



South Staffs Water and Cambridge Water

Water Efficiency in Faith and Diverse
Communities (WEFDC) Research

Final Report

February 2025

Contents

Contents	2
Project overview	8
The context for this research	8
Aims and objectives	10
Methodology	11
Using this report.....	16
Research Findings.....	18
Views of using and saving water in a religious/cultural context	19
Chapter summary.....	19
Using and saving water in the everyday	19
Using and saving water in faith practice	23
Customer views of water efficiency and their water company as a voice on this	32
Chapter summary.....	32
Views of water efficiency	32
Views of a water company as a voice about water efficiency	33
Engaging with customers about water efficiency through the lens of religion	39
Chapter summary.....	39
Using religion/culture as a device to talk to people about saving water	39
Concluding remarks.....	51
Appendices	54
Appendix A: Discussion guides / ethnography topic guide	54
Appendix B: Key stimulus materials	67
Appendix C: Session feedback	68
Appendix D: WEFDC Research Data Flow Plan	73



Executive summary

Background and objectives

South Staffs Water and Cambridge Water form part of a research working group that has come together to commission research to explore the use of water in faith and diverse communities in the areas they serve. The Water Efficiency in Faith and Diverse Communities (WEFDC) workstream has overarching aims to: establish new channels of communication and stakeholder relationships to support 'hard to engage' customers; save water, reduce bills and increase the uptake of social tariffs and/or priority services; and establish a more inclusive water efficiency framework and support tools for diverse customers.

Explain Research, an independent market research company, undertook a programme of qualitative research to better understand the most effective ways to communicate with people from different faith communities regarding their water use and water saving. The research objectives for this project were:

1. To gain a stronger understanding of how best to research, engage and communicate with the faith communities of interest to this research relating to their use of water.
2. To gain a better understanding of how water is used and valued in different faiths and cultures (building on and complementing the findings from a recent University of Cambridge study on this subject¹).
3. Explore customer views of saving water in their lives including views of current campaigns / water saving devices linked to faith/culture.
4. Develop research insights to support the practical development of an inclusive water efficiency engagement/support framework and tools that can be applied practically by water companies.

Exploratory qualitative research comprising a mix of online group discussions and digital ethnographic observations was carried out between September to December 2024. Participants across three communities of interest were consulted: Muslim, Hindu and Sikh. While insights generated in this report fully represent the views those taking part, they cannot be extrapolated as nationally representative, or representative of the views of all in each religious group consulted.

¹ Badder, Anastasia R. (2023) [Water in/and religious relations: A Cambridge study. Report for the project, Water efficiency in faith and diverse communities. Cambridge: Cambridge Interfaith Programme](#)



Key findings

Views of using and saving water in a religious/cultural context

Among those consulted in this research – irrespective of religious background – water was viewed as a precious resource associated with key touch points across the day. Yet, despite broad agreement on its importance and value, participants admitted the availability of water as a resource can often be taken for granted, as it is viewed as continually ‘recycled’ in the system.

Where water saving practices were undertaken, discussions revealed a range of pragmatic reasons drove behaviour, including: moral or ethical beliefs (e.g. pro-environmental); the financial impact of water use and perspectives relating to that (e.g. bill payer vs. non bill-payer); professional practice (e.g. being a landlord and installing efficient devices in their rented properties); the degree of cleaning responsibilities individuals have within the home; and even elements of an individual’s personality, for instance propensity to be frugal. Saving money, energy or reducing bills seemed the most salient as a reason to save water among those consulted in this research. Religious beliefs could positively influence people’s desire to save water too – but important to point out this was just one aspect driving behaviour.

Indeed, people from all the different religious backgrounds included in this research said they had a deep respect for water. When asked, many said this stemmed from religious teachings they had received or had been passed down from an older generation. Distinctions relating to views of using/saving water across the religious groups had implications for customer engagement. More specifically:

- Discussions among Sikh participants found water use is essential to allow them to express the values of their religion– notably through the way that Sikhism aims to give back to the community through taking in, feeding and nourishing others (regardless of others’ religious background). While water efficiency is a relevant concept to them, they more strongly associated larger volumes of water with religious spaces as opposed to religious practice – particularly the kitchen of the Gurdwara.
- Muslim participants had a strong physical and spiritual connection with water. It was viewed as a symbolic enabler – a ritualistic bridge to allow people of this faith to enter the state of spiritual purity necessary to practice via cleansing. They were often open to gaining more knowledge about saving water in their lives to improve their religious observance.
- Among those of Hindu faith, water was also viewed as a central part of their religion that respects nature and our place within it. They saw themselves as already caring a lot about the



environment and pointed out they want this knowledge to be respected by any messaging undertaken by a water company.

Despite examples of common views across the sample, overall, people's relationship with water and how it relates to their religious views was nuanced and individualised. While there was often synergy between religious/cultural beliefs and the notion of using water respectfully, these beliefs don't always equate to water efficient behaviours.

Customer views of water efficiency and their water company as a voice on this

The concept of water efficiency was understood in discussions as the impetus to be more aware about, and mindful of, the amount of water they are using, and then taking appropriate actions to avoid wasting it. Most had not previously considered that their water company 'cared' about water efficiency. People reacted positively when they were told about sustainable or environmental activities being undertaken during discussions, for example, work to protect riverbanks. Overall, the notion that water-saving 'benefits everyone' (e.g. customers' pockets and the environment) was an appealing and a motivating idea in the group discussions.

Engaging with customers through the lens of religion/cultural practice

To summarise views of how water efficiency can be broached in the context of religion:

- Water use was viewed as a highly relevant topic among Muslims, and across the sample participants said they were receptive to messages about this. Messages about water efficiency may therefore be credibly woven into a religious context for people in this community. Despite this, Muslims wanted sensitive handling of communications on individual practices based on ablution, so that there is no danger of feeling singled-out or blamed for being 'wasteful'.
- Water is also highly relevant to those in the Sikh community. Messages about water efficiency may benefit from a community focus, for instance in relation to volumes of food being made in the Gurdwara as part of Seva ('selfless service') requiring lots of washing, soaking, preparing and cleaning up.
- Hindu participants welcomed messages on water efficiency but weren't sure this needed to be delivered solely through a religious lens. Looking deeper, there was a sense that this was because, although the respect of water is central in their religion, the specific 'overuse' of water related to religious practices wasn't salient to them. It felt like this was due to low volumes being used by them for religious practice.



Participants often could not see a clear link between their water use and cultural practice. For instance, when discussing cultural influences on cooking and the use of water during cooking, people often pointed out that while traditional cooking rituals among those with a South Asian heritage could use a good deal of water, such as preparing dal, washing vegetables, etc, 'traditional' cooking is neither universal, nor exclusive in people's diets or cooking style. While diversity and representation of different food cultures was found to be important, and welcomed, people did strongly caution about the use of stereotypical or reductive imagery in relation to assumptions about the way that people from different religious or cultural backgrounds cook or eat food. To avoid other such pitfalls when talking to customers about water use in religious or cultural contexts, the research revealed future engagement must also:

- Recognise people from the religious groups consulted are expert in the notion of saving water and care about this in their lives already.
- Understand that the link between water efficiency and religion/culture is not something most have really considered before in this much depth and so can be quite jarring if not positioned carefully.
- Ensure communication that focuses on 'traditional practices' treads carefully, as some traditional uses and behaviours, such as traditional cooking practices, belong to older generations, or the past.
- Consider 'the messenger' – whereby some groups may feel better served with receiving 'top down' religious messages from religious leaders, others would prefer to have 'ground-up' communications that relay messages more subtly, such as via social media.
- Be positive in language and the 'ask' of 'saving water' versus focusing on 'wastage' – which has more negative connotations.
- Avoid any communications where it can be interpreted as though the water company is apportioning 'blame' to a specific religion for being more wasteful of water than others.

Finally, there were a number of ideas for engagement that emerged in discussions not solely related to religious/cultural use of water. These included: community events/pop ups (as a device through which to speak to a highly targeted population); the idea of 'gamification' of reducing water in their area (for instance, setting up an app whereby people can see others in their area and how much they are saving on water); individualised information (e.g. when customers look at their bill this can be an ideal time to tell them about how to save water specifically related to their usage/benchmark it); and giving away water saving devices and/or providing 'hints and tips' for how people can save water during their common everyday uses / look for leaks etc. came through as a popular idea for people across all the religious backgrounds. These ideas might have further application for communications development when motivating people to think about saving water in their lives on a general basis.



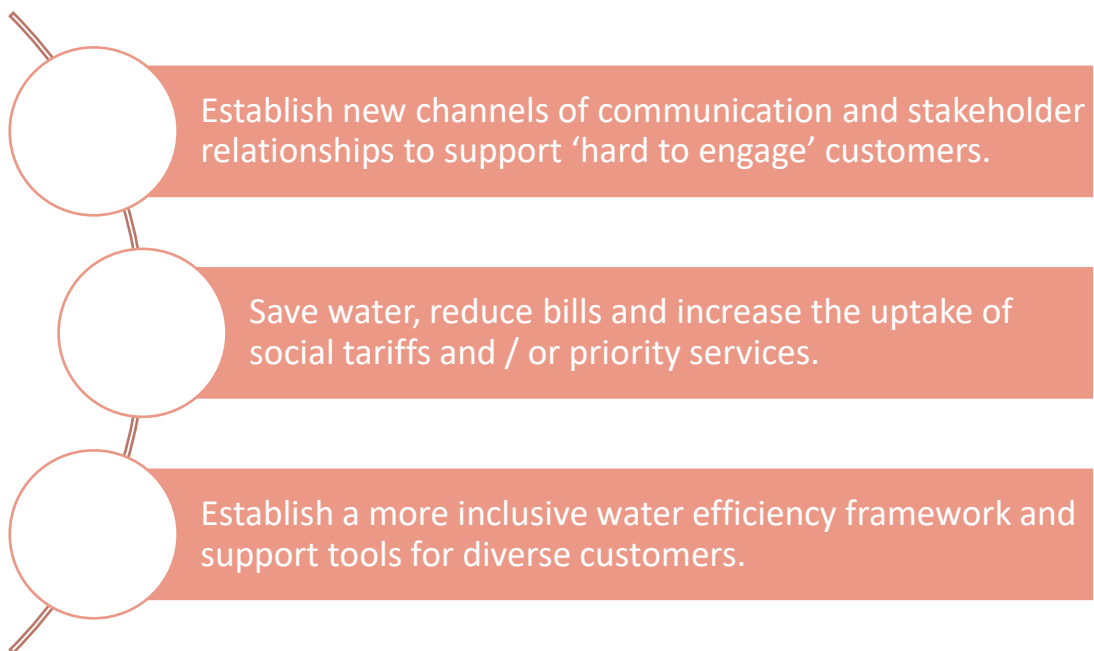
Project overview

Project overview

The context for this research

South Staffordshire Water PLC (SSC) provides a reliable supply of drinking water to approximately 1.6 million people across South Staffs and Cambridge²³. South Staffs Water and Cambridge Water form part of a research working group that has come together to commission research to explore the use of water in faith and diverse communities in the areas they serve.

Supported by the Ofwat Innovation Fund⁴ - which aims to support the water sector to better meet the needs of customers, society and the environment through innovative practice – The Water Efficiency in Faith and Diverse Communities (WEFDC) workstream has overarching aims to:



Under the umbrella of the WEFDC workstream, Explain Research, an independent market research company, were commissioned to undertake exploratory qualitative research to help the WEFDC project team understand how they can best engage with customers who use water in diverse ways – which may be related to faith practices. To deliver against these aims, research was required to engage

² [About Us | South Staffs Water](#)

³ [About Us | Cambridge Water](#)

⁴ [Ofwat Innovation Fund - Ofwat Innovation Fund](#)



with diverse groups of customers about using water in their lives to understand how their water company can engage with, and support, them to reduce their water use.

The research described in this report builds on previous studies such as work carried out by Cambridge University that explored water and/in religious relations (Badder 2023)⁵. Findings here emphasised the importance of water companies' responsibility to learn, reflect and avoid generalising in its engagement. Overall, it cautioned to avoid the assumption of a straightforward connection between religious practices and the use of water. It recommended that further listening to communities should occur to collaboratively work out the tone of initiatives, strategies, tools, or events around this topic, and as such that has been a focus for the research outlined in this report. It was also recommended that in future research, more time and space should be dedicated to explore:

- views of community members not in religious leadership roles;
- the views of women; and
- the family dynamic including views from older adults.

Our project considered these dynamics in its design in terms of exploring the views of non-faith leaders, women, and people living in a range of family compositions. The results here complement Cambridge University findings by focusing on practical insights for communication among the subject groups of interest relating to their use of water in a religious or cultural context.

This project ran alongside Cambridge Water's innovative work '*Reviving the Sunnah*'⁶, a project exploring how Muslim worshippers can pledge to save water during ablution, giving them an opportunity to use water-saving devices such as the wudu ablution bottle for this aspect of their religious practice. The results outlined in this report present a valuable opportunity to add weight and credibility to the body of knowledge being generated in this area of study. It also ran alongside the SSW rice washing campaign⁷, a further innovation project that sought to promote more conscious rice-washing behaviour among water consumers in the South Asian community.

The research objectives for our study are provided overleaf, followed by further information about the specifics of the approach that was taken.

⁵ Badder, Anastasia R. (2023) [Water in/and religious relations: A Cambridge study. Report for the project, Water efficiency in faith and diverse communities. Cambridge: Cambridge Interfaith Programme](#)

⁶ [Reviving The Sunnah](#)

⁷ [Saving Water in South Asian Communities](#)



Aims and objectives

Research aim

The overarching aim for this research was to better understand the most effective ways to communicate with people from different faith communities regarding their water use and water saving.

Research objectives

The research objectives for this project were as follows:

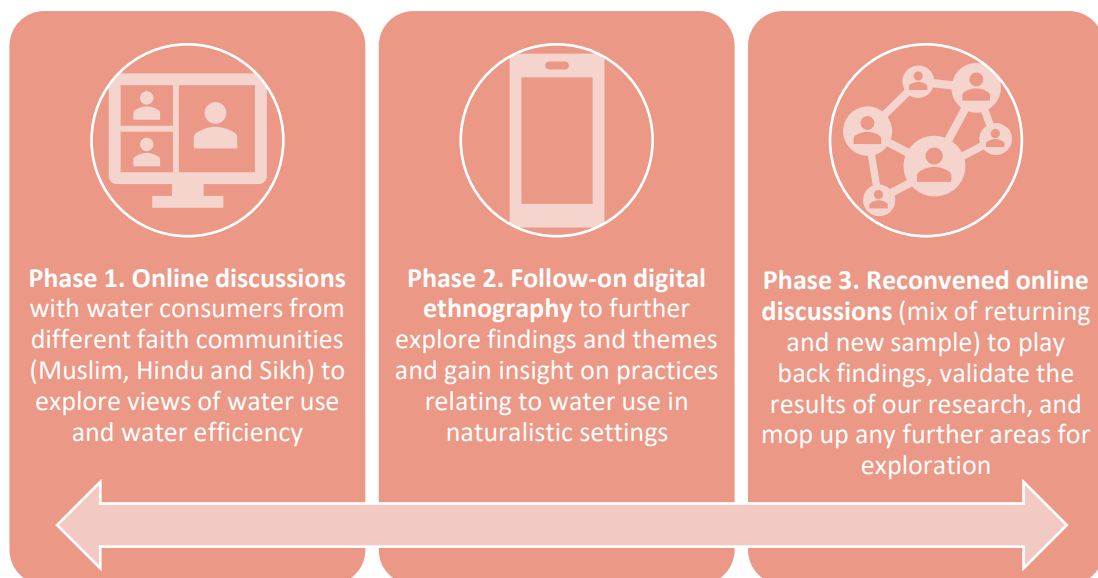
1. To gain a stronger understanding of how best to research, engage and communicate with the faith communities of interest in this research relating to their use of water.
2. To gain a better understanding of how water is used and valued in different faiths and cultures (building on and complementing the recent research findings from the University of Cambridge study mentioned above).
3. Explore customer views of saving water in their lives including views of current campaigns / water saving devices linked to faith/culture.
4. Develop research insights to support the practical development of an inclusive water efficiency engagement/support framework and tools that can be applied practically by water companies.



