



Water saving comms research: Report

July 2020

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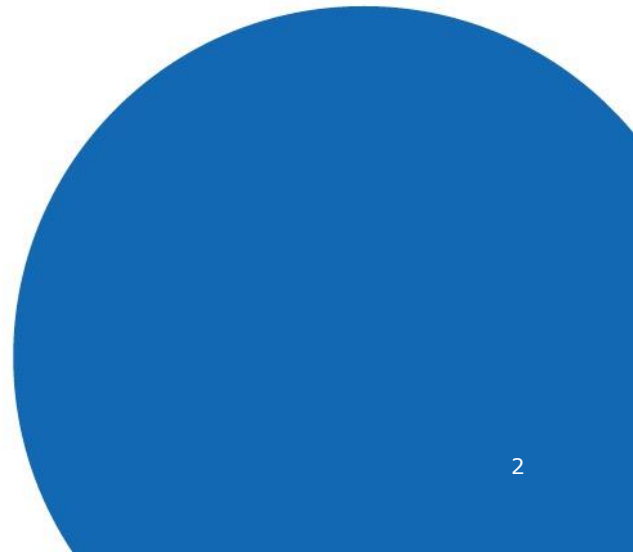
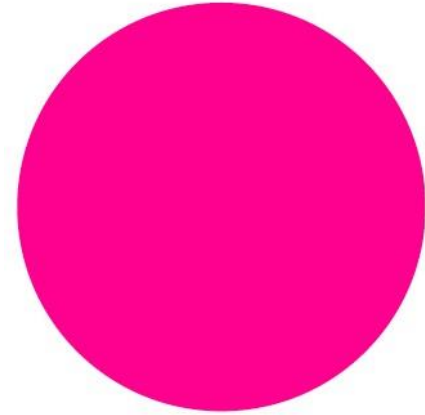
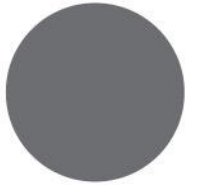
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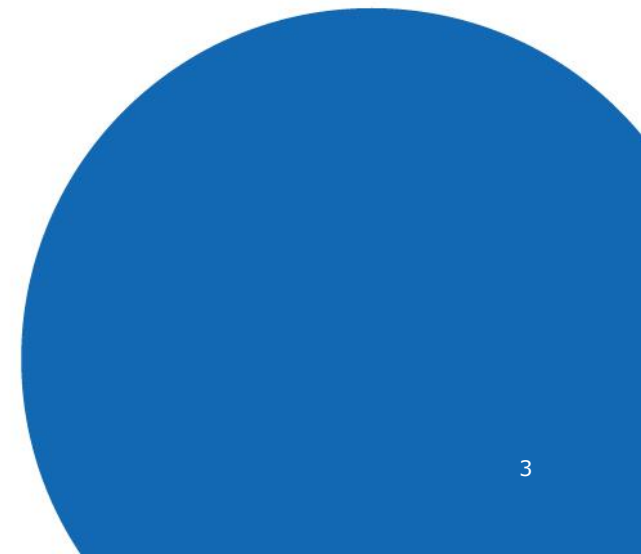
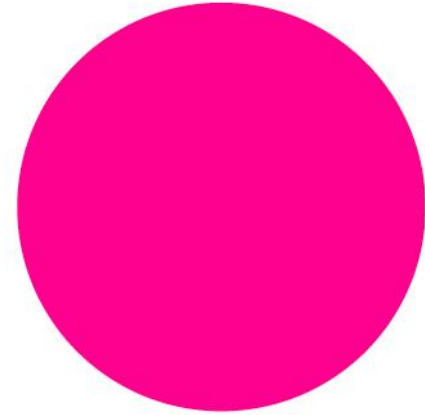
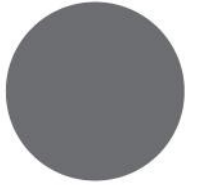
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Background & objectives



Background

United Utilities Water Limited (UUWL) provide water and wastewater services to around seven million people and businesses in the North West of England.

The North West has some of the highest levels of rainfall in the country, however, it is in everyone's interest to save water, whether this is to save money or to save the environment e.g. through reducing the amount of energy required to treat water. Linked to this is one of UU's performance commitments for AMP7 which is to reduce customer water usage by over 3% by the end of the AMP.

With much of the nation having to 'stay at home' due to the Coronavirus, there has been an increase in household water usage since the end of March. On top of this, we have experienced a very dry Spring. This led to UU emailing customers on 29th May with the strapline **Keeping the taps flowing and the loos flushing**. The email asked customers to reduce their water usage.

There were also reports on the local and national news about water shortages around this time.

Less than 2 weeks later (w/c 8th June) the Comms team at UU launched 2 campaigns in Stockport and Blackburn aimed at reducing household water usage.

The Comms team wanted to test the impact of a community based approach in Blackburn versus a direct individual comms approach in Stockport.

More detailed objectives are provided over the page.



Objectives

Research was commissioned to test the effectiveness of the differing comms approaches.

In particular, the Comms team was keen to measure the following:

- What are current attitudes around saving water?
- Awareness / recall of each piece of comms
- Recall of message –unprompted / prompted
- Effect of message on attitude (and marry up to actual measured behaviour)
- Attitudinal priorities e.g. financial position/ priorities, community mindedness, environmental engagement.
- Which “nudge” works best?

The campaign adopted two approaches:

- Direct messaging in the form of emails and a text message in a predetermined area of **Stockport**



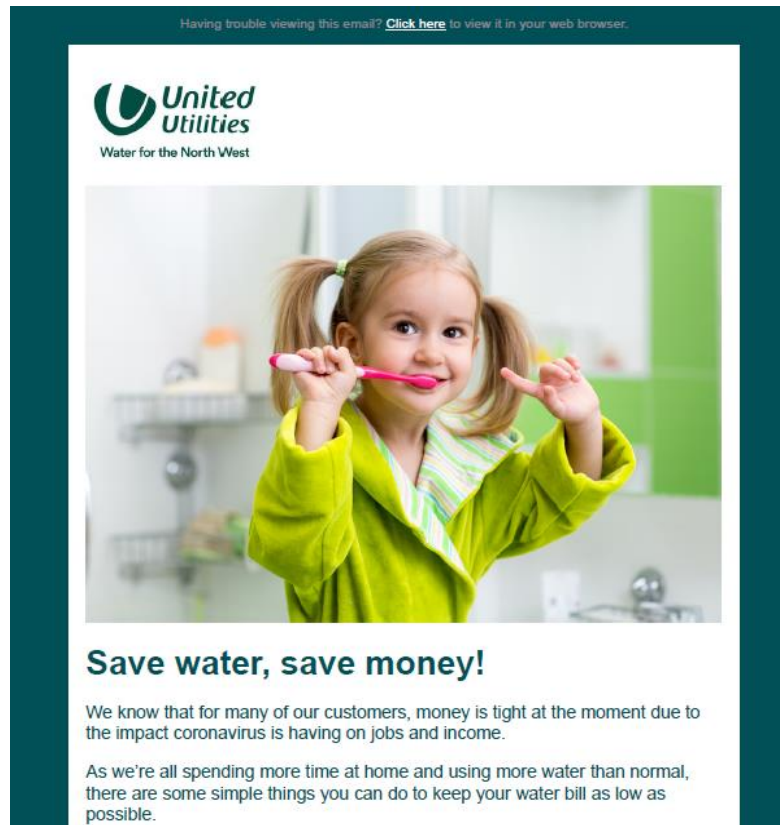
- A community based approach with messaging primarily via social media channels in **Blackburn**, including a charity pledge to East Lancs Hospice



