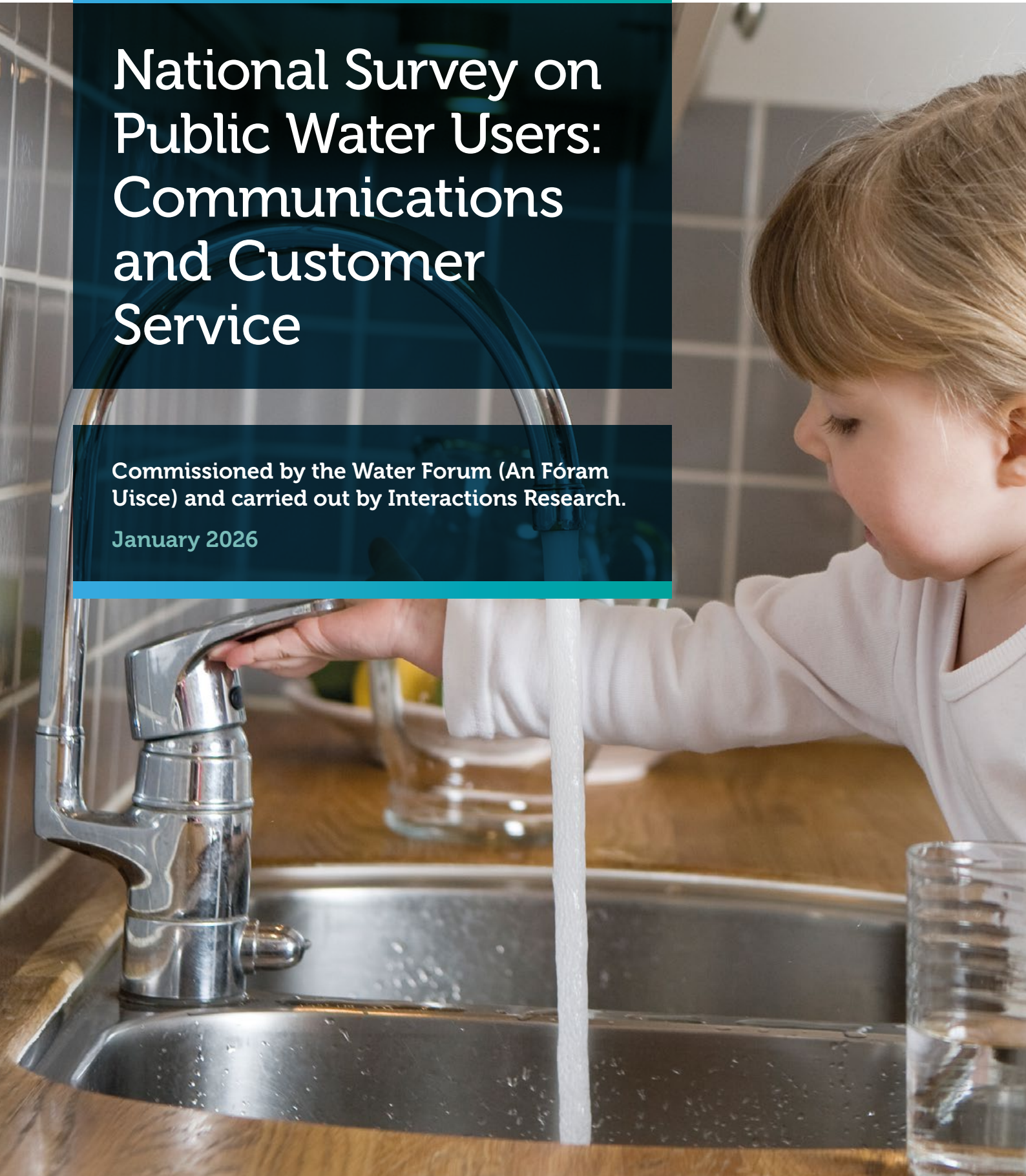


# National Survey on Public Water Users: Communications and Customer Service

Commissioned by the Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) and carried out by Interactions Research.

January 2026





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## Key Insights

Overall satisfaction with drinking water quality is high. Seven in ten customers nationally report being very or quite satisfied with the quality of their drinking water, although satisfaction levels are lower among customers who have experienced recent issues.

Across both national and hotspot samples, taste and colour are the most commonly reported water issues. While these concerns do not generally indicate a breach of drinking water quality standards, they feature prominently in customer experience and perception.

Awareness of Uisce Éireann as the appropriate point of contact for water-related queries or complaints has increased since 2021. However, satisfaction with customer service remains lower than in previous research.

Communication around planned disruptions has improved since 2021, with more customers reporting that they received advance notice of issues. Despite this progress, uptake of direct communication channels, such as text alerts, remains limited.

Customers express a strong interest in receiving information about their water supply. However, while appetite for information is high, many customers do not actively seek it out or are unaware that information is available, indicating largely passive engagement with existing channels.

Interest is particularly strong on information relating to drinking water quality, with a large majority of customers indicating that they would find this type of information useful to receive.