Methodology

Overview of our approach

In order to generate rich insight into the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour among people belonging to the faith groups of interest relating to their use of water in faith or cultural contexts, a qualitative approach to the research was required. In-depth approaches allowed us to explore and interrogate participants in detail on their views of the relationship they have with water, and what it means to them in the context of their faith or cultural practice. With this in mind, our design encompassed a mix of online group discussions and digital ethnographic observations. Three phases of work were carried out, namely:



In phase one of the research, online discussions were carried out with water consumers from different faith communities to explore views of water use and water efficiency. Five online discussions lasting two hours each were carried out with 27 customers from different faith backgrounds (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh) in South Staffs and Cambridgeshire in September 2024.

The ethnographic research (phase two), carried out in October/November 2024 followed ten individuals across a four-week period asking them to reflect on water use in their daily lives/ for cultural and religious purposes, and to make regular digital posts that tell a story about their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in relation to this. The ethnographic element allowed us to probe in real time where required, with clarity on responses gained soon after participants posted content. All ten participants were drawn from phase one of the research.



In phase three, four online discussions lasting two hours were carried out in November/December 2024 with water consumers to further explore views of water use and water efficiency with a stronger focus on ideas for how water companies can engage and communicate with them in relation to this. Of the original 27 participants from phase one, 16 returned for the third stage of the research, indicating a high level of engagement. The remaining 11 were recruited as fresh sample for the second round of online discussions.

Eight participants in total took part in all three phases allowing this research to capture how some participants' views of water efficiency in relation to their faith and culture have developed over time while being part of the research process.

A full breakdown of the sample achieved can be found further on in this report.

The research was carried out online for participant ease and convenience. All online discussions were carried out over Zoom. The ethnographic research was carried out using an app called Indeemo⁸, a qualitative research platform that users can access on a range of devices but most commonly, via their smartphone, to record views and behaviour 'in the moment'. Participants had the opportunity to provide content and / or just post open reflections on the topics posed to them each week. These included, for example, prompts on the use of water in their lives, views of water saving, views of water in their religious or cultural practice, and reflections on how their water company could communicate with them around these subjects. Most often this took the format of video content and photographs, though participants also had the option to attach voice notes if they preferred. Moderators checked in with participants regularly either via the online platform itself or over the telephone during the exercise to ensure understanding of the assignment and to probe for additional insights as required.

This methodological combination – group discussions alongside an ethnographic element – enabled perspectives to be elicited relating to how water use becomes a meaningful activity in social interactions, as well as personal accounts of what that means to people outside the discussion group setting. A key aspect of our approach was integrating a reconvened element into our work so that people who took part in the discussion groups were reunited to participate in final online discussions to further discuss their views and ideas. Discussion / topic guides are provided in Appendix A. These documents show the bank of questions that were available to moderators, and were used flexibly while allowing moderators to provide insights against the objectives at all times.

⁸ [Indeemo | AI powered In-the-moment Video Research platform](#)



Analysis was iterative and we continually reflected on knowledge during the course of the project. To this end, two interim reports were produced prior to this final report to provide emerging insights to the WEFDC team.

Delivering against best practice principles for engaging with water customers

In line with Ofwat's Customer Engagement Policy⁹ – this research explores the priorities, needs, requirements and behaviours of water consumers in detail – focusing on meaningful and high-quality engagement. It is compliant against the Key Principles of Customer Engagement outlined in that document in the following ways:

- The in-depth qualitative nature of this work ensured two-way customer engagement (Principle 2). Transparency was embedded in the research process, with relevant education provided through stimulus materials – see examples at Appendix B of this report – to facilitate considered engagement.
- Its qualitative design was based around the needs of those consulted, for instance, taking into account customer needs and preferences for the research to be carried out online at greater convenience to them (Principle 3,4).
- The ethnographic, behavioural aspect to this research evidences a genuine understanding of customer behaviours and needs (Principle 5).
- The reconvened approach taken with the online discussion groups further ensured meaningful feedback over the course of the research project as it developed their 'genuine understanding' (Principle 5) of the research aims and objectives.
- Diversity and inclusion is a key tenet of this work ensuring that voices from a range of backgrounds were included (Principle 6).
- Evidence of customer needs are provided clearly within this report allowing other water companies to reflect on the findings in their own regions (Principle 7).

This research also delivered against current best practice for engaging water customers (CCW 2020)¹⁰ as summarised in the table below. Consumer feedback on taking part in the research was gathered via a post-participation survey, with relevant questions (on 'ease, relevance, listening') included. 'Making a difference' was reiterated in conversation with participants to ensure they understood their opinion

⁹ PR24 and beyond: Customer engagement policy – a position paper (Ofwat 2022) [PR24-customer-engagement-policy.pdf](#)

¹⁰ CCW (2020) [Engaging water customers for better consumer and business outcomes](#)



mattered. All participants were paid a cash incentive as a thank you for their time. Results from the feedback survey can be found in Appendix C.

Theme	Threshold questions	Approach
Ease	Am I able to answer the questions that I am being asked? Is what I'm being asked to do straightforward and reasonable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout the research consumers were allowed time to give thought to their responses during discussions, as well as ask questions for clarity at any point during their participation. Representatives from the water companies were available in group discussions to translate any ideas difficult to understand to participants during discussions and answer questions.
Relevance	Is the topic relevant / of interest to me? Do I actually have a view on what I am being asked?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were asked throughout the research reflective questions asking whether the notion of water and their religious / cultural practice was relevant to them, being guided by their responses.
Listening	Do I feel like the organisation that has commissioned the research is paying attention to what I say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants' views were validated during the research, and people were given the opportunity to reflect and ask direct questions to their water company and research facilitator throughout.
Making a difference	Do I think anything will happen as a result of taking part? Will taking part benefit others / the wider community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were given explanations as to why this research was being carried out with the opportunity to ask questions at any point. The end use of the research and the goals to create a more inclusive water efficiency framework for consumers in their area as well as further afield was explained.
Financial incentive	Do I receive a financial incentive for taking part? Or the prospect of a prize?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participants were offered a cash incentive by Explain as a thank you for their time and as a way to encourage their return to other phases of the research.



Sample and recruitment

The sample achieved for the phase one discussion groups is summarised in the below table:

Group number	Location	Gender	Gender range	Religious background	Age range	Attendees
1	South Staffs	Mixed	4 male 3 female	Muslim	1 x 18-29, 2 x 30-39, 3 x 40-49, 1 x 50-59	7
2	Cambridge	Female	2 female	Muslim	1 x 18-29, 1 x 40-49	2
3	Cambridge	Male	6 x male	Muslim	4 x 18-29, 1 x 40-49, 1 x 50-59	6
4	South Staffs	Mixed	5 x male 3 x female	Hindu	2 x 40-49, 5 x 50-59, 1 x 60-69	8
5	South Staffs	Mixed	2 x male, 2 x female	Sikh	1 x 18-29, 2 x 40-49, 1 x 50-59	4

For the digital ethnography in phase two we recruited a mix of participants as per the following profile table (drawn from phase one):

Variable	Cambridge	South Staffs
Religion	4 x Muslim	2 x Muslim, 2 x Hindu, 2 x Sikh
Gender	2 x Female, 2 x Male	2 x Female, 4 x Male
Age	3 x 18-29, 1 x 40-49	2 x 18-29, 3 x 40-49, 1 x 50-59

For the reconvened discussion groups in phase three, the following table shows the sample achieved:

Group	Location	Gender	Gender range	Religious background	Age range	Attendees
1	South Staffs	Mixed	3 x male 5 x female	Muslim	2 x 18-29, 2 x 30-39, 4 x 40-49	8
2	Cambridge	Mixed	1 x male 2 x female	Muslim	1 x 18-29, 2 x 40-49	3
3	South Staffs	Mixed	5 x male 3 x female	Hindu	3 x 40-49, 3 x 50-59, 2 x 60-69	8
4	South Staffs	Mixed	6 x male 6 x female	Sikh	2 x 18-29, 1 x 30-39, 6 x 40-49, 3 x 50-59	12



Cambridge participants (as detailed in the above table) were recruited using leads generated from Cambridge Central Mosque, and the authors thank them for their assistance in this. The remaining sample was recruited and screened to take part by Explain Research. As mentioned, all participants were incentivised with a cash payment to thank them for their time.

It is worth noting that while our recruitment criteria were designed to include those that followed particular religions, we did not attitudinally screen for people that were more / less traditional in their beliefs and therefore this has fallen out naturally across the sample. There is no sample split available of people's relative religiosity because self-assessment of this did not form part of our recruitment criteria. Anecdotally however, the inclusion of a range of those more / less traditional in their views has been useful throughout as it has allowed us to hear differences among participants depending on their level of religiosity, where relevant. It may be useful to include this as a recruitment criteria in further research programmes on this subject to further explore this variable.

Representation was also achieved across the sample in relation to the following:

- Age
- Gender
- Family composition –
 - Those with/without children
 - Those with/without children at home
- Bill payers / non bill payers.
- Homeowners / renters.

As per recommendations from Cambridge University's research, this ensured our work captured the female voice and people with different family compositions.

Using this report

Interpreting the results of this report

Each of the communities of interest we have consulted in this work are highly diverse, with a wide range of different cultural norms that will not be captured in a small qualitative project. While the insights generated in this report fully represent the views those taking part, they cannot be extrapolated as nationally representative, or representative of the views of all in each of the religious groups consulted.

Participant consent and research data flow



The WEFDC Research Data Flow plan for this project is provided in Appendix D. Participants have provided the requisite consent to take part and for us to use content they have provided within the body of our report to bring their stories to life. All data captured through the ethnographic tool used in reporting should not be distributed beyond the SSC project team, and it should be stored and deleted as per the agreed schedule for this. Participants have consented that the digital content they have provided will not be shared publicly, however anonymised data may be used in publicly shared reports/documents, such as anonymised quotes.



Research Findings

Views of using and saving water in a religious/cultural context

Chapter summary

A key objective for this research is to gain a better understanding of how water is used and valued in different faiths and cultures. To answer this question, this chapter will explore participant views of the use of water in their lives across the different faith backgrounds consulted (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh) in relation to everyday use and in religious/cultural contexts. It will provide valuable contextual knowledge to support insights relating to engagement with people from different faith communities regarding water saving covered later in this report.

Using and saving water in the everyday

Water is highly valued, but generally seen as an abundant resource

Among those consulted in this research – irrespective of religious background – water was viewed as a precious resource associated with key touch points across the day. People talked about water being woven into their routines and lives from first thing in the morning to last thing at night. Overall, there was significant consistency in the way that people spoke about water: its role in the morning when getting washed and ready for the day such as via preparing food and drinks; during the day for cleaning, cooking and consuming; and in the evening when further preparing food or cleansing themselves of the day. Looking across these everyday practical uses within the home, commonly diarised in the ethnographic strand of the research, it was evident that a lot of repetition and habit drives water use.

Yet, despite broad agreement on its importance and value, participants admitted the availability of water as a resource can be taken for granted. Discussions across the sample touched on how we can be sometimes complacent in the UK regarding our water supply. One participant highlighted that in this country we sometimes do not have the same level of ‘disgust’ at water running away unused down the sink as people he has met in other countries. For him, this came down to a perceived relationship



between respect and abundance – where a resource is felt to be more abundant, there is less respect of it and therefore reduces our motivation to save it.

Thus, a tension was highlighted in the research early on – because water can be viewed as an ‘endless supply’, the idea of needing to save water, or be more efficient with water in their lives, was not always immediately salient.

- *“You can have your tap on and literally it feels like an endless supply... we’re maybe not so grateful for those necessities” (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim)*
- *“It’s taken for granted, isn’t it? You’re born in this country: You grow up with a running tap.” (South Staffs Water Customer, Hindu)*

As a result, all said they used more water than they felt they ‘should do’, such as:

- Taking longer showers than necessary.
- Taking baths when a shower ‘would do’.
- Watering the garden with large amounts of tap water.
- Running water to rinse dishes.
- Washing their car using a hosepipe.
- Running water for frequent hand washing throughout the day – particularly in the post-Covid era.

Despite this, participants did say they sometimes tried to save water at home, by, for instance:


- Only filling the kettle up for what you need.
- Shutting off the tap when you brush your teeth.
- Filling up the washing machine or dishwasher before putting it on.
- Taking a shower instead of a bath.
- Using water left over from last night’s drinking water for plants the next day.
- Using the ‘half flush’ on the toilet.
- One mentioned they had flow-limiting taps.




A range of drivers to save water in the home in these ways were noted, including:

- moral or ethical beliefs (e.g. pro-environmental);
- the financial impact of water use and perspectives relating to that (e.g. bill payer vs. non bill-payer);
- professional practice (e.g. being a landlord and installing efficient devices in their rented properties);
- the degree of cleaning responsibilities individuals have within the home which could give people a greater sense of awareness of how much was being used / 'eco friendly' modes of appliance use; and
- even elements of an individual's personality, for instance propensity to be frugal.

The drive to save money through saving water was commonly mentioned. Indeed, saving energy or reducing energy bills was often a more salient proposition for people than conserving water as a standalone concept. 'Policing' water use within the home seemed to fall to the bill payer a lot of the time who saw efficiency through the lens of cost. For instance, some said they felt like they were the ones that 'nagged' other people in the household about efficiency generally from turning off taps, lights, heating, not using too much petrol in the car by driving slower, having shorter showers, etc. Some parents mentioned a sense of frustration here, that they were at a loss as to how they could motivate younger members of the family to be more mindful with their use of water.

 *"As a parent, how do I teach my children to save water? Hands up, I don't really. I do say to them, come on, hurry up in the shower, the usual mum things, but there's no management of it."* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

 *"[I've got] three girls in secondary school, they shower much longer than I'd like, the amount of water that they use, I'm going to be truthful, I'm not really bothered about the water, it's the cost of the electric shower, the cost of the electricity, you know, so that's an irritant for me."* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)

While cultural factors could be present, these were much less salient for people, beyond the above, more pragmatic drivers to save water in their lives. For instance, older relatives and passed-down stories could influence opinions on water saving. Here, participants said they had heard stories about, or had seen water saving practices among their relatives, such as using a bucket for washing, instead of filling up a whole bath, or being very sparing with the water they use from the tap, never running it unnecessarily. This had given a strong impression to some of our participants that made them think more deeply about their use of water and how they could themselves be better at conserving it.