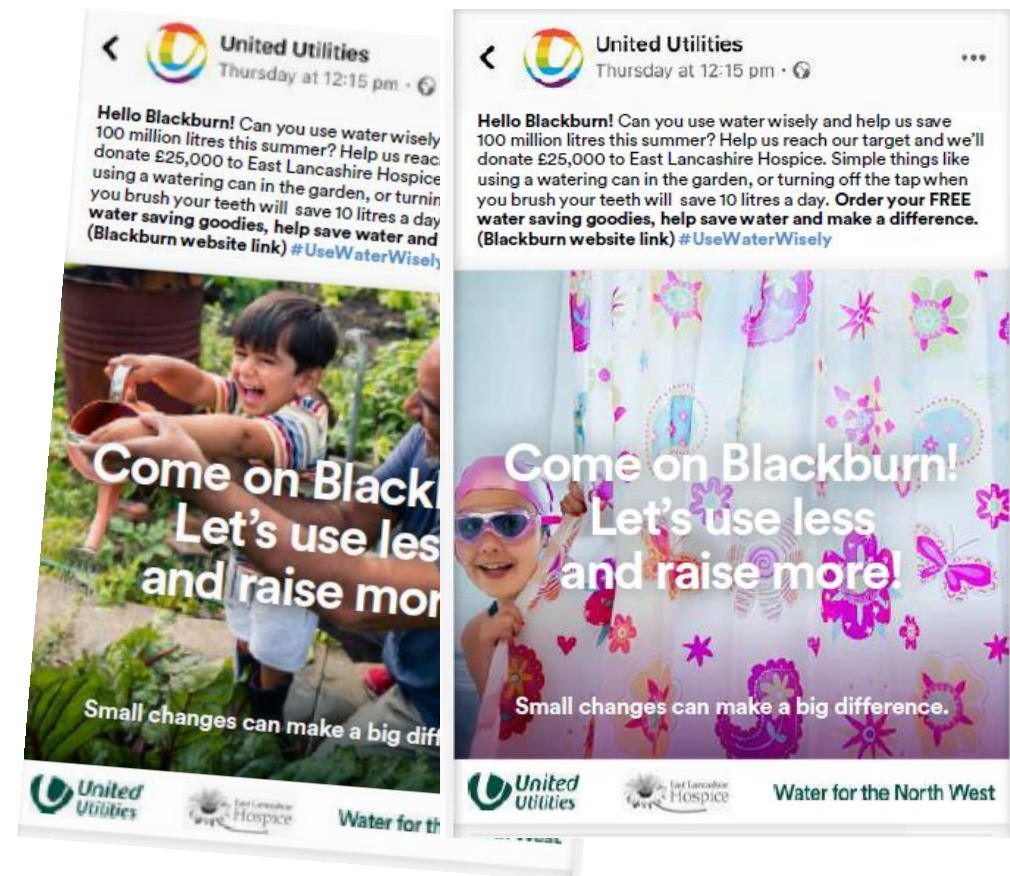
Campaign assets

Trial areas were selected in Stockport and Blackburn.

The **Stockport** campaign involved direct communication via **email and text message**:



In **Blackburn** a community based **social media** campaign was run:





Methodology

Surveys were set up in the two trial areas of Stockport and Blackburn, with a control set for each in other parts of Stockport and Bolton respectively. The surveys were captured via an online survey and a CATI telephone boost.

	Stockport Trial	Stockport Control	Blackburn Trial	Bolton Control
CATI	159	150	150	146
Online	202	578	221	103
Total	361	728	371	249

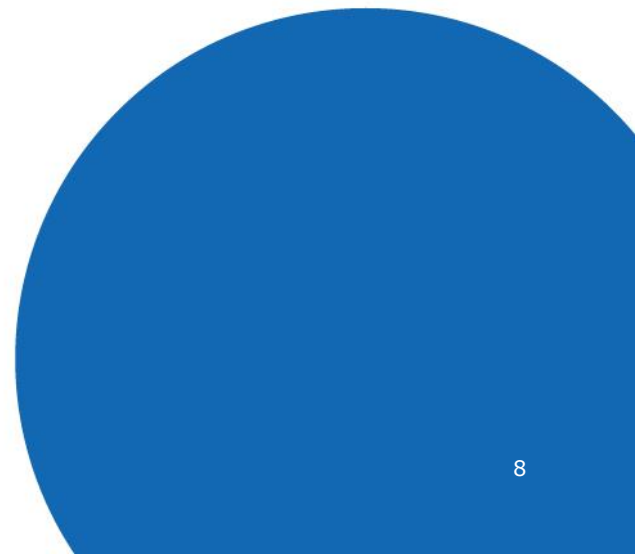
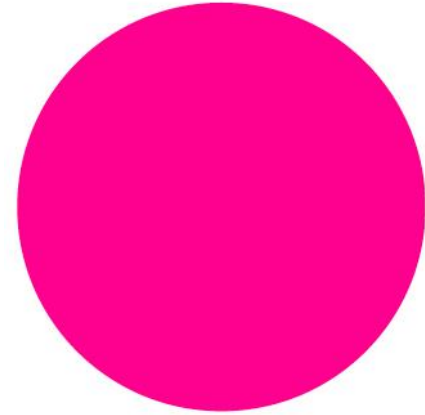
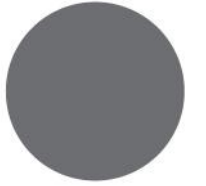
Survey:

The surveys ran from the 9th – 28th June.

Weighting:

In order to ensure that the control samples were matched to the trial samples, weighting was applied using CACI segment. Proportions of each segment in the samples can be found in the 'sample profile' section.

Sample profile



Sample profile



Age

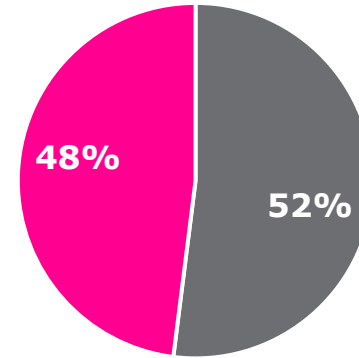
	Stockport Trial	Stockport Control	Blackburn Trial	Bolton Control
18-24	-	-	4%	2%
25-34	6%	1%	16%	9%
35-44	11%	6%	15%	13%
45-54	17%	17%	18%	17%
55-64	20%	27%	19%	28%
65+	47%	49%	29%	32%

CACI Segment

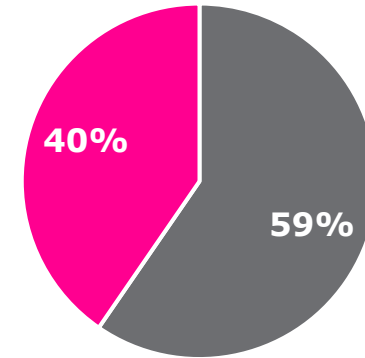
	Stockport Trial	Stockport Control	Blackburn Trial	Bolton Control
A	19%		24%	
B	1%		3%	
C	6%		11%	
D	34%		12%	
E	25%		10%	
F	2%		14%	
G	3%		9%	
H	4%		8%	
Unknown	6%		9%	

