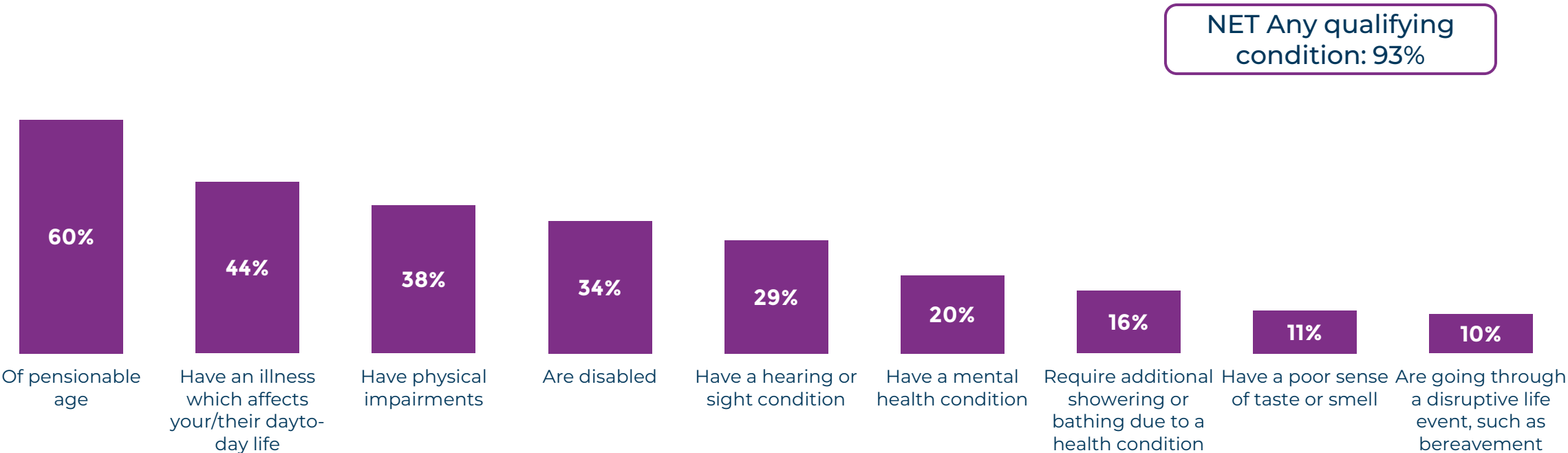
Being of pensionable age is the most commonly selected qualifying condition for those on the PSR scheme, followed by illness and having physical impairments



A2. Which of the statements below apply to you or people you live with?

Base: all respondents (n=1,008)

Only showing codes above 10%





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Awareness and understanding of the PSR scheme

Many of those on the PSR were able to identify correctly that the register is to identify vulnerable people who may need priority assistance



A3. What do you think the Priority Services Register is for?

Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



Provision of support for vulnerable people

For vulnerable people such as disabled people, carers, chronically ill people etc.

Female, 25-34, Affinity Water, on PSR more than 5 years

People who have physical or mental conditions that means they have a priority need for water that may be in excess of the average person.

Male, 65-74, Northumbrian Water, on PSR 2-5 years



Priority assistance during supply disruption

Priority to receive emergency supplies in the event of mains water failure

Male, 65-74, Essex & Suffolk Water, on PSR more than 5 years

To make you a priority if for whatever reason you are unable to get water then they would make it a priority that this is given to you

Female, 25-34, Northumbrian Water



Priority notification of supply disruption

Getting help and assistance with notifications of disruption of services

Male, 18-24, South Staffs Water, on PSR 1-2 years

To provide a list of elderly or vulnerable people who can be notified of any disruption to services and given priority support if necessary

Male, 65-74, Essex & Suffolk Water, on PSR 1-2 years



Continuity of essential services

To ensure that essential services - water, heating are constantly available to more vulnerable people, especially if there is an interruption of the service due to an emergency or fault

Female, 65-74, Southern Water, on PSR more than 5 years

To ensure that essential services are maintained in emergencies

Male, 75+, Anglian Water, on PSR 1-2 years

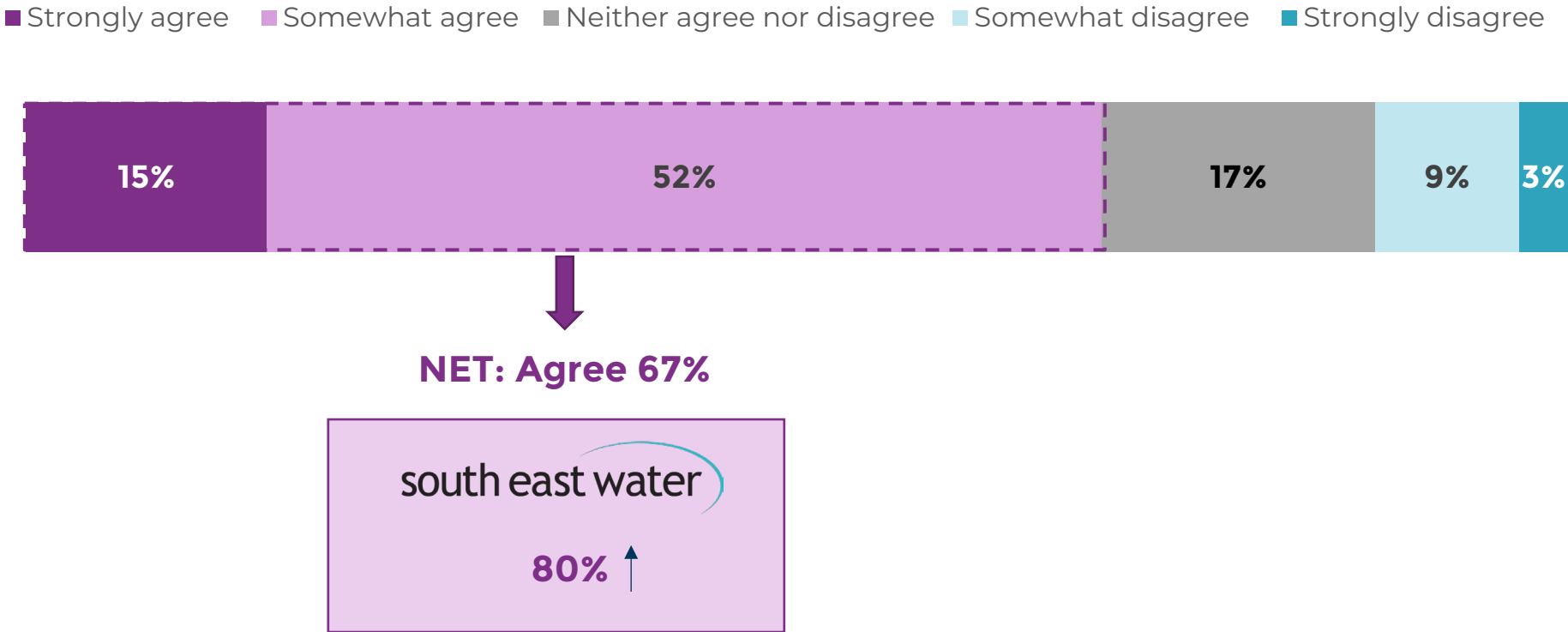


Over two thirds of those on the PSR agree that they understand the support the scheme offers, suggesting that baseline understanding of the service is strong



R3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you understand what support you are registered for through the Priority Services Register?

Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



Respondents generally recognise core PSR services, yet misconceptions persist, particularly around priority restoration of services and financial support, indicating a need for clarity around services offered



What support or help do you think is available to you through the Priority Services Register?

Base: all respondents (n=1,011)

Notification of supply disruption



Telephone or text alert if there is interruption to the service and support if appropriate

Male, 65-74, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, on PSR more than 5 years



That I will be notified if the water supply is to be reduced or cut through planned work or in the case of a known leak

Male, 65-74, Wessex Water, on PSR less than 6 months



Supply of services during supply disruption



Water provision in the event of emergency/short supply of mains water

Female, 55-64, Severn Trent Water, on PSR less than 6 months



The supply of bottled water in the event of an excessively long interruption to the supply of mains water to our house

Male, 65-74, Thames Water, on PSR more than 5 years



Priority restoration of services



Supply restored in my area as a priority

Female, 75+, Anglian Water, on PSR 2-5 years

Should water supply be disrupted we will be on priority for repair/reconnection of service

Male, 75+, Anglian Water, on PSR 2-5 years



Assistance with water bills



I think they can help people with needs like large print bills

Male, 25-34, Essex & Suffolk Water, on PSR 1-2 years



Financial advice and support to pay bills and clear dues

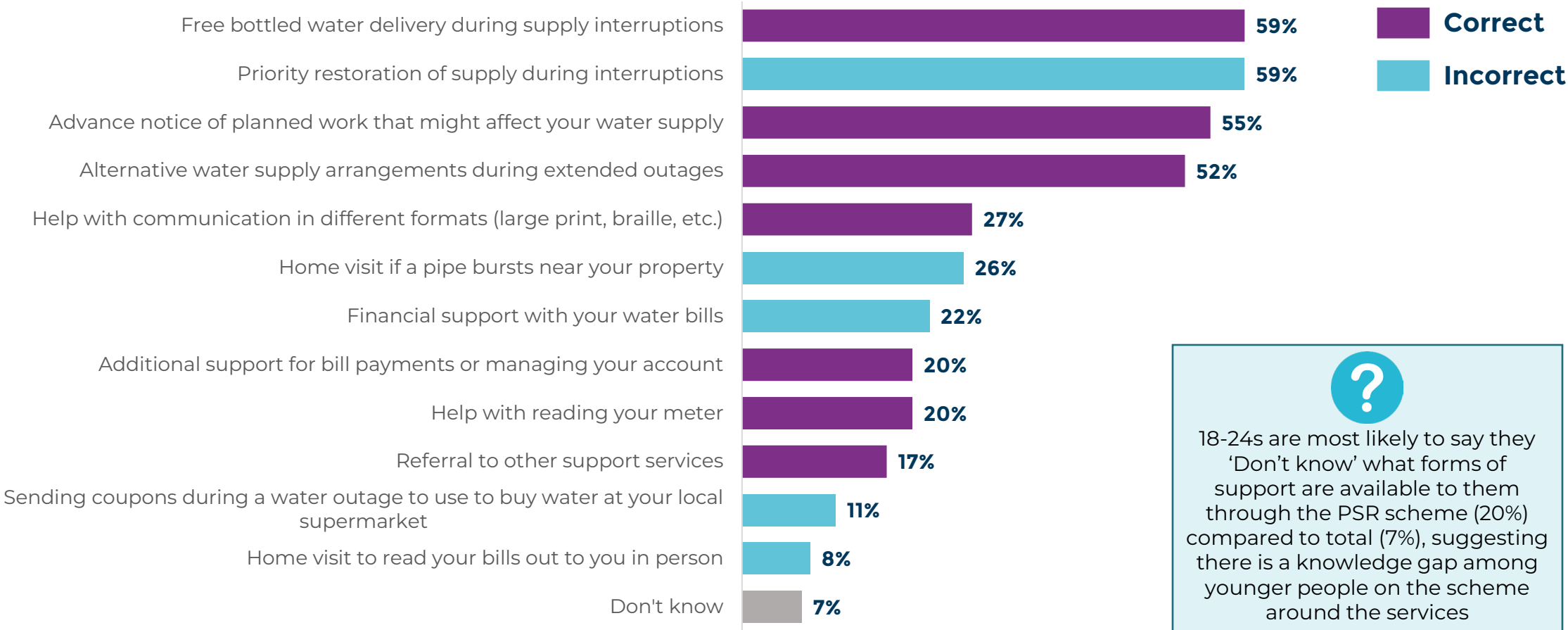
Male, 35-44, Thames Water, on PSR 6-12 months



While core PSR services are well understood, misconceptions remain about priority restoration of services, financial support with bills, and home visits during a pipe burst



R5. Which of the following forms of support or help do you think are available to you through the Priority Services Register?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)





