The voice for water consumers
Llais defnyddwyr dŵr

Water Voice
Severe drought announcement
Topline survey findings

October 2026

Delivered by Taylor McKenzie Research

ccw.org.uk

Background

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After the Severe Drought announcement* on Thursday 15th of October, Taylor McKenzie Research created a survey which launched on Friday the 16th. The survey was distributed out to the Water Voice community.

A total of 498 community members took part in the survey before it closed on the evening of Sunday the 18th with an interim report delivered on the morning of the 19th.

The survey contained 5 short questions and was designed to help assess and understand customer reaction to the announcement.

This report contains topline findings from the community and highlights levels of customer concern, expected implications and responsibility for ensuring ongoing drought events don't impact water supplies.

The narrative shows differences in member sentiment split by those currently under restrictions, compared to those who aren't.

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*https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-activates-plan-to-protect-consumers-as-severe-drought-declared-in-parts-of-england

Community members are concerned by the announcement, but not entirely surprised

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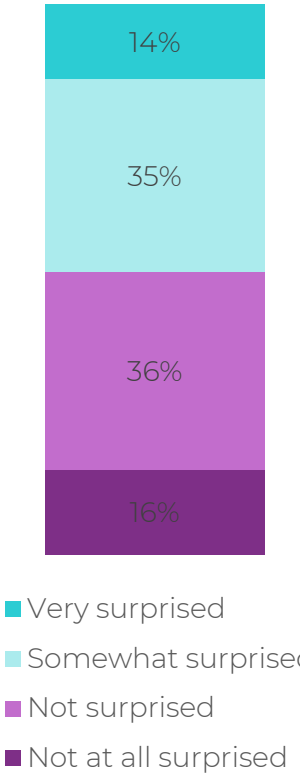
83% of the community are concerned - including 32% very concerned - by this recent severe drought announcement.

But the majority (51%) are unsurprised by it – given how dry some areas have been.

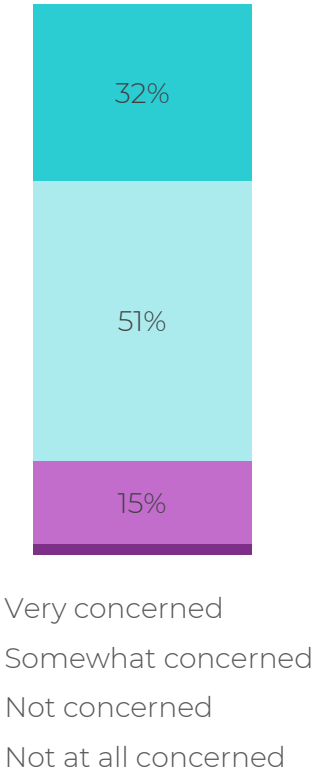
Those who live in areas under a hose pipe ban are less likely to be surprised by the announcement (43% compared to 56% for those outside a ban area).

They are also more likely to be concerned (86% compared to 80% for those outside a ban area).

How surprised are you by this announcement?



How concerned are you by this announcement?



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n=498

Community members anticipate a range of largely negative customer implications

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More restrictions: Longer hosepipe bans and potentially tighter limits on everyday water use.

Higher bills: Expectations that customers will pay more to cover drought measures and infrastructure improvements.

Less reliable supplies: Concerns about lower water pressure, interruptions and possible rationing if conditions worsen.

Having to save more water: Greater pressure to change daily habits, although some feel they already do what they can.

Little immediate change: Some expect limited impact over winter, particularly outside affected areas, unless further restrictions are introduced.

"The advice says no effect on householders supplies. BUT it still may have an effect on bills because of the costs of dealing with the drought."

"Customers will continue to pay very high bills yet face water restrictions . The water companies need to do better planning for these situations."

"To still be in drought going into the autumn months, it concerns me that we won't recover fully before the summer next year"

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"What do you think the implications of this announcement will be for customers?"

The long-term outlook is also concerning from a customer's perspective

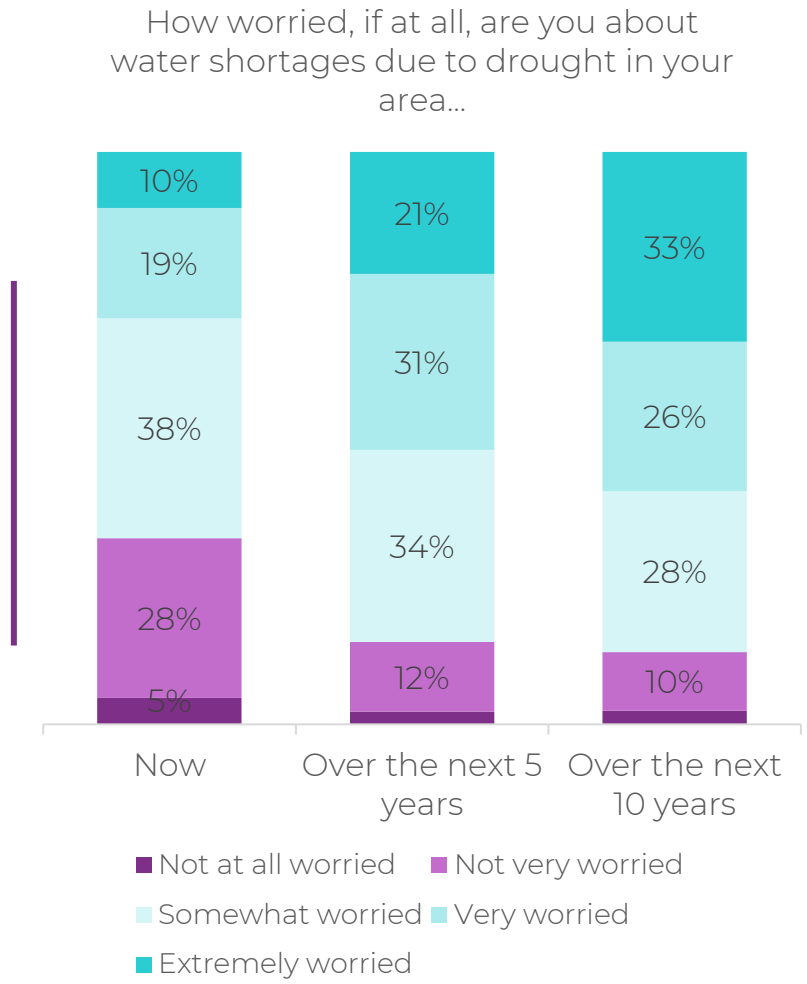
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Drought is seen as a long-term threat. 68% are worried about shortages in their area now, but 86% are worried about shortages over the next 5 years and 87% over the next 10.