Gender

Stockport Trial



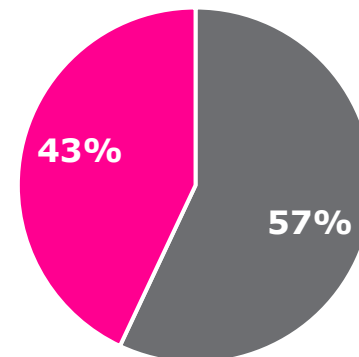
Stockport Control



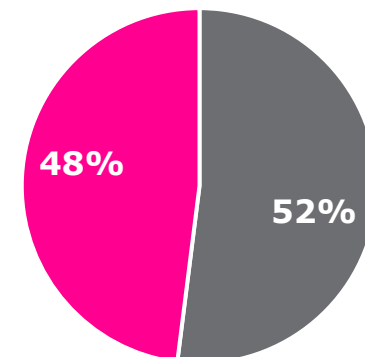
■ Male

■ Female

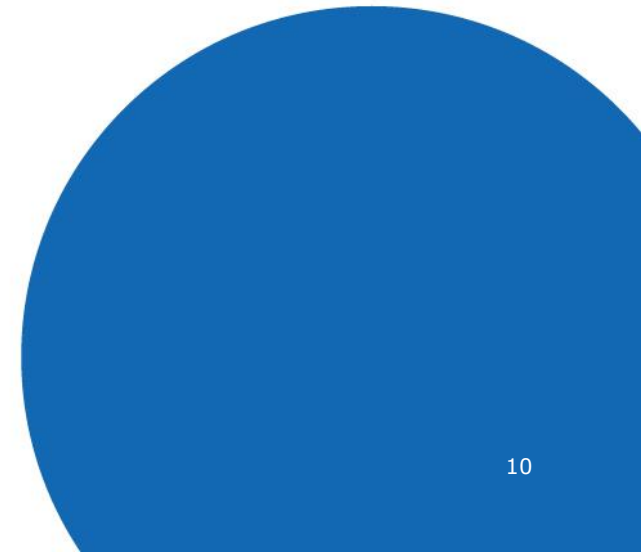
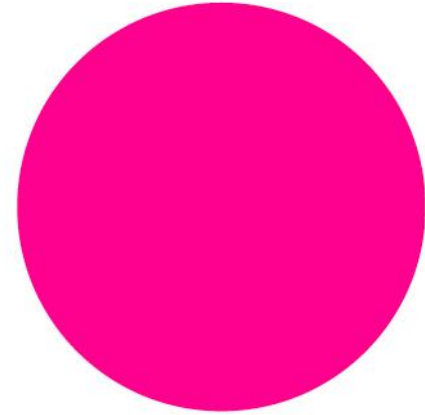
Blackburn Trial



Bolton Control



Direct campaign – Stockport



Campaign overview

- Email and text campaign sent out to metered customers in an area of Stockport
- Customers without email were sent text message
- An email message followed with a reminder to those who hadn't opened
- Another email had previously gone out to all customers (scope for misattribution of campaign – mediated by prompted questioning on campaign assets)

Copy of general email



Keeping the taps flowing and the loos flushing.

It's a challenging time for everyone right now and we are all focused on looking after ourselves, our loved ones and our communities.

Life for everyone has changed so much and, as we enter the 10th week in lock down, the way we are using water has changed a lot too. Many families are now at home all week and water plays a critical role in combating Coronavirus through more hand washing and cleaning. Along with the hot dry weather and the use of water in gardens, we are using far more water than normal.

Copy of campaign email

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#) to view it in your web browser.

Save water, save money!

We've been enjoying some wonderful weather recently which is a good thing during these challenging times. Since the COVID-19 outbreak and government advice around social distancing, we're all spending more time at home which

Attitudes towards water saving across the trial and control areas are consistent



The profile of those who have been actively saving water for 'many years' are those that are:

- 55 or over (64%)
- More likely to have seen and absorbed messaging from UU (72% who have seen or heard something from UU regarding water saving)

Those on lower incomes (<£19,999 a year) are more likely to have been actively saving for years than those on higher incomes (>£50,000 a year) – 60% vs. 46%.(Trial Area)

Both samples are again closely matched in terms of their behaviour and attitudes when it comes to water usage

To what extent do you agree with the following?	Trial		Control	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
I would change my behaviour towards saving water if I knew how much money I could save	59%	18%	59%	20%
I am concerned about water shortages and the prospect of hosepipe bans in the summer	68%	15%	71%	12%
I would be more likely to try and save more water if I knew others were doing it	36%	41%	36%	37%
It requires too much effort to save water	6%	85%	6%	85%
I'd worry about hygiene if I cut down my water usage	27%	55%	28%	56%
I pay for it so I am entitled to use as much water as I want	15%	72%	12%	73%
I would change my behaviour if I knew more about what my water company was doing to save water	53%	22%	53%	19%
I'm unwilling to reduce the amount of water I use on my garden	23%	55%	22%	61%
I can't reduce my water usage because me or someone else in my household relies on it for medical reasons	7%	78%	9%	77%
I think it's important to save water where possible to help the environment	92%	5%	93%	4%

Base: Q01B. Below are a number of statements which we would like to know the extent to which you agree with each one (Trial 368 - exc not sure)