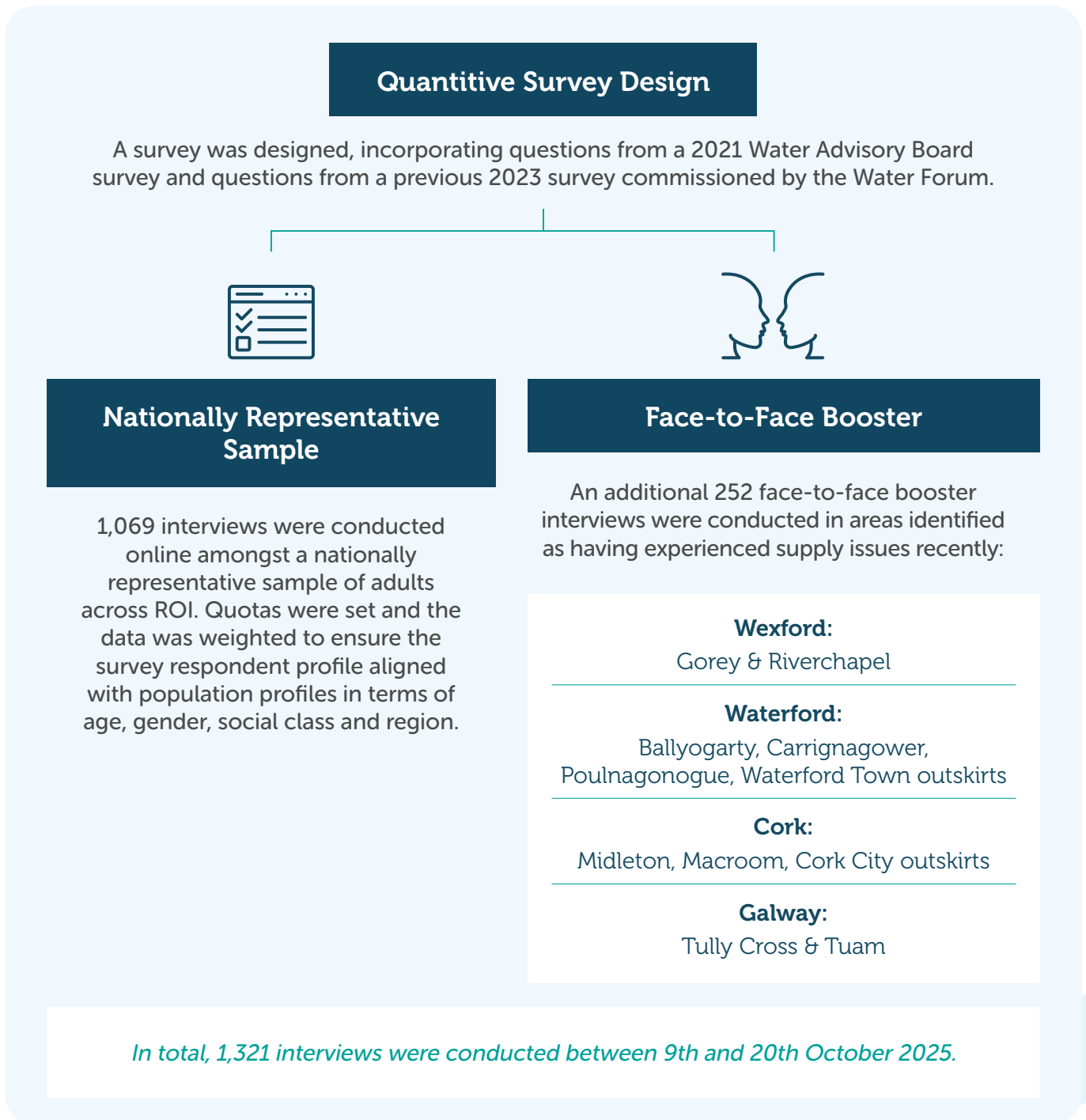
# Survey Objective

To gauge public attitudes towards their public water supply, customer services and communications from their water utility.

# Scope of Survey

Two surveys were conducted as part of this research:

**Figure 1: Overview of Quantitative Survey Design and Sample Composition**



Two key target samples of public water consumers were identified:

- *Nationally representative customers: Uisce Éireann customers from the general population sample (n = 852)*
- *Hotspot area customers: Uisce Éireann customers interviewed in areas with supply issues (n = 213)*

These two target samples represent feedback from a combined 1,065 public water customers and form the basis for all statistics presented in the remainder of this report.

**Figure 2: Survey Question - Where do you get your home water supply?**

Where do you get your home water supply?	Source					
	Face-to-Face		Online Nat. Rep.		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Public water supplied by Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water)</i>	213*	85%	852†	78%	<b>1,065</b>	<b>79%</b>
<i>Group Water Scheme</i>	16	6%	74	8%	<b>90</b>	<b>7%</b>
<i>Private Household Well</i>	10	4%	86	8%	<b>96</b>	<b>7%</b>
<i>Don't know</i>	13	5%	57	7%	<b>70</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,069</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,321</b>	

\* Uisce Éireann customers, interviewed in supply issue hotspot areas

† Uisce Éireann customers, from the nationally representative sample

In 2021 the Water Advisory Board (WAB) commissioned a targeted survey of 628 residential customers in areas where Uisce Éireann had recently carried out maintenance or remedial work. While similar questions were asked in the Water Forum survey, caution is needed when extrapolating satisfaction trends due to small sub-sample sizes and differing methodologies between the 2021 and 2025 research (telephone versus face-to-face).