Another participant recalled observing relatives from Gujarat sorting out irrigation systems which taught them wider lessons about the correlation between water, crops, food and survival and how water recycling (e.g. using it for the animals after human use) made sure it was used efficiently. This gave them more of an impetus to wish to use water for multiple uses, for instance throwing rice water onto plants outside to benefit them rather than throwing it away.

□ *“My mum, she uses a tiny amount, she doesn't use that much, she uses a bucket to save the water and reuse that same water, she just only changes the water when washing her feet”*
(South Staffs Customer, Muslim)

□ *“Culturally on my mum's side... I know that the concept of wasting water is a no-no... probably because when they were kids there was a scarcity of it”* (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim)

Alongside this, religious beliefs can influence people's propensity to wish to save water. However, as this report will go on to show, while religion can provide a motivating rationale for water saving, it is *just one aspect* that can influence people's behaviour. This following section will discuss using and saving water in faith practices in detail.



Using and saving water in faith practice

There was strong respect for water among individuals in all the religious groups consulted

People from all the different religious backgrounds included in this research said they had a deep respect for water. When asked, many said this stemmed from religious teachings they had received, such as having been taught as part of their faith that you mustn't waste water, or respecting the role that water plays in, for instance, cleansing the body to engage in religious practice. Indeed, one of the most common ways of using water in religious practice was part of *cleansing rituals* – cleaning your person, home, religious place or religious objects such as statues – to prepare oneself or the environment for worship. For this, it was essential for people from all the faith groups consulted that the water used was pure and clean, to allow them to perform their religious duties as intended.

Despite similarities, distinctions relating to views of using/saving water across the religious groups consulted are important to draw out. These have implications for customer engagement – both in terms of people's appetite for communication that relates to water efficiency in their specific religious context, as well as steers on what people want from the specific content and tone. To illustrate this, details of specific practices relating to using/saving water will be discussed below, though it is worth pointing out this is not intended as an exhaustive account of the ways in which water is indoctrinated in each religion but is a snapshot of attitudes or behaviour relating to water use observed during this research.

Discussions among Sikh participants found that water use is essential to allow them to express the values of their religion.



Water allows followers of the Sikh faith to purify the body/soul and environment in preparation to participate in their religious practice, such as by drinking Amrit (holy water), washing hands, or blessing the home. The importance of the presence of water in holy places and its use during holy ceremonies was mentioned by some too, who highlighted that water is ever-present in their religious practice.

□ *"Water is very symbolic... I practice Sikhism, so it is something that runs throughout, and some of our religious holy places are surrounded in water."* (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh)



Deeper analysis suggests that alongside ritualistic use, water also plays a vital role in the expression of core Sikh values – notably through the way that Sikhism aims to give back to the community through taking in, feeding and nourishing others. Cooking practices, especially for large groups at the Gurdwara, was a prominent water use for Sikhs participating in the research because of its use in food



preparation, cooking, and cleaning/clearing up enables them to practice ‘Seva’, or ‘selfless service’. Throughout the research and coming through strongly in the reconvened groups and ethnographic elements in particular, participants explained that the kitchen is often seen as being at the heart of the Sikh faith – a place where Sikhs can demonstrate the values of their religion in a practical way to others.




-  *“[I am] born and raised a Sikh... and water usage, what I’ve observed and still do observe as part of the Sikh faith, we do have Holy Water and when we go to the Gurdwara, we serve langar, which is the food and drink that we have as a way to give back as part of our religion... these cooking practices all require water... cleaning up afterwards is all water, and that’s centred around giving back to the community and also feeling a part of it” (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh)*
-  *“Water is used for cooking, basically. I do a lot of volunteering at the local temple where we do prepare food and a lot of water is used, and after people have eaten, we need to wash the utensils and a lot of water is used there as well... we call it ‘Seva’ (selfless service)”. (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh).*

When asked about whether saving water generally was important to people in their religion, many Sikh participants reflected that this hadn’t personally been taught to them through a religious lens. Nevertheless, it was still highly relevant to them given the respect their religion places on the environment and others in the world around them. With high volumes of vegetarian food (e.g. dal) being made in the Gurdwara as part of Seva requiring lots of washing, soaking, preparing and cleaning up, participants highlighted the Holy Temple is a natural and logical space in which to think about water efficiency.

-  *“I help out at our local gurdwara quite a lot... the amount of water that goes into Asian diets, like the daal – you’ll have huge vats of water just to make one pot of daal to feed the community for that morning, and then another vat for feeding the afternoons. And again, the tea urns that went on the cookers. You don’t realise till you’re doing these that the pan is that vast ...water is on the go all the time, and if they aren’t cooking with the water, they are washing with it, because we feed anybody that comes into the temple free of charge, and we’re constantly, then, washing up. So, I did realise, then, that water plays a much bigger part in our religion than... you initially think” (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh)*
-  *“...a big part of our culture is feeding and nurturing, and I think that’s where the cleanliness comes in as well... if you’re involved in the food prep and the kitchen side of it, cleanliness is going to be paramount to that.” (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh)*



However, some questioned the volumes that they would typically use for religious practice, and that such practices rarely would make them think they are being wasteful of water. For instance, participants pointed out that ceremonial practices using water can include cleansing deceased people in the community or carrying out the Amrit Sanskar (baptism). Here, participants elaborated on being 'sparing' with their use of water, only using a 'sprinkle', and as such this wasn't an area where they felt a significant volume of water is going to 'waste' to warrant the need for behaviour modification. Participants highlighted that, as the use of water here is minimal in comparison with other uses, it is not an area they would be comfortable with being asked to think about being efficient with their use.

-  *"My friend's mother passed away a couple of weeks back... we're that cultural and that spiritual about water that we bathe the body before its last rites... We bathe them and make sure they are properly ready to go to the other side."* (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh).
-  *"When we're talking about water, some of the water that we use is not classed as excessive. I wouldn't say that, when we're talking about it. Maybe cooking-wise there may be some people saying that it's used a lot, but for other things, it may not be an excessive use, but it's just something that we're pointing out that will get used in rituals, for example"* (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh).
-  *"...when we're making the holy food, again, it uses a little bit of water, but not excessive amounts?!"* (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh)

Overall, the Sikh participants we spoke to emphasised how water is vital in their religious practice, and water efficiency a relevant concept to them, however they more strongly associate larger volumes of water with religious spaces as opposed to religious practice – particularly the kitchen of the Gurdwara.



For Muslim participants, water was viewed more as a symbolic enabler, allowing them to enter a state of spiritual purity.

While Sikh participants talked about water use as way to express the key values of their religion by allowing them, among other things, to nourish and cook for others, the use of water for Muslim participants focused on cleansing the body. Here, participants emphasised how practicing Wudu (ablutions) allows worshipers to connect with Allah and their identity as a Muslim several times across the day. This seemed to in turn deepen their relationship with water because it acts like a ritualistic bridge to allow them to enter the state of spiritual purity necessary to practice their faith. As a result, Muslims saw religious practice as a key part of their water use overall.

□ *"...When I look at like the amount of water that I use in a day, most of that water goes on religious practice. For example, when I was doing the 'Indeemo' tasks, I said that one of the main ways that I found I could save water is through the religious practice because that's the main way that I use it..." (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).*

It is worth mentioning – as it came through strongly in this research - that Islam places a significant value on knowledge and learning within their faith practice. Here, the pursuit of wisdom is highly encouraged and considered to be virtuous. The Muslim participants we consulted with regularly talked about their respect for water being, ultimately, passed down via the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh) who instructs that water is a precious resource that must be conserved.

□ *"... whenever we get ready for prayer, or even if we were going to hold the Qur'an and read it, it's recommended that we do these ablutions. So, the way that we become sort of impure is if, for example, we went to the toilet... you've become ritually impure again. So, then you would have to make it [Wudu] again after that." (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).*

□ *"Prophet Muhammad says 'Conserve water, even if you are on the banks of a running stream'" (South Staffs Water Customer, Muslim)*

As a result of the nature of its use and prominence in daily ritual, alongside a natural inclination for learning within faith practice, it was common for the Muslims we consulted as part of this research to be engaged in conversation and religious teaching about water use and saving water, and to take that into their consideration during their everyday use.

□ *"One of the teachings as well within Islam [is] that you use water as sparingly as you can; you shouldn't be wasteful, because it is one of those resources in life that you have to really be grateful for and use as carefully as you can" (South Staffs Water Customer, Muslim)*



“I do some religious study, the first thing that we study is purification in modules because it’s so important. So, even if it was from the context of not necessarily the ablution before prayer but kind of consciously cleansing, even if it was like my hands or my feet regularly throughout the day with a religious intent” (South Staffs Water Customer, Muslim).

‘Best practice’ in relation to being sparing with water during ablutions seems to often be taught or inferred from teachings at the Mosque. Messages trickled down from the Mosque have a strong influence on followers. Indeed, based on such lessons, one participant said that they had made changes in their home to carry out ablutions more efficiently by having a bidet installed.

Overall, the Muslim participants consulted had a strong physical and spiritual connection with water. They were open to gaining more knowledge about saving water, and open to saving water in their lives to improve their religious observance.

For those of Hindu faith, water is viewed as a central part of their religion that respects nature and our place within it.

Hindus that took part in this research spoke about their religion as a philosophy – a way of living that respects nature and the interplay between human beings and the natural world. Cleanliness – of the person, the home, holy spaces – is vital in Hinduism and seen as a divine attribute. As a result, water is viewed as a sacred resource in our lives, specifically in relation to its role in allowing purification. Followers of this religion therefore talked about being attuned to saving water in their lives already.

“Water is a central part of our religion – from birth to death. Cleanliness is a central part of our religion... it is our life... we can’t pray without water, we can’t do anything without water” (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

“And you know, to bathe in the River Ganges, for us is a purifying process... and when we say goodbye to someone we have to ask the river, the mother river to adopt that person, the ashes, so wherever we are in the world that flow of water is important to us” (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

“Water is really valuable to me as part of my religion and I would never waste ever as part of what I’m doing. So for me I just take what I need.” (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

Given the respect of water was part of their wider beliefs as a Hindu, one or two pointed out that they would not expect a water company to ‘know more about’, or feel more strongly about this, than



they do. Because water is part of their philosophy already, some found it difficult to think that a water company could teach them something about the sanctity of water that isn't already evident to them.

- *"I don't think that the water company should be talking to us about this... I would worry, I mean actually it can be insulting, because we respect water, we care about it"* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)
- *"We already value water, we already respect it – why would we need to hear that from a water company?"* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)
- *"You don't want to ostracize a community of Hindus by condescending them, by saying that – don't waste water. Do you know what, it's like going to a vegan and saying, I hope you don't mind not eating a hamburger"* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

Further, when it came to water efficiency, participants in this group said that while they admitted that everyone can sometimes be responsible for using more water than they should – this would be rarely or if ever something they would associate with their religious use of water. Mainly because they couldn't visualise where – volume wise – this wastage would be occurring.

- *"Me and my wife have lots of containers of water – little gold containers of water in the house that we use [for religious purposes] but these, what we're talking about are small amounts, not excessive amounts, and so no I wouldn't say that we use too much water to help us practice our religion – in other areas of my life though I know that I can waste water by leaving the tap on. But it's not religious."* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu).

To summarise, the Hindu participants consulted agreed that water is essential in their religious practice, but they do see themselves as already caring a lot about the environment and so would want this knowledge to be respected by any messaging undertaken by a water company.



Religious/cultural beliefs can sometimes act as a driver to save water – but they are only one aspect influencing behaviour

For those who spoke about having absorbed religious teachings about the importance of respecting and saving water, or cultural traditions from their upbringing, this could encourage water saving practices in their life. For instance:

- One participant talked about having recently connected more deeply with the teachings of their religion, and as part of this increased mindfulness, they now switch off the tap in between washing and soaping their hands to avoid wasting water.
- Another talked about reading recently about how Islam promotes drinking water sparingly – sipping it or only filling your bottle up as much as you intend to drink – to signify a greater sense of respect to the water through savouring its effects. As a result they now try to practice this in their life.
- A different participant noted that the idea of saving and recycling water from rice cooking was very strong in her upbringing with it being used for all sorts of things after cooking including watering the garden to ensure they respect the Prophet's (pbuh) teachings on avoiding wastefulness. To comply with this they always make a point of watering the outside plants with rice water.
- Yet another said that she uses a pre-filled bucket with water and bleach for cleaning and doesn't throw it away across the week because this was a habit her water-savvy mother had – and she in turn did this.

However, it is important to note that religious philosophy or cultural teaching does not necessarily lead to saving water as part of religious practice. In some cases, it can lead to the opposite. For instance:

- One participant talked about how their younger children – while being highly compliant with religious teaching to practice ablutions, had not taken on teachings about being sparing with water to the same degree. Instead of being economical with water while performing Wudu, they simply jumped in the shower without thinking, using more water than was perhaps necessary.

□ *“For the kids’ ablutions, they just slosh water all over themselves or jump back in the shower – it’s getting so expensive!”* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)




Indeed, the relationship between water use, religion and traditions from upbringing is complex, and people's relationship with water and how it relates to religious views is highly nuanced and individualised. For some use occasions, there is a strong relationship between water and religious practice. For instance, using water in traditional customs such as carrying out Wudu for Muslims, by drinking Amrit (holy water) in the Amrit Sanchar ceremony for Hindus, or by bathing in the Sarovar (a sacred pool of water) for Sikhs. Here there is a clear and strong relationship between water use and religion, whereby water enables religious practice itself.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are of course many water use occasions that are entirely transactional, with little thought given to religious practice – such as through mopping kitchen floors or carrying out washing within the home.

Yet, there is a significant conceptual 'grey area' that falls between these two variables whereby 'non-religious' uses of water use can be viewed through a religious lens. Here, what may seem as everyday usage at its surface, can, on an individual level, be imbued with religious meaning. For instance, one participant spoke about choosing to wash her car at home rather than go to a hosepipe car wash because that would be wasting water and therefore against her religious beliefs. In this way, religious observance of water led to a reduction in use in a non-religious context. Another spoke about how on a Friday, to wash more thoroughly for Friday prayers, they spent longer in the shower and probably used more water. In this way, an aspect of religious observance vs use of water for a religious purpose, led to greater use.

Despite synergy between religious/cultural beliefs and the notion of using water respectfully therefore, these beliefs don't always equate to water efficient behaviours. As mentioned above, many had never really considered the impetus for saving water and were instead focused on saving energy through heat and electricity in their home. Most talked about water saving practices that had no link to their religion or culture at all, with some highlighting that other drivers – such as the need to be sustainable in their life more broadly or to save money – could influence water efficiency practices beyond a religious influence. Sometimes, these drivers could be overlapping:

 *"I mean, actually, there's two aspects to water efficiency to me. One of them would be spiritual, the Islamic imperative of conservation of water as a means of respecting it as a sanctified resource of this earth, I suppose, and then the other aspect would be conservation for environmental purposes, which are not mutually exclusive from the spiritual aspect"* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)

While religious or cultural beliefs can be a *priming factor* to using water respectfully therefore, and in some cases *influence behaviour* relating to this, this report will go on to discuss that some are keen to



avoid being spoken to purely through the lens of their religion or cultural practices, for fear of being ‘blamed’ or inadvertently labelled as ‘wasteful’. First, the following section will discuss customer’s views of water efficiency generally and what they feel the role of their water company should be as a voice about this subject matter.



