

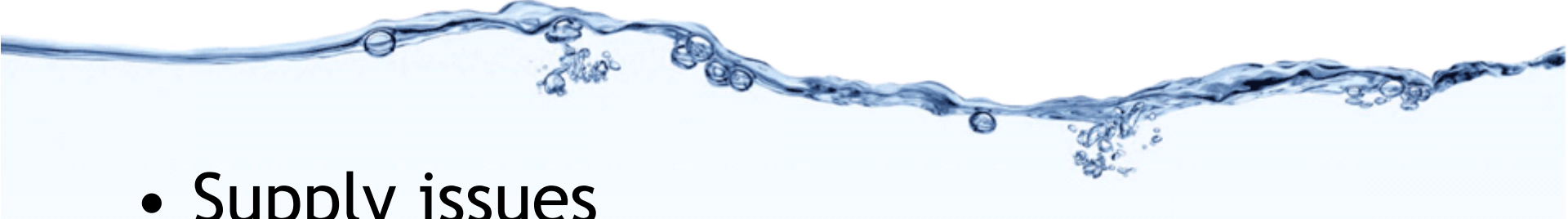
# Consumers' experiences of water supply interruptions following the freeze-thaw events of March 2018

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# Background

- 
- Supply issues
  - Water company response
    - Preparedness
    - Consumer & Stakeholder Communications
    - Provision of alternative supplies
    - Help for vulnerable consumers
    - Compensation
  - Review and insights

# CCWater Research Methodology

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Research was conducted in 7 company areas -  
Severn Trent, Thames Water, Affinity Water,  
South East Water, Southern Water, South West  
Water and Welsh Water

- 1,000 household telephone surveys
- 265 non-household business surveys
- 6 focus groups
- 10 in depth interviews with non-households
- 15 in depth interviews with self-identifying vulnerable consumers



# Consumers' experiences

## Communications

- 43% (49% NHH) of respondents said they did not receive information from water company about interruptions. Rural consumers got more information from companies than other consumers (67% v 57%)
- One in three household consumers in Wales, and more than one in four in England, felt it necessary to proactively contact their water company to get information



# Communication

- Almost two in every five affected business customers in England and Wales contacted their water company for information
- The most sought-after information for customers concerned the timescales for when the supply would be restored
- More than half (51%) of households that do not use the internet received no information from other sources and were entirely dependent on their water company for information




# Areas for improvement in future

- Companies need to provide information more quickly, including through a range of social media (and the water company's own website) to maximise reach;
- have more 'on the ground' company activity – to be inclusive and reach everybody (in particular to inform those consumers who do not use social media/internet)



# Areas for improvement in future

- 
- A decorative graphic of a water splash with bubbles, spanning the width of the slide.
- better manage non-household customers' and household consumers' needs for information on when the water supply will be restored
  - provide information confirming the safety of the water (even if discoloured or at a low pressure) once the supply has been restored.



# Consumers' experiences

## Alternative Supplies

- Most (72% household England, 52% household Wales; 74% non-household customers) did not receive any alternative water supplies during the interruption.
- fewer than half of recipients of alternative water supplies felt that what they were given met their needs entirely.






# Alternative Supplies

- Most had a long walk, or short drive, to get to alternative water supplies (e.g. bottled water stations).
- the vast majority of consumers in vulnerable circumstances did not receive a customised service (93% in England and 92% in Wales).
- water companies' definition of 'vulnerable' is not aligned to consumers' views of who needs additional support during a sustained loss of water supply




# Areas for improvement in future

- 
- sufficient provision so that all consumers' basic requirements can be met - including better understanding of all consumers in vulnerable circumstances;
  - improved distribution by having more water stations, more tankers and more at-the-door service;
  - clear and timely information about when, and where, alternative supplies will be distributed;
  - more effective contingency plans to enable water-critical businesses to continue their operations.

# Key findings - the overall customer experience



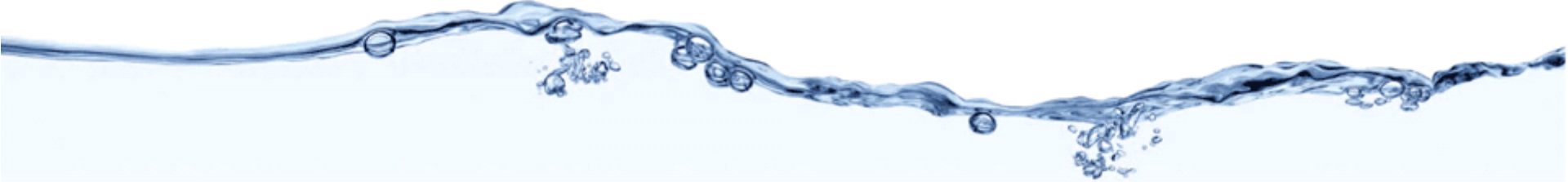
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- Overall, 78% of household consumers thought that the supply interruption somewhat, or badly, affected their household
  - 84% of non-household customers thought the supply interruption somewhat, or badly, affected their business
  - 25% of consumers affected now have a different opinion of their water company, for either better or worse depending upon how well the company handled the incident.

# Key findings - customer compensation



- More than half of all customers who experienced a supply interruption, including those in vulnerable circumstances, were unaware that they were due any compensation
- 31% of household consumers were aware that they were to receive, or had already received, compensation; and 23% of non-household customers.
- 84% of those aware of the compensation being offered were quite or very satisfied with it
- Guaranteed Standard Scheme now being revised

# Headline messages from consumers



- We want to hear from our water company through a **variety of channels** and see them on the ground
- We want to know **where emergency water** is and want it fairly distributed
- We want to know **when the water will be back on** - but make sure the information is reliable
- We want extra help when we are **vulnerable**, and not just for those on priority services register



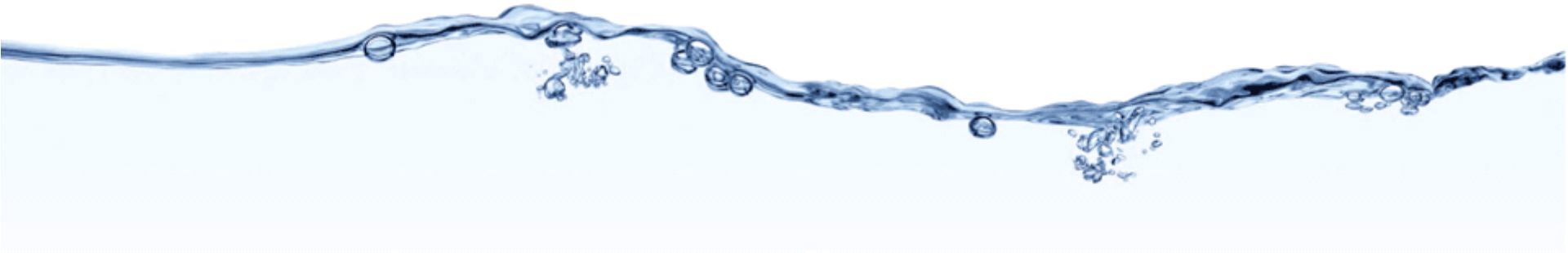
And, as a **business**:

- we need access to **larger supplies** of emergency water
- we need compensation that considers **business losses**.

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**THANK YOU**