

Northumbrian Water Group

People Panels –
#9 Bespoke Measures

Research report November 2022

Executive summary

This was the ninth round of the People Panels, conducted online via Zoom, which sought to explore five potential bespoke measures with the five panels, to understand the ranking preference of which measures should remain as bespoke for the next business planning period, as well as the reasons underpinning those preferences.

Explain was responsible for developing the session materials alongside NWG, the overall running of the event, and for chairing and moderating the breakout room discussions per group. An NWG representative was also present at each session.

This report outlines the discussions per panel group as well as providing an overall, holistic summary.

The five potential bespoke measures

Panellists were first introduced to the proposed common measures, suggested by Ofwat for the next business planning period, which can be compared against other water companies' performances nationally. Following this, it was explained that NWG, as a company, can present several bespoke measures to Ofwat, which are measured by NWG but not comparable to other water companies nationally, as they are decided by individual water companies. To qualify as a bespoke measure, Ofwat stated one of two conditions needed to be met:

- (1) It concerns an issue of local importance
- (2) A company is performing poorly on an issue which may not be a concern for other water companies

The table below shows each of the five potential ‘bespoke measures’ presented to panellists.

Target	How have Northumbrian Water Group performed against each measure?
Repeat sewer flooding*: (overall rank 1 st)	Performed well: 23 repeats (against 21/22 target of 44 repeats)
Sewer blockages*: (overall rank 4 th)	Not meeting: 11,991 blockages (against 21/22 target of 11,379)
Visible leak repair time: (overall rank 3 rd)	Performed well: 6.7 days (against 21/22 target of 8 days)
Interruptions over 12 hours: (overall rank 2 nd)	Performed well / in process of being finalised: 143 properties impacted (against 20/12 target of 500 properties). Storm Arwen has impacted 21/22 figures, which are being finalised
Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours: (overall rank 5 th)	Performed well: 7 minutes 39 seconds (against 21/22 target of 8 minutes 4 seconds)

**Please note that both of these measures are specific to Northumbrian Water only as they concern drainage and wastewater systems. All five measures were discussed by all panellists (including Essex and Suffolk customers) and it was explained that, whilst these measures did not impact them directly, their opinions were still highly valued.*

Summary of results

	Northumbrian	Essex	Suffolk	Young
1 st	Repeat sewer flooding	Repeat sewer flooding	Repeat sewer flooding	Repeat sewer flooding
2 nd	Sewer blockages	Visible leak repair time	Interruptions over 12 hours	Interruptions over 12 hours
3 rd	Visible leak repair time	Interruptions over 12 hours	Visible leak repair time	Sewer blockages
4 th	Interruptions over 12 hours	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	Sewer blockages	Visible leak repair time
5 th	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	Sewer blockages	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours



Overall, reasons underpinning **repeat sewer flooding** and **interruptions over 12 hours** related to panellists highlighting that these are the two measures which would have the **most impact on people's lives**, either in terms of health hazards, financial and emotional turmoil, or disruption.

Reasons for the somewhat middling importance ranking of **visible leak repair time** referred to a need to reduce the **wastage of water, environmental impact, and inconvenience**. However, this was considered less inconvenient to customers than sewer flooding and interruptions of 12 hours or over.



Sewer blockages were thought to **cause more problems down the line**, including sewer flooding and interruptions, however these were felt to be somewhat **beyond the control of the company**, as it depends on customers' behaviours of disposing waste correctly.

When considering reasons for ranking **interruptions between one and three hours** as having the lowest importance, panellists felt that this was **more of a minor inconvenience in comparison to the other measures** being presented, and preferred NWG's focus to be on other areas.

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Overview of this round

Background

This was the ninth round of the People Panels, conducted online via Zoom, which sought to explore five potential bespoke measures with the five panels, to understand the ranking preference of which measures should be bespoke, as well as the reasons underpinning those preferences. Sessions were conducted with each of the five People Panels on the following dates:

- **Monday 31st October: Employees**
- **Tuesday 1st November: Northumbrian**
- **Wednesday 2nd November: Essex**
- **Monday 7th November: Suffolk**
- **Friday 9th November: Young**

The session materials were developed by Explain, working closely alongside NWG throughout, and all workshops and focus groups were attended by a NWG representative. These NWG representatives included: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. This ensured they could provide information on behalf of the company and respond to any clarification questions from attendees.

Purpose of the session

The purpose of the session was to ask panel members to consider five potential bespoke measures for the next business planning period. Panellists were asked whether they thought the measures should remain as bespoke measures, how they ranked them in terms of importance, and the reasons underpinning their preferences were explored.

Approach taken

No pre-work was set in advance of the session. Each 90-minute session was facilitated by Explain. To begin with, the future common measures, as proposed by Ofwat, were shared with the panellists.



Following this, five potential bespoke measures were introduced to the panellists:

- Repeat sewer flooding
- Sewer blockages
- Visible leak repair time
- Interruptions over 12 hours
- Interruptions between one and three hours

Within the session, the 'Employee', 'Suffolk', and 'Young' panels remained as one main group for the duration of the 90-minute discussion. The 'Northumbrian' and 'Essex' panels, however, were split between two breakout rooms for a total of approximately 50 minutes for their discussions, with approximately 10 minutes allocated for each of the five potential bespoke measures.

After discussing each bespoke measure, whether panellists would like to see each potential bespoke measure put in place, and whether they would like a reward or penalty attached to it, a final poll was conducted to rank the preferences on a scale of 1 'most preferred' to 5 'least preferred', in addition to a 'none of the above' options.

Attendee profile

Attendees in the session were all members of the established panels. The number of attendees per session were as follows, where 'Defining the Future' indicates the number of attendees who were previously part of NWG's Defining the Future research.

Panel group	Total no. of attendees	'Defining the Future'
Employee	3	n/a
Northumbrian	13	2
Essex	14	3
Suffolk	10	2
Young	9	1

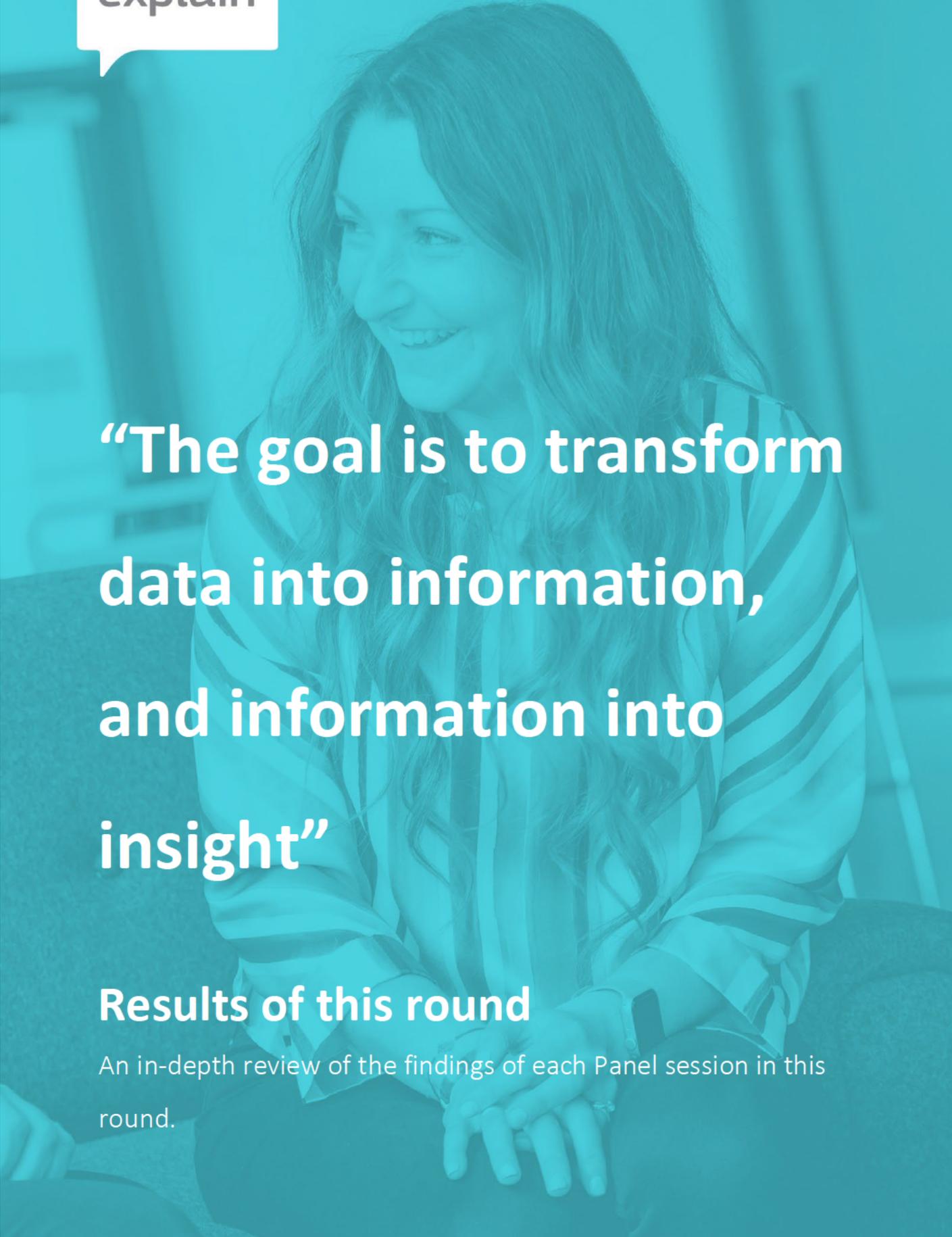
Event feedback

The event feedback gathered from the closing polls, completed by panellists themselves, is shared at the end of this report. Please note, closing polls were launched for the Essex and Young People Panels only.



The logo for 'explain' is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word 'explain' in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with a small icon of a document with a speech bubble above the letter 'i'. The logo is white and set against a teal background.

explain

A woman with long, wavy hair is smiling and looking to her left. She is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt with dark horizontal stripes. The background is a blurred office setting. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter.

