

Encouraging sustainable water use in the home

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We understand where people are now

- High concern that we face an environmental disaster without change
- More than half are doing at least two things to help the environment
- Similar number are willing to do a bit more
- Challenge to engage on the 'why' we need to act to use less water
 - Vast majority agree that we should all save water regardless of the weather yet significant barrier to individual action remains lack of belief that we need to act
- Positive shifts in those claiming they are cutting their water use
 - Two thirds now say they pay attention to the amount of water they use and are cutting their water use though half of these report this is 'sometimes' or less often
 - Increase from half in 2007 - still less than for energy use; still 20% who 'do not want to/have not thought about' cutting down

What would we like people to do?

Defra's headline behaviour goals

Personal Transport

- Use more efficient vehicles
- Use car less for short trips
- Avoid unnecessary flights (short haul)

Homes: waste

- Increase recycling
- Waste less (food)

Homes: energy

- Install insulation
- Better energy management
- Install microgeneration

Homes: water

- More responsible water usage

Eco-products

- Buy energy efficient products
- Eat more food that is locally in season
- Adopt lower impact diet

People tell us how they use water

- About two-thirds claim they undertake regular behaviours to use less water e.g. turning the tap off when cleaning teeth
- Low levels report one-off installations
 - More than half say they 'don't want to/haven't heard of' water-displacement devices (55%) or aerated showers (65%) and one third of gardeners are using a water butt
- 'Good' behaviour is buying appliances with a good energy rating
 - People believe that water efficiency standards on products should be norm
 - Water efficiency not a key factor in choosing a product (brand, price etc)
- Showering is time efficient (and believed to be more water efficient) – power showers are aspirational
- People use products in different ways (e.g. frequency of use) and behaviours meet different needs (e.g. relaxation, cleanliness)

We know why people are acting and why they are not – the sustainable behaviours unit evidence shows...

What others are doing is key

- **Fairness** is key - 'I will if you will'
 - People learn from each other - **peer to peer learning**
 - People follow the **social norm** - the environmental norm is recycling so this can be a barrier to more action
 - People need to see **exemplification** - Government and business should act first (yet some mistrust of their motivations)
 - People make (sometimes wrong) **assumptions** about modern products and levels of **choice-editing**
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Sense of making a difference matters

- People desire **feedback** on progress and validation
 - People are **sceptical** about the problem, causes, and value of individual or collective action
 - There is a **disconnect** between the small actions and the big issue
 - Understanding the science of climate change is not a prerequisite for action
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What's in it for me is important

- People are **more concerned by loss (costs) than gain** – focus on what you'll lose by inaction rather than what you will save by acting
- The **feel-good factor** and avoiding feeling guilty
- **Lifestyle fit** – people don't really want to change their lives
- Fit with **self identity and status** (including if behaviours are visible to others)
- **Ability to act** – e.g. access to infrastructure, limitations in rented properties

People tell us how they use water and why they don't use less water



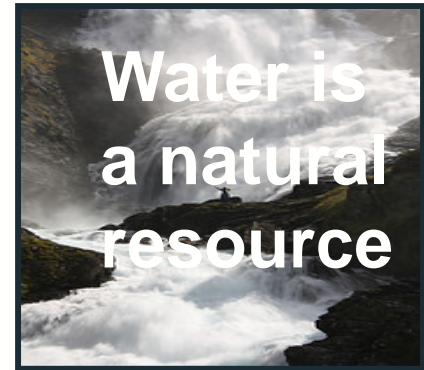
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It never rains it pours

'No hosepipe ban for 3 years – there's no problem'

On hot water
'You don't think of using water as producing that amount of CO2'..