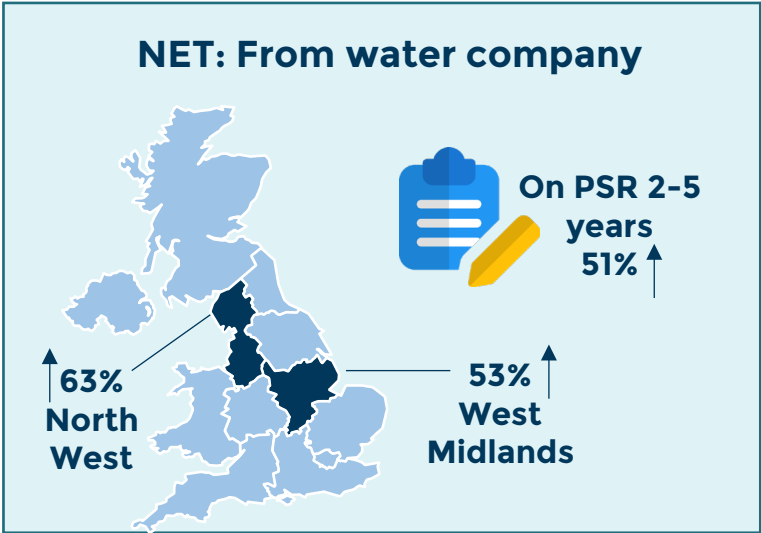
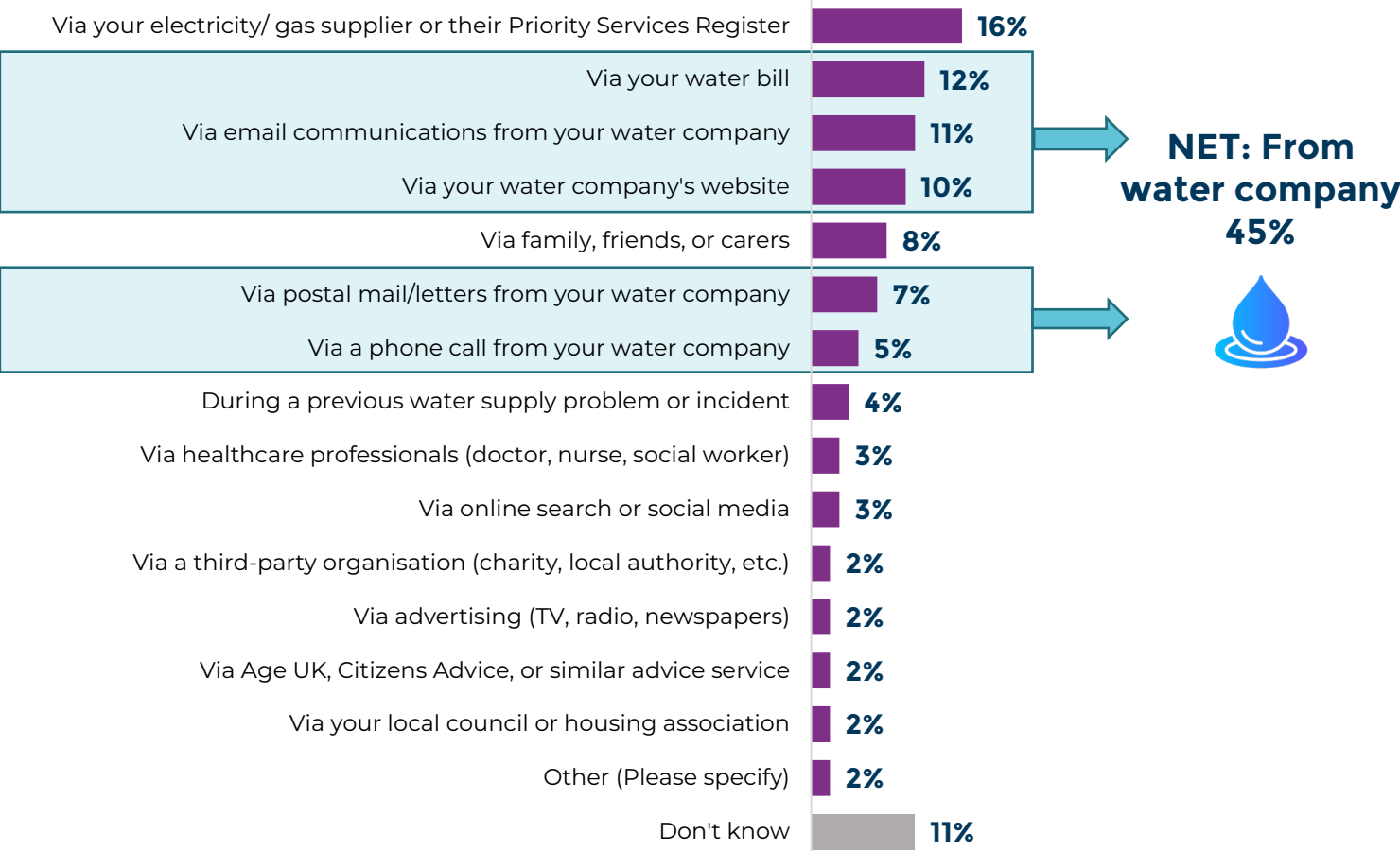
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Joining, and experience of, the PSR

Almost half of those on the PSR learned about the scheme from their water company, mainly via bills or email



A3b. How did you first become aware of the Priority Services Register?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)

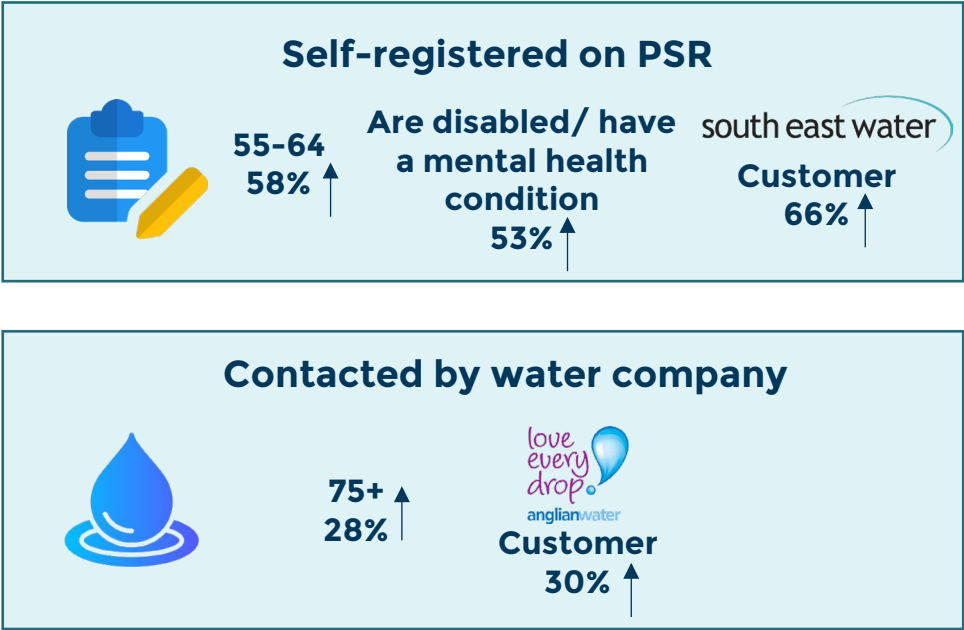
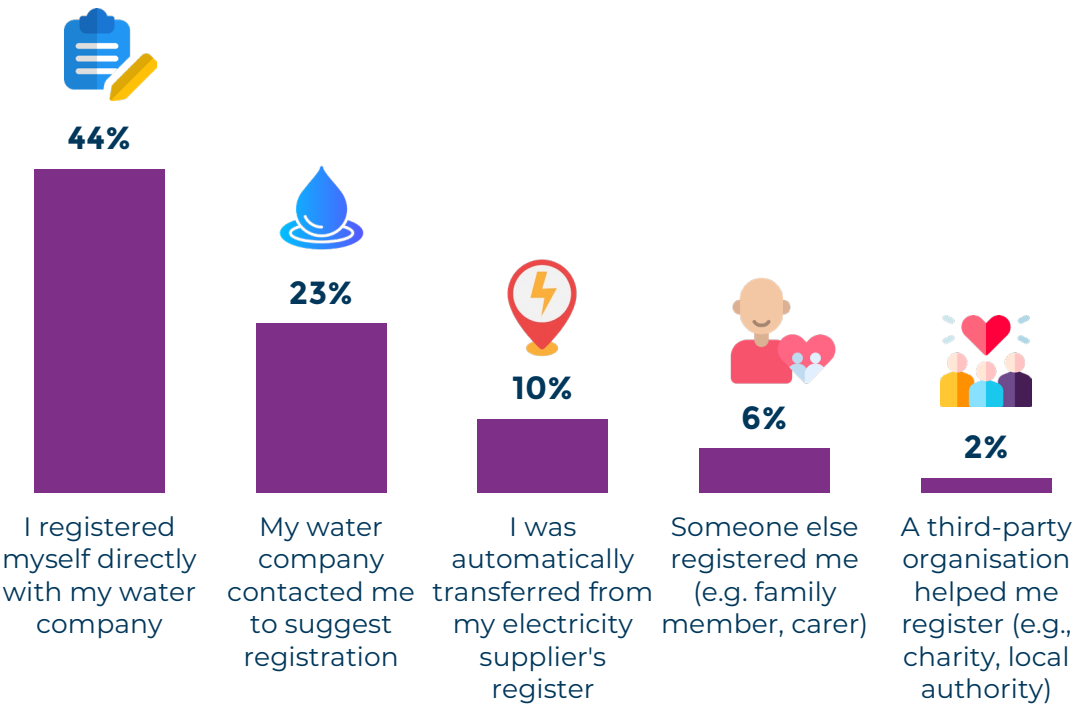