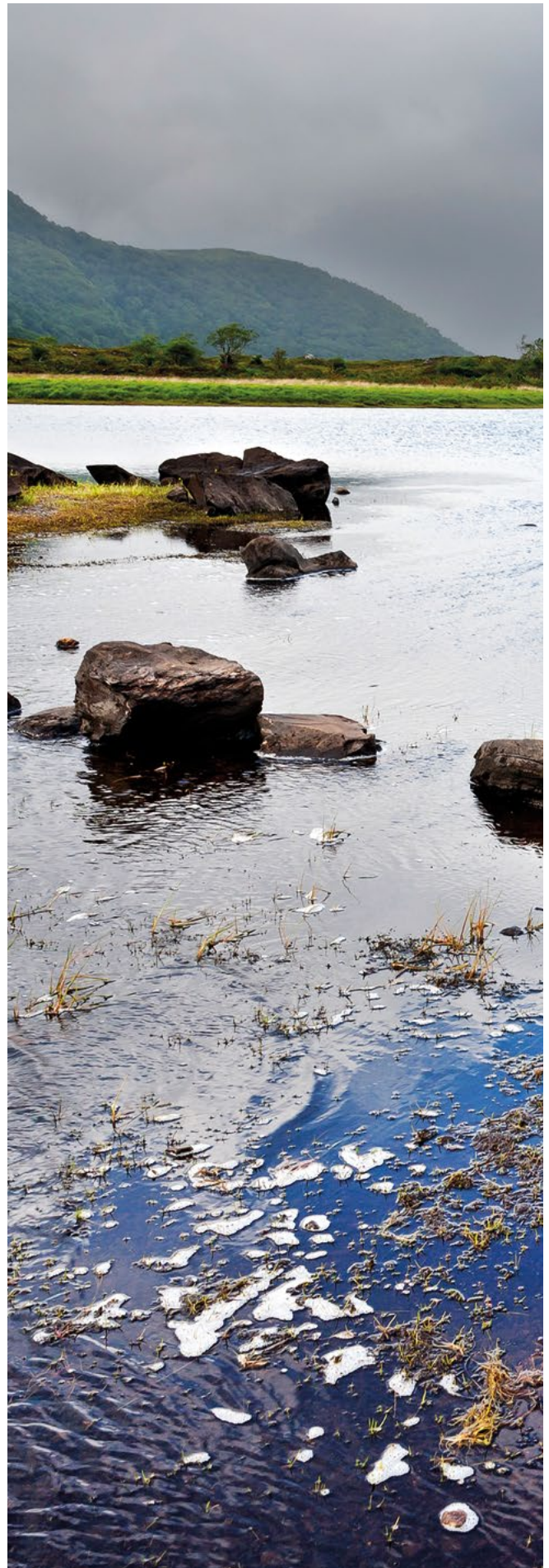
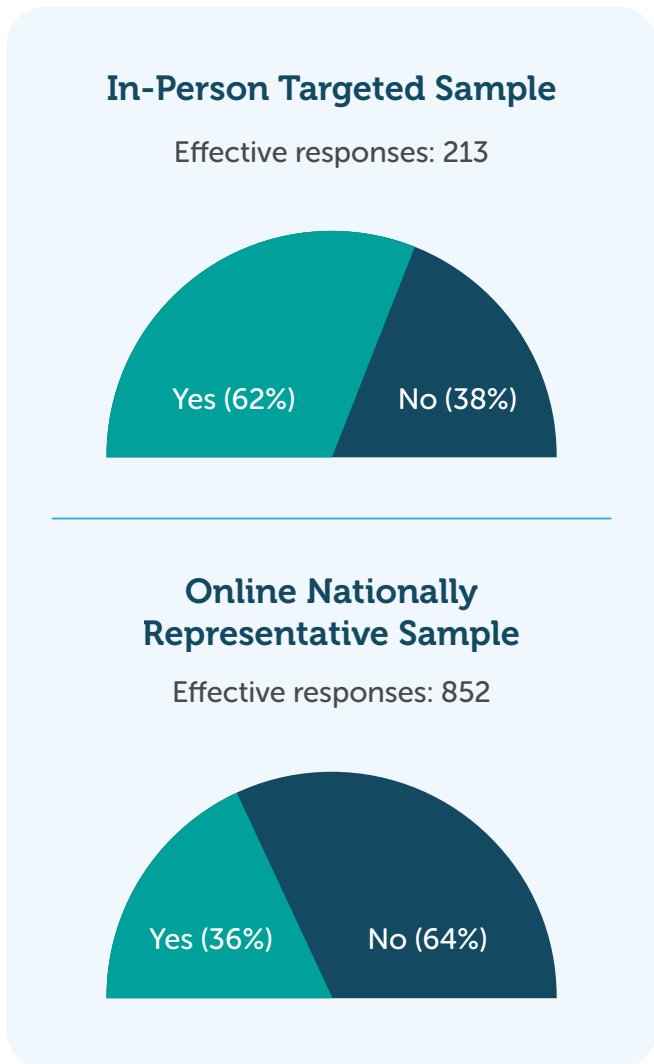


# Survey Results and Key Learnings

## Part 1: General Water Supply Profiles

36% of public water consumers in the nationally representative sample said they had experienced water issues in the past year. This rose to 62% in the face-to-face interviews in identified hot-spot areas, which is unsurprising since these were targeted in areas with ongoing disruptions to water supplies.

**Figure 3: Survey Question - Have you experienced any issues with water supply or water quality in the past 12 months?**



## 1.1 Water Supply Issues Experienced

**Taste and colour are the most commonly reported water issues across both samples.**

As shown in Figure 4, taste and colour were the most commonly cited issues, highest for both face-to-face respondents and the nationally representative sample of Uisce Éireann customers. In the majority of cases, taste and odour issues do not indicate a breach of drinking water quality standards under the EU Drinking Water Directive. However, Uisce Éireann encourages customers to contact the utility if their water tastes unusual, smells musty, or has a stronger-than-usual chlorine odour.

Figure 4: Survey Question - What types of water supply issues have you experienced?

Issues Experienced	Sample		
	In-Person (Targeted)	Online Nat. Rep.	Total
<i>Taste</i>	77%	48%	57%
<i>Colour</i>	63%	52%	56%
<i>Supply interruptions</i>	31%	47%	42%
<i>Odour</i>	51%	32%	37%
<i>Water pressure</i>	17%	38%	31%
<i>Disruptions (&lt;24 hours)</i>	11%	31%	25%
<i>Disruptions (&gt;24 hours)</i>	27%	20%	22%
<i>Boil water notices</i>	38%	12%	20%
<i>Do not drink notice</i>	45%	9%	20%
<i>Other water related issue</i>	9%	4%	6%

Odour, boil water and do-not-drink notices were higher amongst the hot spot area responses. There were more issues with water pressure and disruptions of less than 24 hours amongst the nationally representative sample.

68% of Uisce Éireann customers amongst the nationally representative sample said their issues were solved within 3 days. Unsurprisingly, the face-to-face booster sample reported more ‘issues still ongoing’. However, 18% of Uisce Éireann customers in the nationally representative sample reported ongoing issues also.

## Part 2: Customer Experiences

Of all Uisce Éireann customers who reported experiencing some issues with their supply, further questions were asked to assess levels of satisfaction with customer experience.

### 2.1 Awareness of Who to Contact

When asked who they would contact with a query or complaint about their water supply or water quality, 70% of Uisce Éireann customers said they would contact the utility directly (Figure 5).

Awareness of Uisce Éireann as the appropriate point of contact has increased significantly compared with the previous WAB survey carried out in 2021, where only 45% of customers identified the utility. This represents a positive development, reflecting Uisce Éireann’s growing establishment as the national single utility for public water supply.

However, 18% of public water customers indicated that they did not know who to contact, representing an opportunity for further improvements in customer awareness of who to contact regarding water-related queries or complaints.