Some attitudes are more common amongst certain segments

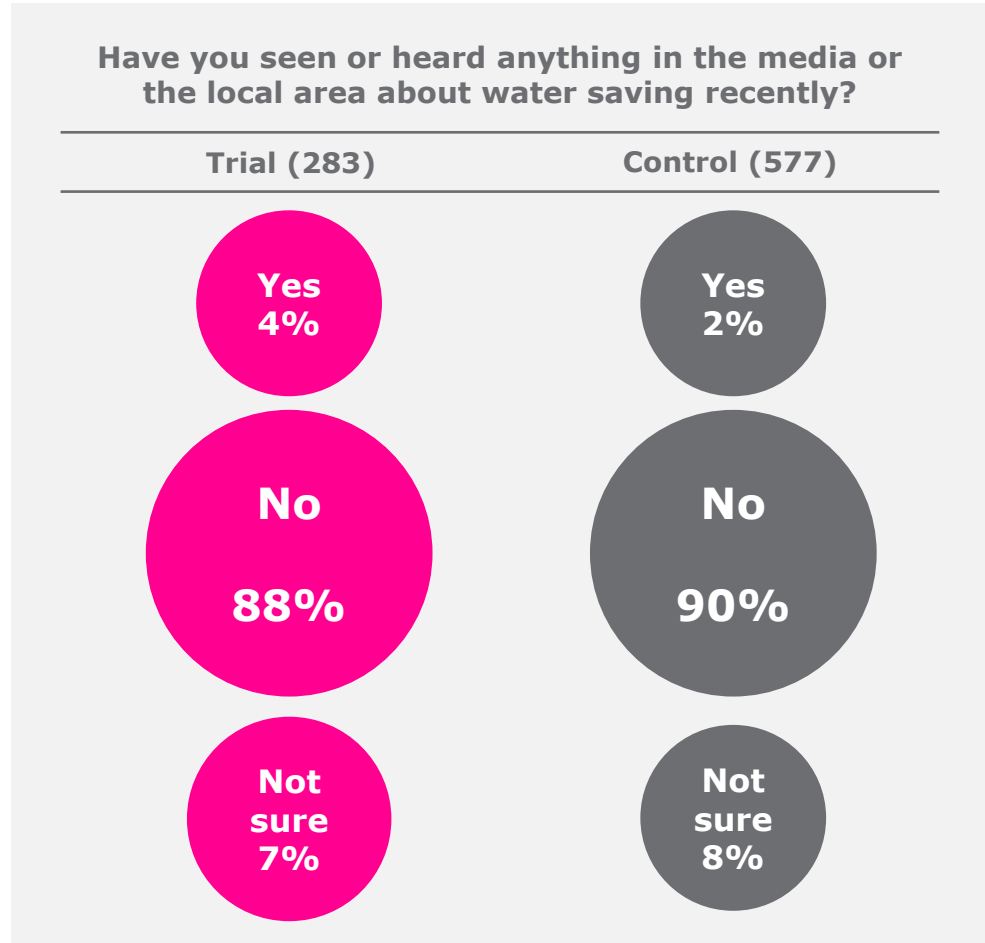


To what extent do you agree with the following?	Trial % Agree	CACI segment % Agree
I would change my behaviour towards saving water if I knew how much money I could save	59%	Budget Conscious Elderly (68%)
I am concerned about water shortages and the prospect of hosepipe bans in the summer	68%	Financially Secure Empty Nesters (75%)
I would be more likely to try and save more water if I knew others were doing it	36%	-
It requires too much effort to save water	6%	-
I'd worry about hygiene if I cut down my water usage	27%	-
I pay for it so I am entitled to use as much water as I want	15%	-
I would change my behaviour if I knew more about what my water company was doing to save water	53%	Families Getting By (85%)
I'm unwilling to reduce the amount of water I use on my garden	23%	-
I can't reduce my water usage because me or someone else in my household relies on it for medical reasons	7%	-
I think it's important to save water where possible to help the environment	92%	-

Base: Q01B. Below are a number of statements which we would like to know the extent to which you agree with each one (Trial 368 - exc not sure)



A minority spontaneously recalled something about water saving



Most comments referred to local news programmes mentioning water shortages due to lower rainfall:

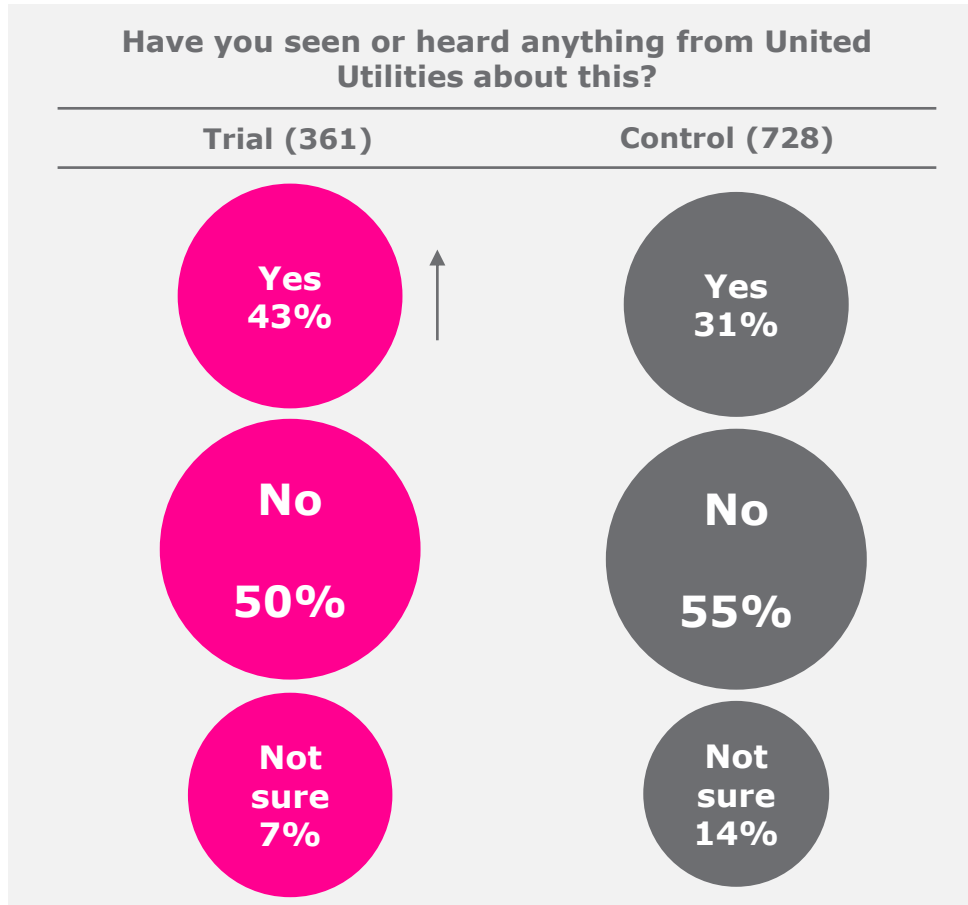
"Article in news about rainfall shortage."

"Reports of water shortages on TV."

Some also spontaneously referred to an email received from UU regarding water saving:

"Info received from UU about increased usage due Covid-19 causing shortages and encouraging saving water."

When prompted on comms from UU, 43% of the trial sample recalled seeing something



When looking at those who received the email versus the text, it is those who received the email that were most likely to state they had seen something from UU (54%) than those who received the text only (27%).

Initially the campaign appears to have reached customers from all segments, however, it has had most exposure to customers aged 45 or over (46%) versus those under 45 (31%)

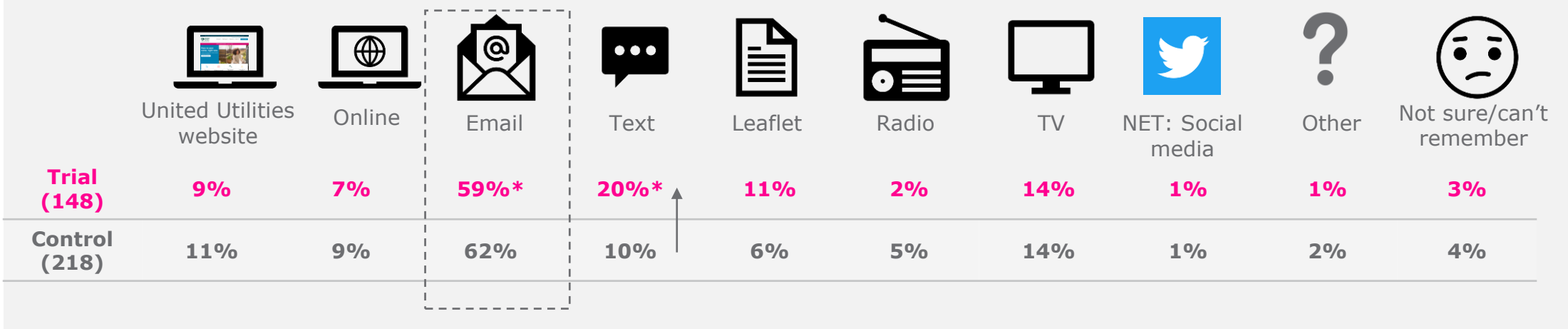
↑ Statistically significant

Base: Q03B. Have you seen or heard anything from United Utilities about this? (n)



Messaging has reached customers as per the campaign channels of email and text

Where have you seen/heard/read this information from United Utilities?