↑ Statistically higher than the total

Self-registration was the most common method for joining the PSR, though outreach from water companies helped to drive registrations



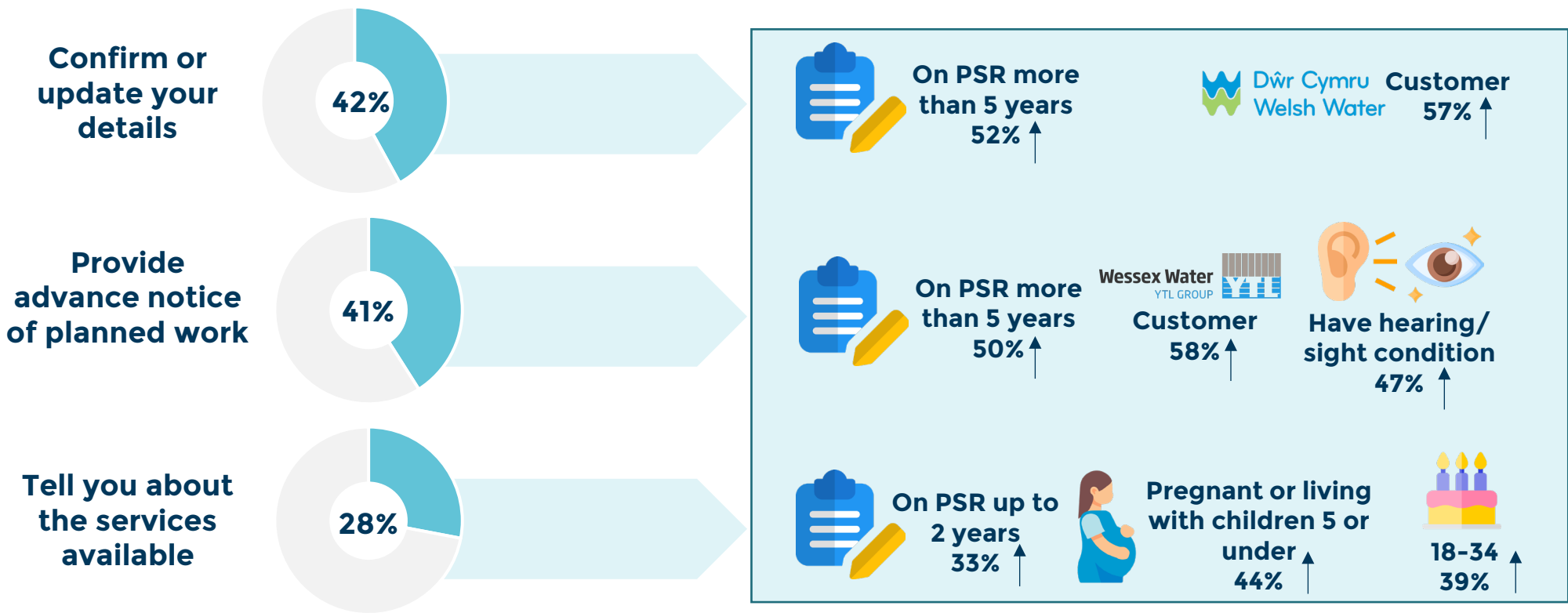
R2. How did you get registered on the Priority Services Register?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



Whilst 2 in 5 of respondents have been contacted by their supplier to confirm their details or provide notice of planned work, water companies could improve communication about available services for registrants



E1. Since being on the Priority Services Register, has your water company contacted you to do any of the following?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



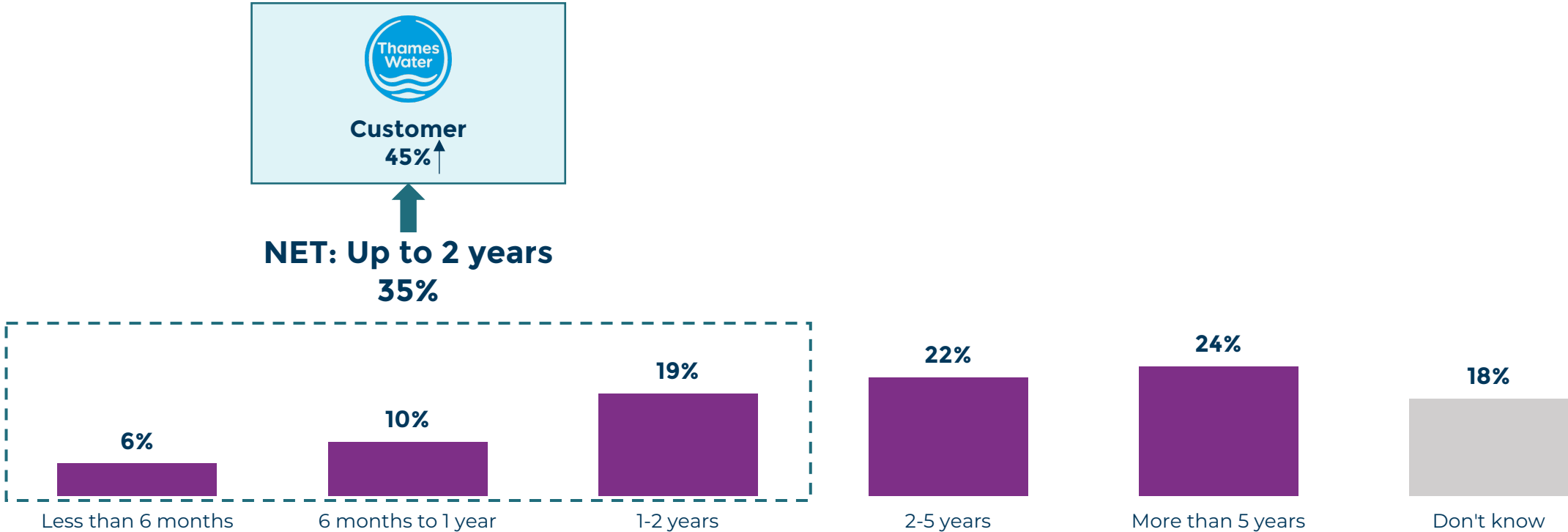
Priority Services Register Survey
Subgroup bases: 18-24 (134), pregnant or living with children under 5 (81), have a hearing/sight condition (297), Dwr Cymru Welsh Water customer (44), Wessex Water customer (38), on the PSR up to 2 years (356), on the PSR more than 5 years (246)