**“The goal is to transform
data into information,
and information into
insight”**

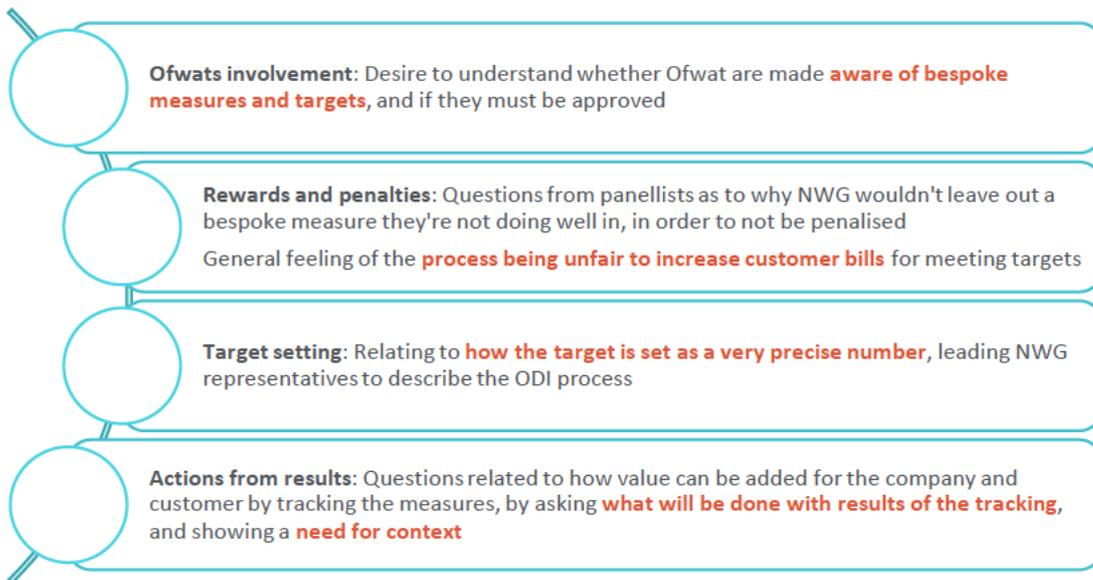
Results of this round

An in-depth review of the findings of each Panel session in this round.

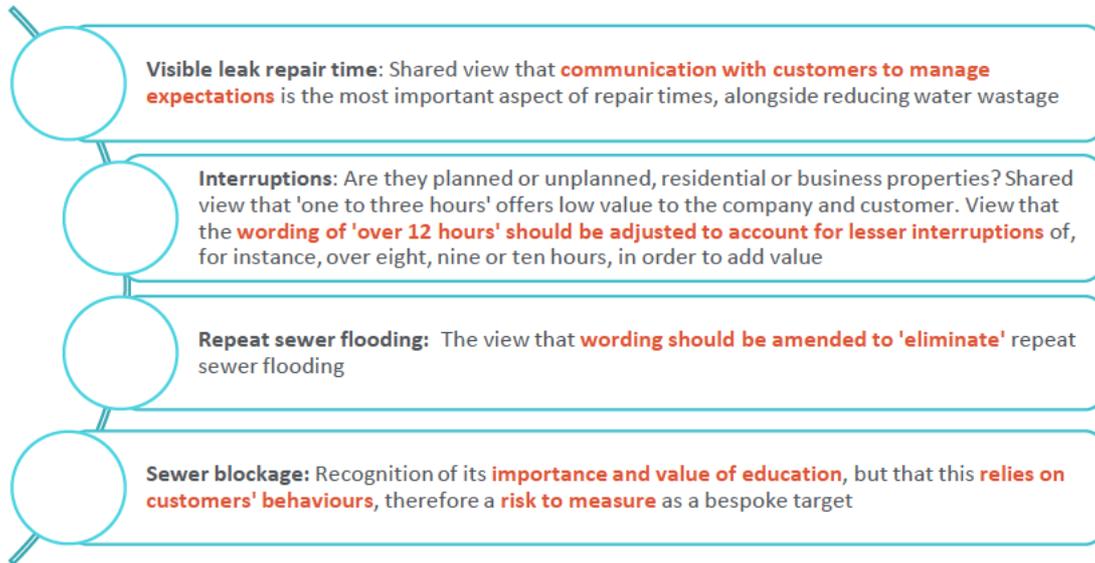
Results of this round

Across the five panels

All panellists were introduced to the proposed common measures before being presented with the five potential bespoke measures. The first graphic below details **common questions** raised across the panels.



This second graphic below details **common, shared views across the panels**, in relation to the five potential bespoke measures which were presented



Employee

In this session, employee panellists were not asked to rank their preference of the five potential bespoke measures. However, the table below provides an overview of the consensus amongst employee panellists regarding whether the measure should be bespoke, as well as their opinions on whether there should or shouldn't be a reward or penalty attached to it.

Except for 'interruptions between 1 and 3 hours', employee panellists viewed the remaining four measures as having enough importance to be included as a bespoke measure.

Employee (Base 3)	Bespoke?	Reward/penalty?
Repeat sewer flooding	Yes	Mixed
Visible leak repair time	Yes	n/a
Interruptions over 12 hours	Yes	n/a
Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	No	No
Sewer blockages	Yes	n/a
None of the above	n/a	n/a

Reasons underpinning the ranking preferences

Repeat sewer flooding

Some clarification was needed between the employee panellists, to understand what would be captured differently to the proposed common measure of repeat sewer flooding.

☐ *“So, if the repeat incident happens within the same reporting year, then they're all counted as part of the common measure. If the repeat incident has happened in any previous reporting year, it's not included... so, I would say yes, we should measure and report it” – Employee People Panel*

All three employee panellists considered repeat sewer flooding to be an **important issue but were unsure of what the added value was** of having it as a bespoke measure, due to not being able to compare against other water companies or then utilising the data tracked.

☐ *“But it comes down to what we're going to do with that information, because it's only worth anything if we are making a commitment to potentially put some or all of those issues right” – Employee People Panel*

☐ *“From a customer perspective, the only reason they're bothered is because they want it fixed. They want to know that it's not going to happen again. If we're going to record it and report it,*

but we've got no intention of investing and therefore doing anything about it, that data becomes worthless to a degree” – Employee People Panel

- “I don't really see the benefit. And I think it would be difficult to use the data, like X's just said, especially if there's no one else you can compare against” – Employee People Panel*
- “I assume that just because something isn't a common or a bespoke measure, doesn't mean that we're not interested in it. There'll be lots of things in the business that happen that we record, we report on, and we do things with internally” – Employee People Panel*
- “To fully make an informed decision, we need to understand what the business' intention would be if this wasn't a bespoke measure. So, if this wasn't recorded and reported as a bespoke measure, would we behave differently as a business where we have properties that repeat flood?” – Employee People Panel*

Employees felt that having the measures focus purely on the outcome, ‘the number of events of repeat flooding’ **doesn't account for the context** in which the events happen. Therefore, this was thought to be an insufficient measure, as external factors of flooding or drought will influence the measure.

- “You need to understand why we're performing well... If we're performing well against it because we've mitigated that risk for some of those properties, then we're genuinely performing well.... If [it's] because we haven't had any rain, and there hasn't been an opportunity for those properties to flood, it's almost like a false positive” – Employee People Panel*
- “I agree that it's a good measure and it's measuring that we are reactive, and we are fixing these things. But like X says, if it's just because we've had a drought and there's been no rain, well... it's a false positive” – Employee People Panel*
- “The measure has to have less customers flooded on a repeat basis than last year [which] isn't measuring us [or] driving anything necessarily, because part of that is determined by weather conditions. So, if the purpose of the measure is about actually driving our performance, so that our assets perform better, that's what you need to [have] measured, including that in the measuring somewhere” – Employee People Panel*

Measuring repeat sewer flooding as a bespoke measure was felt to pose **a risk to the business, due to the lack of control over weather** events, which could have an impact of receiving a penalty beyond the control of the company.

- *“If all we're looking at is have properties flooded on a repeat basis, it's going to take one significant weather event, potentially, and it blows the measure out of the water, and we'll be in a penalty situation. So, what does that penalty look like? And are we willing to run the risk that if we're not targeting investment to reduce the risk of flooding, are we willing to accept that that might be the outcome?” – Employee People Panel*

Sewer blockages

Before deciding whether sewer blockages should be included as a bespoke measure, one employee panellist wanted **further information as to how this differs from the proposed common measures**, and what value it would add.

- *“Is there a common measure that is very similar as we had before with the repeat sewer flooding? Is this something that would be picked up?” – Employee People Panel*
- *“We only have internal flooding and external flooding, we have sewer collapses as well, but nothing to take on board how many blockages we get” – Employee People Panel*

Employee panellists all considered sewer blockages to be **important** and shared their **surprise that sewer blockages are not a proposed common measure**, thereby agreeing it has a place as a bespoke measure.

- *“It would probably change mine... it does come across as quite important to me, and do think it probably has value as a bespoke measure” – Employee People Panel*
- *“I think it's an important one as well. It's more about awareness though, isn't it? We have done big things in getting it out there, but I don't know if people understand... Maybe we should be a bit more visible... If it's not a common measure, then it should be a bespoke one, yeah” – Employee People Panel*
- *“I'm relatively surprised that there isn't a common measure ... certainly in terms of volumes of customer contact. I guess it's a bit like their risk, the likelihood and severity scenario. So, with your repeat flooders, you've got high severity, low likelihood. This is a low severity, arguably, but quite a high likelihood. I'm surprised given the numbers of customers across not only our organization, but across water and sewerage companies collectively that that would impact, that there isn't a common measure” – Employee People Panel*

The reasons highlighted by employee panellists, in favour of measuring sewer blockages as a bespoke measure, were that it's **actionable and it's easy to prevent**. The main prevention strategy discussed was in relation to **educating the public and raising awareness** of what causes sewer blockages and how these can be prevented.

□ *“It's something that's quite easily prevented... It's more the awareness piece. Sewer flooding is really, really difficult to control, especially due to the weather. But if we can stop people putting wipes down the drains, the chances are we're going to stop sewer flooding, or some of it at least... I think we need to ramp this one up, basically, because it'll have a massive knock-on effect to people's houses flooding” – Employee People Panel*

In addition, as sewer blockages has **previously been flagged as an area which needs to be improved**, one employee highlighted that this **can't then be taken off the table** after not gaining the desired outcome of reduced sewer blockages; referring to this being a measure which has not been met in 2020/21.

□ *“Whether the metric stays the same is another question, but we've committed to trying to reduce the risk of something happening. Just because we haven't necessarily got the outcome that we hoped for in the time that we originally set, I don't think it's the right thing to then just take that off the table, particularly given the numbers... nearly 12,000... which in the context of our entire customer base is still not a huge amount, but is far, far more customers impacted than by the flooding measure” – Employee People Panel*

Visible leak repair times

Employee panellists felt that visible leak repair times should be considered as a bespoke measure due to **its importance in gaining customer confidence** and ensuring customers are **able to see the company is acting** on visible leaks being reported.

