

## **WATER AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE E-BULLETIN**

Brought to you by Waterwise and Kathryn Rathouse Social Research, October 20, 2009

We're very sorry for the long break between this issue of the e-Bulletin and our previous one. Summer holidays rolled into September and then there was so much catching up to do! Lots of reports in this issue, plus a couple of events:

### 1. Survey of attitudes and behaviours towards the environment

The 2009 survey gives a representative picture of what people in England think and how they behave across a range of issues relevant to the environment including energy and water use in the home, purchasing behaviours and volunteering behaviours.

With regard to water, compared to two years ago, more people said that they paid attention to the amount of water used in the home; however, cutting down on the use of hot water tended to be a less frequent behaviour compared to other energy saving behaviours. One-off behaviours were not common. Only a third of respondents had installed a water butt, and only 13 percent were using a water displacement device. Almost no one - just 3 percent - had an aerated shower. While a small proportion were contemplating installing each of these items, overall people were much more likely to have rejected the idea.

The survey follows from previous environmental surveys run by Defra and its predecessors in 1986, 1989, 1993, 1996-7, 2001 and 2007. The 2009 survey was commissioned jointly by Defra and the Energy Saving Trust and consisted of 2,009 face to face interviews in people's homes during the spring. Additional questions were included in an omnibus survey consisting of 1,772 face to face interviews. Both the main survey and omnibus survey were administered under contract by TNS Global Market Research. The full report and associated releases are at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/statistics/environment/pubatt/index.htm>.

### 2. Public understanding of sustainable water use in the home

Last winter Defra commissioned Synovate to undertake a qualitative study on public understanding of sustainable water use in the home. Among the specific research objectives were to explore aspirations around water consumption and water using products as well as perceptions around unlimited vs. efficient use. The research was designed to provide evidence to inform future policy development to encourage more sustainable water consumption.

Results from the focus groups reinforce that there continues to be limited awareness of water scarcity and the environmental implications of water usage, and that motivations behind basic practised water efficient behaviours are more likely to be lifestyle driven rather than water saving driven. The study also found that focusing on the volumes of water wasted in simple tasks can provide immediate motivation for some respondents and that the overall desire to avoid waste and wastefulness is a powerful motivator; however, a greater level of willingness to change is expressed when participants are aware of the context in which such wastage is situated.

Among its recommendations is the need to build engagement and understanding of wider issues around water shortages and increasing demand supported by more information about potential wider benefits. People also need to see their own changes reproduced on a large scale, backed up by visible government and water company action.

The report is available at

[http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=EV0503\\_8291\\_FRP.pdf](http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=EV0503_8291_FRP.pdf).

### 3. Real time energy displays

Research on consumer responses to real time energy displays, carried out by the Centre for Sustainable Energy for the Energy Saving Trust, might yield some valuable lessons for smart water meters. The report is available at [http://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/1422?utm\\_source=CSE+e-news&utm\\_campaign=d149c37429-CSE\\_enews\\_october\\_2009&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/1422?utm_source=CSE+e-news&utm_campaign=d149c37429-CSE_enews_october_2009&utm_medium=email).

#### 4. Living with water poverty

*Living with Water Poverty* explores what it is like for consumers who are living with water poverty. The research was carried out by Creative Research for CCWater in order to develop their affordability campaign. The report is at [www.ccwater.org.uk/upload/doc/Report - Living with Water Poverty FINAL.doc](http://www.ccwater.org.uk/upload/doc/Report_Living_with_Water_Poverty_FINAL.doc).

#### 5. Impact of household water metering in South East England

This report presents an analysis of the affordability impacts in South East England if metering were to increase to 50 percent, 60 percent or 90 percent by 2014/15. Modelling of alternative metered tariff structures including zero standing charges, rising block tariffs, seasonal tariffs and a metered tariff based on property values was also undertaken. The study focused on pensioner households, single parent families and households with 3 or more children.

It was found that with more widespread metering some households will have lower water bills and some higher bills. In general, there will be more households with lower bills than higher bills. For the lowest income households there is evidence of an improvement in water charge affordability under the 50 percent and 60 percent metering scenarios, with these improvements concentrated in smaller size households like pensioners. Only under the 90 percent metering scenario is there evidence that water charge affordability will worsen overall and this is concentrated in categories such as single parent households and households with three or more children.

This was a collaborative project between the EA and the GLA. The full report is available at <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO0709BQSO-e-e.pdf>.

#### 6. High water consumption and perceptions of personal cleanliness

Cathy Riley at Resource Futures is looking for research on the link between high water consumption and perceptions of cleanliness. If you know of anything relevant, please email Cathy ([Cathy.Riley@resourcefutures.co.uk](mailto:Cathy.Riley@resourcefutures.co.uk)) and copy us in. Thanks.

#### 7. Water wise training for housing associations and related organisations

Waterwise East (contact Clare Watters at [cwatters@waterwise.org.uk](mailto:cwatters@waterwise.org.uk)) is holding a free day of training for housing associations, developers, consultants and others involved in the development of social housing in the East of England. Issues to be covered include meeting higher levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes, dealing with residents' complaints and encouraging unmetered residents to save water. The event will be on November 16 in Cambridge.

#### 8. Innovation in water efficiency

This Waterwise technical symposium will feature several speakers covering innovation in engaging consumers, product design, water efficiency labelling and intelligent metering. This event is being supported by UCL; tickets are £75 +VAT. Go to <http://www.waterwise.org.uk/images/site/invite%20to%20waterwise%20technical%20symposium%20on%20innovation%20and%20water%20efficiency.pdf> for more info.

The purpose of this e-Bulletin is to share research and other activities related to water and behavioural change. We hope that the e-Bulletin will be interactive; we ask that subscribers email us with news, announcements, events, requests for information, opportunities for collaboration and other information that we will include in future W&BC e-Bulletins. We release about two e-Bulletins per month.

Best wishes,  
Joanne and Kathryn