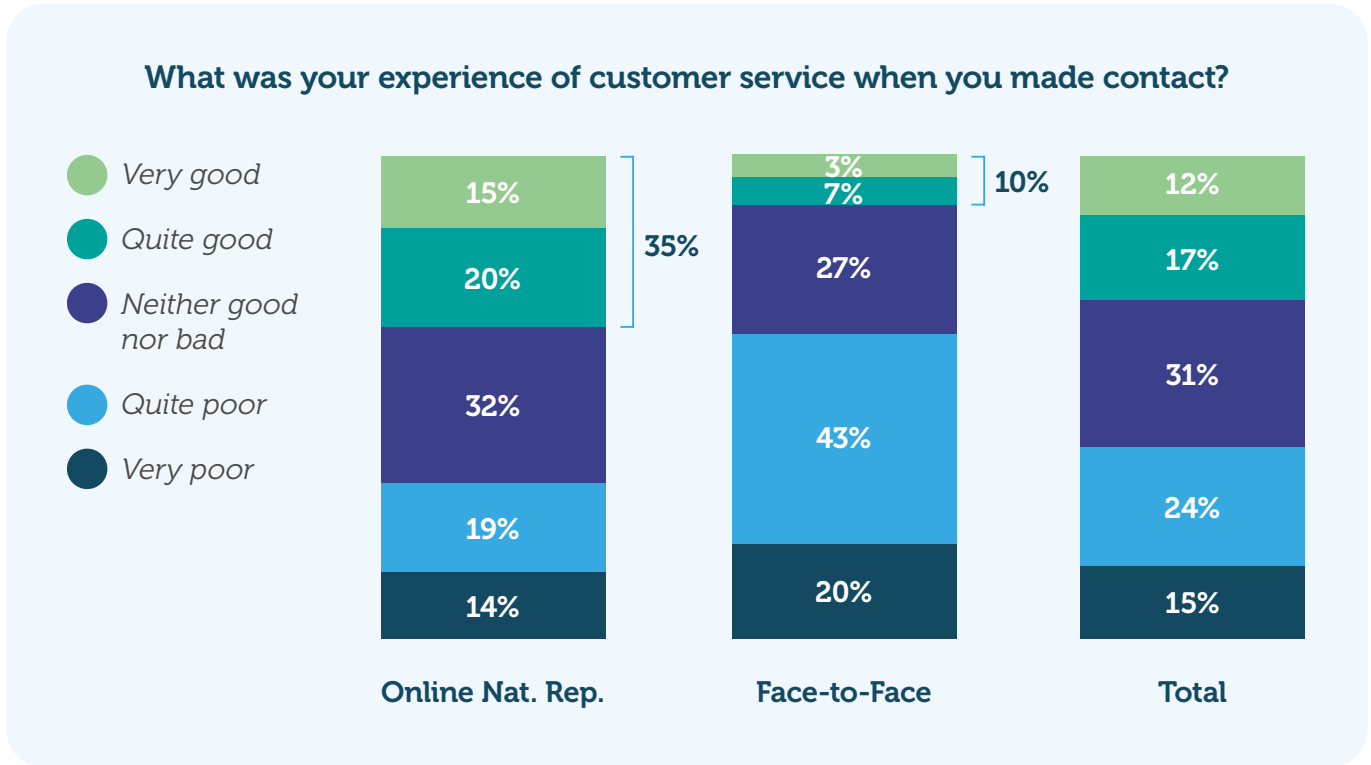
**Figure 5: Survey Question - Do you know who to contact if you have a query or a complaint about your water supply or water quality?**

Do you know who to contact if you have a query or complaint about your water supply or water quality?	Source		
	In-Person (Targeted)	Online Nat. Rep.	Total
<i>Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)</i>	72%	69%	70%
<i>Local Authority</i>	18%	18%	18%
<i>Local Group Water Scheme</i>	5%	4%	4%
<i>Don't know</i>	10%	19%	18%
<i>Other</i>	3%	1%	1%

## 2.2 Experience of Customer Service Contact

Overall, somewhat polarised satisfaction levels for customer service across public water consumers. Uisce Éireann customers who contacted the utility (n=138; 108 in Nat. Rep. sample, 30 in the face-to-face sample) were asked to rate their experience of customer service.

Figure 6: Survey Question - What was your experience of customer service when you made contact?



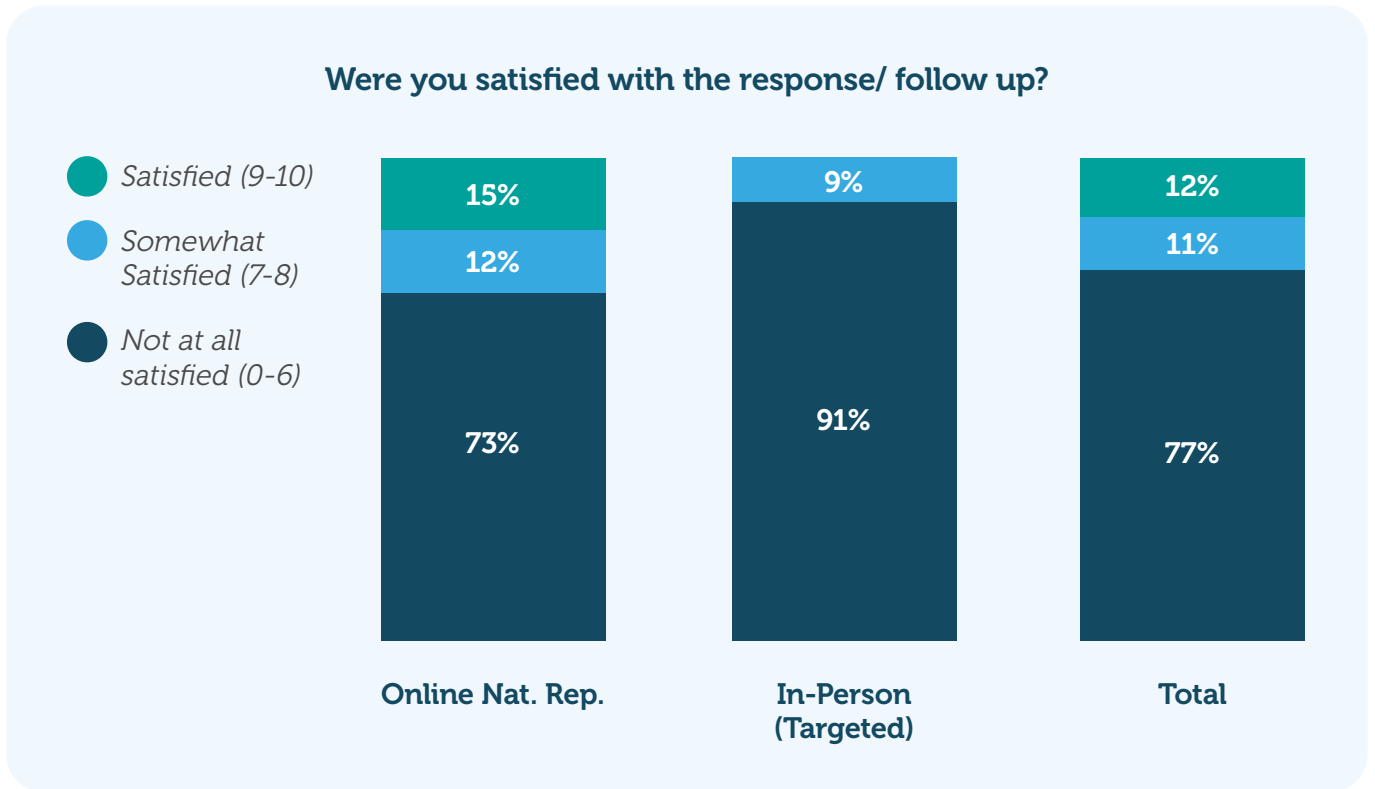
Customer service satisfaction levels were mixed overall and notably lower among customers in hotspot areas (Figure 6). Only 10% of face-to-face respondents rated their experience as *quite good* or *very good*, compared with 35% of respondents in the nationally representative online sample. Results indicate a low level of customer satisfaction across both surveys.