□ *“It can be hard because what one customer sees is a leak, is often not really a leak. But it's very important for the company to be seen to be reacting to things... And often, we've got to remember the customers are our eyes and ears... we do respond quickly, but sometimes we could be a bit quicker. So, I definitely think it should be, it should remain as a bespoke measure if it's not a common measure” – Employee People Panel*

□ *“If there's a leak across the street and they [the customer] rang us three weeks ago and we still haven't turned up, [if] we're really not that bothered, it just looks bad. So... it's not necessarily the*

amount of water. It's how we look to our customers that we're not reacting, or we are reacting" – Employee People Panel

- *"It's almost more like a reputational type thing for the company... because it is quite a whole, high-profile topic, both in the industry and for us, personally. For me, on a very basic level, [it] warrants being returned as a bespoke measure" - Employee People Panel*
- *"It's something that we should definitely be doing. It's definitely a reputational thing" – Employee People Panel*

In addition to measuring visible leak repair times, employee panellists shared that an important element of gaining customer confidence in relation to leak reports is **improving communication with customers to manage their expectations.**

- *"The issue fundamentally with all of this is around communicating with customers and accurately managing those customers' expectations... what that customer might not know is that just because the water happens to be coming out of the ground over the road from the house, that might not be where the actual leak is, that might be just where it's shown. And we might be doing a whole lot of work behind the scenes that they're not seeing, and they're not being told about to try and track that leak down. So, from a customer perception point of view, it's less about the how much we lost in terms of quantity of water, or how long it took us to fix it, and more about, being more transparent about what we're doing... we should be tracking response time, repair time and we should be trying to drive that down by working more effectively and being more efficient and managing resource better" - Employee People Panel*
- *"I completely agree... there are sometimes bursts that occur where we need a collar making and because we don't have them, we don't stock them and sometimes they can take three weeks. But I just think if you're Joe Public... You don't think they're having a collar specially made for specific main that hasn't been on Earth for 40 years" - Employee People Panel*

Interruptions over 12 hours

All employee panellists felt that interruptions over 12 hours should be considered as a bespoke measure due to the **inexcusable length of time and impact** the interruption would have on people's lives.

- *“I do think that over 12 hours, absolutely, we should be reporting it. Because something has gone catastrophically wrong if we have a customer that's been off supply for over 12 hours. And there should be a further investigation afterwards to see why” – Employee People Panel*
- *“Operationally if there is an issue where customers are out of supply for that length of time, there must be something out of the ordinary. It's not a standard interruption to supply I wouldn't have thought” – Employee People Panel*

Discussion also included how this would affect a smaller quantity of customers than an interruption of approximately five hours, so **wanted further information on how the length of time '12 hours' was decided** upon.

- *“There's a whole raft of timescales that are more than three and less than 12... I completely get all of the things that X said around 12 [hours being] a really long time” – Employee People Panel*
- *“In terms of customer inconvenience, I certainly think anything over four or five hours becomes quite substantially inconvenient to a customer” – Employee People Panel*
- *“I would say anything over three hours, certainly over four or five hours becomes a definite inconvenience, so I'm not quite sure what the benefit is of... 12 hours” – Employee People Panel*

Whilst agreeing on its importance, employee panellists suggested **acting on tracked data** to support the 143 individuals who have had interruptions lasting more than 12 hours. Ultimately, employee panellists felt **value would need to be added** by ensuring data collected will **drive improvements** and mitigate risk in future.

- *“What you need to understand is, who were the 143? And do we see these people being impacted multiple times on more than one occasion and is that because of where they are? And then, what are we going to do to mitigate that? So, making sure that we have alternative supply plans in place so that if there is some kind of outage, we can mobilize quickly” – Employee People Panel*
- *“Fundamentally, the issue is we have probably small pockets of customers, that if there is an issue will always be without water for potentially a significant length of time. And that might be four... seven hours, anything more than three, essentially. Purely because of where they are” – Employee People Panel*
- *“Tracking them... For four, five hours, and six. So, at the end of it, you get the chance to have a bigger picture of what really happened. What could have been done, what should have been done? What was done and what wasn't? And be able to kind of... wrap it up, I suppose as lessons*

learned, what would you do differently? What can we do the next time that will stop it from happening” – Employee People Panel

- *“What are we doing to make sure that next time the same thing happens, we don't have another 143 properties that are without water for 12 hours? I would like to think that if we're measuring the target over 12 hours, we're measuring four hours, five hours, six hours, seven hours, eight hours, nine hours, ten hours, 11 hours, as well. And keeping those figures to show that how many were getting back on during any one catastrophic event, so that we can show that we're getting the numbers down” – Employee People Panel*

Interruptions between one and three hours

Employee panellists generally felt that this measure is less important than other potential measures presented in this session, due to it being **less severe**, having less of an impact on customers, and having the **potential to negatively impact the proposed common measure ‘interruptions over 3 hours’**, due to the measure being a calculation of an average.

- *“We do record every interruption, so... the data can be cut in any hours or whatever. The common ones ‘three hours’... we were good performing at the time [against] three hours, so we pushed to try and see if we could do a better measure, and this ‘[interruption between] one to three [hours]’ came in. So yes, we get the data and we're able to use this information to try and improve our performance against the target. So, we can lower the amount of time properties are lost with water. So, it's for us to achieve that. I know there was perhaps extra teams brought in to attend interruptions quicker, so anything like that. We've got to look for operational activity to try and improve performance. There is a bit of a converse thing with this that the better we get the three-hour measure. Potentially, it could make the one to three hour worse. Because if you managed to push them below the three hours, then they might drop in at two hours 47. So that might make the average one to three go up. So, it's a bit of an awkward measure in that sense” – Employee People Panel*

Following one employee panellist's explanation of the potential negative impact on the proposed common measure ‘interruptions over 3 hours’, other employee panellists agreed that NWG would be best to focus on the proposed common measure as the **reward for bespoke measures would be smaller, comparatively**.

- *“I'd perhaps be minded to play the numbers game, and not to have a bespoke measure. And to focus on... the common measure that we are actually targeted on from a reward or penalty*

perspective. And if we were to have the previous measure that we've just talked about, or something similar... it will have a big impact on the customers that it does affect" – Employee People Panel

- "I feel like presumably any reward is relatively small in comparison to the effort that would be potentially required to ensure that we also meet the common measure" – Employee People Panel*
- "To effectively succeed at that common measure, to get a reward, we effectively fail a measure that we're not actually required to have in the first place... unless you've got confidence that you can meet both, why make it more difficult for yourself?" – Employee People Panel*
- "Then it's... setting yourself up to fail further almost, isn't it?" – Employee People Panel*

Northumbrian

The table below provides an overview of the consensus amongst Northumbrian panellists regarding whether the measure should be bespoke, as well as their opinions on whether there should or shouldn't be a reward or penalty attached to it.

'Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours' was felt to not have enough importance to be included as a bespoke measure. The 'mixed' view of including 'sewer blockages' and 'interruptions over 12 hours' as bespoke measures arose from the panellists' views that these are influenced by external factors, such as customers' behaviours and extreme weather events, therefore shouldn't impact NWG in the form of a reward or penalty. Nevertheless, they were considered important measures.

	Northumbrian (Base 13)	Bespoke?	Rewards/penalty?
1 st	Repeat sewer flooding	Yes	Yes
2 nd	Sewer blockages	Mixed	No
3 rd	Visible leak repair time	Yes	n/a
4 th	Interruptions over 12 hours	Mixed	No
5 th	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	No	n/a
6 th	None of the above	n/a	n/a

Reasons underpinning the ranking preferences

Repeat sewer flooding

Northumbrian panellists unanimously agreed that repeat sewer flooding should be considered as a bespoke measure and were **surprised that this was not a proposed common measure** given by Ofwat. Panellists reasoned this was due to the **negative impact sewer flooding has on individuals and the property**, adding that happening once is more than enough.

- *"I struggle to understand why it's a bespoke measure... surely there's properties up and down the country that are affected by repeat sewerage events" – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *"I think [repeat sewer flooding] it's required, but it should be under the OFWAT" – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *"Definitely. I know my family home got affected by a flood and it took about 18 months for it to actually recover from everything. So, I can only imagine for that to happen again, a couple of years later would just, it would just be horrific" – Northumbrian People Panel*

- *“I rate it very, very high. To have it happen a second time must be devastating, if you've had a sewage flood in the home, and then it happens again. Appalling” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Relating to the negative impact, panellists felt they would **be happy for NWG to be rewarded or penalised** as a result of meeting or not meeting their targets.

- *“I've got no problems with being rewarded if they stop people's houses being flooded” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“[moderator: so, it'd be a penalty if they don't hit the targets they set and reward if do get them? Is that do you think that's reasonable for this one?] “Yeah, the target should be tighter and the penalties if you missed that target” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Sewer blockages

There was a mixed view relating to whether sewer blockages should be considered as a bespoke measure.

Most Northumbrian panellists felt that, whilst sewer blockages are important, it is **not as important as other measures presented to them** in the session thus far, such as repeat sewer flooding. Instead, it was suggested that NWG should track and record this measure, but it **should not be considered** as a bespoke measure.

- *“It's not as important as flooding” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“I don't think it should be a measure, but I think the company needs to record it. Because ultimately, they need to know how time is spent on dealing with the issue” – Northumbrian People Panel*

However, some panellists felt sewer blockages should be considered as a bespoke measure, highlighting its **importance due to the subsequent impact** of repeat sewer flooding, in terms of time and resources, including costs.

- *“Nearly 12,000 incidents no doubt indicates a high percentage of call outs to unblock drains. Thats people's time and resources that can be better spent. So, it's definitely an important measure. And then obviously... that links back to sewer flooding... I've never had it happen to me, but I can only imagine it's a disaster” – Northumbrian People Panel*

- *“Blockages must be consequences, one of the reasons for sewage flooding” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“I think it's a good measure, just as we've discussed, because of the effects of it on flooding” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Overall, Northumbrian panellists recognised sewer blockages as **an important educational piece that should be used to heighten public awareness of what should and shouldn't be put down drains.**

- *“I like that they're targeting areas as well, so they know where to deliver their advertising campaigns around what not to put down drains” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“We want education basically... Educate people as much as you like, but some people are always just going to ignore that advice, for whatever reason, an accident can happen. And that's going to end up with a blockage and that's another figure on the target, isn't it?” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Despite recognising education as an important aspect of reducing sewer blockages, Northumbrian panellists felt that sewer blockages shouldn't be a bespoke measure due to the reward and penalty attached, as this would be unfair to NWG as a company, due to them having **no control over customers blocking drains.**

- *“They have no control about the people who put tea towels down the drain, the toilet. We saw months ago, the tea towels and bras and packets of wipes... they can continue the bin the wipe campaign but really, they're measuring themselves on people's choices of what they put down the toilet... unless people stop putting tea towels down the toilet, they're really going to struggle there” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“It's just the individual, you know? You're relying upon your target being achieved by people not putting stuff down the toilet... it's just almost impossible for them to achieve that because they're relying upon everybody else” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“I understand why the company would want to record it, because obviously they're losing money by people, by their blockages, but ... it's like they're penalizing themselves [for] other people's actions” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Visible leak repair times

Northumbrian panellists generally felt that visible leak repair times should be considered as a bespoke measure, referring to the **high number of leaks in urban areas, water wastage and poor visual impact** on the area.