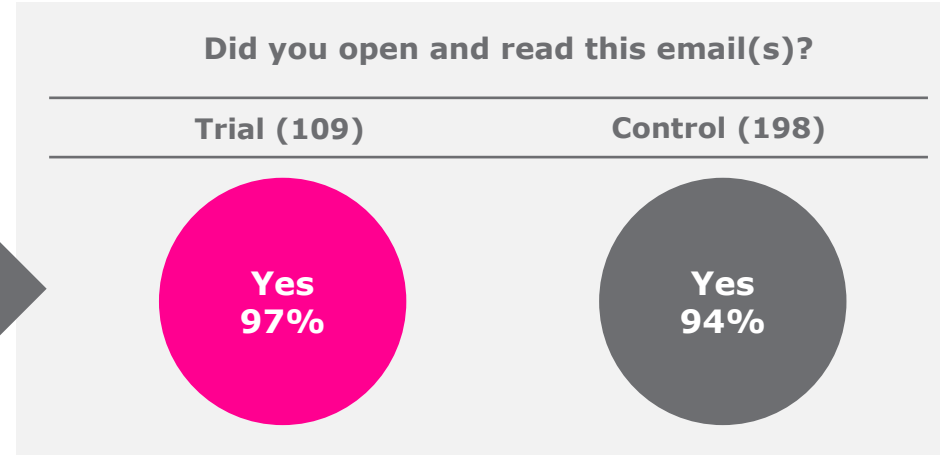
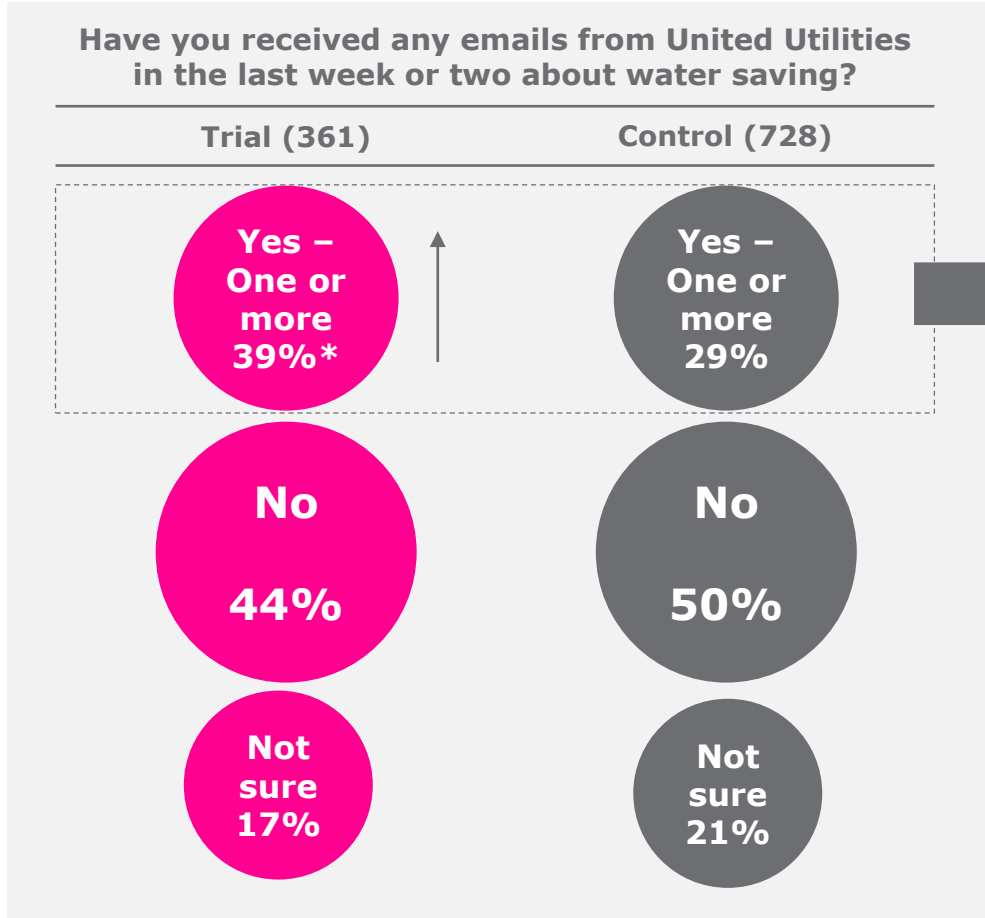


*Of those who were sent the email (i.e. only email address was available on the sample), the number who recall seeing an email from UU rises to 82% (Trial Only)

Similarly for those who were sent a text (i.e. mobile number only on the sample), the number who recall seeing a text from UU rises to 59% (Trial Only)



39% of the total trial sample recalled receiving an email from UU and the majority of those opened and read the email



It is those who are aged over 55 who are most likely to recall receiving an email (47%).

*Looking at the online sample only (i.e. those that were sent the trial email), the number who recall seeing an email **increases to 60%**.

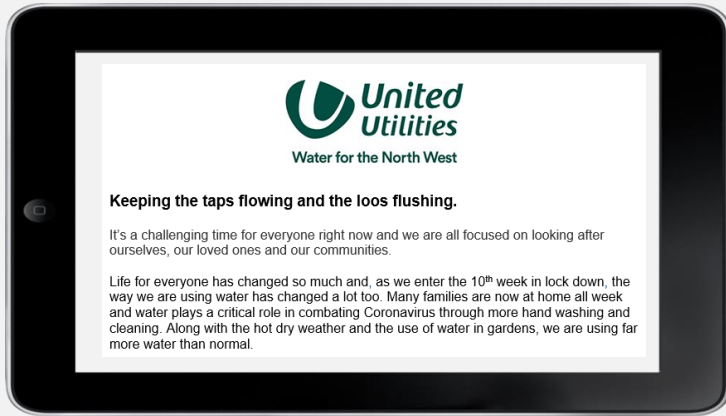
Segments A (Budget Conscious Elderly) and E (Financially Secure Empty Nesters) are much more likely to have read and opened the emails from UU

Using data from UU we actually know that the number that did in fact open the campaign email from this sample is 63% (it is likely the remaining 37% opened the earlier email).

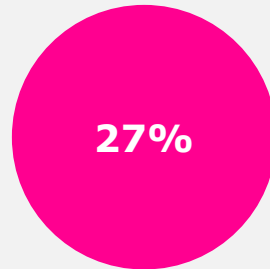
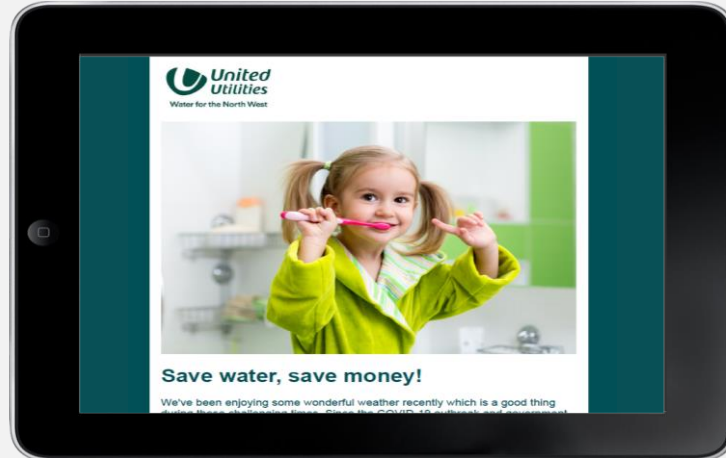
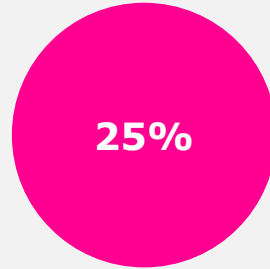
↑ Statistically significant



There is evidence that email recall relates to both the campaign email and an earlier email sent by UU to all customers



Which of the following emails from United Utilities do you recall opening?
Trial only (202)



It is clear that any behaviour change as a result of campaign materials could also be attributed to a previous email communication that went out to all UU customers approximately 1 week earlier.