Customer views of water efficiency and their water company as a voice on this

Chapter summary

This chapter explores people's understanding of what water efficiency means to them, views of their water company as a source of messages about water efficiency, as well as feedback on a current campaign that speaks to saving water within a defined cultural context, through cooking practices.

Views of water efficiency

'Water efficiency' was perceived as 'being more effective' with the ways that you use or save water

Participants were asked to describe and talk about what water efficiency means to them. Prompted associations with the concept of water efficiency included:

- Using water with consideration.
- Using water less carelessly.
- Giving thought to the way you use water.
- Only using what you need.
- Using the 'eco' mode on appliances.

During discussions, there was a sense that people associated "water efficiency" with being more aware about, and mindful of, the amount of water they are using, and then taking appropriate actions to avoid wasting it. In this way, people talked about water efficient practices as being about implementing positive behaviours to be 'better at using water' vs. stopping wastefulness. This distinction is important for future communication as it shows that customers seem to be more receptive to positive messages that reinforce good behavioural intents, allowing them to be better, versus focusing on the notion of preventing wastage.







Views of a water company as a voice about water efficiency

Water companies need to position saving water as something we're all working towards – including them

This research sought to explore views of a water company as being the source of messages about water efficiency.

When thinking about their relationship with their water company, participants described a somewhat transactional relationship. For most, this comprised looking at and paying their water bills without any need to more deeply connect. People said there was little reason to strike up dialogue unless something 'went wrong' or they had an additional information need. One participant who had recently reached out to South Staffs noted a positive interaction when phoning to get clarity on their bill, where they received some verbal advice about water efficiency with the goal of reducing costs. From memory, she said this focussed on advice to cut down on the frequency of uses for appliances such as her washing machine – advice that she took.

-  *"...[the relationship is] a bill, been paying it for years, and years, and years, and will do in the future, you just don't think that, you know, you need to contact them, unless you've got a problem, leak or, you know, blockage or something like that"* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)
-  *"...you take it as a utility, you use it, you consume it, and there's no issues, your monthly or yearly bill comes out, and there's nothing really to report back to South Staffs with?"* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)
-  *"I don't have any problems with South Staff's water. I've never really had to get in touch with them"* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)
-  *"They were really helpful [on the phone] they knew exactly what I wanted. And they were just quite professional. And yeah, no, that kind of answered my query quite quickly."* (South Staffs Customer, Sikh)

Most believed that the water is clean and drinkable in their area and they trusted it. This was important to those consulted because, beyond reasons of general health and sanitation, their water supply needs to be trusted for washing for purification prior to engaging in religious practice. However, others mentioned that recent reports in the media of untreated sewerage discharge in different areas of the country had influenced their overall trust in the purity of their local supply. A few had changed their water consumption directly owing to this (e.g. filtering / using a bottled supply for consumption) just



in case their supply was also impacted and they didn't know about it. While there was spontaneous awareness the sector is regulated and therefore an assumption that there is a 'minimum standard' for all water companies to meet, for some, following recent media coverage, they admitted that trust across the sector would likely be affected. One participant queried whether costs might increase for them as a result and hoped that they would not.

- *"[I have a] good level of trust – no cause for complaint... the water is clean and drinkable... tastes fine..."* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)
- *"...what happened down south did leave me more paranoid than I was about the water supply"* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)
- *'Well, I know recently in the news, we've had Ofwat order quite a few water companies to pay out some... they've been fined, haven't they, for the pollution in the water or the several areas that they haven't maintained. So I'm not sure if South Staffs is one of them. So I do wonder whether that's going to impact on increases in the future if South Staffs is one of those that have had to fork out these big fines'* (South Staffs Customer, Sikh)
- *"There's definitely a mistrust in my community around the quality of water that we're drinking to a point where we are kind of trying to drink bottled water or having conversations about hard filters, filters at the water connection and comparing it."* (South Staffs Customer, Sikh)

Except among those recruited via Cambridge Central Mosque (who had been privy to Cambridge Water actively deepening their relationship with the Mosque recently), people had not previously considered that their water company 'cared about' water efficiency. Some said that reducing customer usage wasn't something they thought their water company would encourage, because this would 'reduce their profits' as a commercial company.

- *"[I] like the project at Cambridge Central Mosque. I mean, I don't think I've ever seen any other utility company do anything quite like that, especially... feeling quite authentic, and not just marketing or public relations"* (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim)

Against a backdrop of increasing consumer mistrust in the sector¹¹, there is a sense that water companies need to be aware how messages may land with people regarding water efficiency – in terms of taking 'joint responsibility' for a problem and reassuring the consumer that they are also taking steps to save water, beyond efforts they may be making at home. For instance, during this study one person mentioned they had experienced water leaks in their road, which made them reflect on how little they knew about water maintenance in their area, and their lack of knowledge about how much water is

¹¹ [Customer trust and satisfaction in water companies falling in latest Ofwat and CCW research - Ofwat](#)



lost through such leaks. Given this, one participant felt confused as to why they were being spoken to about water efficiency in a religious context when there were so many other examples of 'high volume wastage' he could think of. This seemed unfair to him.

□ *"When you see how much water is being wasted [elsewhere] literally thousands of litres of water because of leaks...then you think, well, why am I trying to save it? What's the point when it's leaking out at something like 7000 gallons a minute at high pressure, so what do we do there?"* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

As a result, people reacted positively when they were told about sustainable or environmental activities being undertaken by their water company during discussions, for example, work to protect riverbanks.

□ *"I'm impressed by how sustainable you're looking to become, and all of the measures that you're using to become really sustainable, that's impressive"* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)

After being informed about the risk of future water shortages and the need to take action on this, participants admitted that the notion of water 'running out' was not something they had considered before, and therefore the idea that *'if no action was taken there won't be enough water to meet human demand by 2045'* was both surprising and shocking to them. Daily use volumes (in terms of the bathtub analogy) was viewed as helpful to allow them to conceptualise and reflect on how much water may be being used in everyday activities in their life comparatively with others.

□ *"And with reference to 2045, not enough water to meet human demand? That's quite worrying. If that is the case, where's the water going to come from, unless we manage it better?"* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

□ *"[on water shortages] ...well, I never had any idea. Sorry, never had any idea, never thought about it. But it's actually just hit home right now."* (South Staffs Customer, Muslim)

Overall, the notion that water-saving 'benefits everyone' (e.g. customers' pockets and the environment) was an appealing and a motivating idea generated through the group discussions. Though it was felt more could be done to talk about the 'moral responsibility' and ethical practices of their water company regarding their role to save water, which they felt was lacking in their current knowledge and understanding.

□ *"Any campaign to reduce water consumption seems to [also] be in favour of the consumer, so I think you're kind of in a sweet spot there?!"* (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim)



“...the key thing is the moral responsibility this company has to ensure essential human health for all of its clients, customers, you know, going forward now and into the future. I didn't see any mention or reference to that” (South Staffs Customer, Hindu).

Participants were also asked to reflect on an example of South Staffs Water’s work to raise awareness about saving water as part of cooking practices, and reactions to this are discussed below.

Mixed views towards engagement with local communities relating to saving water during cooking practices

Participants were shown the following slide and a short video¹² informing them about South Staffs Water’s work to raise awareness and visibility about sustainable kitchen practices:

Engagement with local communities to date

- In 2024, South Staffs Water has been raising awareness and visibility around sustainable kitchen practices within East Asian and other communities
- South Staffs Water has also engaged with students to gain their input to help develop water savings ideas for use when growing and cooking food.
- **Your input is important alongside all these other initiatives to help develop ideas to benefit communities across the country.**



Securing your water future



¹² [Saving water in South Asian communities campaign](#)




The idea that such campaigns offer a more diverse look at ways to save water within different communities was, on the one hand, welcomed. Participants noted that there were some similarities with their own cooking practices, particularly those that used a lot of rice in their cookery.

As alluded to already in this report, a few people spoke about water usage across different cooking occasions in their lives that linked with their own religion or culture, such as cooking at volume in a religious place, or feeding lots of people at religious events. In addition to this, people did mention cooking cultural foods at home, for instance, one person described how she liked to spend time at the weekend making batches of traditional recipes for her family, a practice that was special to her. They said that these occasions could, by their nature, lead to a good deal of water use. For instance, running more water at the sink when cleaning and preparing larger volumes of vegetables, or for instance when defrosting meat in sinks filled with water for these larger, volume cooking occasions. In addition, participants noted that cookware for traditional recipes cooked in south Asian communities – irrespective of religious background – could be 'large'. Some of this cookware was shown during the ethnographic work in particular. Often these were not able to fit into a dishwasher or not dishwasher-friendly. Some said that this might lead to them washing up more by hand, and potentially using more water on some occasions.

Despite this, in discussions participants often could not see a clear link between their water use and cultural practice. For instance, when discussing cultural influences on cooking and the use of water during cooking, people often pointed out that while traditional cooking rituals among those with a South Asian heritage could use a good amount of water, such as preparing dal, washing vegetables, etc, 'traditional' cooking is neither universal, nor exclusive in people's diets or cooking style. Nor is there a benchmark here to suggest that they use more water during these practices than preparing non cultural food or that others might use to prepare food from their culture.


When reflecting on these sorts of campaigns, representation was valued with some mentioning that they were happy for a water company to be approaching water use from diverse perspectives, recognising food cultures among those in their region.

 *"When I see a Muslim woman doing cooking, and she's sharing her top tips on water efficiency within the home, whether it's cooking or cleaning, it's likely to stick with me more, because I relate to that person, I relate to her practices."* (South Staffs Water Customer, Muslim)

Across the board however, people did strongly caution about the use of stereotypical or reductive imagery in relation to assumptions about the way they cook food from a cultural perspective. Participants highlighted that there was a fine line between using images which reflected a culture, and



reductive stereotypes, and as such there was reticence for people to agree that targeting groups of people by the way they use food was necessarily going to be a good idea if it were to make assumptions that people of certain cultural backgrounds cook in the same way, or to single them out in their practices. Especially when people from all backgrounds, relating to all food cultures, can be wasteful of water when it comes to cooking.

 *“...we need to be very, very careful - not all South Asians for example operate in the same way”* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

The following section of this report discusses people’s views of using religion as a device through which to broach the subject of water efficiency.



Engaging with customers about water efficiency through the lens of religion

Chapter summary

The final chapter of this report explores customer reactions towards using religion (or cultural) ideas as a way for their water company to talk to them about saving water. It provides practical insights on future communication and engagement to support the development of an inclusive water efficiency engagement/support framework, one of the overarching objectives of the WEFDC workstream.

Using religion/culture as a device to talk to people about saving water

People from the different religious groups consulted reacted differently in discussions about whether their water company should talk to them about saving water through the lens of their religion/culture. For clarity on this, views will be discussed in turn for each of the religious groups consulted. As much as possible, practical steers will be provided based on what customers told us they would like in terms of the specific approaches for communication.

Messages about water efficiency may be credibly woven into a religious context for people in the Muslim community

Water use and efficiency was viewed as a highly relevant topic among Muslims, across the sample participants said they are receptive to messages about this. People were open to their water company aligning with beliefs they already held that saving water is a good idea. Due to the fact that: (a) there is a strong link between religious rituals and water use; and (b) an admission from many that ablution can be one of their key uses for water, there was a logical fit between religious observance and water efficiency.

□ "...When I look at like the amount of water that I use in a day, most of that water goes on religious practice. For example, when I was doing the *Indeemo* tasks, I said that one of the main ways that I found I could save water is through the religious practice because that's the main way that I use it..." (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).




Perhaps due to a disposition to learn about water saving as part of Islam, several spontaneously took an **experimental approach** to participation in the digital ethnography, engaging in ‘trial and error’ to see if they could save more water during their time in the research as illustrated in the below case studies.

CASE STUDY 1: Experimentation/multi-purposing - example of using water for multiple purposes to be efficient, from the digital ethnography

(Cambridge, Muslim, Male, 18-29)

One of the participants that took part in the ethnographic research described how contributing to this study has made him “hyper-aware” of water usage in his life. One of the ways he is considering his usage more as a result of taking part in the research is the way in which he is now recycling water or ensuring that water use occasions have ‘multi-uses’. For instance, washing his fruit in a bowl of water instead of washing it under a running tap, and then using that water again to feed his plants. He really felt this was a simple way for him to ensure that water isn’t ‘discarded prematurely’ and it gave him a sense of satisfaction and a feeling he was respecting the water more.


 *“I think participating in the study has made me hyper conscious of my water usage. And so, I was washing some fruit in a bowl of water and I decided I'm going to use this water rather than throwing it back down the sink. I want to then use this water to put it in my house plant, which is something I [was] very conscious of...usually when I'm washing fruit and things, I just throw the water down the sink.”*



CASE STUDY 2: Experimentation/multi-purposing – tapping into ‘Tik Tok’ demonstrations, from the digital ethnography (Cambridge, Muslim, Female, 18-29)

Another participant from the Muslim faith highlighted a number of ‘experiments’ that she undertook as part of her participation in the research. She told us how she started tapping into current behaviours but slightly amending them to use less water. For example:


- Starting to re-use kettle water in the morning – the first use was to heat up a food flask; the second was to wash some cups; and then she still had enough water left to dilute some floor cleaner to mop the floor – so the water went through three different purposes.
- Saving rice water has started to become part of her routine, too – soaking rice, putting it into little bottles and then using it as a spray for her hair. She learned about this on Tik Tok but it fed into a belief she had already had from when she was little about the multiple uses of rice water and saving rice water for more than one use.
- She also mentioned another experiment - switching to re-usable bottles of water rather than pouring her children a glass of water and then them only having a few sips of it.

 *“I saw someone on TikTok [say] that rice water is good for your hair, so I tried that out!”*




CASE STUDY 3: Experimenting / ways to reduce water during Wudu, from the digital ethnography (Cambridge, Muslim, Female, 18-29)

One of the participants that took part in the digital ethnography, highlighted that at their Mosque there is a jug for Wudu which encourages people to only fill it to the 'Prophetic' volume (c. 750mls) to perform their ablutions. They were inspired by this and decided to attempt this approach at home. She said that one solution for her would be to get two of these jugs and have one in each of her bathrooms, ready to use. A few days later she continued with her experiment and decided to, instead of using the jugs, switch to a flask because she realised that she needed up to 1.5L to effectively complete her ablution. She felt that the spray for ablutions though wasn't good enough because it doesn't generate a 'cuppable' volume of water to cleanse yourself with. The mist didn't make her feel like she was being washed properly. She felt that she needed to be able to physically splash or smear the water onto her body to feel like washing is taking place effectively – as this is the way she has been taught. Misting, for her, seemed to slow down and disrupt the process of ablution. It also didn't allow her to rinse out her mouth. Primed now to this topic, and thinking further about different ways to be more efficient with her water use, she then installed a flush saving device into her two toilets.


 *"I ordered the saving water devices pack, the free one, I think, that was part of the 'Reviving the Sunnah' campaign. There was like this bag that comes in it that you put in the kind of... the basin of the toilet for when you flush it saves like a litre or two with every flush...if you'd asked me initially, I would have had no idea that that's something that I could do. So, also kind of yes tie to the religious element but I think the really important thing is like making it implementable [easy] for people" (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).*



Such examples demonstrate potential scope to take this experimental mindset and utilise it in engagement work. However despite a clear rationale for engagement, Muslims cautioned about communications on individual practices based on ablution alone, and, if implemented, it needs to be treated sensitively and positively so that there is no danger of feeling singled-out or blamed for being 'wasteful'. Particularly as some had never really linked water efficiency to religious practice before.