□ *“I would say yes and my reason for that is, certainly if you live in an urban area, this is one of the standout things that you can see when it’s going wrong, because you see your street running like a stream, as we’ve had locally here last year. So, it’s certainly important, apart from the obvious issue of the water wastage in systems and the amount of it, it’s a very visual thing” – Northumbrian People Panel*

□ *“Yeah, I think it needs to be a measure. As X said, you wander around urban areas and it’s surprising how many leaks you do see” – Northumbrian People Panel*

□ *“Of the ones so far, this one’s the most that I think is worthwhile of measuring’... I walk to work, and I remember, there was a leak in an area and in the wintertime, if it freezes, it’s really hard for me to walk over” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Interruptions over 12 hours

When considering this measure, there was **some confusion around the necessity** of having a bespoke measure concerning interruptions over 12 hours **when Ofwat have stated there is a proposed common measure of interruptions over 3 hours.**

□ *“If you’ve got a common measure of ‘three hours [interruptions]’, which you’ve got to do as part of OFWATs common demand... [I] can’t see the point of this 12 hour [interruptions] one... your target with them is three” – Northumbrian People Panel*

□ *“If OFWAT had done the 12 hour one and then Northumbria Water had said now we can smash that we can do it within three, then you can see them doing it that way. But doing it reverse seems like they haven’t got much faith in them being able to hit the three hours” – Northumbrian People Panel*

After some discussion, which involved clarification of pinpointing times, and the view that 12-hours may be considered a major, rather than minor, inconvenience, Northumbrian panellists agreed that **12 hours was a long time which would negatively impact customers.**

- *“I think once those 12 hours hit, it gets a little bit dicey... you've probably gone through your supplies and your backups. I think it's massively important that they are monitoring themselves and keeping an eye on when they are potentially not fulfilling their side of the bargain; their supply” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“12 [hours], as X was stressing is quite a long period of time. Supply is starting to get down, it's a bit difficult... I think NWL having their own measure is useful... that might be a reflection of the geography” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“It's good. Obviously, they are keeping an eye on where it could potentially [be] prolonging it and causing that much of a negative impact on people” – Northumbrian People Panel*

However, Northumbrian panellists felt that NWG would be **setting themselves up to fail** if they were to implement this as a bespoke measure, stating that if they fail to match the 12-hour bespoke measure target, they will also fail the 3-hour proposed common measure target.

- *“If you fail to match your 12-hour target, then you're really going to fail to match their three-hour target” – Northumbrian People Panel*
- *“It just seems like you're setting yourself up either for a double reward or a double fail” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Interruptions between one and three hours

Generally, Northumbrian panellists felt there was **little to no difference between the proposed common measure set by Ofwat**, ‘interruptions over 3 hours’, and this potential measure of interruptions between one and three hours. Therefore, it was felt to be of **lesser importance**.

- *“Not if you've got three hours’... Because there's no difference, very little difference between two hours, 59 minutes or three hours’*

Instead, panellists highlighted that **communication regarding the interruptions is what is more important** to them.

- *“I think what's more benefitting interruptions like that is getting information out to people that say there is an interruption. It's that side of it that's equally important to me” [moderator “The communication about it”] “Absolutely” – Northumbrian People Panel*

Essex

The table below provides an overview of the consensus amongst Essex panellists regarding whether the measure should be bespoke, as well as their opinions on whether there should or shouldn't be a reward or penalty attached to it.

The 'mixed' view of having a reward or penalty attached to 'sewer blockages' as bespoke measures arose from the panellists' views that this relies on customers' behaviours, therefore shouldn't impact NWG in the form of a reward or penalty. Nevertheless, it was considered an important measure.

	Essex (Base 13)	Bespoke?	Reward/penalty?
1 st	Repeat sewer flooding	Yes	Yes
2 nd	Visible leak repair time	Yes	Yes
3 rd	Interruptions over 12 hours	Yes	Yes
4 th	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	Yes	Yes
5 th	Sewer blockages	Yes	Mixed
6 th	None of the above	n/a	n/a

Reasons underpinning the ranking preferences

Due to the remaining upcoming sessions taking place with panellists from the Essex and Suffolk regions, please note that the order of reporting was amended to reflect the first three potential bespoke measures discussed as those which affect the water supply of Essex & Suffolk Water: 'visible leak repair times', 'interruptions over 12 hours' and 'interruptions between one and three hours'.

The two potential bespoke measures which are related to wastewater, are discussed afterwards, as the fourth and fifth discussion points: 'repeat sewer flooding' and 'sewer blockages'.

Visible leak repair times

Visible leak repair times was considered as an **important** measure by Essex panellists, with an overall agreement that it should be considered as a bespoke measure due to it being an encouraging target and **in alignment with environmental targets of reducing water wastage**.

□ "[moderator] you all agree that it should be one of the bespoke measures, then?" "Yes' 'Yeah, yeah, yeah'" – Essex People Panel

- *“You're trying to prevent waste... so, it's definitely a good one to help with. Don't waste water in the long run” – Essex People Panel*
- *“It's encouraging. Isn't it? That they're thinking of what the customer wants, feels, thinks” – Essex People Panel*
- *“If there's a massive leak on the road, and you've reported it. You assume that it will be sorted out as soon as possible. I would say eight days or six days seems quite a long time, because obviously the water is going to keep pouring out in that time” – Essex People Panel*

Essex panellists added that visible leak repair time has an **impact on customer confidence**, however the communication between the company and customer also influences customer confidence, therefore this should also be considered an important aspect to focus on.

- *“You need targets, and it also gives the customer confidence when they report a leak... They've got an idea of how long they can expect before it's fixed” – Essex People Panel*
- *“It's probably quite important from what everyone said in terms of consumer confidence, because it's about visible leaks, so, if you've seen a leak, you observed as a consumer. Knowing how long it takes, it'd be like, okay that's going to be sorted quite quickly... if we knew took X amount of hours... for that to be resolved. So, I think it's a good consumer indication [and] gives us confidence” – Essex People Panel*

The urgency was also thought to depend on whether the visible leak is in an **urban or rural area**,

- *“It's the degree of urgency, isn't it?... Say, Colchester High Street... or whether it's in the suburbs where it's not quite so urgent” – Essex People Panel*

Overall, Essex panellists felt that the rewards and penalties attached to the bespoke measure would be encouraging, **add to customer's confidence in reporting leaks** due to feeling as though the company will act on the reports promptly.

- *“Somebody reported it in leak, and it was still happening after a few days... I could feel that the person was frustrated that [they couldn't] get that help soon enough... penalty, as well as rewards should be also for those measures” – Essex People Panel*
- *“From the customer's point of view, we have more confidence to report if there is a leak... the customer confidence will build up more” – Essex People Panel*

Some concerns were raised by a few Essex panellists, wanting to **ensure NWG weren't penalised for taking more time to repair a complex leak**, as it's **most important to ensure visible leaks are repaired properly**.

- *"I worry about that a little bit, just because I'm just wondering whether in a bid to meet the targets, whether it will be done properly" – Essex People Panel*
- *"Should they really be penalised for taking more time to make sure that it's done properly? Especially, it depends on the complexity of the leak... do they need to take everything out and start again, will they need to build their infrastructure again?" – Essex People Panel*

Interruptions over 12 hours

The increase from an interruption of 3 hours to an interruption of 12 hours was felt to be a **significant difference**, which contributed to Essex panellists viewing it important to consider interruptions over 12 hours as a bespoke measure.

- *"To not have water for twelve hours is a long time, that's half the day, whereas three hours is the morning, afternoon, evening" – Essex People Panel*
- *"I think it needs to be a bespoke option because it's too long. So, they need to bring that down. So, by highlighting how many leaks they have over 12 hours, they can then work to bring that 12 hours down" – Essex People Panel*

Essex panellists generally felt **unsure as to why the length of time of '12 hours' had been decided** and felt that it would make more sense to adjust the wording of the potential measure to, **instead, measure interruptions of more than nine hours**, for instance.

- *"Everything that have been measured over three hours, and obviously anything over that, whether it's six, nine, 12 is going to also be measured. So, what is the point of the 12 hours? I didn't really get that" – Essex People Panel*
- *"From three hours to 12 hours is a big difference. So personally, depending on the urges of your need alluded to earlier, maybe nine hours might be a better bespoke target rather than 12" – Essex People Panel*
- *"I do definitely think it should be a common measure rather than a bespoke... 12 hours is a very long time for some people, three hours seems quite quick. I think [similar] to what X said something like nine. But again, you can see the subjective too" – Essex People Panel*

- *“I just wondered why it was set at 12 hours... why didn't they consider having a lower threshold for example, five or six hours, because as X said, 12 hours is an awful long time, and you would expect them to [have] fixed it by then” – Essex People Panel*
- *“12 hours is just a long time. I think, reduce it. I know, like you say, three but I think maybe like five, six would probably be alright. But I just feel like 12 is just too long” – Essex People Panel*

One Essex panellist also questioned **whether NWG was adding extra pressure** by adding bespoke measures as a target to meet

- *“Are they shooting themselves in the foot a bit by doing these extra? ... by putting extra pressure on themselves?” – Essex People Panel*

Overall, Essex panellists felt that it was **fair for rewards and penalties to be attached** to this measure, due to recognising a 12-hour interruption as a **significant length of time** which would impact individuals.

- *“Yes. The rewards should be, and they should be delivering some water if it's going to be 12 hours” – Essex People Panel*
- *‘Well, the reward should but if they're going to be monetarily paying for if the water goes off, that would be offset” – Essex People Panel*

Interruptions between one and three hours

When first considering whether interruptions between one and three hours should be considered as a bespoke measure, Essex panellists generally felt that it **could be helpful**.

- *“If that's what customers have asked for, and it's being measured already, I don't see why it would be junked [no longer measured]” – Essex People Panel*
- *“Yeah, keep it as a bespoke measure [with] regard to the minutes. I guess that could be helpful, because it could be two hours and one minute, rather than going over to two hours and be classed as three hours” – Essex People Panel*

However, some Essex panellists felt that **other potential bespoke measures had greater importance.**

□ *“I would say that there are much more important measures that we should look at, other than the ones that have been served to us to discuss on” – Essex People Panel*

Due to the **disruption**, one Essex panellist felt that it was **fair for NWG to be penalised** by having to reward the customer.

□ *“Yeah, it’s a compensation thing, isn’t it? If it was a major disruption, there has to be some sort of compensation... there should be a reward and a penalty, I think. But the penalty in this instance, will be more important... If somebody’s really sort of desperately in need of water for whatever reason, and the company can’t solve it within that timescale they’ve allocated, there must be some sort of penalty” – Essex People Panel*

One Essex panellist instead shared that they felt **only rewards** should be attached to this measure for NWG, as it would act as **motivation for quick repairs**, and up to three hours interruption in the supply seemed **acceptable** to them.

□ *“It will feel good if it’s only rewards. So, it’s motivational to repair it quickly, but I think up to three hours should be acceptable for interruptions in the supply” – Essex People Panel*

Repeat sewer flooding

There was a **unanimous agreement** amongst Essex panellists that repeat sewer flooding should be considered as a bespoke measure due to its **devastating impact on people’s lives and homes**, stating that once is more than enough.