This represents a drop in levels of satisfaction in customer service since the WAB survey which was completed in 2021, where 51% rated their customer service experience as *quite good* or *very good*.

*Awareness of Uisce Éireann as the contact point has increased since 2021, but customer service satisfaction is lower.*



Figure 7: Survey Question - Were you satisfied with the response/follow up?



Customers who had made contact were also asked whether they were satisfied with the response or follow-up they received (Figure 7). Just 27% of the respondents in the nationally representative sample said they were happy with the response or follow up with Uisce Éireann, while the face-to-face sample in hot-spot areas reported lower satisfaction overall with no respondents selecting “satisfied”.

### 2.3 Advance Notice of Disruptions

Uisce Éireann customers who experienced issues in the last year were asked whether they were made aware in advance of potential issues or disruptions with their water supply. Overall, 36% reported that they received advance notice of issues.



**Figure 8: Survey Question - Were you made aware in advance that there may be issues or disruptions with your water supply?**



Only 21% of people in the WAB survey in 2021 were made aware in advance of planned disruptions to supply, while 39% of respondents in 2025 indicated they received advance notice. This is relatively consistent across both samples and represents an improvement in customers’ recall of communication about disruptions over time.

Text alert was the most recalled method for notifying customers of issues or disruptions in 2025, as mentioned by 26%, followed closely by flyers (24%). However, only 24% reported being signed up to Uisce Éireann text alert service, consistent across both samples. This indicates that there is significant room for improvement to try to increase the number of public water consumers who are signed up to the text alert service, with 25% of face-to-face respondents and 26% of the national representative sample indicating that they were not aware of the text message service.

*There has been improvement in advance notice of disruptions since 2021, while uptake of text alerts remains limited.*

### 2.4 Water Conservation Advice

Customers were asked whether they had ever been advised by their water supplier to conserve water. Overall, 43% of all Uisce Éireann consumers (n=1,065) reported having received water conservation advice by their supplier.

Uisce Éireann customers who recalled being advised to conserve water (n=469; 359 in Nat. Rep. sample, 110 in Targeted sample) indicated that a wide range of communication channels were used for conservation messaging, with radio the most mentioned at 36%.

On being asked to select from a list of emotions how they felt about having to conserve water, positive emotions dominated.

64% said they felt supportive of water conservation efforts, 44% felt proud to contribute. Still 26% of the national sample indicated they were sceptical about the impact of conservation and 30% felt frustrated by the need to conserve water, both indicating scope for improvement in public attitudes through education and awareness on the multiple benefits of conserving water.



Figure 9: Survey Question - How do you feel about having to conserve water?