 *"I think even during all of this research, in these weeks, [where] we're trying to think of how we use water specifically as Muslims, it is very limited. So, I think that's where it would- it would seem strange for a water company to sort of target that because it is mainly just ablution? (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).*

In this way, participants were keen for 'softer' and positively positioned advice that seeks to provide 'hints and tips' to use less water as part of a general desire for Muslims to embrace water efficiency within their lives, rather than communications that solely puts the spotlight on 'excessive' water use during ablutions and invertedly causes offence.

 *'Do you think that the amount of water that is being used in certain households is significantly higher than for people of certain religions and cultures? Because a part of me would probably be thinking, am I being kind of targeted here if I get called upon my usage of water because I'm a Muslim? I'd probably take that more personal and probably say no way, no thank you, go away.'* (South Staffs Water Customer, Muslim).

To soften the message it might be worth thinking about how motivated Muslims can save water beyond efficient Wudu practice. For instance, as shown in Case Study 1 in relation to multi-purposing water, how 'small changes can lead to other small changes'. This approach not focusing specifically on religious uses may work well when delivered through social media, such as through Tik Tok or YouTube, where people are well-versed in receiving content that aims to give them advice about a whole plethora of subjects. As part of this, it might help to think about communications that seeks to incrementally deepen engagement, by, for instance, getting people to firstly question water use and then experiment with how water can be reduced in their religious practice or as part of a whole host of everyday uses.

As mentioned above, there was a feeling from discussions with customers from this community that knowledge about water use is often – and most credibly – filtered down from the Mosque into the community. Using religious leadership to 'trickle down' ideas about water efficiency practices in relation to faith was welcomed. Participants were receptive generally to messages that come from trusted Muslim figures - e.g. the Imam to whom they are used to listening in relation to how they can



improve or deepen their religious practice. One highlighted that she had experienced this form of co-creation previously and felt that it had worked well:

□ *“When I lived in Singapore, I remember the Government approached the Mosques to talk about how they could make the areas outside of the Mosques greener, like to have garden space. So, I think that’s what I’m thinking of, like consulting.”* (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).

Specific ideas relating to this also included:

- having companies setting up stalls in the atrium of Mosques delivering water efficiency messages; and
- doing so during key festivals where mindfulness around the consumption of resources (e.g. Ramadan or World Water Day) might encourage worshippers to reflect more on this topic and take it into deeper consideration.

In addition to utilising the Mosque as way to trickle down knowledge, some said that a ‘Business to Business’ approach could also work well here to inform them sensitively of ways they can reduce their water consumption, as well as working alongside them to help develop messages that will work among their congregation.

As part of any communications campaign, Friday may be a useful day on which to release messaging. People spoke about Friday as being a day where: (a) they are expected to be well cleansed for prayers, which for some, results in ‘longer showers’ and therefore greater water use; and (b) Friday is a day where there is the expectation of sermons on such topics as the religious use of water being delivered at the Mosque.

Alongside this, and not limited to a Friday, one participant highlighted that notifications in his prayer app could be a good way to – if done so sensitively and supportively – encourage mindfulness about the use of water for a religious purpose.

Overall, participants were also keen to caution on the use of stereotypical imagery, an interesting need that emerged during discussions was about ensuring that a multitude of voices and imagery are used in any communication depicting Muslims.

□ *“Yes, even using images, if it were tied to the Muslim theme, it’s the idea that it shouldn’t be all people of one skin tone, or if all people were dressed a certain way, because there is such a big mix of people [that are Muslim]”* (Cambridge Water Customer, Muslim).



□ *“Diverse images is definitely going to appeal... like hijab-wearing women, different colours, different tones...”* (South Staffs Water Customer, Muslim).

Messages targeted to the Sikh community about water efficiency may benefit from a community focus

Participants told us how giving back to the community is an integral part of being Sikh. As a result, community focussed messages about how to be more efficient with water may work well. For instance, saving water as an activity that allows ‘communal good’ may chime with this group.

With high volumes of vegetarian food being made in the Gurdwara as part of Seva requiring lots of washing, soaking, preparing and cleaning up, participants highlighted the Gurdwara is a natural and logical space in which to think about water efficiency. Messaging present inside this community space may work well for this reason.

□ *“...you kind of see that happening in some of the Gurdwaras...you kind of take your trays and you see all the volunteers kind of washing up, the taps are just running”* (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh)

One of the challenges for communication highlighted by this group, but relevant for all, is that people’s versions of ‘clean’ and purified – whether that is the body or holy statues or the community kitchen – is very different from one another. This is a challenge therefore for messages targeted at individuals. How much water use during these activities is ‘too much’ – or, is it again about giving people ‘hints and tips’ that relate to ways to save water irrespective of how much water they currently use within these practices. Due to the lower volume of water used in some of the ceremonial practices, it doesn’t feel like this is a ‘way in’ to discuss water efficiency with followers of this faith relating to these.

There was some debate in the groups about whether it would be appropriate for a water company to talk about water saving measures within the Gurdwara, but the consensus was that this would be acceptable if dealt with sensitively and respectfully. Encouragingly, some said because messages about not being wasteful with food were commonplace in the Gurdwara, they would be open to messaging particularly if it supports efficient / money saving practices.

□ *When you go to get langar, even though the food is free, it's written in a lot of temples now: ‘Please only take what you're going to eat.’ You know, my kids have been taught from day one as well, whatever you put on your plate, you need to finish it. Don’t throw food in the bin. So, I think that element of not wasting, to me, resonates...”* (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh).


This idea is illustrated further in Case Study 4 from the ethnographic strand of the research.



CASE STUDY 4: Communication aimed at religious places

(Staffs, Sikh, Male, 40-49)

During the course of the ethnographic research, one Sikh participant noticed that their Gurdwara had installed water efficient taps which made him reflect on the benefits of this, and wondered if this simple measure could be encouraged in other holy places too. He felt there would be an openness to engage with water companies if there was a dual benefit here of also helping them carry out their religious activities more economically.

 *"...knowing that I was going to do this research, I was at the Gurdwara, I spoke to the head of the Gurdwara and I asked him, because we use gallons and gallons of water at the Gurdwara on daily basis...has anybody ever come in and done a survey for you to show you ways... I know they've got the taps that are saving and that, and he was saying "no." I mean, how many Gurdwaras there are throughout the country. They are trying to feed the community, feed everybody, but they've got bills as well, it's got to balance out. But nobody's ever been from the water industry to even give them any guidance..." (South Staffs Water Customer, Sikh).*

Hindu participants welcomed messages on water efficiency, but weren't sure this needed to be delivered solely through a religious lens

As mentioned throughout this report, similarly to the Muslim and Sikh participants consulted, Hindu participants also respected water within their religion – as part of this religion's philosophy about saving water and being mindful about that as part of saving nature. Indeed, mindfulness as a concept is certainly something they are well versed in as part of their religious philosophy and therefore may be a useful way into communication with this group.

Looking deeper, there was a sense that although the respect of water is central in their religion, the specific 'over use' of water related to specific religious practices wasn't salient to them. It felt like this was down to the volumes being used by them for religious practice, which wasn't thought to be a lot.



- *“...If you're going to do and practice rituals within the household, water will be always a constituent part. But I think that in our specific cultural use of it, is not very different to anybody else...”* (South Staffs Water Customer, Hindu)
- *“Education in general is so important...but education among people that are Hindu about saving water – something we already know I just don’t understand it... our philosophy, our religion is different to our culture – and our culture – we live here in England and it’s not different to anyone else.”* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

As a result, some mentioned they would prefer messages to focus on the everyday use efficiencies that they can make – irrespective of their use of water as a practicing Hindu – such as unlearning bad habits and being more mindful about saving water from a general household use perspective.

Nevertheless there was a strong belief in education and teaching the next generation about the philosophy of Hinduism and their approach to respecting nature. Coming though strongly in this group was the suggestion that messages about water could focus on the younger generations and be more general in nature. Education within schools was thought to present a strong opportunity, but again participants admitted this might also be part of a more generalised education programme. Indeed, one recalled a particularly salient experience from his youth when a teacher demonstrated clearly that saving water is within everyone’s capability – an approach he felt was effective:

- *“I remember an assembly that one of my teachers did for me, 1988 and he came into the assembly hall in front of 200 pupils with a camping stove and one glass of water. And with that one glass of water, he brushed his teeth, all in a different order, made a cup of tea, had a shave, boiled an egg, and then he pulled a plant out of his bag and poured the rest of the water into that plant. Nothing was wasted. And I take... and I left that assembly...and I was like, can't believe he did that,’ sir, that was amazing’. All from one bottle of water...”* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)
- *“I think the younger ones in my house use water more indifferently...”* (South Staffs Customer, Hindu)

In terms of trusted sources, messages that come from elders and parents were motivating for those consulted in this research. Those that were parents themselves spoke about wanting to pass down relevant Hindu teachings to their children, or positive lessons they had learned about water efficiency from older generations – leveraging this need may present a ‘way in’ for communication with this cohort.



Beyond this, an opportunity may exist to provide people interested in this topic with help to convey to others in their community the importance of water efficient practices. In essence, how to become a better advocate for water saving. For instance, from the ethnographic research, one of the Hindu participants did mention that having attempted to take water efficiency as a discussion topic into the Temple, he gained limited traction and therefore would have liked to be guided on how to be a better advocate for water efficiency within his religious community, as shown in Case Study 5.

CASE STUDY 5: A spontaneous attempt to be a ‘water efficiency advocate’. (Staffs, Hindu, Male, 50-59)

One of the participants in the digital ethnography talked about how, due to taking part in the research, he had found himself spontaneously advocating for water efficiency in his life among his family, friends and in the Temple – with limited success. For instance, he had been to the Temple recently to clean statues and was talking in detail with the elders about how they should only use the water that they need to when cleaning – not, in his words *“buckets and buckets of water without thinking”*. On Guru Nanek Dev Ji’s 555 birthday he went down to the Temple to help with all the washing of the statues and again he took it upon himself to educate people about using just the amount of water that is needed when washing the statues. For him, the biggest barrier he faced was not knowing how to change ingrained behaviour and be ‘convincing’ to others – especially “older people”.

This example shows that there may be a role for advocates to deliver messages about water efficiency in religious places such as the Temple, but they must be helped to develop a motivating message to others.



Additional insights across groups consulted

In addition to the above findings, irrespective of religious or cultural background, there were some additional ideas for engagement that emerged across the research. These ideas arose because people did see lots of ways to save water that were relevant to them that didn't revolve around their cultural or religious beliefs.

As this is qualitative research, we have reported a range of ideas put forward by participants in the discussion groups below. In some cases, this could have been only mentioned by one person. As a result, these are not ordered by the potential scale of an opportunity, but put forward as potential relevant ideas that emerged in discussions that are likely to require further research and co-creation to establish the appeal or feasibility of the idea in practice.

These ideas are summarised below:

- Across the groups there was a broad appeal in the idea of **community engagement**. For instance **events/pop ups** were viewed as an appealing device. Outreach via face-to-face communications was felt to be an authentic way in which to develop trust and relations within the faith groups about the motivation for the water company's engagement, and it was accepted that this is a way to reach people in the community of a range of faith groups and backgrounds. It was noted that outreach could also be highly targeted – as mentioned above in this report via pop ups in religious places such as the Mosque. Though it should be noted that there was a strong mistrust with individual/'door-to-door' engagement approaches, and this wasn't desired.
- **Digital engagement** also came through as a potentially useful way to communicate with water consumers. For instance, one person suggested said the **gamification of reducing water in their area/community** would be an appealing idea to them. Here, engagement positioned as a 'game' whereby people can see others in their same area, and how much they are saving on water (perhaps through an app or portal). Through comparison with other's behaviour, he felt this peer-influence would provide motivation to then save more water in his life, too. Another noted that if he were reminded of the need to save water via his **prayer times reminder app**, this might be a good way to remind him of being careful with water at the right time.
- **Individualised information** about saving water also came through as an interesting idea. For instance, many people said that the only time they engage with their water company – when they look at their bill – was an ideal time to tell them about how to save water specifically related to their usage to spur them on. Helping people **benchmark their water use** was also felt to potentially be a useful device to get people thinking about their usage, specifically if this can allow people to get a quick read of how much they are using compared to the 'norm'.



- Coming through in the ethnographic work, there was a notion that **the sink / plughole is a universal space where water is seen to be wasted in the home**, with many talking about contemplating how much water they are using when watching it all ‘drain away’. This might have further application in communications work when thinking about motivating imagery or ideas to get people thinking about water wastage.
- **Giving away water saving devices** and/or **providing ‘hints and tips’** for how people can save water during their common everyday uses / look for leaks etc. came through as a popular idea for people across all the religious backgrounds.

As mentioned, these ideas, should they be viewed as useful approaches, may benefit from further exploration or co-creation in research given the relatively small qualitative sample consulted in this work.



Concluding remarks

The overarching aim for this research was to better understand the most effective ways to communicate with people from different faith communities regarding their water use and water saving. The research presented here has met the key objectives of the research by providing a stronger understanding of ways to communicate with people of different faith groups about their use of water and how water efficiency can be spoken about through the lens of religion well, and where it may work less successfully.

Discussions with customers throughout this research have been very revealing of people's views about this complex notion of how, if at all, religion/cultural practice can be used as a way to communicate with them about saving water in their lives. Despite an obvious link between the two for some, others were not sure about the strength of the relationship between their religious observance and water over-use. Future engagement with water consumers seems to therefore have the option of either:

- communicating with people about the religious use of water and how they can save water when carrying out specific religious activities; and/or
- speaking more diffusely to people with primed religious beliefs about saving water in their lives, not referencing specific religious practices.

The former leans towards a focus on groups that use volumes of water ritualistically on a very regular basis (i.e. for ablution), or that use volumes of water in religious places (e.g. in the Gurdwara). The latter is a more universal approach that seeks to recognise that people from all religious and cultural backgrounds in the UK can share common beliefs about water as a precious resource.

Irrespective of religious or cultural background, participants talked a lot about the need for universal 'hints and tips' from their water company in terms of how small changes can over time lead to bigger positive changes in water consumption, benefiting both them and the environment. In terms of encouraging longer term positive behaviour, it feels like this could be a useful approach to take. The first step on the ladder may be to encourage the 'experimental mindset' that was observed in the ethnographic research – getting people to think about and be more mindful of water, and then to see how they can make small changes to reduce their consumption.

It is worth pointing out that, for all, authenticity and community engagement was strongly welcomed and valued in this research. It was respected that a water company was broaching this topic and listening to diverse voices in its community. At the same time – and against the backdrop of potentially reducing trust in the sector – customers want to feel informed, advised and supported in saving water, and not made to feel as though they are being blamed by their activities. While you of course are



coming from a place of genuine intent to increase representativeness and voice in your engagement, it is vital that communications do not inadvertently make people think that you are reapportioning the blame for wasting water on them. Especially when it comes down to their most sacred and spiritual beliefs and rituals. Owing to this, customers seem to be more receptive to positively-toned messages that reinforce good behavioural intents, allowing them to 'be better', versus focusing on the notion of preventing wastage. They also didn't want to feel as though they were the only group being 'targeted' in such campaigns.