□ *“[I’d] be devastated if it happened more than once. Once would be enough” – Essex People Panel*

□ *“That would be more than devastating. I couldn’t think of anything worse” – Essex People Panel*

□ *“It’s hard to measure someone’s emotional trauma if it happened once, let alone repeated. You can’t put a figure on that” – Essex People Panel*

□ *“It’s the company’s responsibility, isn’t it? To be on top of it” – Essex People Panel*

□ *“A friend of mine has experienced it [serious flooding] when we lived up in Yorkshire, and it was just devastating... they had a country cottage, their dream home... and eventually, they, it was just demolished” – Essex People Panel*

- *“It's huge. It never happened to us, so I don't know all the consequences that might come up. But even [to happen] once it's really a lot, but to be repeated, I think it's really, almost unacceptable. It might happen, but it shouldn't, that's why should be measured” – Essex People Panel*

Considered to have devastating consequences, there was similarly a unanimous agreement amongst Essex panellists that penalties should be given to NWG for repeat measures. However, panellists felt that there should be **no reward for NWG preventing repeat sewer flooding from happening**.

- *“Definitely penalties for this one because, yeah, it's huge” – Essex People Panel*
- *“This is the big issue, isn't it? Because we just think that if you live in a house, you've got a mortgage on it, and you think, well I'm going to move and sell. You won't be able to do that” – Essex People Panel*
- *“I don't personally think a reward should be instated for this particular measure. I think more of a penalty if it happens ... because it shouldn't. I know it does happen sometimes, but it shouldn't. It's more of a penalty if it does happen” – Essex People Panel*
- *“I don't think they should be rewarded for getting it right... I think definitely get penalized for repeat measures” – Essex People Panel*
- *“They're getting rewarded twice, really. Once from the customer, but [they] are given a better service. And they're saving money because they're not having to keep going fix the same problem... it encourages them to fix it properly the first time” – Essex People Panel*

Sewer blockages

There was a mixed view when considering whether sewer blockages should be considered as a bespoke measure.

Several Essex panellists agreed that sewer blockages are **important and relevant**, so should be considered as a bespoke measure. Several panellists highlighted that the **target has not been met in the past**, so it shouldn't be removed as a target.

- *“Yeah, I think it should continue... because it seems to be very relevant and important” – Essex People Panel*

- *“I think that is important because obviously it's not been met, the target, and I feel like keeping it can encourage to get it lower, quicker. I know it might be a slow process, but that's just what I think. If it's not achieving it now, then it's something to work towards” – Essex People Panel*
- *“If it is still happening, that means it really does need to be sorted out. It needs to be a measure so that people can focus on getting it right or the company can put structures in place... to make sure it doesn't happen. Maybe educating people about things like wipes or how to dispose them better. Those kinds of things would reduce how much of it is there” – Essex People Panel*

However, some Essex panellists discussed how the measure **relies on customer behaviours**, which the company cannot control. Relating to this, one panellist shared the **importance of educating the public and raising awareness** of what should and shouldn't be put down drains.

- *“The problem is this is, this is customer related, isn't it? It's the customer that causes most of the blockages” – Essex People Panel*
- *“I've got grandchildren now and they are learning about the environment at school, and conserving water, and not putting naughty things to have the toilet. You know, they are learning at a younger age, so that, when they get into society, they'll already be conditioned to show more respect and be more aware. So, I think the education as X says if the water companies can get involved” – Essex People Panel*

Following discussion of the mixed views on whether sewer blockages should be considered as a bespoke measure, Essex panellists felt that it **wouldn't be fair on NWG to be penalised as it is the customer causing the sewer blockages**. However, one panellist suggested that rewards could be given by Ofwat to **fund education to customers**.

- *“Rather than rewards, if they could use the funds given by OFWAT or whatever, for more education to the consumers” – Essex People Panel*
- *“It's not fair to penalize the water companies when there's, it's the, it's the consumers that are causing that problem” – Essex People Panel*

Suffolk

The table below provides an overview of the consensus amongst Suffolk panellists regarding whether the measure should be bespoke, as well as their opinions on whether there should or shouldn't be a reward or penalty attached to it.

'Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours' was felt to not have enough importance to be included as a bespoke measure. The 'mixed' view of including 'sewer blockages' arose from the panellists' views that this is largely based on customers' behaviours, therefore shouldn't impact NWG in the form of a reward or penalty, due to being beyond their control.

	Suffolk (Base 10)	Bespoke?	Reward/penalty?
1 st	Repeat sewer flooding	Yes	Yes
2 nd	Interruptions over 12 hours	Yes	Yes
3 rd	Visible leak repair time	Yes	Yes
4 th	Sewer blockages	Mixed	No
5 th	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	No	No
6 th	None of the above	n/a	n/a

Reasons underpinning the ranking preferences

Visible leak repair times

Suffolk panellists felt that visible leak repair times should be considered as a bespoke measure, particularly as the **data shows leak repair times have been improving**, though there were some questions raised regarding how the data is collected and measured.

- ☐ *"If the time [to repair visible leaks] still is improving, then I think it should continue... to continue doing it like that" – Suffolk People Panel*
- ☐ *"I think it should be in there, but it has got the word 'visible' in front of it... I wonder how that impacts on the total number of leakages" – Suffolk People Panel*
- ☐ *"[It] should be kept, but how often do they check that they're getting reliable data? It goes to X's point; you're going to have some long gaps between the leak being seen and being repaired, and another one might be done in two days" – Suffolk People Panel*

Other concerns shared by Suffolk panellists related to the way in which visible leak repair times are measured, namely the use of ‘average’ and ‘visible’ in the measure. One panellist suggested that **there could be other more important root causes of the leak which require attention**, rather than ‘visible’ leaks.

- *“If people see it, they report it, they’re upset about it; it doesn’t mean to say that you don’t fix the leak, but it might put too much of an effort onto just the visible leaks, and take your eye off the rest of the problem” – Suffolk People Panel*
- *“The idea of an ‘average’ is another issue, because if somebody’s reported on a leak, and they’ve not heard anything for ten days or more, in an ‘average’ it could be lost” – Suffolk People Panel*

The **importance of communicating with customers to manage expectations** was highlighted in a comment by a Suffolk panellist who felt that there were no actions taken by the company for two weeks, based on them not being provided with information.

- *“We had a water leak here. It wasn’t really affecting our pressure, but it went on for about two weeks before anybody even looked at it, as far as we could tell... Give more information to the public at large” – Suffolk People Panel*

One Suffolk panellist stated they felt Essex & Suffolk Water **should be held responsible, as a company**, for actions or lack of actions they take which may result in damage, when considering whether rewards or penalties should be given to the company for this measure.

- *“What I’m more interested in is if Essex & Suffolk Water get it seriously wrong, cause damage or whatever, they should be held responsible” – Suffolk People Panel*

Interruptions over 12 hours

Having an interruption over 12 hours was felt to be **very disruptive** for people, therefore of high importance and should be considered as a bespoke measure.

- *“[It’s] extremely important to monitor the twelve hours. I think most people can manage for three hours without their water, but twelve hours could really impact quite dramatically on a household... we don’t have a water tank in our home, so you’d be in a position where you’d be relying on bottled water; you couldn’t cook your dinner, you couldn’t do your laundry” – Suffolk People Panel*

- *“I feel that twelve hours without usage of water is just insanity, and very disruptive to a lot of people... I think people can cope for three hours, but not twelve” – Suffolk People Panel*
- *“It is important that they continue to monitor these as a bespoke measure, because as they’ve already said, with Storm Arwen for example, those figures could come out very different” – Suffolk People Panel*

Some Suffolk panellists recognised the importance of an interruption of over 12 hours but continued to suggest it would be of **greater value** for the company and customers to amend this bespoke measure to **measure interruptions of over six, eight or ten hours**, for instance.

- *“I know it is disruptive for the people involved, and I’m not minimising that, but... that’s a very small amount of properties... If you reduce the period without water to measuring, six, eight, or ten hours, that would hit a greater number of properties that have suffered that, and it would be a more valuable target” – Suffolk People Panel*
- *“Yes, I’m inclined to agree with X; I think shortening the time down to six or eight hours, which is still going to impact quite dramatically on people. I think I’d want to see a consistent pattern over a number of years” – Suffolk People Panel*

Overall, Suffolk panellists thought it was fair for NWG to be rewarded and penalised for their performance against this measure, citing that **penalties and rewards drive business performance**. The disruption to people’s lives is significant, and **penalties were thought to motivate prevention**.

- *“I’ve had it when I’ve had a disruption of three hours. You don’t realise how much you depend on your water until it’s been cut off. I think any disruption which is six, eight hours or more, has a significant impact, so there definitely should be penalties” – Suffolk People Panel*
- *“Financial penalties and rewards drive business performance, and even though it counts on the customers, I understand how this works. In the end, the impact on how well you perform should have a greater impact on our bills than the tiny amount that comes in as a reward” – Suffolk People Panel*

Interruptions between one and three hours

Interruptions between one and three hours were thought to be a minor inconvenience to Suffolk panellists, who suggested it shouldn't be considered as a bespoke measure and, instead, NWG should keep their focus elsewhere

- *“I think one or three hours... I wouldn't really put that as 'bespoke' really” – Suffolk People Panel*
- *“I think that this measure is one that doesn't need to be a 'bespoke' one, because they are performing well. Those periods without water are relatively short, and it's inevitable that they're going to happen. I think they ought to be focusing on the customers who are very badly affected by situations, as opposed to something which I think is a relatively minor inconvenience” – Suffolk People Panel*

As the length of time is a **minor inconvenience, and somewhat acceptable**, Suffolk panellists generally agreed that there would be **no need to attach a reward or penalty** to this measure.

- *“Probably not... it's a minor inconvenience... there's always going to be a circumstance where one to three hours is an urgent matter... but I wouldn't say it's as important as knowing about people who have been out for a longer period of time” – Suffolk People Panel*

Repeat sewer flooding

There was an overall agreement that repeat sewer flooding should be considered as a bespoke measure due to it being **extremely disruptive and horrendous** for people who must suffer with it.

- *“It's extremely disruptive to people; it's really one of the horrors, isn't it? I think it needs to be there” - Suffolk People Panel*
- *“It's horrendous for people that do suffer with it. To keep it down is good, and it's a failure if it happens” - Suffolk People Panel*

Relating to the **drastic consequence** of repeat sewer flooding, there was an overall agreement that **rewards and penalties are fair to attach** to this measure. Some panellists further suggested individual customers who are affected should receive support and compensation.

- *“Overall, yes, there should be. The better you do, the better it is for everybody out here. If you don’t reach your targets, or show some improvements, then yes, I think you should be giving us a little bit back” - Suffolk People Panel*
- *“This is something that affects people in a fairly drastic way and can possibly lead to problems with the sewerage as well. So, yes” - Suffolk People Panel*
- *“They ought to be looking at what they’re doing for those individual customers who are most adversely affected, more so than what happens to the company as a whole” - Suffolk People Panel*

Sewer blockages

Briefly discussed, Suffolk panellists recognised the importance of sewer blockages, but suggested tweaking the **wording of how it is measured to give more information** about the people that are affected by sewer blockages.

- *“Maybe not the number that you clear; the amount of time that people are affected by the blockages would give people more information” - Suffolk People Panel*

Despite recognising its importance, Suffolk panellists generally felt that there **shouldn’t be a reward or penalty** attached to this measure due to the **reliance on customers’ behaviours, and lack of control** NWG have over what customers put down drains.