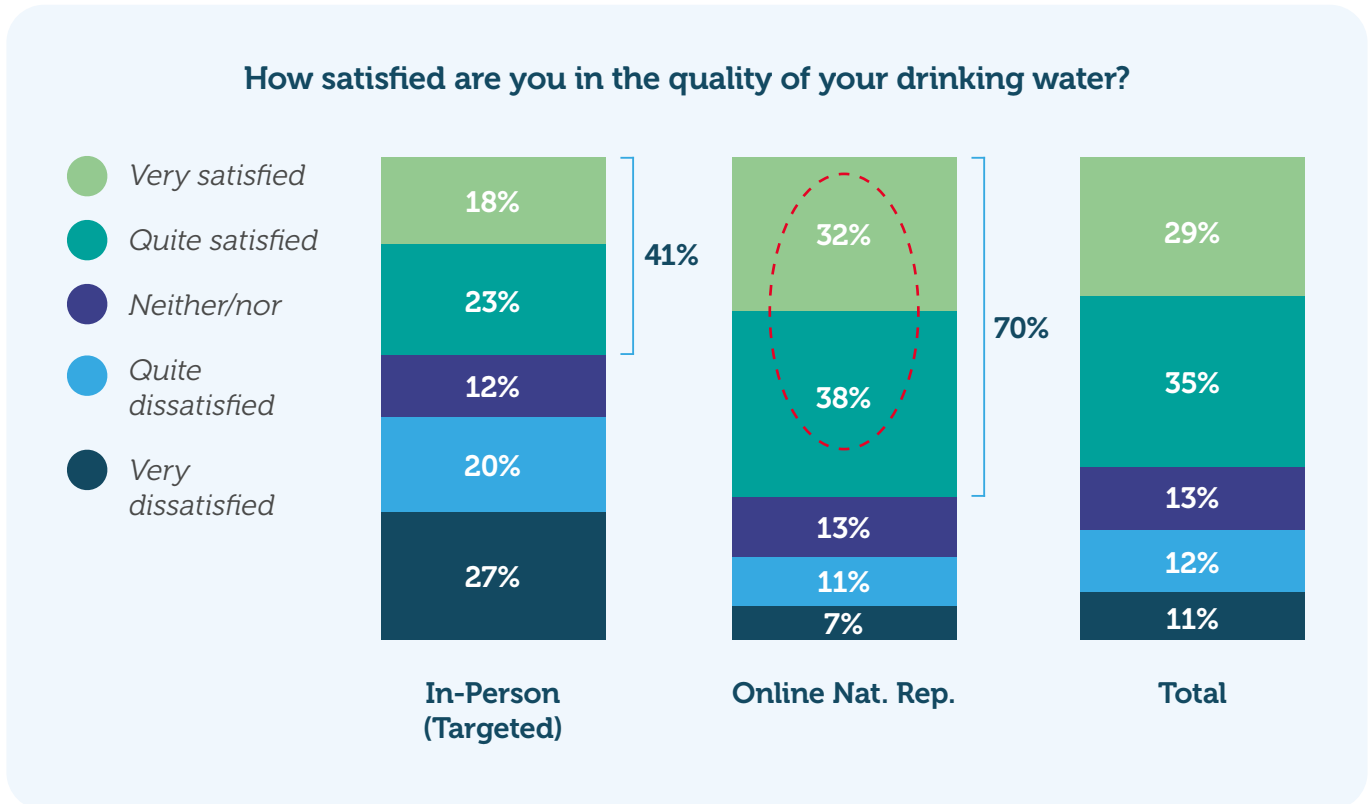
How did you feel about having to conserve water?	Source		
	In-Person (Targeted)	Online Nat. Rep.	Total
<i>Supportive of water conservation efforts</i>	63%	64%	64%
<i>Proud to contribute to water conservation</i>	42%	44%	44%
<i>Anxious about drought or shortages</i>	42%	32%	35%
<i>Motivated to take action</i>	44%	31%	34%
<i>Frustrated by the need to conserve</i>	23%	30%	28%
<i>Empowered to act</i>	34%	25%	27%
<i>Skeptical about the impact of conservation</i>	23%	26%	25%

## Part 3: Customer Attitudes

### 3.1 Satisfaction with Drinking Water Quality

*Overall satisfaction with drinking water quality is high, with 70% of customers sample satisfied.*

Figure 10: Survey Question - Overall, how satisfied are you in the quality of your drinking water?

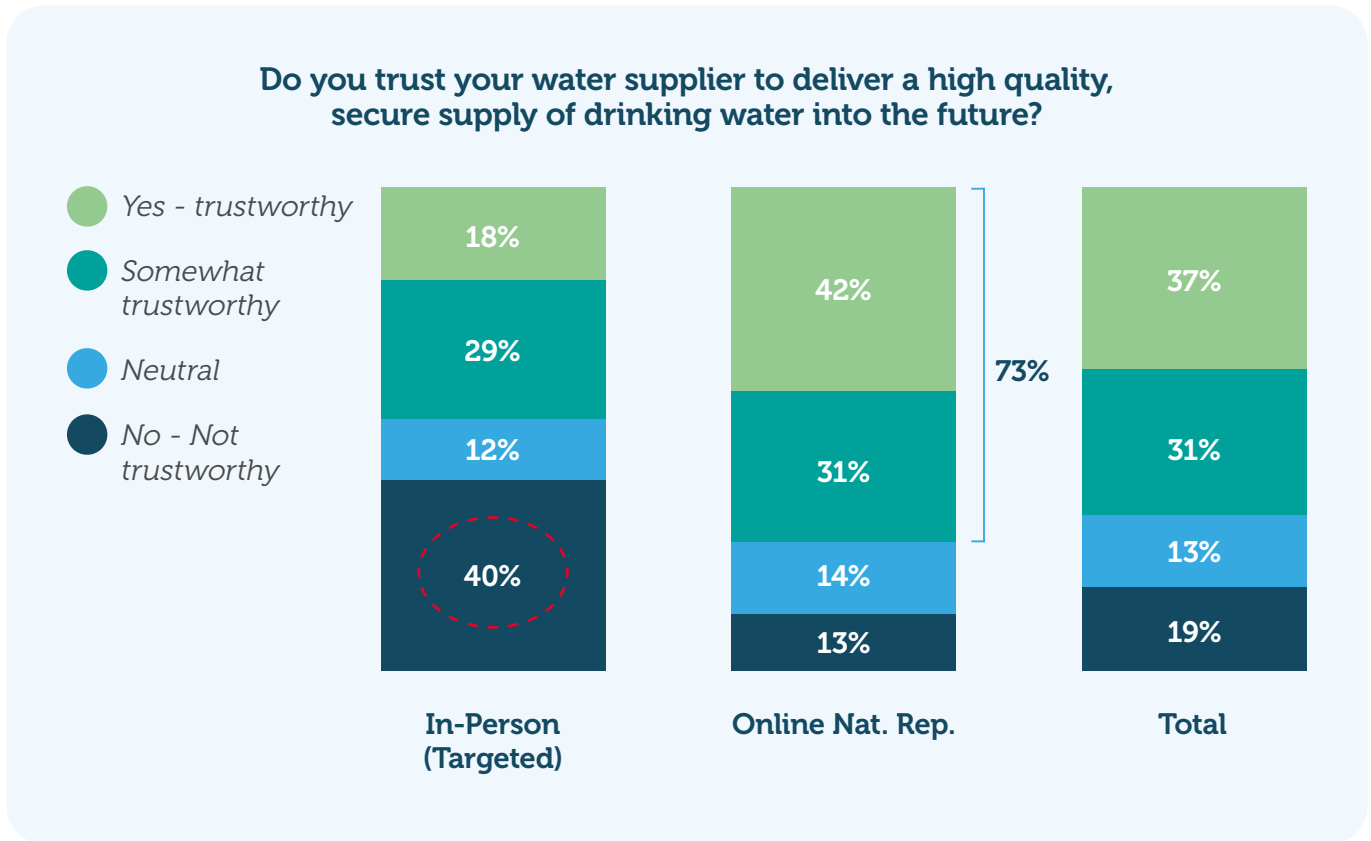


Markedly lower satisfaction levels were recorded amongst the in-person targeted sample, with only 41% registering a satisfied score. As expected, experience of issues in the past 12 months is associated with lower levels of satisfaction. Similarly, satisfaction is highest amongst those who haven't experienced issues or disruptions to water supply.