The intensity of worry also increases as members look to the future. 29% are extremely/very worried now, rising to 52% when thinking over the next 5 years and 59% over the next 10 years.

Those in a hosepipe ban area are much more worried about a water shortage due to drought now, (79% compared to 53%) and in the future (91% compared to 79% over the next 5 years, and 91% compared to 82% over the next 10).

Just 13% aren't worried about water shortages in their area over the next 10 years!



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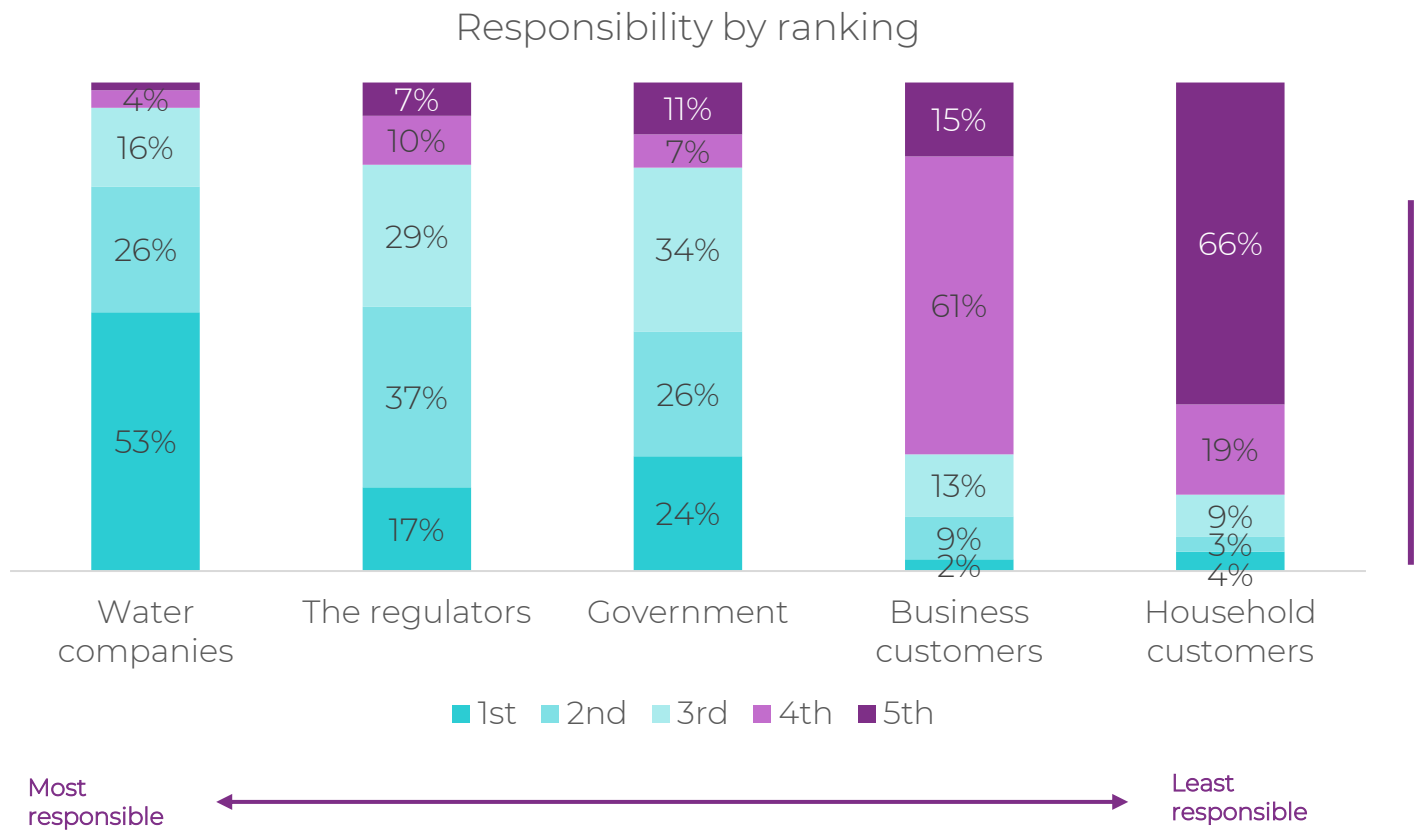
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"How worried, if at all, are you about water shortages due to drought in your area..."

Water companies are seen as having by far the most responsibility for protecting supplies

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53% ranked water companies 1st and 79% placed them top 2.

Regulators and Government were also seen as having a role to play. Regulators were 2nd, with 54% ranking them within the top 2 and Government 3rd with 50% ranking them in the top 2.

Households are seen to have by far the least responsibility, with 66% ranking them 5th (just 7% ranked them top 2).

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"Who do you feel has the most responsibility for ensuring ongoing drought events don't impact water supplies in England & Wales?"

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