- *“I don’t think there really should... because it could be the customers as well, as the lady said, it could be baby wipes being flushed down the toilet, so there has to be... If customers are not putting the right things down the toilet, and then it’s getting blocked, or the pipes are getting blocked, then I find it a little bit unfair to say that the water company should be given a penalty” - Suffolk People Panel*

Young

The table below provides an overview of the consensus amongst Young panellists regarding whether the measure should be bespoke, as well as their opinions on whether there should or shouldn't be a reward or penalty attached to it.

'Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours' was felt to not have enough importance to be included as a bespoke measure. Whilst 'visible leak repair time' was viewed as important enough to be included as a bespoke measure, the panellists had a 'mixed' view as to whether a reward or penalty should be attached, primarily due to feeling as though it would be beneficial to motivate quick fixes, yet would be unfair to reward NWG and, subsequently, negatively impact customers' bills.

	Young (Base 9)	Bespoke?	Reward/penalty?
1 st	Repeat sewer flooding	Yes	Yes
2 nd	Interruptions over 12 hours	Yes	Yes
3 rd	Sewer blockages	Yes	n/a
4 th	Visible leak repair time	Yes	Mixed
5 th	Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours	No	No
6 th	None of the above	n/a	n/a

Reasons underpinning the ranking preferences

Visible leak repair times

Amongst Young panellists, there was an overall agreement that visible leak repair times should be considered as a bespoke measure. Firstly, as the **target was considered to motivate NWG to continue to meet the target** and secondly, to **increase confidence for the customer** and company.

- *"I would say that, yes, they do maintain it just because if you look at the targets and look at the actual like figures they are achieving, they are achieving it but it's not like a massive difference between the two figures, so I think it's good that the target is there and keeping them in check that way" – Young People Panel*
- *"It's definitely an important measure, obviously trying to reduce that to increase confidence for the customer and the company. So definitely, yes, I think it's a good one" – Young People Panel*
- *"Yes, I agree with the others. It's good to continue to report it, yes" – Young People Panel*

Discussions around attaching a reward or penalty to this measure was met with a **mixed** response, as it was felt that it would **motivate the company to meet the target**, however Young panellists felt it was **unfair** that, by meeting the target, the customers would have their bills impacted.

- *“Having that financial reward or penalty, whichever one... it’s a bit of a drive to kind of do the right thing like by customers and within that the companies like values” – Young People Panel*
- *“For the actual company yes, but I don’t think it should then fall onto customers, no. But then obviously we pay for service. So, I don’t know...” – Young People Panel*
- *“I feel like if they do well then, we should get rewarded by like a bit of money off the bill because obviously we’ve paid, we’ve put our trust in them to provide that good service and obviously then they will have succeeded. But if they haven’t done as well then maybe we should pay the same... and then maybe it gets increased the next year or something” – Young People Panel*
- *“I think the penalties are good because they’re going to motivate them to put more work into ensuring that that target is met, but the fact that it’s going to increase prices for customers if it is met, I don’t think that is necessarily needed as a bespoke measure, if that’s going to be the case” – Young People Panel*
- *“For the incentive, I think it is a good sort of measure... that should be in place but maybe just not necessarily sort of then impacting the customers financially” – Young People Panel*
- *“I don’t think that the customer should be really penalised for the company to go and necessarily make sense from the customer’s point of view” – Young People Panel*
- *“You’re paying anyway so why would you have to pay extra just for them just doing what they’re supposed to do” – Young People Panel*

Interruptions over 12 hours

Young panellists agreed that interruptions over 12 hours is a **significant length of time** and would be a **major inconvenience** to people, therefore it should be considered as a bespoke measure.

- *“Yes, I do think that they should continue. Because I think that obviously although it is an infrequent sort of occurrence, I think when it does happen it’s a big inconvenience to people. So, I think that it should still definitely be a measure” – Young People Panel*
- *“That’s half a day of water interruption basically. So, I think even though these things happen infrequently they do and like what X said, like they do have a major impact when they do happen” – Young People Panel*

- *“Even though it happens infrequently it would be a big event for people, so I think it is important to keep a track of it” – Young People Panel*
- *“Yes, I also agree because twelve hours is a long time. That’s obviously going to really affect the customer, it’s a major inconvenience so I think it’s better that it is monitored, and they do meet the standard of making sure that there’s not any interruptions that last over twelve hours” – Young People Panel*

Similar to the previous measure, Young panellists **recognised the importance** of this measure and felt it should be considered bespoke, however they generally felt it was **unfair to have a financial impact on the customers bills**.

- *“I’m not necessarily sure it should be incentivised or anything like that because I think completely unpredictable events... you don’t know when it’s going to happen... maybe sort of keep it a measure in the background but also not a major one” – Young People Panel*
- *“I don’t see why that should be something that affects customers because you don’t get a choice whether or not you’re with a really good company that always outperforms because, how I’m reading that, your bills are always going to be affected” – Young People Panel*
- *“Yes, but as long as it’s not going to impact the customer because at the end of the day in my opinion, I think the customer is the most important here. So, yes, but it can’t have the financial implications on the customer, basically” – Young People Panel*

Interruptions between one and three hours

Overall, Young panellists felt that interruptions between one and three hours are a **minor inconvenience** and felt that the measure should not be considered as bespoke, as NWG should put their **resources and focus elsewhere**.

- *“For it [the interruption] to be measured... doesn’t seem worthwhile and some of the other areas seem to be more worthwhile in measuring” – Young People Panel*
- *“I don’t see it being as a big inconvenience... the time and the effort could be put into other resources and other things, i.e., the twelve-hour thing. Yes, I just don’t think it would be worth it” – Young People Panel*

- *“That short amount of time seems very insignificant compared to twelve hours. So, I don’t think it’s something that should be measurable. Definitely important, but not bespoke” – Young People Panel*
- *“As they’re really so short, I don’t see the point to them being a bespoke measure” – Young People Panel*
- *“It might be a little bit too tight a goal, especially when they’re meeting it quite well ... so, yes, I don’t think it’s worth the financial side in terms of how it comes to the consumer. In that sense, I think you’re right, they should be putting their money into the twelve or ten hour kind of targets, not targets this small” – Young People Panel*

Repeat sewer flooding

Repeat sewer flooding was considered to be one of the most important measures discussed in this session, at this point, by one Young panellist, with other Young panellists **echoing the importance** of repeat sewer flooding. Some Young panellists based in Essex or Suffolk regions shared they **weren’t personally affected** by this and felt that water supply interruption for over 12 hours would be more important.

- *“This is one of the most important ones that we’ve talked about so far” – Young People Panel*
- *““Yes, I agree that it’s really important. It’s a basic thing you expect. You don’t want things to get damaged by a water company” – Young People Panel*
- *“[It’s] quite a major issue, although... I’m in Essex & Suffolk Water so I’m not as affected by it, but I do think it’s an important issue for them to be focused on” – Young People Panel*
- *“It is still an issue that maybe should be focused on but perhaps not as much as something like the environmental issues, or like the loss of water for twelve hours” – Young People Panel*

Young panellists agreed that repeat sewer flooding shouldn't happen once, and more than once within five years shouldn't happen at all. Panellists felt that the responsibility lies with NWG, therefore they should be penalised if the target isn't met.

- *“If someone’s house is being flooded more than once every five years then that should be something that the company is penalised for, because that can cause loads of damage to the houses, infrastructure and the person who’s living in that house as well... I think it should be something that they do get penalised for if that does happen” – Young People Panel*
- *“For it to happen more than once in a five-year period when it, you know, shouldn’t happen at all really. I think that, for me, it’s the financial implication on the water company because I mean that for me would probably help prevent it because it’s a motivation, and it’s a driver... people having to be out of the house and it’s impacting their whole lives and routines... it’s a big incident how rare it might be” – Young People Panel*
- *“They could potentially still have it as a financial incentive to reduce the incidents of it even more, because obviously 23 is still quite a big number for incidents like that” – Young People Panel*
- *“I would agree, it needs to be incentivised” – Young People Panel*
- *“If there is sewer flooding in the house, that often has to be cleaned up and paid for by the individuals’ home insurance companies. So, I think it is quite important that, even if they do have to pay a bit more if the company succeeds, it’s fine overall because at the end of the day the consumer would have to pay that anyway from their own insurance... and that can affect their premiums as well. So, yes, I think it’s definitely worth having” – Young People Panel*

Sewer blockages

Overall, Young panellists agreed that sewer blockages should be considered as a bespoke measure, since it's a **target not being met currently**, in addition to the **impact sewer blockages can have on other issues**, such as sewage and flooding.

- *“Because they’re not meeting the target, I think it should be kept as a bespoke measure” – Young People Panel*
- *“It should just stay as a bespoke measure because if there’s blockages there are going to be more issues, i.e., more like sewage and more flooding” – Young People Panel*
- *“Because they’re not performing well, like X said, it should be kept to the bespoke measure because that’s supposedly what the bespoke measures are for” – Young People Panel*

- *“I think if you’re not meeting the target then it definitely needs to be kept regardless, because I mean the target’s there for a reason, isn’t it?” – Young People Panel*
- *“Just because they’re not meeting the target, it’s quite important that we do work towards meeting it, especially because it’s quite an important topic as sewer blockages can lead onto other things. So, yes, I think there should be a focus on that” – Young People Panel*

Educating customers through campaigns was felt to be a way in which sewer blockages could be reduced.

- *“I think it’s to do with educating the customer as well. As you say, the whole ‘bin the wipes’ scheme and stuff like that. Maybe having even more advertising around what should go down the toilet and what shouldn’t” – Young People Panel*

The logo for 'explain' is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word 'explain' in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with a small square icon containing a white document symbol to its right. The logo is set against a white speech bubble background.

explain

The background of the slide is a photograph of two women sitting at a table, engaged in conversation. The woman on the right is in the foreground, looking towards the woman on the left. Both are smiling. The scene is dimly lit, with string lights visible in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

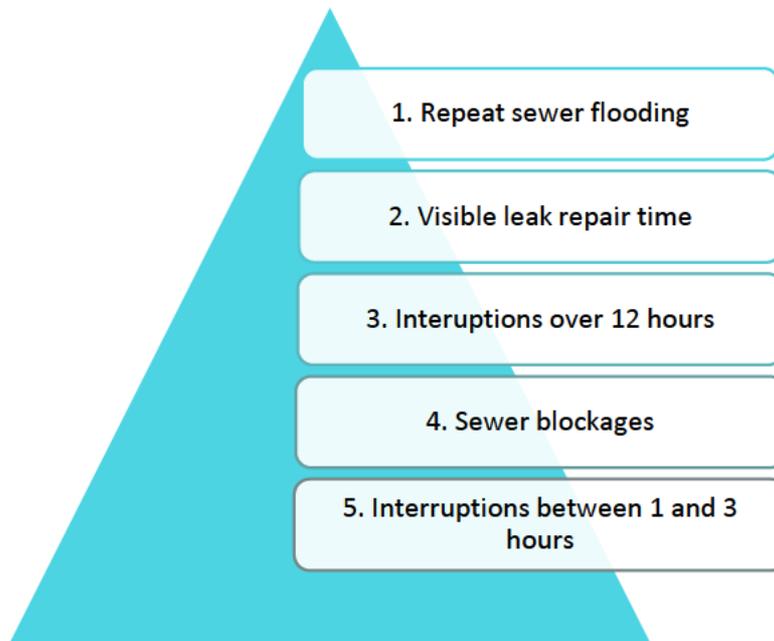
**“Research should never
be just for knowledge – it
should be for progress”**

Conclusions

A holistic review of the actionable insights.