In line with this, this research has been able to highlight common threads that are relevant irrespective of religious beliefs – and as such may offer fruitful areas within which to think about developing lines of communication. Ideas that have been put forward in this report include the promotion of 'hints and tips' on water saving, suggesting small changes to behaviour such as the multi-purposing of water at home and the benefits of this, providing water saving devices and/or advice to people that wish to experiment to save water in their lives / religious practice, creating motivating lines of communication that may to help those advocate for water saving in their community or among family generationally, community education programmes such as those in schools, and engagement with individuals but also places of worship.

At the same it has revealed 'risks' – in potentially offending, singling out, or othering through communication on this topic. To avoid these pitfalls when talking to customers about water use in religious or cultural contexts, this may involve:

- Recognising people from the religious groups consulted are expert in the notion of saving water and care about this in their lives already.
- Understanding that the link between water efficiency and religion is not something most have really considered before in this much depth and so can be quite jarring if not positioned carefully.
- Ensuring communication that focuses on 'traditional practices' treads carefully, as some of these traditional uses and behaviours, such as traditional cooking practices, belong to older generations, or the past.
- Considering 'the messenger' – whereby some groups may feel better served with receiving 'top down' religious messages from religious leaders, others would prefer to have 'ground-up' communications that relay messages more subtly, such as via social media.
- Being positive in saving water versus focusing on wastage.
- Avoiding any communications where it can be interpreted as though the water company is apportioning 'blame' to a specific religion for being more wasteful of water than others.



Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Discussion guides / ethnography topic guide

Water Efficiency in Faith and Diverse Communities – South Staffs

Notes about this document for those reviewing

- This guide has been developed based on your research objectives, to help our interviewers get the most from each qualitative conversation
- As such, it's designed to give our interviewers guidelines around the structure, timing and content of their discussions
- However, we want to ensure that conversations feel natural and engaging for participants to allow conversations to flow and evolve as participants move through the conversations, within reason. We will ensure all key areas are covered, and will also explore new, interesting but relevant tangents if they arise
- Content won't necessarily be covered in the exact order it appears in this document, dependent on natural conversation flow
- Language will be adapted to suit the participants, as appropriate, determined by the moderator
- We find that the deepest insights often aren't found by asking direct questions, but by prompting and probing initial responses with appropriate follow up questions.
- All interviewers have been well briefed on the project context and objectives, so will be able to probe into topics that come up and ask additional questions to reveal other relevant tangents as and when appropriate, and delve beneath initial reactions
- This discussion guide builds on the research already undertaken with engaged community stakeholders by Cambridge University.

Preliminary interview discussion guide

Introduction [5 minutes]

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in this focus group session. My name is X and I work for a company called Explain, we're an independent research agency and have been commissioned by South Staffs Water to carry out this research on its behalf.
- Introduce Explain team present and Staffs Water Representatives – stress their role is just to observe and answer any questions if needed
- We want to talk to you today so we can understand your views, attitudes and how you use water, particularly in relation to everyday cultural practices.



- There are no right or wrong answers in this, I'm just hoping to understand your thoughts and opinions.
 - o MRS Guidelines - Right to refusal / anonymity
 - o Okay to audio record?

Understanding our research

- Provide attendees with short summary of our research and objectives to begin the discussions.
- We want to speak to you today to understand the best ways in which South Staffs Water can communicate with its customers, particularly focusing on different communities within its region. The aim is to develop an approach that can be used to engage with communities across the country in a practical and sensitive way – we want to help and educate people more about water.
- We also want to understand your thoughts and opinions on how water is used in your household and local community and what this means to you. Particularly we want to better understand how your use of water is placed within your everyday lives and/or any cultural practices relevant to you – and particularly related to how you prepare and cook food.

Slide 4: Water initiatives that South Staffs Water have been undertaking

- *Provide summaries of the different projects which have been taking place in South Staffs*
- *Read through the projects that are being conducted across the South Staffs region and water use and how this project is a small part to understand the local community's thoughts surrounding water efficiency in daily lives as well as any cultural practices.*

Slide 5-6: Getting to know each other

- Short introductions from the Explain team and from focus group
- Help develop South Staffs Water's thinking
- Give honest feedback
- Tell South Staffs Water how they can best align with your priorities as customers
 - o Ask every attendee to introduce themselves

Slides 7 and 8: Engagement with water companies 6.20pm

- Does anyone currently engage with South Staffs Water outside of receiving their water bill?
 - o What do you think about its forms of engagement/communication?
 - o What works well / what could be improved?
- What are your thoughts on South Staffs Water and the water bills you receive?
 - o Are they affordable to you?



- Are you satisfied with the service they deliver?
- Would you say you trust South Staffs Water?
- To deliver a high-quality water supply and service?
- To deliver/meet needs within your community related to water use and the environment?

Slides 9-11: Background on South Staffs Water

- Explain to play video giving attendees brief overview of South Staffs Water.
 - o What do you know about South Staffs Water?
 - o Did anyone learn anything new?
 - o Did anything surprise you?

Slides 12-14: The challenge for reducing the amount of water people use (setting the scene) 6.30pm

- Explain to share slide giving background to the challenges facing South Staffs Water regarding water use and water consumption more generally as well as how this impacts the environment.
- Explain to briefly discuss the options that are available to South Staffs Water (decrease demand or increase supply) – *SSW to cover any questions on the slide materials*
- Does this all make sense? Any points of clarification.

Slides 15 - 20: Water use in cultural practices 6.45pm

- In what ways do you use water in your daily lives?
 - o Cooking / cleaning – personal hygiene including flushing the toilet / gardening and/or our door use / washing – e.g. clothes, floors, etc / religious practices
 - ♣ Probe for more detail into what specifically within the above prompts they use water for
- In what specific ways do you use water within your culture?
- Do you use water in different ways than say your parents' or grandparents' generation did?
- In what ways? Why is it different? / Why has it not changed?
- What does water or the use of water mean to you within your culture and/or faith?
- Do you see water being important within your culture and/or faith? If so, why/why not?
- *Researcher to probe for differences between generations*
- Does water or its use have an innate value or importance because of its importance within (*read out as appropriate by group*) Islam/Hinduism/Sikhism?



Slides 20-22: Water efficiency 7pm

- What are your opinions on Water Efficiency, particularly when it comes to growing, preparing and cooking foods – by that we mean trying to reduce the amount of water people use everyday in their lives and/or capture used water to reuse it?
 - o What does it mean to you?
 - ♣ Is it something you find important? Why/why not?
 - ♣ Do you take part in any water saving practices?
 - ♣ Is water efficiency important within your community or family or home?
 - o What do you know about water efficiency?
- What have you heard about water efficiency?
- Have you heard about water efficient practices in other countries or communities?
- If so, what countries and what type of practices?
- Do you know of any countries/communities where they aren't water efficient and don't see any importance in preserving water?
- What types of measures do you know about? Explain chair to show two subsequent slides on what is water efficiency and how it can be used within the South Staffs region.

Moderator to prompt about cooking practices if not mentioned in the discussion by this point.

Slides 23-24: Engagement with Water Companies 7.20pm

- How do you engage/communicate with your water company or other suppliers – such as your gas/electricity/broadband/phone?
 - o What does this look like? How do you engage?
 - o What forms of engagement do you prefer?
 - o What style of communication works for you?
- Can you think of any good examples of companies that get their messaging to customers spot on – so that people engage and aren't put off?

Slides 25 - 27: Engagement on Water Efficiency 7.40pm

- *Explain chair to share slide around why water efficiency is important*
- How do you think water companies like South Staffs Water should approach or communicate to their customers regarding water efficiency, such as changing their behaviours around water use?
 - o How should it look and feel in your opinion?
 - o What does it need to say?



- Is there any language/form/style which should be used or avoided to inform or help people to change the way they use water?
- What channels would you prefer to be contacted on? (*Interviewer prompt on whether community religious/cultural/community leaders or local tv/media, emails, postal flyers/newsletters etc*)
- Would it have more impact on who delivers the message – someone you know and trust within your religion/community?
 - ♣ How can this be a way to allow a trusted 2-way dialogue?
 - ♣ How can it avoid judgment or upsetting people?

Slides 29 – 30: Thank and close and next steps

- Right to remain anonymous

Ethnography research:

- We will be running our online research across a 4 week period starting in October.
- Brief overview of next steps including the Indeemo tool or diary journal for those digitally disengaged.

Final groups:

- After the online research, we will then be holding our final in person focus groups towards the end of November.

Willing to take part in future research?

Share satisfaction polls



Water Efficiency in Faith and Diverse Communities

Discussion guide for final discussion groups

Notes on this guide

- This discussion guide has been developed based on your research objectives, to help our interviewers get the most from each qualitative conversation.
- While it is designed to give our interviewers guidelines around the structure, timing and content of their discussions, we want to ensure that conversations feel natural and engaging for participants and thus allow conversations to flow and evolve. Therefore, content won't necessarily be covered in the exact order it appears in this document. Despite this, we will ensure all key areas are covered, as well as exploring interesting but relevant tangents if they arise.
- Language will be adapted to suit the participants, as appropriate, determined by the moderator.
- We find that the deepest insights often aren't found by asking direct questions, but by prompting and probing initial responses and these are indicated throughout.
- All interviewers have been briefed on the project context and objectives, so will be able to probe into additional topics that come up and ask additional questions to reveal other relevant tangents as and when appropriate, to delve beneath initial reactions.

Recap on the research objectives

- To investigate the use of water within the lives of people from different faith backgrounds (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh) in relation to their everyday use as well as water in religious and cultural practices.
- To explore the most effective ways to engage and communicate with people from these communities regarding water use and water saving practices with the aim of reducing water use.
- To understand which water saving devices may be impactful at reducing water use within defined cultural contexts – specifically Wudu devices.
- To discuss what actions customers believe could be taken by them to ensure water saving practices are embedded into long-term practice.

Timings	Section
10 minutes	<h3>Introduction & Background</h3> <p><i>Hello everyone! Thank you for agreeing to take part in this online discussion today. My name is X, and I work for Explain – we're an independent research agency and we're working on this project to find out the best ways in which South Staffs Water/Cambridge Water can communicate with its customers within its region. They want to know how to best engage with different communities in a practical and sensitive way about water use so that these learnings can be shared across the country.</i></p> <p><i>We might have a mixed group today in terms of including some of those that took part in a first stage of research with us exploring the use of water in their everyday lives – and if this is you, welcome back!</i></p>



	<p><i>The feedback we have had so far has been really useful. We look forward to further exploring your views with us today. And for those that are joining us on this project today for the first time, welcome! There's no special information of knowledge you need to take part, we're simply going to be having a really casual chat as a group and we look forward to hearing your views.</i></p> <p><i>There are no right or wrong answers today, I'm just hoping to understand your thoughts and opinions. I want you to, as best you can, give your honest feedback, whether that's relating to things you agree with, or things you don't agree with. We would like to see some debate tonight in the groups – do feel free to disagree with one another in a constructive way. We are also going to 'play back' some of the things that we are learning from the research so far and to get you to reflect on this.</i></p> <p><i>Today you will notice that there are people representing the water companies we are working on behalf of attending – South Staffs Water and/or Cambridge Water. They're here to listen to what you have to say, and we will leave some time at the end for you to ask any questions you may have for them.</i></p> <p>[MODERATOR TO STATE]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>MRS Guidelines: Right to refuse / anonymity.</i> - <i>Recording: We will be audio-visually recording this discussion in line with MRS Code of Conduct. The recording will be stored on our secure servers and no one outside of the Explain research team will have access to this. Can I confirm that you are happy for me to record this discussion?</i> <p>[START RECORDING, RECORD CONSENT ONCE RECORDING HAS STARTED]</p> <p><i>Any questions? Okay to begin?</i></p> <p><i>To begin, we'll start off with some quick introductions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would everyone be able to say their name, who they live with, if you're new to this research or if we've spoken before... and if you weren't here tonight – what would you be up to?
35 minutes	<p>Religious and cultural use of water & water efficiency</p> <p><i>Quick recap of behaviour relating to HH use of water and religious / cultural use of water. Past conversations during this project have been about the use of water in your everyday lives and routines.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shall we remind ourselves – and for those fresh to discussions tonight let's think about for the first time – some of the main ways you use water in your household? Shout out top of mind associations. - Can you remind me of some of the main ways that you use water <u>specifically for any religious purposes?</u> For uses mentioned, probe use and frequency, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cleansing ○ Offerings ○ Celebrating



- **As a whole, how much water do you use for ‘religious’ purposes in your life vs other ‘household’ uses?** Ask participants to imagine it as a percentage.
 - **Is that a fair question to ask?** Do you ‘separate’ water use in this way in your mind? If not, why not?

- **As well as religious uses of water can we remind ourselves as a group/discuss for the first time any cultural uses or traditions you have that impact the way you use water?** If so, what are these? Have these been passed down to you?
 - PROBE: washing and preparing food

- **Do you have any habits that influence the way that you use water? If so, what are these?**

Using positional statements to get deeper into people’s views about water efficiency in relation to their religion/culture

I’m now going to show you some views that people might have about water use, religion and culture, and I want you to think about what they make you think and feel. Reflect on if these are true for you, or not, and why?

[MODERATOR SHOW STATEMENTS SEQUENTIALLY AND PARTICIPANTS ASKED TO VOTE TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THEIR AGREEMENT ON A SCALE OF 1-5 (MIX ORDER ACROSS GROUPS)]

“My religious beliefs shape the way I use water in my life”

“People sometimes use more water than necessary to help them practice their religious beliefs or cultural practices”

“People in my family or household sometimes use more water than necessary in their religious or cultural practices”

“Saving water is important to people that follow my religion”

“You have to be using a lot of water to worry about needing to save it”

[PROBE FOR EACH IN TURN]

- How did you vote? Are you surprised by the vote results?
- If this is true for you, please describe how this works in your life?
- If it is not true for you, why do you say that?
- Has anyone’s views changed from last time? If so, how?