↑ Statistically higher than the total

Over a third have been on the PSR for up to two years, while nearly a quarter have been on it for more than five, showing wide variation in time spent on the register



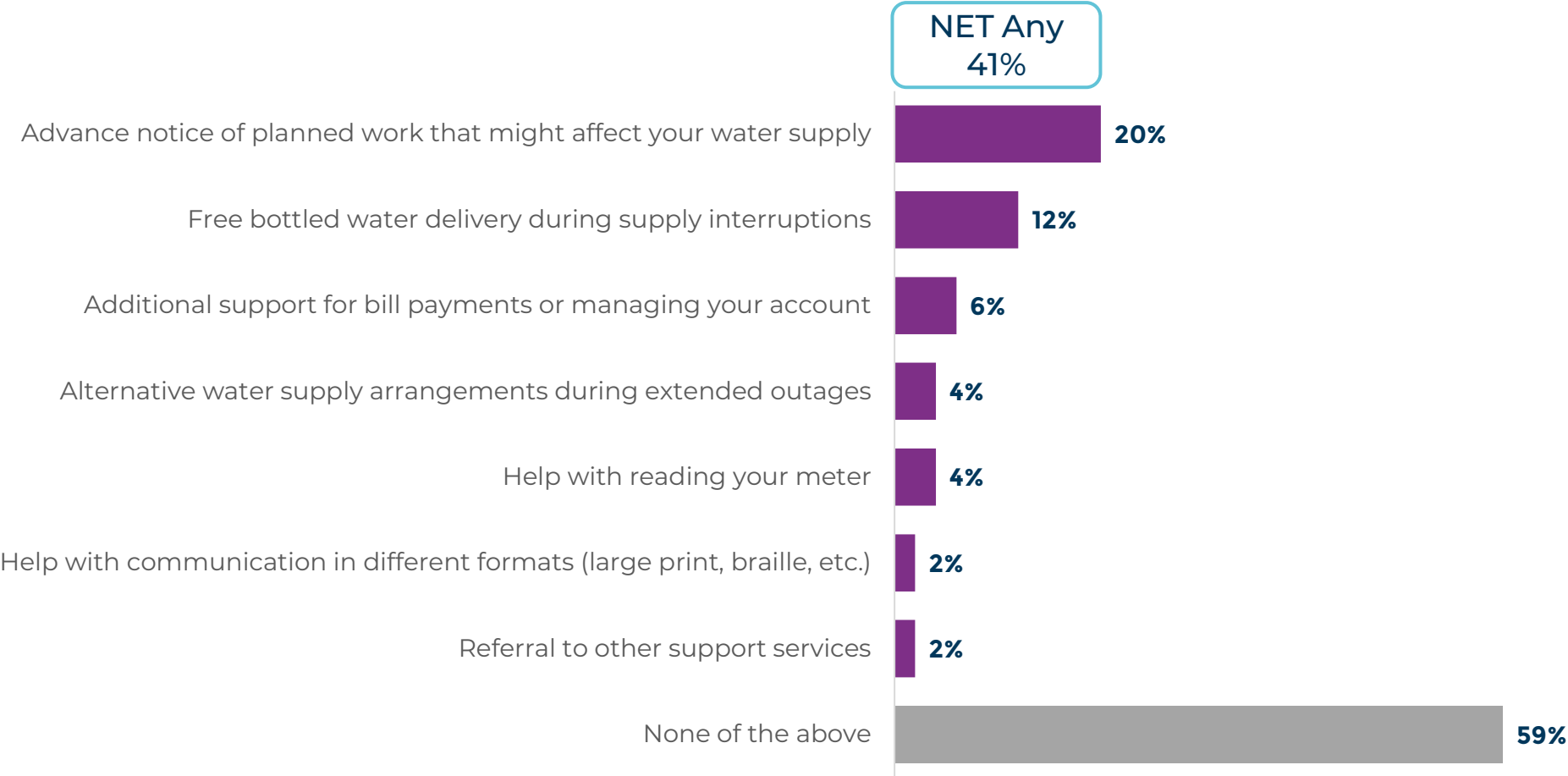
R1. How long have you been registered on your water company's Priority Services Register?
Base: Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



Of the services that have been used by those on the PSR, advanced notice of planned work and free bottled water during interruptions were the most common



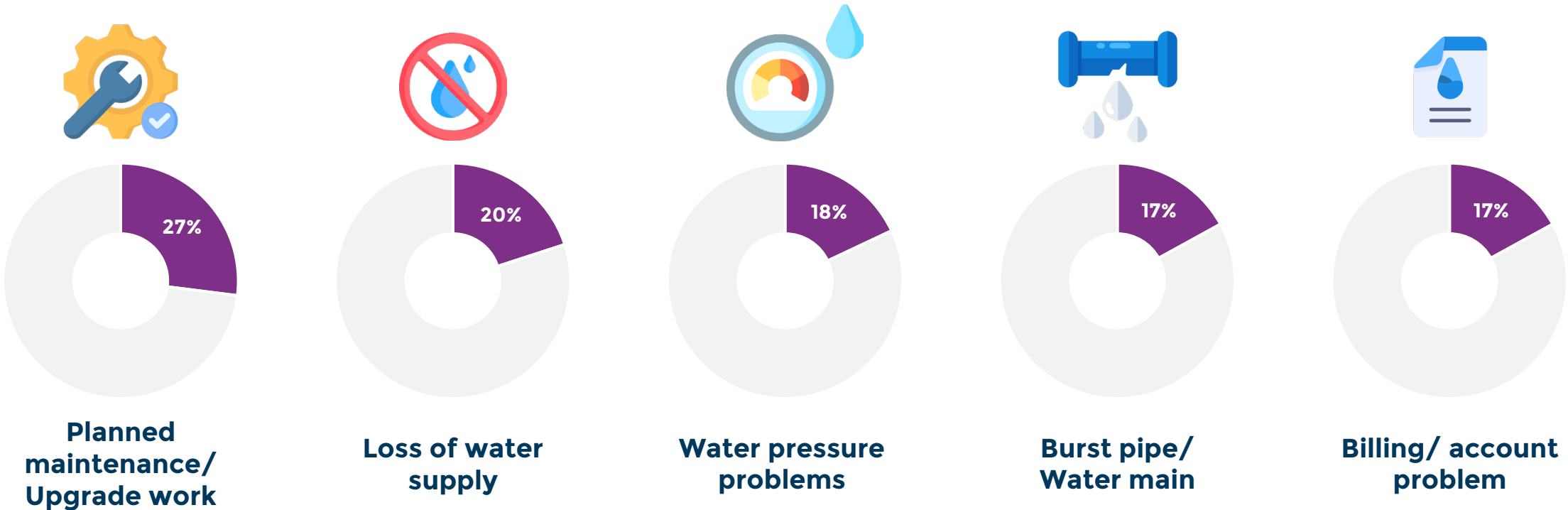
R6. Of those you just selected, which of the forms of support or help have you or people you live with used before?
Base: all respondents aware of services available on the PSR scheme (n=914)