Conclusions

The overall priority ranking for the potential bespoke measures are shown below.



Repeat sewer flooding (ranking 1st)

Across all panels there was a desire to see this remain as a bespoke measure, underpinning this was a recognition of the severity of the incident from a customer's perspective. For sewer flooding to happen once is awful, but for it to happen more than once in five year period was considered to be unimaginable.

Visible leak repair times (2nd)

It was considered important to keep this as a bespoke measure for two main reasons: (1) there was a concern that failure to address visible leaks in a timely manner would have a negative impact upon public perceptions of NWG; and (2) a recognition of water as vital, but limited, resource and a subsequent desire to minimise wastage.

Interruptions over 12 hours (3rd)

There were mixed views about whether interruptions over 12 hours should remain as a bespoke measure. Similarly to repeat sewer flooding, those in favour reflected the scale of the negative impact on customers to have their water supply interrupted for such a long period of time.

Conversely, those not in favour discussed not understanding why this measure needed to be distinct when interruptions over 3 hours were already being proposed as a common measure.

Sewer blockages (4th)

Views on this measure were largely that it should not be considered as a bespoke measure. Panellists felt that it was not fair to set financial penalties or rewards against a target that is solely based upon customer behaviour. However, some felt that this measure could not be entirely disregarded as it had previously been a bespoke measure.

Interruptions between one and three hours (5th)

There was an overarching sense amongst panellists that this measure was of little consequence in light of the proposed common measure of interruptions lasting 3 hours or over. There was also a sense that, if this remained as a bespoke measure, NWG are putting themselves at risk of financial penalties for an issue that was considered to be of lesser importance.

The logo for 'explain' is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word 'explain' in a lowercase, sans-serif font, with a small square icon containing a white 'e' positioned above the 'i'. The logo is set against a white speech bubble background.

explain

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a woman with long, wavy hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is sitting at a desk with a laptop in front of her. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color, which serves as a background for the text.

**“Quality is not an act; it is
a habit”**

Appendices

Supporting documentation can be found in this section.

Appendices

Appendix A: PowerPoint used

AGENDA

MODERATOR TIMINGS – 1.5 HOURS TOTAL 6.30 - 8PM

Bespoke Measures Session

- 6.30pm: Intro
- 6.35pm: What are performance measures
- 6.45pm: Common measures what are they
- 6.55pm: Bespoke measures what are they
- 7pm: The five potential bespoke measures (10 minutes max per breakout)
- 7.50pm: Poll
- 8pm: Close



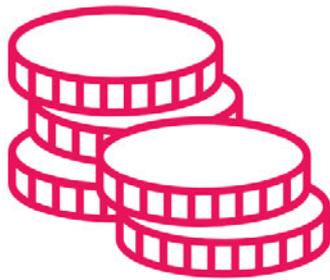
TODAY WE WILL...



1. Learn about the measures that Ofwat are introducing as performance indicators for the water industry
2. Understand the difference between common and bespoke measures
3. Understand the differences that Ofwat are proposing to these performance measures for the 2025-30 business planning period.
4. Understand whether you think Northumbrian Water should continue to report on their bespoke measures.

WHAT ARE PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN? BACKGROUND



- Within each business plan produced by water companies they include some performance measures.
- Against any of those performance measures companies have the potential opportunity to earn a reward for good performance. They also have the potential opportunity to earn a penalty for poor performance.
- These rewards and penalties will have an impact on customer bills.

5

WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN? BACKGROUND

- There are **two** different types of performance measure:

**Common
measures**

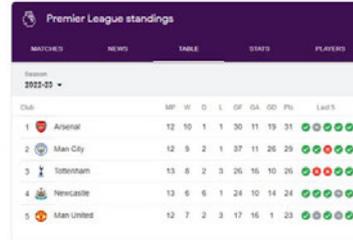
**Bespoke
measures**

6

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN?

WHAT ARE COMMON MEASURES?

- Ofwat has proposed that all water and wastewater companies **must include some common performance** measures in their business plan for 2025-30.
- Each water company will have to measure and report on their performance against each of the common performance measures.
- This will mean that companies' performance **can be compared** across the industry



Club	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	Qualif
1 Arsenal	12	10	1	1	30	11	19	31	●●●●●
2 Man City	12	9	2	1	27	11	16	28	●●●●●
3 Tottenham	13	8	2	3	26	16	10	26	●●●●●
4 Newcastle	13	6	6	1	24	10	14	24	●●●●●
5 Man United	12	7	2	3	17	16	1	23	●●●●●

7

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN?

WHAT ARE BESPOKE MEASURES?

- Unlike common measures, bespoke measures are not required by Ofwat.
- Bespoke measures are **performance measures that customers want** companies to measure within their plans. Each company may have different bespoke measures.
- It is very important to Northumbrian Water that any bespoke performance measures included in the next business plan are **wanted and supported** by our customers.



8

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN?

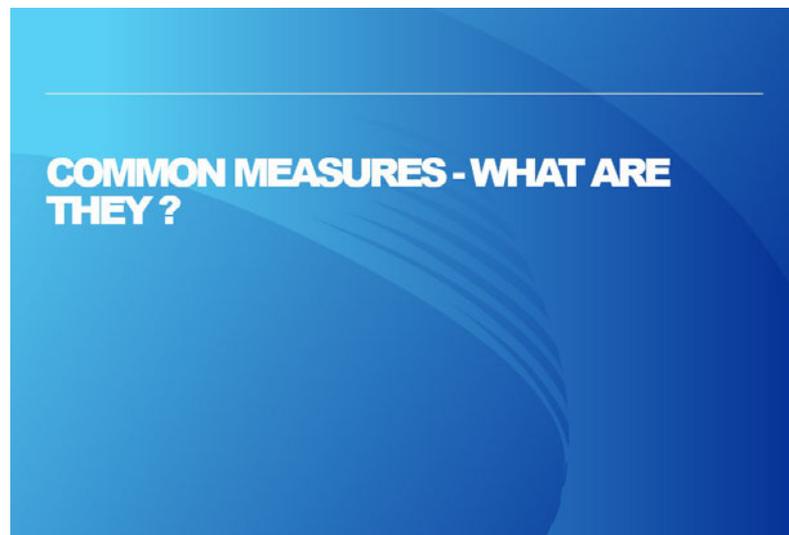
THE CHANGES IN THE 2025-2030 BUSINESS PLANNING PERIOD

- Ofwat has proposed that for the next business planning period water companies will need to report on more common performance measures than in previous years.
- Because of this, some of the **bespoke** measures that Northumbrian Water currently uses will be made common across the industry for 2025 to 2030.

Northumbrian Water have **five** bespoke performance measures that are not being made common. We would like your views on whether we should retain those five bespoke performance measures for 2025-30.



9



**WHAT ARE THE COMMON MEASURES?
1. CUSTOMER AND BUSINESS EXPERIENCE**



WHAT ARE THE COMMON MEASURES?
2. WATER SUPPLY INTERRUPTIONS



13

WHAT ARE THE COMMON MEASURES?
3. MEASURES OF WATER QUALITY



14

WHAT ARE THE COMMON MEASURES?
4. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SEWER FLOODING

Banstead man's home flooded with sewage from broken pipe

10th March 2020



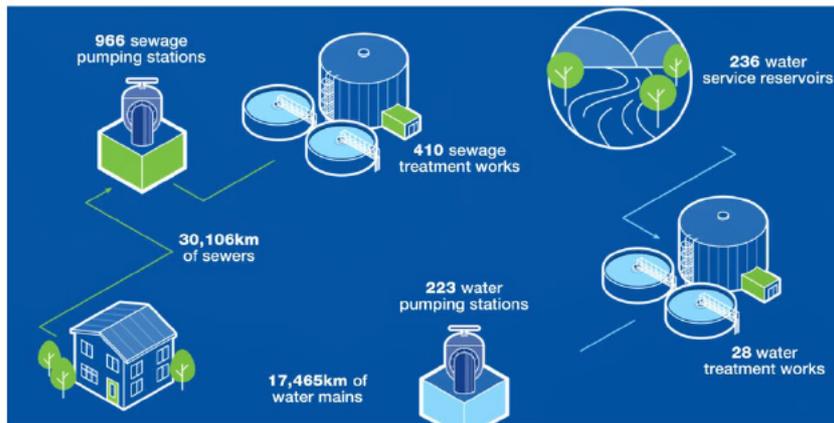
15

**WHAT ARE THE COMMON MEASURES?
5. ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES**



16

**WHAT ARE THE COMMON MEASURES?
6. ASSET HEALTH**



17



18

BESPOKE MEASURES- WHAT ARE THEY ?

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN? WHAT ARE BESPOKE MEASURES?

- Unlike common measures, bespoke measures are not required by Ofwat.
- Bespoke measures are **performance measures that customers want** companies to measure within their plans. Each company may have different bespoke measures.
- It is very important to Northumbrian Water that any bespoke performance measures included in the next business plan are **wanted and supported** by our customers.



20

WHAT ARE THE MEASURES IN THE BUSINESS PLAN? WHAT ARE BESPOKE MEASURES?

Ofwat have said that there are **two conditions** for a bespoke measure to be agreed

It concerns an issue of local importance
OR
A company is performing poorly on an issue which may not be a concern for other water companies.

21

LET'S PAUSE FOR QUESTIONS

22

TELL US...

- ✓ What do you think about bespoke performance measures?
- ✓ Should Northumbrian Water include them in the next business plan?

23

THE FIVE POTENTIAL BESPOKE MEASURES

THE BESPOKE MEASURES THAT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER CURRENTLY REPORT ON

1. REPEAT SEWER FLOODING

- This is when a customer's property floods **more than once** in a five year period



Ofwat has proposed that internal and external sewer flooding incidents be reported as common performance indicators.

- Northumbrian Water have **performed well** against this measure. In 2020-21 they reported 25 repeats (their target was 46). In 2021-22 this figure was 23 (target was 44).

25

DISCUSS...

- ✓ **Do you think Northumbrian Water should continue to have repeat sewer flooding as a bespoke measure?**
- ✓ **Why?**
- ✓ **Does Northumbrian Water's performance against this measure change the way you think?**
- ✓ **Should Northumbrian Water have financial rewards and penalties placed against them for this measure?**

26

THE BESPOKE MEASURES THAT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER CURRENTLY REPORT ON

2. SEWER BLOCKAGES

- This is the **number of blockages** cleared each year due to debris in sewers.



Ofwat is not proposing to record any similar measures in their common measures

- Currently, Northumbrian Water are **not meeting** their targets for this measure. There were 11,991 blockages in 2021-22 (target 11,379).