	<p>Views of the concept of being communicated with about water efficiency in relation to culture or religion.</p> <p><i>By 'water efficiency' we mean using water in the best possible way, as efficiently as possible, and reducing the amount of water we waste. Thinking overall about the idea of water efficiency in relation to your religion or culture...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should water companies talk to you about water efficiency from a religious perspective? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Why do you say this? o What are the positives about using religion to talk about water efficiency? o Do you think it can it be used as a motivating factor to save water? o Are there any downsides or risks (PROBE: offending / stereotypes) o How do you think this can be done sensitively / appropriately? - Should water companies talk to you about water efficiency in reference to your traditions or culture? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Why do you say this? o What are the positives about using culture to talk about water efficiency? o Do you think it can it be used as a motivating factor to save water? o Are there any downsides or risks (PROBE: offending / stereotypes) o How do you think this can be done sensitively / appropriately? - Overall, how do you think this idea fits with using other reasons as motivation to save water e.g. sustainability / environmental reasons? More/less important to you?
35 minutes	<p>Projective task: water company advisor</p> <p>The purpose of this task is to get people to get into tactical discussions of how a water company might communicate about using less water in the context of religion or culture.</p> <p><i>We've talked about the idea of using your religion and cultural beliefs as a way to talk about being more water efficient in our everyday lives. Now we are going to move on to talk in more detail about how this could be done in reality – taking into consideration what you're saying about the things that they should or shouldn't do.</i></p> <p>[MODERATOR TO SHOW TASK ON MIRO]</p> <p><u>PROJECTIVE TASK</u></p> <p><i>I want you to imagine you have been asked to join the Board of South Staffs / Cambridge Water as an expert advisor representing your community!</i></p> <p><i>What <u>advice</u> would you give them if they wanted to use religion / cultural practices as a way to talk to people about saving water?</i></p>



	<p><i>Spend the next 5 minutes on your own thinking about one or two key points you would like to make if you were in charge, and then we are going to share ideas with the rest of the group to see whether people agree or disagree with them.</i></p> <p>You might wish to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ [MESSAGE] What things could they say to people to get them to think about saving water in a religious or cultural context? ➤ [TONE/LANGUAGE] What words would they be ok to use and what words wouldn't be ok? ➤ [CHANNEL] Where could they promote these ideas? E.g. online, social media, in the community etc. Is it better to have these messages in a 'religious place' (e.g. place of worship) or not? ➤ [IMAGES] What images can you imagine seeing when they're talking to you about these ideas? What would be the pitfalls of what to avoid when using images? (E.g. stereotypes to avoid) <p>PROBE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tell me about your ideas. Gain input from the wider group.
30 minutes	<p>Specific ideas for engagement and communication</p> <p><i>We'd like to now spend the last part of our session talking about some specific communications ideas that came out of the last round of group discussions to see if they would work in relation to our discussion today.</i></p> <p>Motivating people across the generations</p> <p><i>Some people have said that there are differences in their household in relation to how they use water across the generations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you say in your household when you want people to use less water? Does that vary by age or are there other factors you consider? - What could better motivate younger people in your household to save water in the home? What discourages them from doing so? - How could your water company best help bring families together to make better use of water? If needed, prompt with examples – e.g. using a game to provide competition and learning, <p>'Hints and tips'</p> <p><i>Some people said in the last round of the research that they don't want to be 'lectured' about saving water and that hints and tips (e.g. saving rice water for hair learned from a video on Tik Tok) would be more motivating to them when thinking about how to save water.</i></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you think of any other ideas for hints and tips based around water efficiency, for in the home or out and about? - What about relating to religious or cultural uses of water – can you think of any ‘easy wins’ for your water company to help encourage people to use less water? <p>‘Trusted voices’</p> <p><i>Some people mentioned in the previous research that they liked the idea of trusted voices in their community delivering these messages.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who do you think that a ‘trusted voice’ would be? [PROBE local voices vs. national/international voices online]. <p>[Optional: time permitting, refresh their memory about the Ping Coombes video on You Tube to get a read on this – is this approach appealing to you? Why / why not]</p> <p>Digital ideas</p> <p><i>Some people mentioned in previous sessions that they felt digital communication would be good. What do you think about the following idea:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using an app to tell you about saving water (e.g. prayer times reminder app) – is this appropriate? Any other ideas like this one come to mind?
5 minutes	<p>Water saving devices (Muslim groups only)</p> <p><i>I’d like to show you a recent innovation developed by South Staffs Water with a supplier – a Wudu Ablution Bottle</i></p> <p>[MODERATOR TO SHOW SLIDE]</p> <p>PROBE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awareness of this product? Or any other Wudu devices – e.g. cup/bottle/spray ○ Understanding and comprehension of its benefits ○ Appeal / usage. e.g. would they use this in the home / when travelling? ○ Perceived potential impact in helping people become more water efficient in their religious practice. ○ Any barriers to using this device? Could these be overcome? If so, how? ○ How could this be promoted to communities/families?
5 minutes	<p>Thanks and close</p> <p><i>Thank you everyone for your time today, we really appreciate your help with the research, whether you’ve just joined us tonight or you’ve been involved in several stages of the research.</i></p>



As I said earlier Explain work to Market Research Society Codes of Practice, this means that from the discussions tonight you will not personally be attributed to any quotes we generate based on things you have said.

Our next steps will be to collate all the feedback we have received, and we will be writing a report for South Staffs and Cambridge Water so keep an eye out for that when it is published on their website!

Thank you again for your time. Does anyone have any further questions for clarification from South Staffs and Cambridge Water you'd like them to answer now?

Feel free to contact us with any further questions about the research

We will be in touch with you to process your thank you payment for taking part in the next few days.

Close.



Date	W/C 21st October	W/C 28th October	W/C 4th November	W/C 11th November
Introduction page - indicative text - landing page	<p>Introduction to Indemno and this stage of research and the expectation set they should be posting every day or every other day.</p> <p>And that, at best they can, they should try to provide 'in-the-moment' feedback.</p> <p>Each week we want them to simply show us how they use water more generally as well as when it relates to religious / cultural uses.</p> <p>We are interested in the everyday - they don't need to put on a show or make a film. Both professional, we're simply wanting you to capture what happens when we're not there to get a feeling for how people use water within their lives, cultural and religious practices. It's ok to show us the same sort of activity across the 4 weeks if you do it multiple times - for example, there's no limit on how many times you show us cooking with water, especially if you want to show us different ways and different things.</p> <p>We're interested in the use of water both within your home among you and your family, as well as outside the home, or more widely in your community.</p>			
Standard topic prompts each week to explore behaviour across the 4 week period - will be repeated each week so that we can get a sense of their behaviour over the fieldwork period as a whole	<p>Show us/well us about the ways you use water in your everyday life. Using a range of formats such as videos, pictures or voice notes, please show us how and why you use water relating to the everyday activities we talked about.</p> <p>These may include: using water in your morning, afternoon or evening routine, or water for cooking, cleaning, religious practice, washing, gardening, activities outside or at work - there is no limit to this we're just interested in how you use water in your life. If there's something we haven't mentioned here that's fine too - show us how you do things in your world. You might want to choose a different water most days, for instance in relation to cooking, particularly when it comes to growing, preparing or cooking foods. It would be good if you can touch on different water uses a few times over the 4 weeks if you can.</p> <p>We're really interested in you as an individual - what do you do in your life and in your home, work or community. What little quirks do you have? Do you have certain rituals relating to any of these things? Why? How are things different at different times of the day or at the weekend versus during the week? Overall, what are you thinking, feeling, doing, and why when using water?</p> <p>How you share with us on the app will be up to you - you may wish to take some footage on your phone and talk along as you do the activity, you may wish to make a voice note after you've done an activity or as a thought pops into your head throughout the day! Any mix is fine! Think out loud!</p> <p>Please share only what you feel comfortable sharing with us.</p> <p>(Participants will be reminded that obviously we would expect them to preserve their own modesty at all times)</p>			
Extra questions based around a theme relating to your objectives. These will be used just to ensure that participants are on the right track without being overly prescriptive	<p>Water in my life</p> <p>As well as showing us about water use in your life this week, think particularly about how water use can vary across the family, such as between different generations living in your household?</p> <p>How you share with us on the app will be up to you - you may wish to take some footage on your phone and talk along as you do the activity, you may wish to make a video or voice note after you've done an activity or as a thought pops into your head throughout the day!</p>	<p>Water efficiency and use</p> <p>As well as telling us about water use in your life throughout this week, please also think about what water efficiency means to you. By 'efficiency' we mean being less wasteful of water across any of its uses.</p> <p>Across this week, show us and tell us about any examples - no matter how big or small - that relate to you being more/less wasteful or efficient with water. Try to give us a flavour of both, again using a range of formats such as videos, pictures or voice notes. We're not looking for 'perfect' behaviour here - we all know that we can be both efficient and inefficient in our lives. Let's see how this works for you specifically. What does water efficiency mean to you? What are some examples of how you are more efficient? Can you give us some examples? Is it important in your family or wider culture, or should it be made more important? How could this be achieved?</p> <p>How does water efficiency vary across the family, particularly between different generations living in your household?</p> <p>Again, how you share with us on the app will be up to you - you may wish to take some footage on your phone and talk along as you do the activity, you may wish to make a video or voice note after you've done an activity or as a thought pops into your head throughout the day!</p>	<p>Water in my religious and cultural practice</p> <p>As well as telling us about water use in your life throughout this week, as a particular point to think about, we'd like you to pay closer attention this week to the use of water as part of your cultural and religious practices. This can relate specifically your religion, or something to do with the way you have been brought up in terms of family traditions or customs, for example cooking practices.</p> <p>How you share with us on the app will be up to you - you may wish to take some footage on your phone and talk along as you do the activity, or directly afterwards to preserve your privacy if preferred. You may wish to make a video or voice note after you've done an activity, or as a thought pops into your head throughout the day!</p>	<p>Saving water in the long term</p> <p>As well as telling us about water use in your life, reflecting about the past few weeks, what are your thoughts about how water saving practices can be embedded into your life and routine? How do you think you could be encouraged to do this in the long term?</p> <p>Related to this, how can your water company communicate these ideas to you? What should they say? Or not say? How should they say it?</p> <p>How should water companies engage to encourage people to change the way they think about water and use less - where it is appropriate to do so? And where is it not?</p>
Link to your objectives	<p>Establish a more inclusive water efficiency framework and support tools for diverse customers.</p> <p>Understand the most effective ways to communicate with communities regarding their water use.</p>	<p>Establish a more inclusive water efficiency framework and support tools for diverse customers.</p>	<p>Understand which water saving devices / interventions are likely to be the most impactful at reducing water use within defined cultural contexts.</p>	<p>What actions need to be taken to ensure water saving practices are embedded into long-term practice.</p> <p>The best ways to engage with customers to drive behaviour change.</p>
Prompted questions - examples of how we might respond to the content	<p>Validating and encouraging the usefulness of their post.</p> <p>Probing further information, e.g. why do you use water this way?</p> <p>Were you taught to use water this way by anyone?</p> <p>Why is using water this way important to you?</p> <p>Do your friends or family use water differently to you when performing the same behaviours? Probing generational differences.</p> <p>Can probe on seasonal differences if mentioned spontaneously</p>	<p>Validating and encouraging the usefulness of their post.</p> <p>Probing further information, e.g. why do you use water this way?</p> <p>Can you show us any other water saving practices you know about from friends/family/other cultures/communities?</p> <p>Can you show us examples of where you or someone you know has not been water efficient?</p> <p>How did you come to use water this way while carrying out this activity? Did anyone do it differently to you?</p> <p>Do you use water differently while washing/cleaning outside your home than you would do inside your home?</p> <p>Do you think more about how to save energy over water in your daily routines? Why is this?</p> <p>Do you think you could use less water when preparing and cooking food? Why do you think you can/can't do this?</p> <p>Probe generational or cultural differences throughout.</p>	<p>Validating and encouraging the usefulness of their post.</p> <p>Probing further to elicit responses relating to the use of water in cultural and any religious practices / ways to be efficient in this</p> <p>PROMPT 1: MENTIONED - Reflect on (water saving device) and its potential suitability or use in your life? Could you see this working for you? Why/Why not?</p>	<p>Validating and encouraging the usefulness of their post</p> <p>Eliciting further responses if behaviour change mentioned.</p>
Moderators:	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day
	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day	Log in to monitor participant engagement and respond to posts every day




Appendix B: Key stimulus materials

Key slides shown in discussion groups to stimulate discussion and debate. A full copy of the presentation slides used during discussion groups is available to review alongside this report.

Engagement with local communities to date

- In 2024, South Staffs Water has been raising awareness and visibility around sustainable kitchen practices within East Asian and other communities
- South Staffs Water has also engaged with students to gain their input to help develop water savings ideas for use when growing and cooking food.
- Your input is important alongside all these other initiatives to help develop ideas to benefit communities across the country.**



Ping Coombes
Water Engineer and Mass Outreach Officer

Securing your water future

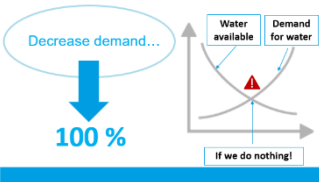
Important water facts in the South Staffs Region

- 137 litres**
Average water consumption
- Personal water use has risen by 60% since the 1960s.
- 45%**
Of homes have a water meter
- 50%**
Less summer rainfall by 2080s
- 11%**
Population growth by 2045

Securing your water future

So, what options are open to South Staffs Water?

Over 10% of our freshwater and wetland animals and plants are threatened with extinction in the UK due to taking water to meet human



Decrease demand...
100 %

Water available Demand for water

If we do nothing!

The company's plans to meet demand by:

- Reducing leakage from pipes
- Providing advice and education to help customers reduce their water use
- Labelling on appliances so consumers can choose to buy ones which use less water
- Working with developers to build homes that use less water
- New tariffs that encourage lower water use

Securing your water future

What is water efficiency?

- Research with water users shows a disconnect from water and where it comes from and that there is a difference between what people say and what they do.
- Unlike fossil fuels, there is a view that there is a never-ending supply of water.

Monitoring water usage in properties	Identifying and reducing leakage from pipes	Managing and changing appliances that use water
Changing our everyday behaviours and practices with water	Optimising use of water use while minimising waste	It is not about limiting or restricting essential use of water

Securing your water future

Why water efficiency is important

To improve the natural environment Reducing water demand helps by reducing current and future water abstraction pressure on the natural environment	To improve future water supplies and adapt to climate change Reducing the demand for water helps us to adapt to these changes and make us more resilient to them	To help us reach carbon net zero Every litre has an energy and carbon footprint – by using less water we reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Save money on water bills Saving water = saving money on energy bills, if you have a water meter	Collective effort Reducing water demands a collective effort. From water suppliers, water users, regulators and the Government	