The events in which registrants of the PSR scheme used its services were mostly due to supply interruptions in the events of planned maintenance and complete loss of water supply



R7. In which situation(s) or circumstance(s) did you use Priority Services Register support? Top 5 reasons
Base: All respondents who selected any of the following forms of support they think are available through the PSR and have used any of them before for themselves or for people they live with (n=374)



Those on the PSR indicated that more frequent communication and improved links with community services would be beneficial, with some also noting a need for financial or bill assistance



R8/R8b. What other support or help, that is currently not available, do you think would be useful for you or people in your household who are on the Priority Services Register? 🤖 Incl. AI prompting

Base: Base: all respondents (n=1,011)

More frequent communication and progress updates



I think better communication during outages would help; maybe updates via text or app for those on the register ... 🤖 ...I'd find it helpful to get **regular text updates** on when the issue will be resolved, if there are any changes, and any steps we need to take (like boiling water or using back up power). **Real time tracking would ease a lot of stress.**

Male, 35-44, Anglian Water, on PSR 2-5 years

Dedicated **contact to keep up to date with progress of issues**... 🤖 ...ETA of fixing, what the issue is, what stage the repair is at

Male, 35-44, Thames Water, Don't know



Financial support or assistance with bills



I think I'd personally benefit from more financial support/assistance with water bills as **prices keep rising**... 🤖 ...reductions in bills, discounted tariffs

Female, 25-34, Southern Water, on PSR 2-5 years

Classes offered to sort out bills such as signing up, or how to read the meter, how to fix minor issues... 🤖 ...offered within communities, online, schools

Female, 18-24, United Utilities, on PSR 6-12 months



Facilitating community support during outages



With consent, suppliers could share anonymised lists with local voluntary groups so **neighbours or community first-responders can check on PSR customers** during incidents

Female, 25-34, Affinity Water, on PSR 6-12 months

A volunteer check-in network for vulnerable households during long outages... 🤖 ...They would make people **feel safer and less isolated**, especially if they rely on medical equipment or have mobility issues. Quick doorstep help and **friendly check ins would cut anxiety and ensure no one is left struggling** in silence during an outage

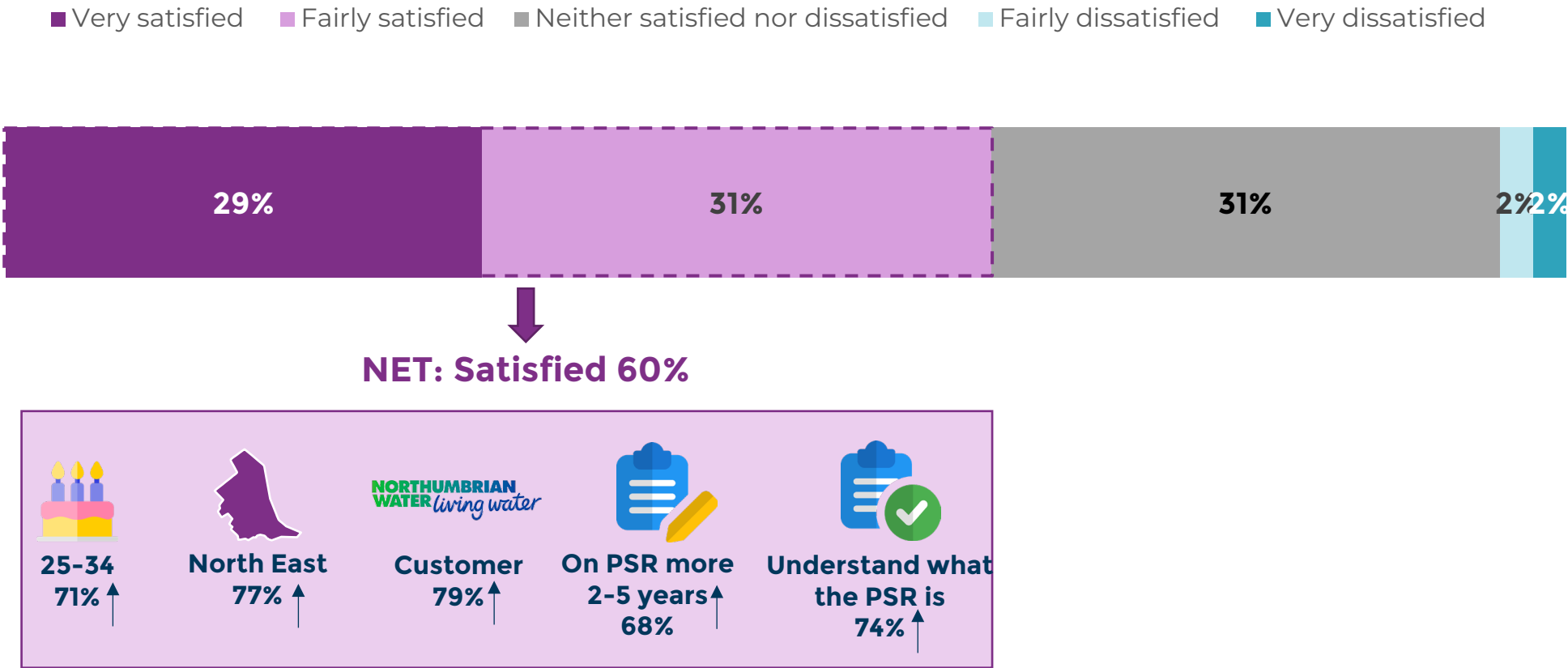
Female, 45-54, Hafren Dyfrdwy, on PSR more than 5 years



At a total level, satisfaction with the PSR scheme was still high, with almost two thirds of customers either fairly or very satisfied