27

DISCUSS...

- ✓ Do you think Northumbrian Water should continue to have sewer blockages as a bespoke measure?
- ✓ Why?
- ✓ Does Northumbrian Water's performance against this measure change the way you think?
- ✓ Should Northumbrian Water have financial rewards and penalties placed against them for this measure?

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THE BESPOKE MEASURES THAT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER CURRENTLY REPORT ON

3. VISIBLE LEAK REPAIR TIME

This is the average time it take to fix a leak reported by customers.



Ofwat include the amount of water lost through leaks and the number of pipes that burst causing a leak in their proposed common measures.

Northumbrian Water have performed well against their targets.

2020-21	2021-2022	2022-2023	2024-2025
10 days target	8 days target	6 days target	4 days target
9.7 days achieved	6.7 days achieved		

29

DISCUSS...

- ✓ Do you think Northumbrian Water should continue to have visible leak repair time as a bespoke measure?
- ✓ Why?
- ✓ Does Northumbrian Water's performance against this measure change the way you think?
- ✓ Should Northumbrian Water have financial rewards and penalties placed against them for this measure?

30

THE BESPOKE MEASURES THAT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER CURRENTLY REPORT ON

4. INTERRUPTIONS TO SUPPLY LASTING OVER 12 HOURS

This is the number of properties that have an interruption to their water supply that lasts **over 12 hours**.



Ofwat are proposing to include interruptions lasting three hours within the common measures

In 2020-21 Northumbrian water **performed well** against this target, with 143 properties impacted (target 500).

Storm Arwen has impacted figures for 2021 – 22 and these are currently being finalised with Ofwat.

31

DISCUSS...

- ✓ **Do you think Northumbrian Water should continue to have interruptions lasting over 12 hours as a bespoke measure?**
- ✓ **Why?**
- ✓ **Does Northumbrian Water's performance against this measure change the way you think?**
- ✓ **Should Northumbrian Water have financial rewards and penalties placed against them for this measure?**

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THE BESPOKE MEASURES THAT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER CURRENTLY REPORT ON

5. INTERRUPTIONS TO SUPPLY LASTING BETWEEN 1 AND 3 HOURS

This is the average number of minutes a property is without water when the interruption lasts between **1 and 3 hours**.



Ofwat are proposing to include interruptions lasting three hours within the common measures

In 2020-21 Northumbrian water **performed well** against this target, achieving 7 minutes 39 seconds (target 8 minutes 4 seconds)

33

DISCUSS...

- ✓ Do you think Northumbrian Water should continue to have interruptions lasting between 1 and 3 hours as a bespoke measure?
- ✓ Why?
- ✓ Does Northumbrian Water's performance against this measure change the way you think?
- ✓ Should Northumbrian Water have financial rewards and penalties placed against them for this measure?

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THE BESPOKE MEASURES THAT NORTHUMBRIAN WATER CURRENTLY REPORT ON

PREFERENCE OF BESPOKE MEASURES

Repeat sewer flooding

Sewer blockages

Visible leak repair time

Interruptions over 12 hours

Interruptions between 1 and 3 hours

35

VOTE AND DISCUSS...

- ✓ Please vote to tell us your preference for which bespoke measures Northumbrian Water should continue to measure in the next business planning period.
- ✓ Please remember you can vote for 'none at all'.
- ✓ Let's discuss....

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WHAT'S NEXT?
LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT SESSION

- In the next session, we will be looking at business planning options and which you find the most acceptable.
- We'll be in touch about the next session which will take place Monday 5th December.

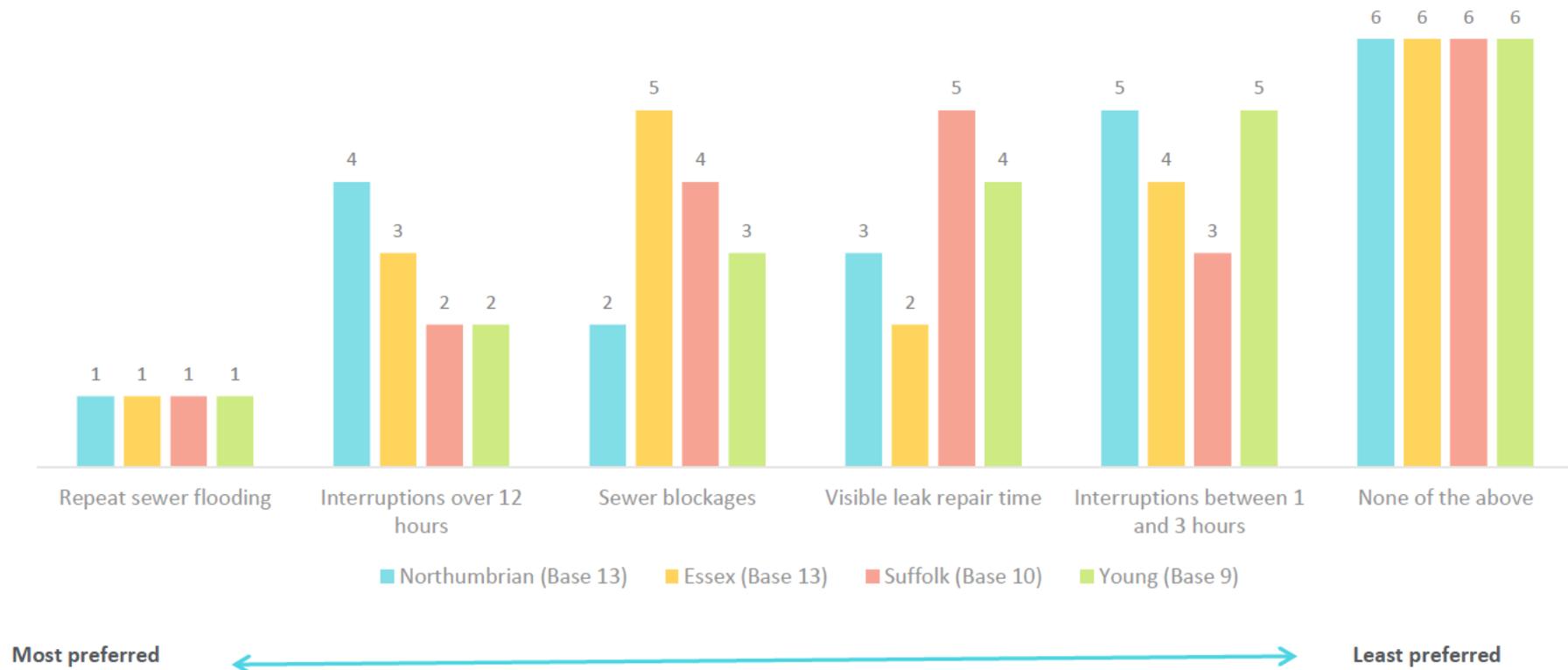


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THANK YOU

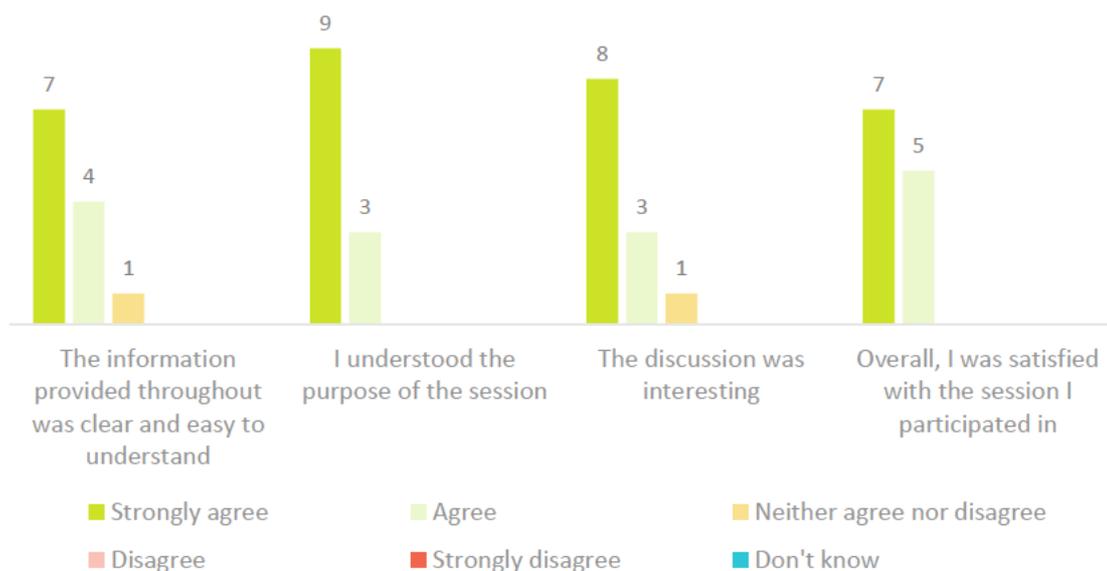
Appendix B: Poll results

Please rank your preference of which bespoke measures you think Northumbrian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water should continue to measure in the next business planning period, on a scale where 1 is your most preferred and 6 is your least preferred (Base 45)

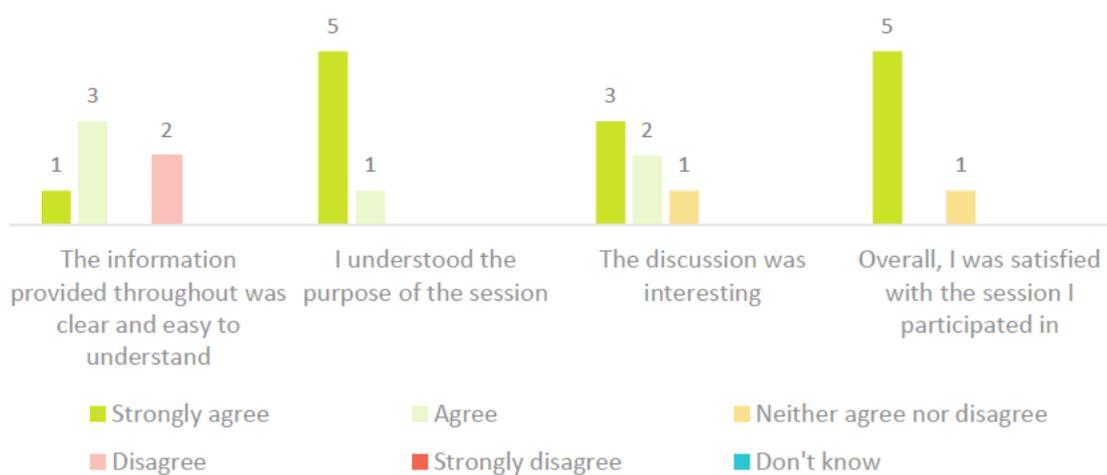


Appendix C: Event feedback

Closing poll results for Essex People Panel (Base 12)



Closing poll results for Young People Panel (Base 6)





Report Author: [REDACTED]

Report check: [REDACTED]