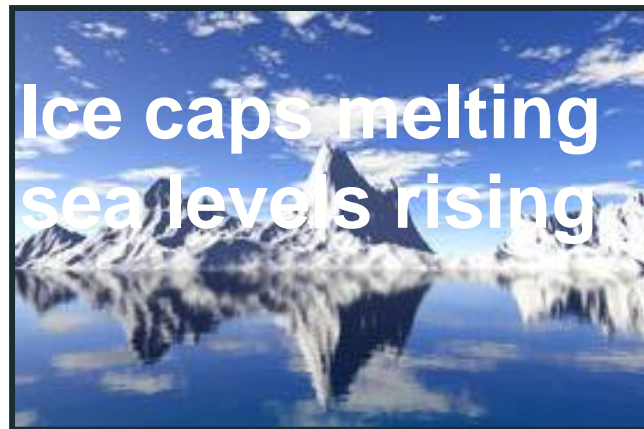
Water is a natural resource

'Water goes round in a big circle – you can't waste it'



UK is an island surrounded by water

'Bathing is me-time – I do other things to help the environment'



Ice caps melting sea levels rising

'We have more water as the ice-caps are melting'

'..You just leave it on a trickle... It's just going down your overflow, but coming out of the tap, so you don't go cold and warm up'...

What's most key for encouraging sustainable water use - evidence shows...

What others are doing is key

- For many it's a global issue not a local issue
- People feel their effort would be outweighed by others
- No environmental norms to use less water
- Need to recognise cultural cues and there's a lack of visible behaviours
- Work with drivers for water use and build new norms e.g washing behaviour is determined by a combination of bathroom infrastructure, pleasure and identity, and people's lifestyle

Sense of making a difference matters

- Building a sense of why we need to act
 - Surprise about how much water we each use
- No one over-riding motivation for using less water – need to use a mix
 - Concern about the environment or sense of guilt alone is not sufficient to motivate action. Saving money is also not a key motivator for most, though it has a role where metered participants had the highest priced water
- Recognise why people undertake the behaviours and the personal impact e.g. bathing can be 'me-time', showering can be about cleanliness or waking up

What's in it for me is important

We identify best practice principles for delivering change



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No single solution

- Need a **package of interventions** – integrating policy and communications interventions
 - Packages of interventions need to address core motivations and barriers
 - Need **different interventions for different segments or population groups**
 - Securing behavioural change is not a single event, **it's a long term process**
 - It's difficult to predict effective behaviour change interventions, **we need to take risks and pilot**
 - **Increase choice editing (removing the worst offending products) and choice offering (making choice possible)**
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We will if you will

- Be clear on the **role for government, business and individuals** (the triangle of change) and take an **holistic approach across people's lifestyles**
 - Interventions are more successful when **delivery partners work together from the beginning**
 - Work with **trusted intermediaries** – third sector, business, membership organisations, communities
 - Use individuals and organisations to **reach the 'influencers'**
 - **Ensure the infrastructure is in place** – facilities available, accessible and promoted
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Know your audience

- **Start where people are** – know your audience, segment, tailor and target
- Work with what we know motivates different groups –eg. go beyond environmental concern and saving money to wastefulness, fit with identities; use supportive trends and non-environmental motivations
- Develop **different approaches** for habits and choices
- **Understand and address barriers** – make sure people have the ability to act

What does this mean for possible approaches?



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No single
solution

- **Cross sector collaboration has genuine benefits**
- Package of interventions needs to **address product availability, tools to enable change** and communications, and develop different approaches to engage different groups
- **Choice editing vs choice offering** - Recognise where the focus is on product design and availability and advising intermediaries vs enabling the most engaged to make better choices
- Work with **trusted intermediaries** and use individuals and organisations to **reach the 'influencers'**
- Make more behaviours visible e.g. demonstration projects in workplace, tools to show action

We will if
you will

- **Build engagement and understanding of the wider issues** around water shortages and increased demand and set this in the context of why other methods are inappropriate, e.g. desalination due to resources and cost
- **Ensure people have the ability to act** - products and tools available, accessible and promoted

Know
your
audience

- **Start where people are** and focus on a combination of 'why people need to save water', 'what people can do to save what', and 'how to do it'.
- **Understand why** people undertake behaviours – you can waste or save water when you leave your tap on when cleaning your teeth, not when you are having a relaxing bath
- **Don't rely only on environmental concern or saving money** - use a mix including wastefulness, fit with identities, others acting, providing feedback and be positive

Find out more...

www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/social/behaviour/