When specifically asked about the text message 20% recall receiving it

Have you received a text from United Utilities in the last week or two about water saving?

Trial (361)

Yes
*20%

Did you read the text?
(71)

Yes
97%

The text message has a lower recall than the email. When looking at those in the sample that had a mobile number only, the number stating they received a text increases to 31% - still lower than the equivalent figure for those who were sent the email.

Segments A (Budget Conscious Elderly) & D (Comfortable Mid-Life Established Families) are most likely to recall receiving a text message.



The key messaging within the campaign looks to be widely understood

The main spontaneous mentions of messaging are around:

Free water saving items/goodies

More people at home during lockdown = more water being used

'Save water, save money'

Specific mentions on how much a household could save if turning off the tap whilst brushing teeth

"Turning of the tap whilst brushing teeth can save £100 a year."

"The email referenced water saving goodies that were available through its website."

However, there were some more detailed mentions of water shortages due to dry weather, which are not applicable to the campaign message but that of an earlier email sent to customers:

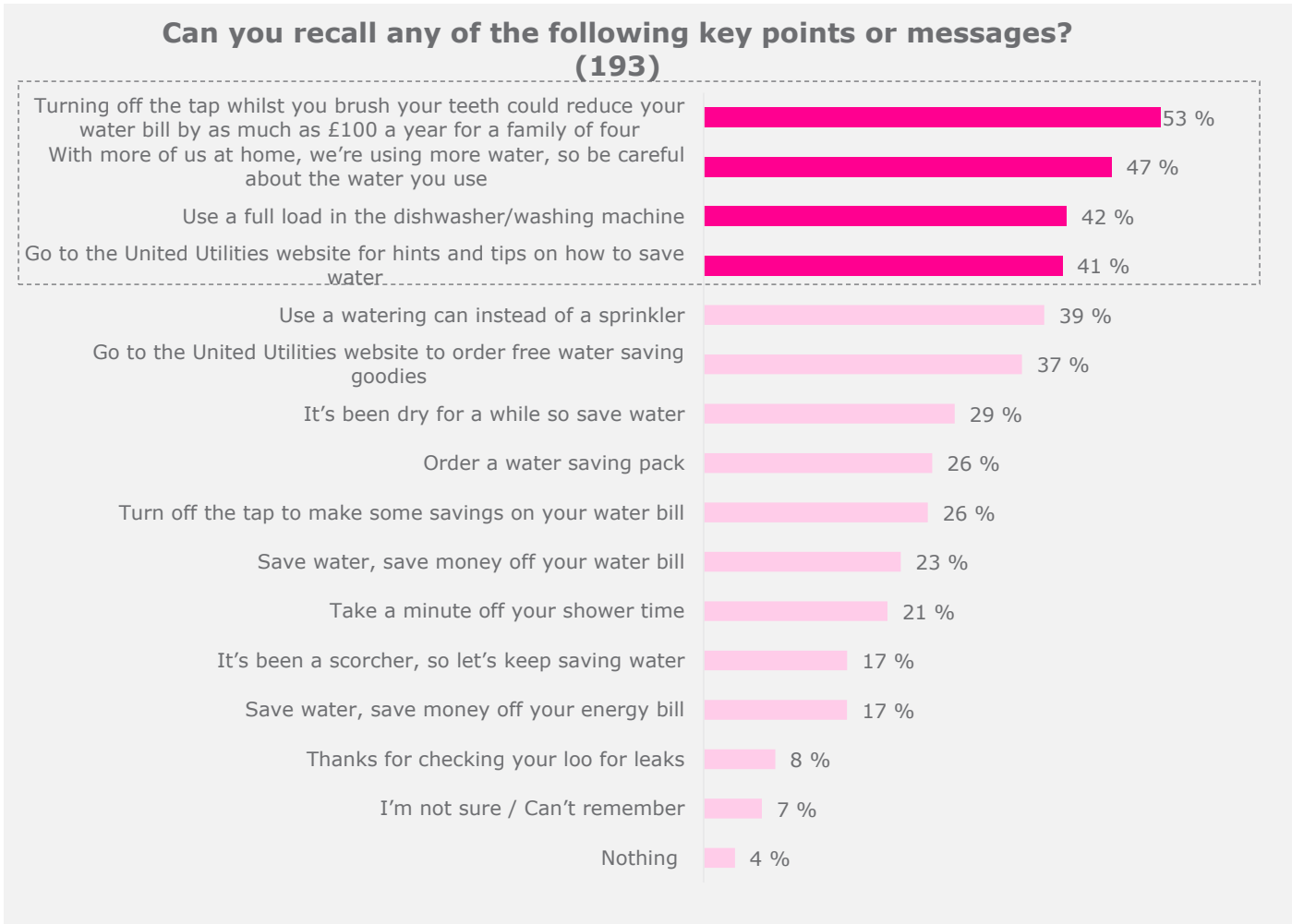
"It was a useful list of ways in which domestic use could be reduced."

"It was regarding the recent long dry spell and the coronavirus outbreak which has led to increased water usage. It highlighted the need to conserve water and think about our usage of water."



The key messages within the campaign have resonated with the trial audience

Core campaign messages



Some of the key messaging within the main body of the email have a high level of recall.

Over half (53%) of the trial audience recall the messaging around turning off the tap whilst brushing teeth could save up to £100 a year for a family of four.

The overall tag line of 'save water, save money' has a lower level of recall.

There is a higher recall rate of the key messaging amongst those aged 55 or over. Segment E (Financially Secure Empty Nesters) are most likely to recall *'with more of us at home, we're using more water, so be careful about the water you use'* message.

Base: Q08B. Can you recall any of the following key points or messages?

The campaign has had a positive impact, with a good level of call to action



Having seen or heard any of this information on water saving from United Utilities, please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

Trial

	% Agree	% Disagree
It made me change my behaviour to more actively save water (189)	44%	30%
It made me visit the United Utilities website to find out more about water saving (188)	26%	50%
It made me order/look into ordering water saving products (186)	27%	47%
It provided helpful advice (188)	72%	11%
It made me talk to friends / family about how we can save water (188)	35%	37%

Almost half (44%) of the trial audience stated that information seen from UU has made them actively save water.