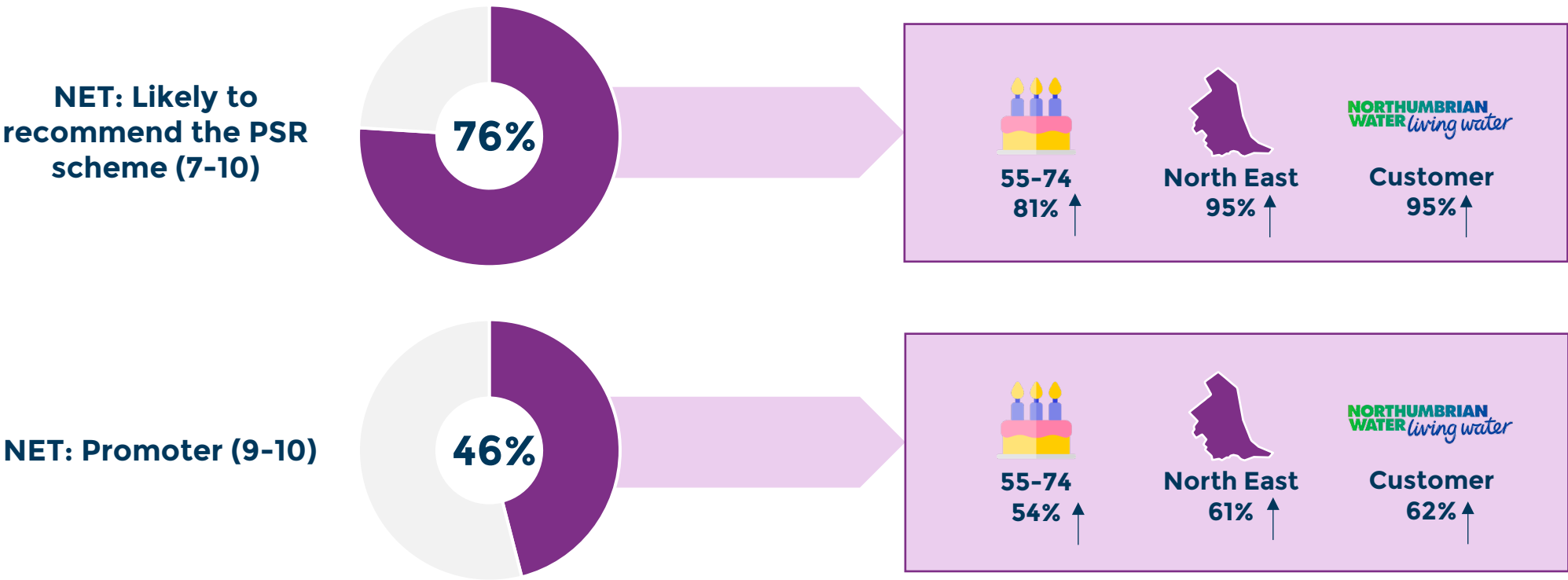
S1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience of being on the Priority Services Register?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



Most PSR registrants would recommend the service, driven by Northumbrian Water customers. Enhancing their understanding of specific services offered could help to strengthen this advocacy even further



S2. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely, how likely would you be to recommend the Priority Services Register to other people who might benefit from it?
Base: all respondents (n=1,011)





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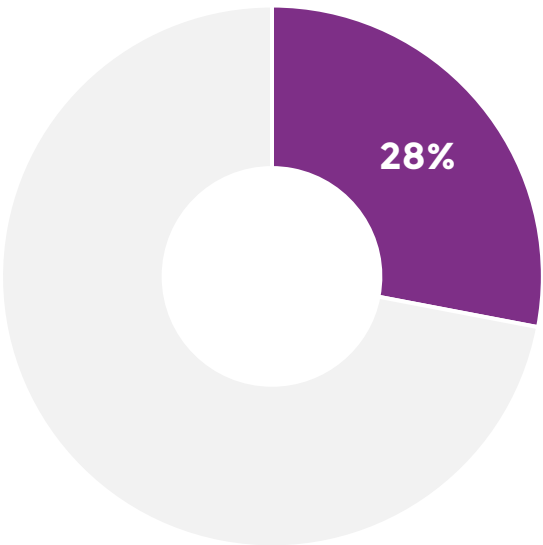
Deep dive: supply disruption

Over a quarter of those on the PSR have faced supply disruptions from maintenance or unexpected issues

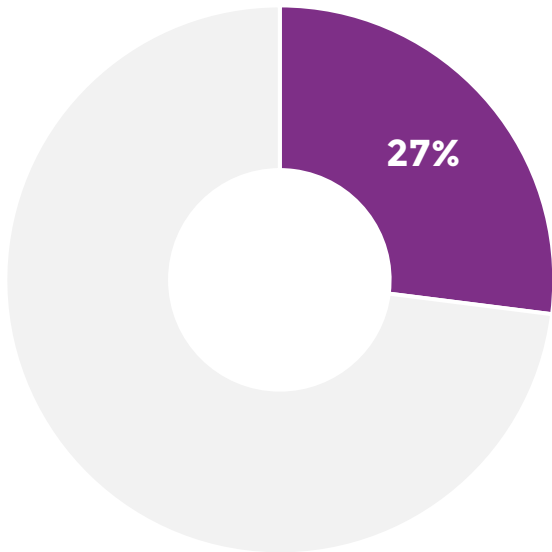


E2. Since being on the Priority Services Register, have you experienced any situations where your normal water supply was disrupted...

Base: all respondents (n=1,011)



Because of
planned
maintenance



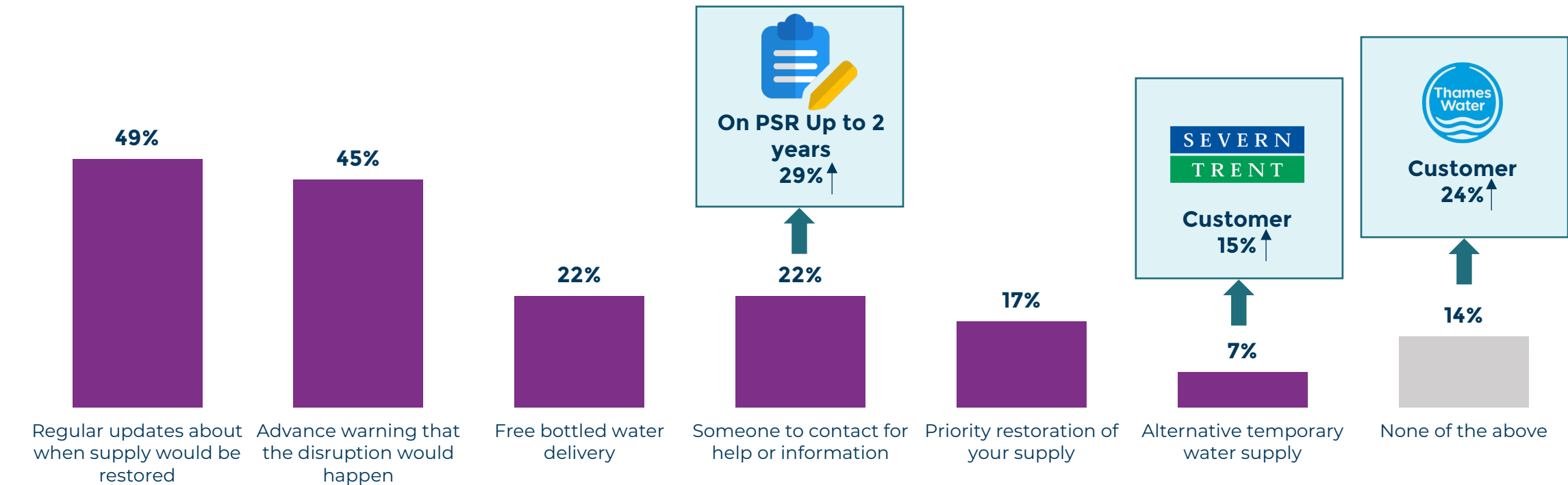
Because of an
unexpected
problem

Levels of communication around these losses of supply were either consistent or provided in advance



E3. Thinking about the most recent time your water supply was disrupted, what support did you receive from your water company?