### 3.2 Levels of Trust in the Water Supplier

73% of Uisce Éireann customers in the nationally representative sample expressed trust in their water supplier to deliver a high quality, secure supply of drinking water into the future (42% registered 'yes, trustworthy' and 31% said 'somewhat trustworthy').

**Figure 11: Survey Question - Do you trust your water supplier to deliver a high quality, secure supply of drinking water into the future?**



Trust was lower amongst the face-to-face sample, and also in those who have experienced supply issues in the last year.

Customers were asked to explain, in their own words, the reasons for their level of trust. Figure 12 outlines the key themes identified in open-text responses relating to trust. 47% of comments included a reference to water quality, while a similar percentage (41%) referred to customer experience.



*Water quality and customer experience are the two most frequently cited drivers of trust.*

**Figure 12: Survey Question - Please give reasons for your answer (do you trust your water supplier to deliver a high quality, secure supply of drinking water into the future?)**

Coded Themes	Source		
	In-Person (Targeted)	Online Nat. Rep.	Total
<i>Water Quality</i>	51%	46%	47%
<i>Customer Experience</i>	42%	40%	41%
<i>Water Supply</i>	15%	26%	24%
<i>Infrastructure</i>	2%	8%	7%
<i>NA/No comment/Don't know</i>	8%	7%	7%

## Part 4: Communication Preferences

### 4.1 Customers' Appetite for Information

*Customers expressed strong interest in receiving information on their water supply.*

52% of those surveyed said they would like more information on their water supply, while 37% said the information they currently receive is just right. The desire for more information is higher amongst those who have experienced issues, where 69% said they would like more information. Only a minority said they don't care or would prefer to receive less than they currently do.

Figure 13: Survey Question - Would you like more information on your water supply?

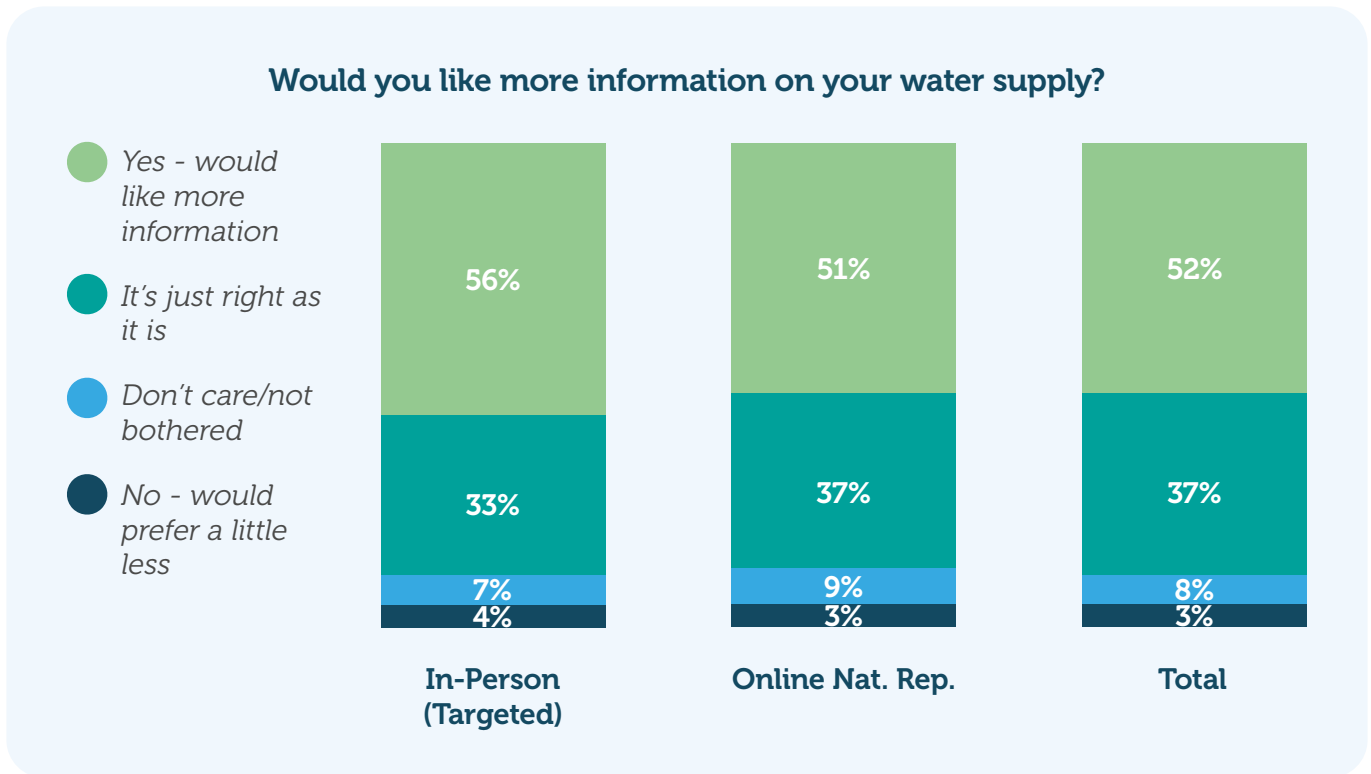
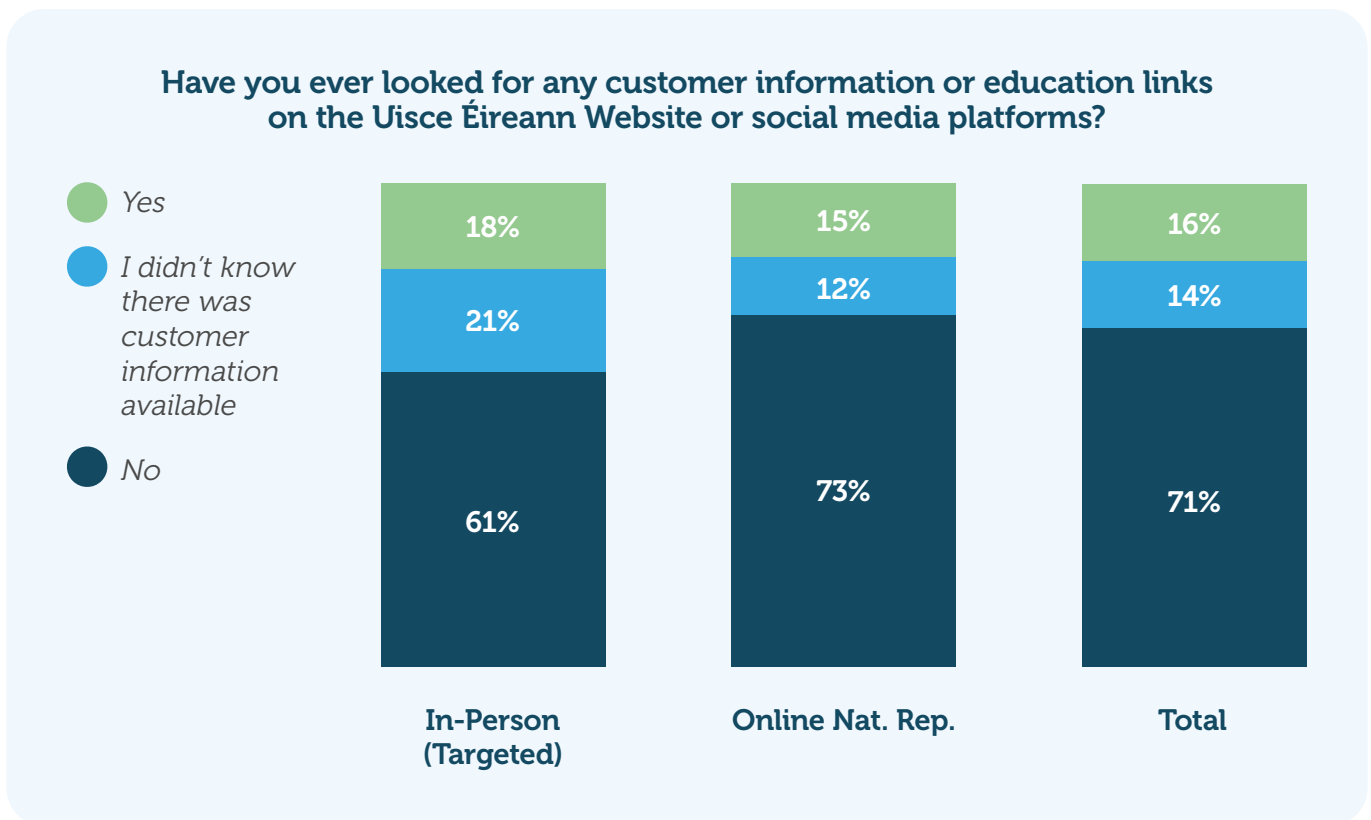