Messages with greatest impact on behaviour change:

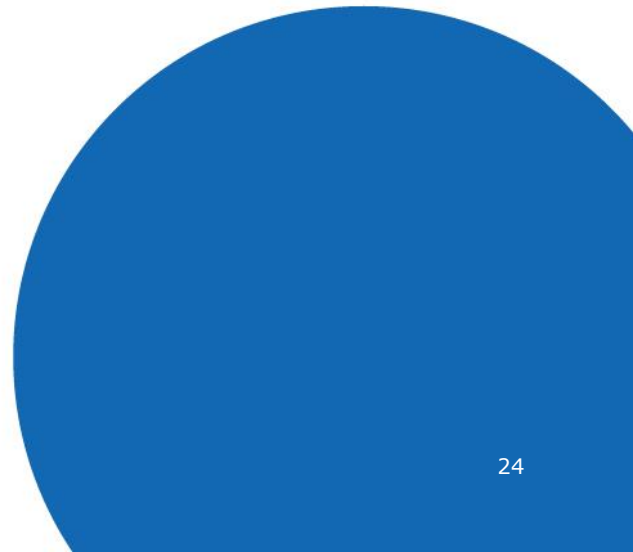
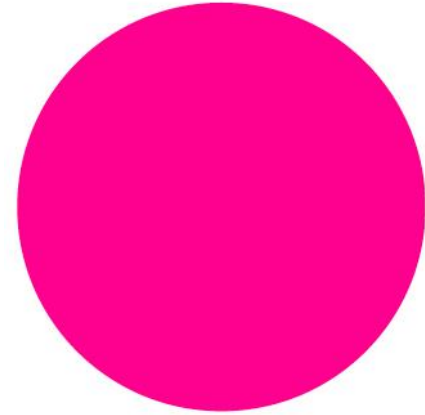
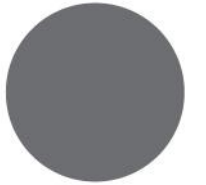
'With more of us at home, we're using more water, so be careful about the water you use' – **60% who recall this are now saying they are using less water**

'Turning off the tap whilst you brush your teeth could reduce your water bill by as much as £100 a year for a family of four' – **60% who recall this are now saying they are using less water**

Those who read the email are also significantly more likely than those who read the text to change their behaviour (48% c.f. 40%)

The messaging has also had an impact on those who were 'just starting' to save water – with 53% saying it has further influenced their behaviour, but it has had most impact on those who have stated they already save water.

Community based campaign - Blackburn



Campaign overview

- Social media campaign launched in Blackburn
- Pledge included for £25,000 to East Lancs Hospice
- Bespoke area of website dedicated to Blackburn created

Blackburn website

Make a pledge to save water this summer – and help a good cause in Blackburn

We've been enjoying some wonderful weather recently which is a good thing during these challenging times. Since the COVID-19 outbreak and government advice around social distancing, we're all spending more time at home.

This has created extra demand for water, with hundreds of millions of extra litres being used across the North West every day. This has caused some issues with water pressure and supply, simply because we've found it difficult to supply water down our pipes to meet this extra demand.

That's why we'd love you to make a pledge to save water this summer. Something as easy as turning off the tap when you brush your teeth will save around 6 litres a minute. And if everyone in Blackburn can reduce their water usage by just 7 litres a day, we'll make a donation to East Lancashire Hospice to say thanks for all your efforts!

To help get you started, take a look at some of the easy ways you can make a difference below. We have lots more water saving tips on your saving water page. And don't forget to order our FREE water saving goodies to make saving water in the home even easier.

So come on Blackburn, let's all do a good turn and help a local cause at the same time!



Ditch the hosepipe

Hosepipes use hundreds of litres of water an hour. Use a watering can for your plants, and a bucket and sponge for your car, and you'll be doing the environment a good turn.



Turn off the tap

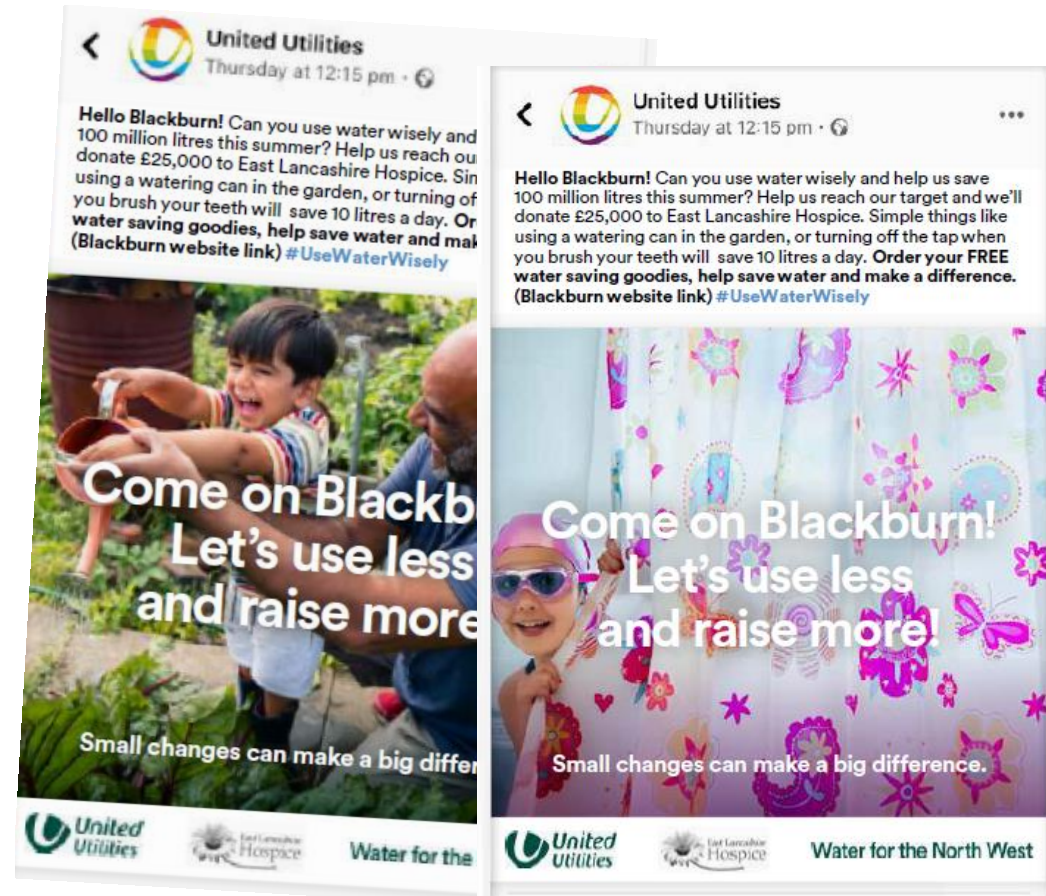
Something as small as turning off the tap while you brush your teeth will save 6 litres of water every minute and could reduce your water bill by as much as £100 a year!