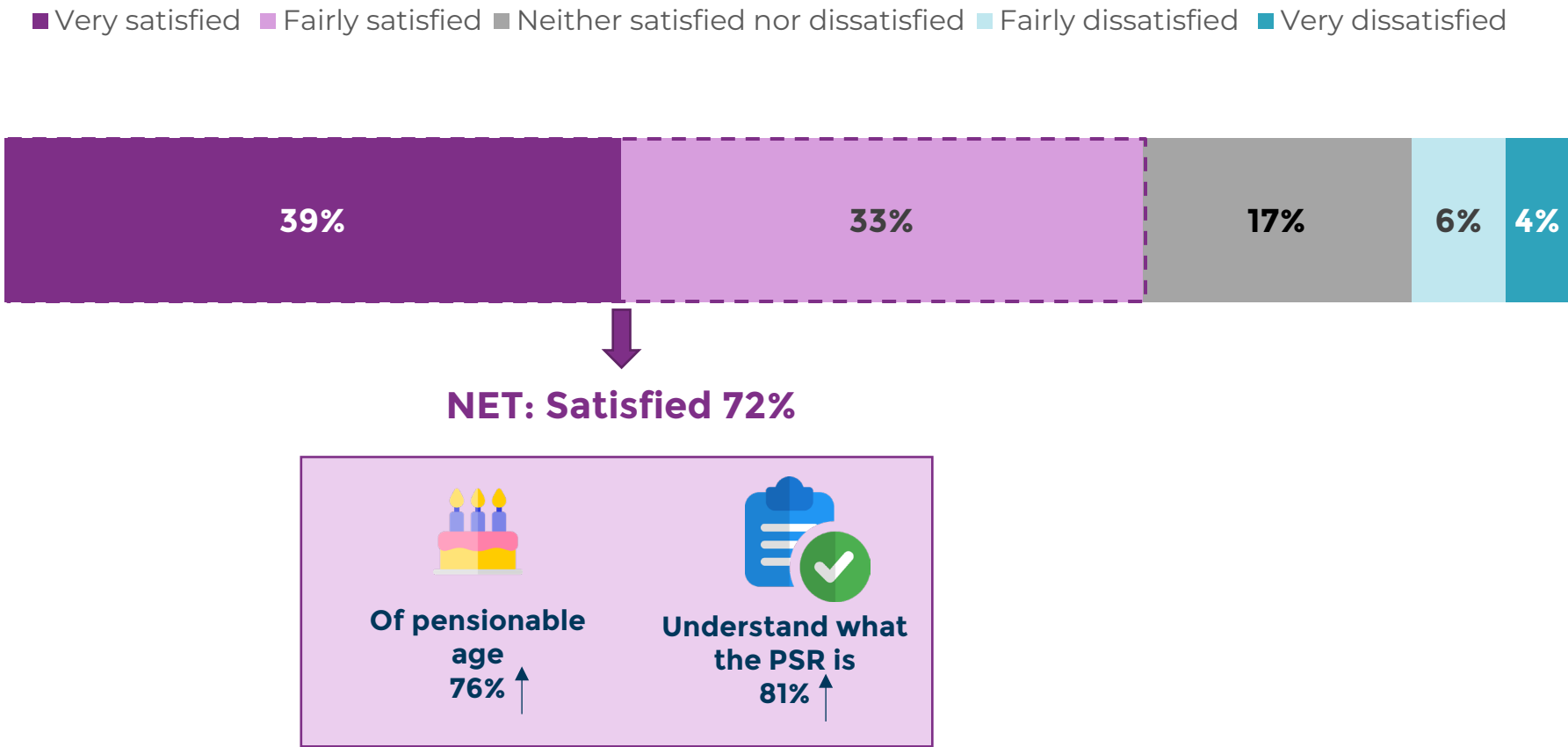
Base: all respondents who have experienced supply disruption (n=402)



Satisfaction with the PSR experience is high, primarily among pensioners and those who understand the PSR. Enhancing comprehension of the service could help to solidify satisfaction levels further



E4. How satisfied were you with the support you received during this supply disruption?
Base: all respondents who have experienced supply disruption (n=402)



PSR participants affected by supply disruptions suggested that more timely updates and improved coordination of alternative supplies would have been beneficial, though many were satisfied with the support provided



E5/E5b. What, if anything, could your water company have done better to support you during this supply disruption? Incl. AI prompting
Base: all respondents who have experienced supply disruption (n=402)

More frequent communication and updates



More information would have been good. Plenty of **advanced warning** and some bottled water delivered would have been very useful...
...As someone on that register, really being kept appraised of a situation and given some help...would have been most welcomed

Female, 35-44, United Utilities, on PSR more than 5 years

They could have provided **clearer and more frequent updates** about what was happening and when the water would be back on...
...**more direct communication** for those who rely on extra support.

Male, 25-34, Southern Water, on PSR 6-12 months



Better provision of alternative water supplies



Offering **alternative water supplies nearby** so we didn't have to worry about running out...
...I think it would have helped if **bottled water deliveries were organised more quickly**, with **clear communication** about when and how they'd arrive

Female, 25-34, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, on PSR more than 5 years

If it had gone on longer help with finding alternative water to use would have been helpful...
...water for cooking, making drinks, washing

Male, 45-54, Anglian Water, on PSR 2-5 years



Satisfied with the experience and nothing more could be done



Nothing, calling me was a nice touch as it was better than getting a generic text

Female, 35-44, Severn Trent Water, on PSR 2-5 years

I believe they did everything possible, I was very impressed at the time actually

Female, 75+, Wessex Water, on PSR 2-5 years

I thought the water company did very well. They were friendly and efficient

Male, 65-74, Anglian Water, on PSR more than 5 years





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Conclusions



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Conclusion



1. **Establishing a baseline awareness of the PSR** and its services, and current satisfaction levels

Baseline awareness of the PSR and who the service is for is high, with registrants having high levels of confidence in their knowledge of the support available to them. Satisfaction, as well as awareness, is also high among those on the PSR, with the majority stating they would recommend the service. With nearly half of PSR users being promoters, this strong baseline can help build awareness and create a positive feedback loop to support future communications from water companies around the service.

2. **Obtaining a read on current understanding of the PSR**, and areas in which this understanding can be improved

Understanding of the PSR and its services is strong overall, though some misconceptions, particularly around priority restoration of services and the provision of financial support, remain. Registrants who have been on the PSR for up to 2 years are most likely to have received supplier communications with detail around the services offered, indicating that refreshers for longer-term PSR members could help to reinforce understanding.

3. Understanding **potential areas of improvement of the services offered** to improve the experience of those on the PSR

Though satisfaction with the PSR is generally high, some areas of improvement or suggestions for additional services were provided, with PSR registrants feeling they would benefit from more frequent communications in the event of supply disruption and greater links to community support groups for those most vulnerable. Financial support was also highlighted by some, suggesting that greater education is needed on the services that the PSR is able to provide to avoid these misconceptions. Companies should signpost their PSR registrants to further information on additional financial support that they offer.

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