Figure 14: Survey Question - Have you ever looked for any customer information or education links on the Uisce Éireann Website or social media platforms?



Despite their expressed interest in information, only about 16% said they have looked for information on the Uisce Éireann website or social media platforms (Figure 14). Most customers showed passive information seeking behavior having either never looked for information (71%) or didn't know information was available (14%).

*Whilst interest in information is high, customers do not appear to have actively sought it out or to be aware that it is available.*

Potentially indicative of an appetite for more information when issues arise, 21% of Uisce Éireann customers in the targeted in-person sample said they did not know information was available on the Uisce Éireann website. Slightly higher access rates also registered amongst the nationally representative sample who had experienced issues.

When asked to select from a list of other information customers would find useful to receive about their water supply, 80% of the total sample and 91% of the face-to face sample showed a strong appetite for more information on the quality of their drinking water.

46% of those who experienced issues expressed an interest in drinking water quality, while those without issues showed an interest in water conservation (66%) information.



Customers were asked a closing open-text question around advice to Uisce Éireann (Figure 15), where communication was again the most prominent theme, followed by suggestions around information dissemination. The remaining themes were service quality, customer engagement, elderly/accessibility, public relations and awareness campaigns.

**Figure 15: Survey Question - If you could give Uisce Éireann some advice on how they should communicate with customers, what would it be?**

Coded Themes	Source		
	In-Person (Targeted)	Online Nat. Rep.	Total
<i>Communication</i>	42%	41%	41%
<i>Information Dissemination</i>	29%	27%	27%
<i>Service Quality</i>	13%	11%	11%
<i>Customer Engagement</i>	7%	11%	10%
<i>Elderly and Accessibility</i>	10%	7%	7%
<i>Public Relations</i>	1%	4%	3%
<i>Awareness Campaigns</i>	2%	3%	3%
<i>Don't know/Not stated</i>	22%	27%	26%

*Customers show a strong appetite for receiving information about drinking water quality.*

# Policy Recommendations



## 1. Improve Accessibility and Clarity of Information

With high interest but low active engagement, improve the visibility and clarity of information through plain language, clear signposting, and practical guidance during incidents. An Uisce Éireann App was cited as a new initiative to improve accessibility and customer engagement.



## 2. Strengthen Customer Service Experience and Follow-Up

Improve the timeliness and consistency of customer service responses and follow-up, particularly during supply disruptions.



## 3. Enhance Advance Notification and Increase Uptake of Direct Channels

Build on improvements in advance notification by increasing awareness and uptake of text alerts and ensuring timely, consistent updates during disruptions.



## 4. Strengthen Trust Through Ongoing Engagement

Regularly seek and act on customer feedback relating to water quality and customer service, and report back on actions taken to support transparency and trust.



## 5. Provide Clear, Localised Information on Water Quality

Given the strong customer appetite for drinking water quality information, provide clear, localised information on drinking water quality and supply issues, addressing common taste and odour concerns that influence trust.



## 6. Continue to Promote and Support Water Conservation Messaging

Continue to promote water conservation initiatives, reinforcing positive customer attitudes and providing education on the broader benefits of conserving water.





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