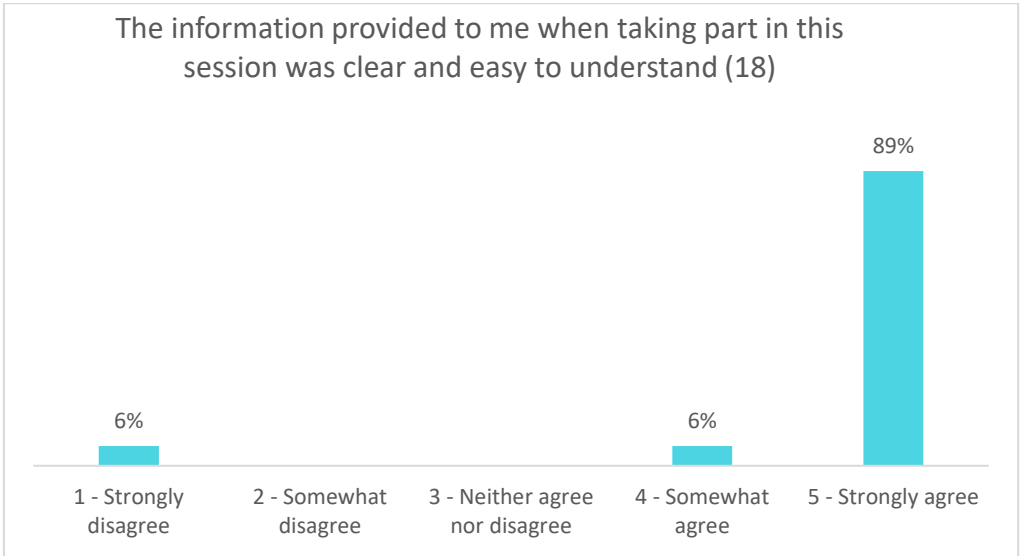
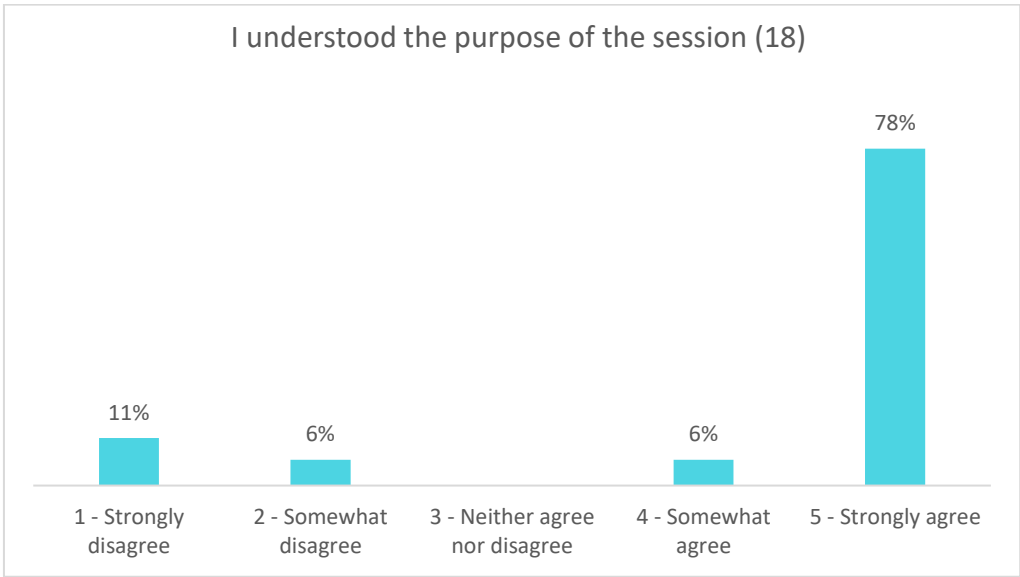
Securing your water future

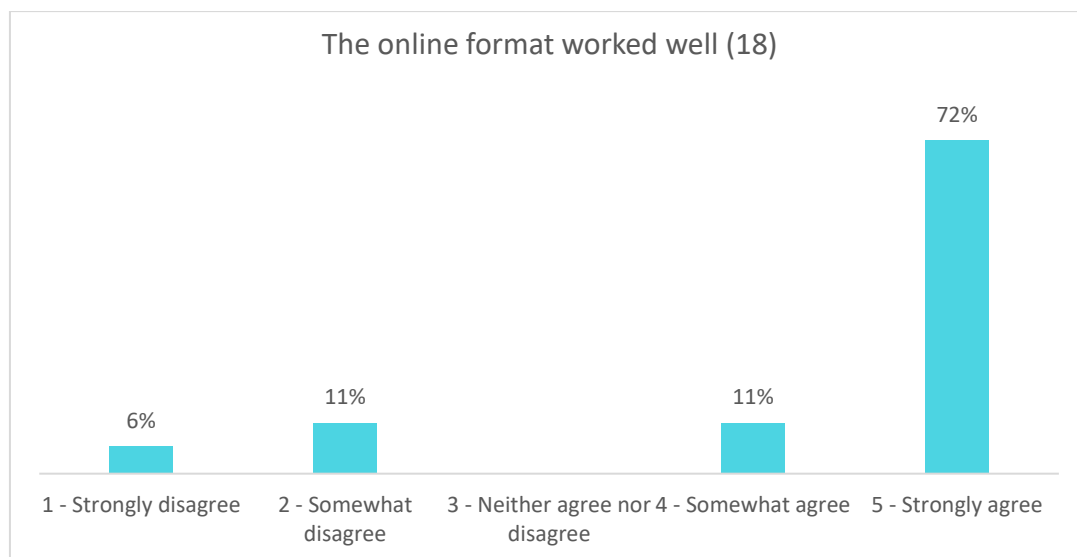
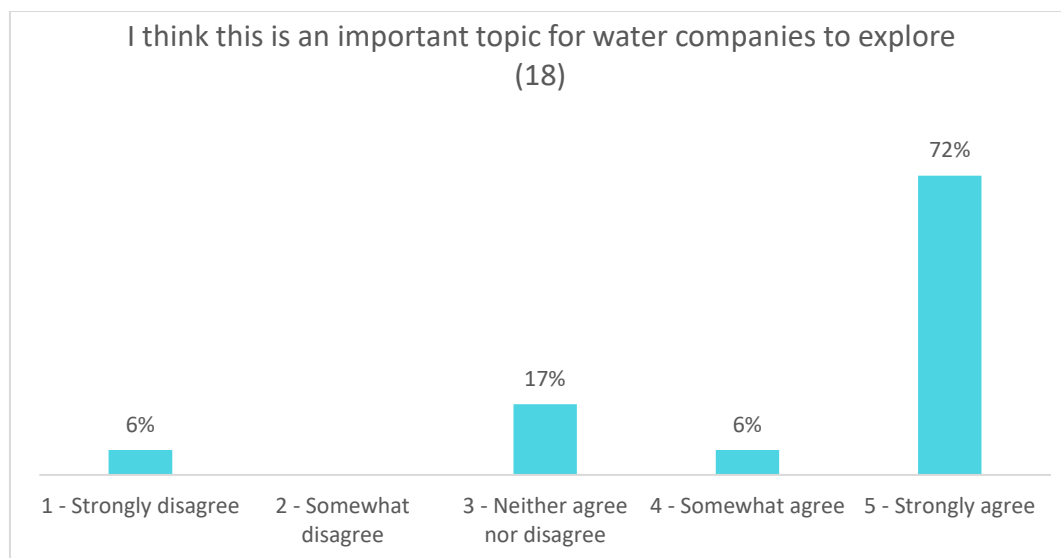
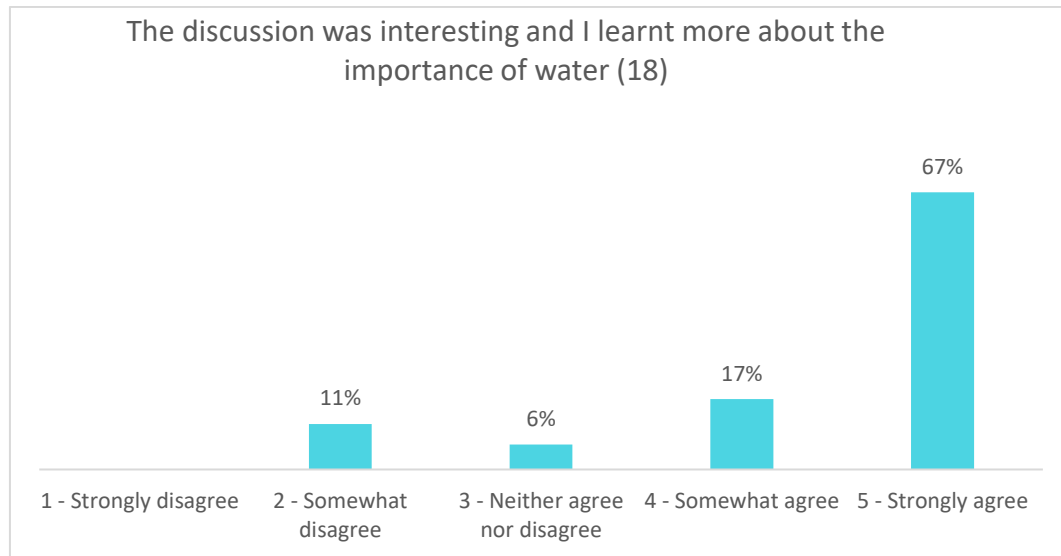


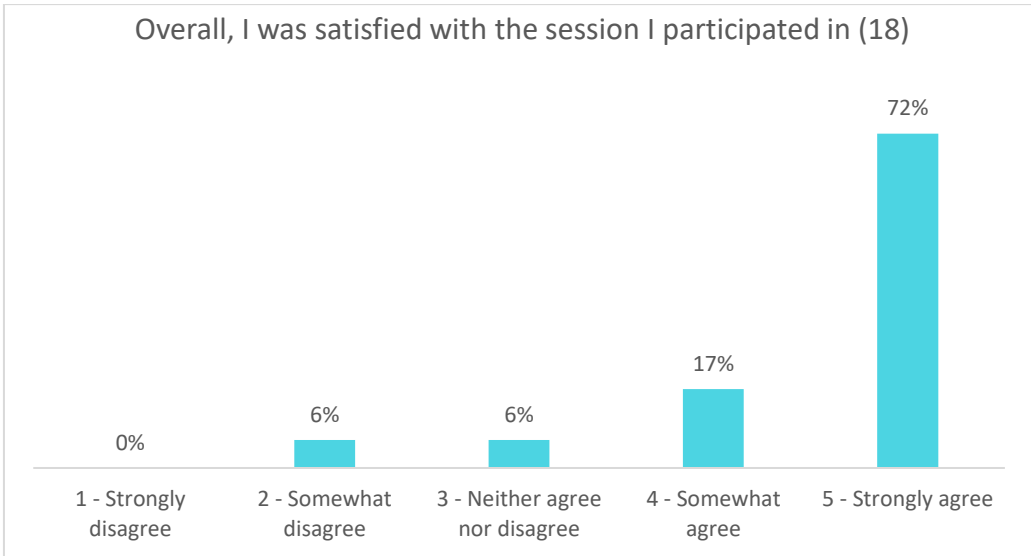
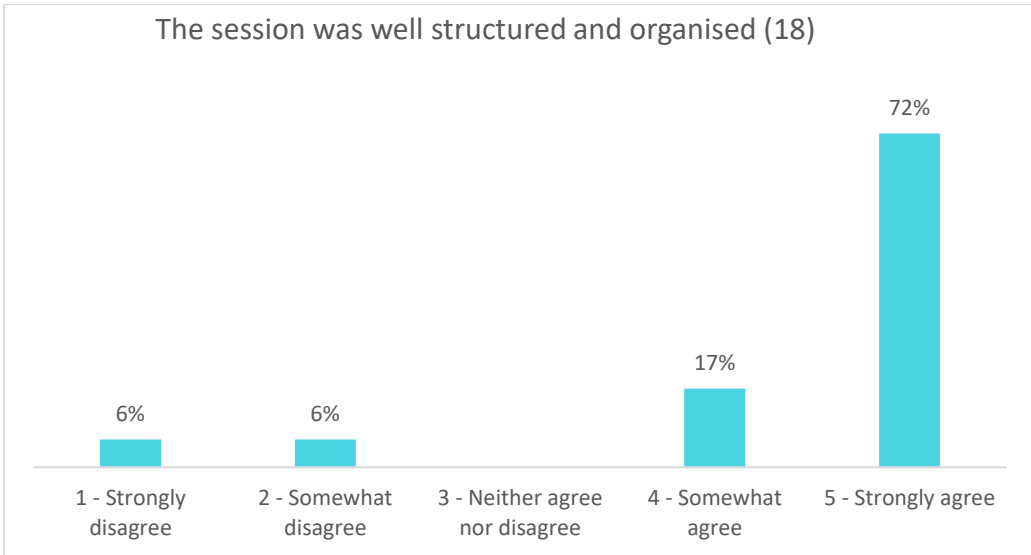
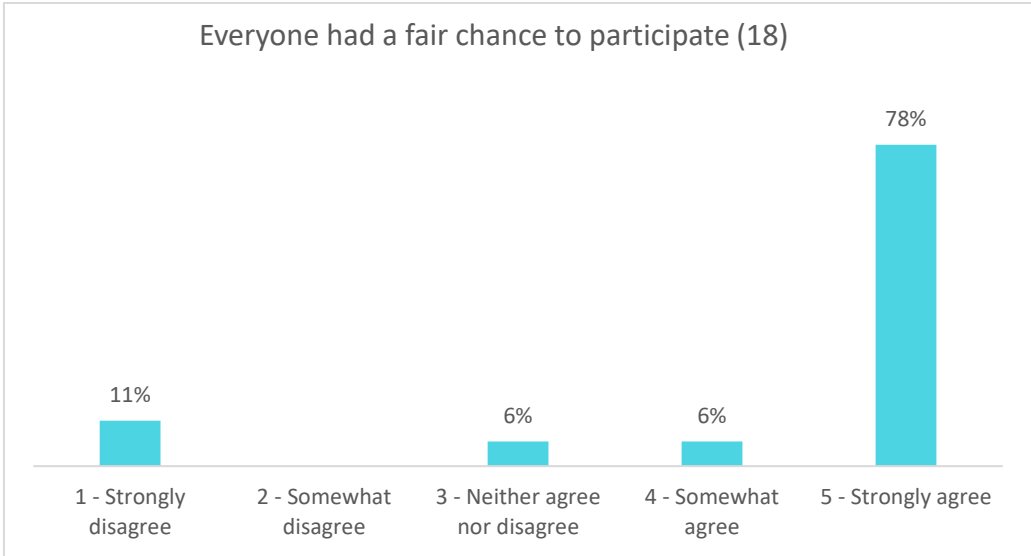
Appendix C: Session feedback

At the end of their participation in the research, people were asked to participate in a survey to understand their satisfaction with the session, and how sessions can be improved.

Respondents were asked on a scale of 1- strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree, to what extent they agreed with a series of statements, the results of which are shown below. Please note, the results include complete and partial survey responses.








Open-ended responses to the feedback questionnaire

Responses to the feedback form are presented below.


Participants were positive about:


- The session being well-organised
- Interesting subject matter for discussion
- Feeling included and listened-to
- Good moderators


 *"I overall gave high score as I found it beneficial. Being part of a minority ethnic group with a religious background I felt really inclusive and listened to"*


 *"Amazing and interesting session which was very detailed and very informative"*


 *"Clear and straight forward. Chair included everyone's views and encouraged people to part".*

 *"Enjoyed experience from start to finish from recruiting to moderators and staffing that educated me more to understand"*

 *"Everything was well organised from start to finish throughout study and online community groups to help us understand more"*


 *"It was really well organised. Clearly explained. The host was able to get full participation from all participants. Some participants did input more than others".*

 *"I enjoyed the session, it was nice and relaxed. We all had a chance to speak, there was no pressure to speak."*

 *"I love the session. Was very good maybe leaflets regarding water saving or another group session like this"*


Areas for improvement:

- Online format doesn't always filter dominant voices out as well
- Comments questioning whether the group should have focused on religion at all

 *"I think it's difficult when there's a number of overpowering voices in an online format. It's harder for the more quiet and introverted person who has ideas to be contribute to say much*



when the louder people are repeating the same opinion or not even answering the question. It would be useful to set some ground rules at the start and the option to use the 'raise hand' function as a means of getting the host's attention."

 *"This is an important part of everyday living and without water we would suffer as individuals, thus group was about Hindu's and their faith in how we use/need water in our daily life, the only thing that bothered me was that this should have not been a project targeting religious beliefs and should have been about water usage in general, felt as though we was religiously targeted which in my opinion is not politically correct!"*



Appendix D: WEFDC Research Data Flow Plan





Author: Claire Cook

Report check: Rebecca Crinson

Final sign off: Rebecca Crinson