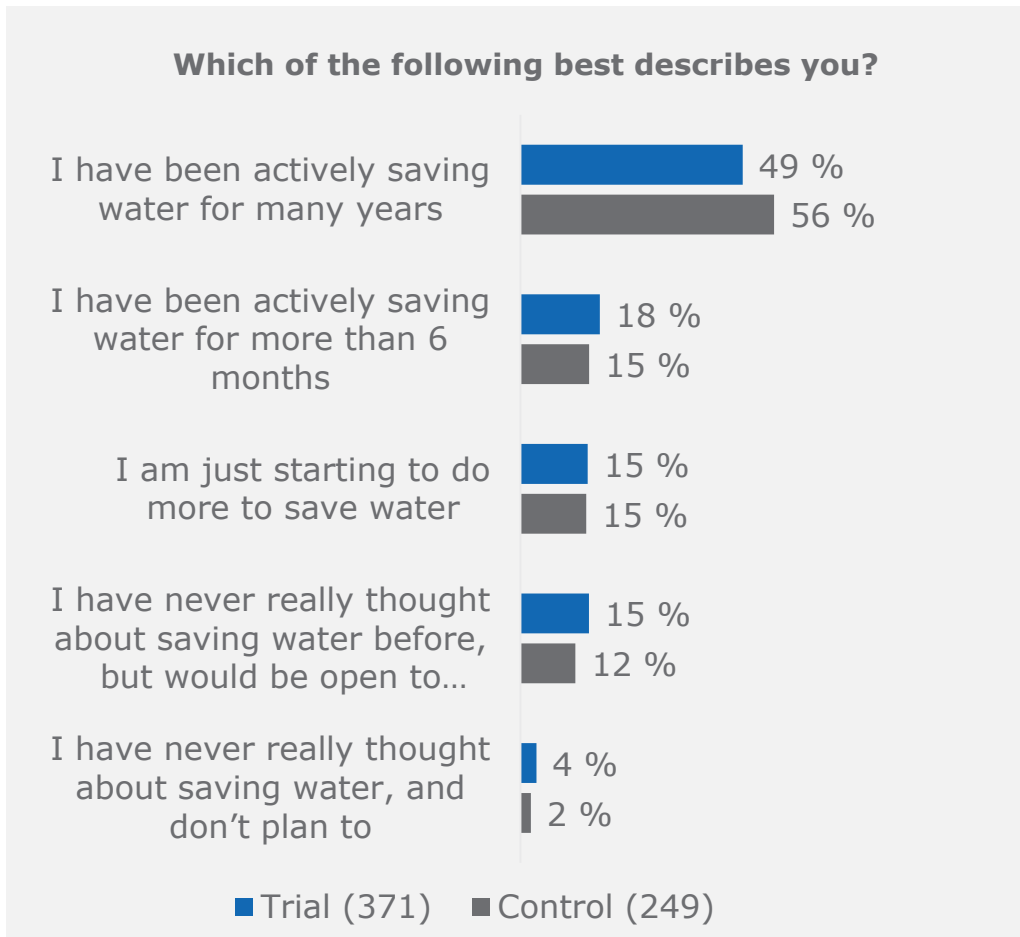
Reduce hot water use

You can make a big saving on your energy bills if you reduce the amount of hot water which is wasted in the home. For example, only switching on dishwashers and washing machines when you have a full load makes a difference.

Copy of campaign posts



Just under half of the trial sample have been actively saving water for many years



The profile of those who have been actively saving water for 'many years' are those that are:

- 55 or over (54%)

Those in Blackburn on <£19,999 a year are more likely to have been actively saving for years than those on >£50,000 a year (51% vs. 35%).

There are a number of messages which would encourage people to save water

To what extent do you agree with the following?	Trial		Control	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
I would change my behaviour towards saving water if I knew how much money I could save	61%	17%	62%	20%
I am concerned about water shortages and the prospect of hosepipe bans in the summer	68%	20%	64%	25%
I would be more likely to try and save more water if I knew others were doing it	40%	37%	45%	37%
It requires too much effort to save water	9%	81%	9%	83%
I'd worry about hygiene if I cut down my water usage	34%	49%	39%	49%
I pay for it so I am entitled to use as much water as I want	20%	67%	18%	67%
I would change my behaviour if I knew more about what my water company was doing to save water	58%	16%	57%	23%
I'm unwilling to reduce the amount of water I use on my garden	22%	55%	24%	56%
I can't reduce my water usage because me or someone else in my household relies on it for medical reasons	13%	73%	11%	75%
I think it's important to save water where possible to help the environment	94%	3%	93%	5%

Base: Q01B. Below are a number of statements which we would like to know the extent to which you agree with each one (n – exc not sure)

Some attitudes are more common amongst certain segments

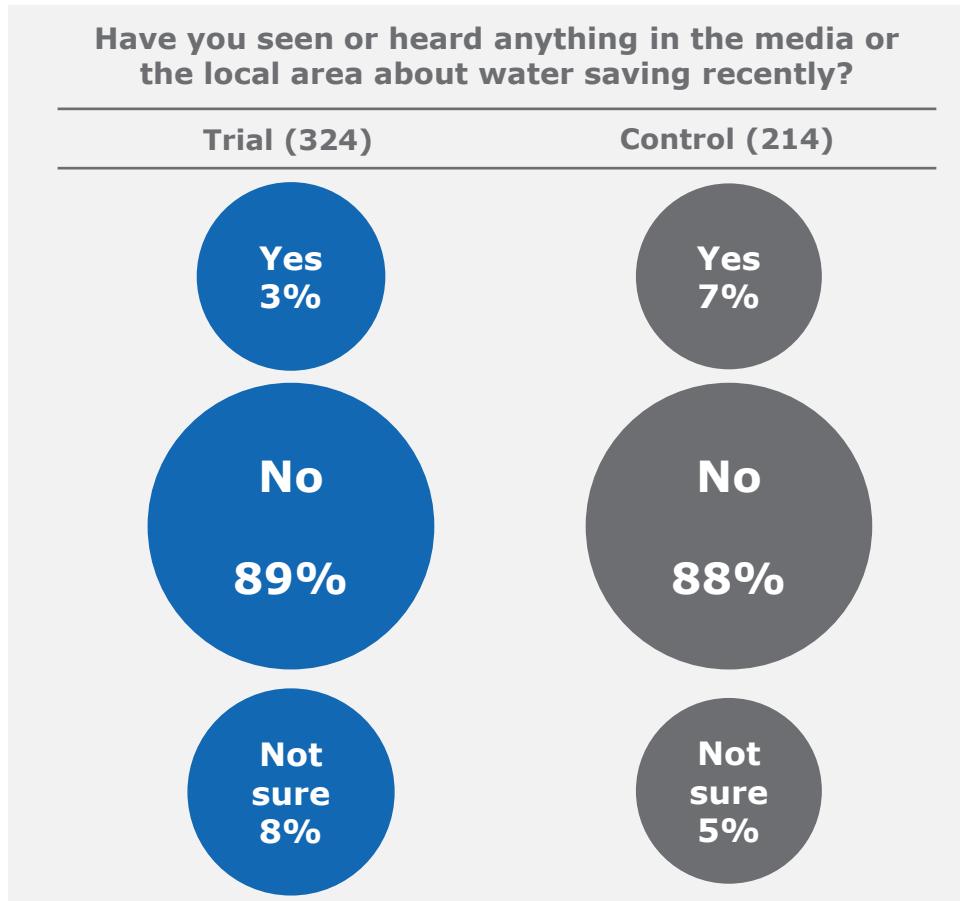


To what extent do you agree with the following?	Trial % Agree	CACI segment % Agree
I would change my behaviour towards saving water if I knew how much money I could save	61%	Hard Pressed Families (73%) & Families Getting By (71%)
I am concerned about water shortages and the prospect of hosepipe bans in the summer	68%	-
I would be more likely to try and save more water if I knew others were doing it	40%	Hard Pressed Families (52%)
It requires too much effort to save water	9%	-
I'd worry about hygiene if I cut down my water usage	34%	-
I pay for it so I am entitled to use as much water as I want	20%	-
I would change my behaviour if I knew more about what my water company was doing to save water	58%	Hard Pressed Families (69%)
I'm unwilling to reduce the amount of water I use on my garden	22%	Indebted Singles (60%)
I can't reduce my water usage because me or someone else in my household relies on it for medical reasons	13%	-
I think it's important to save water where possible to help the environment	94%	-

Base: Q01B. Below are a number of statements which we would like to know the extent to which you agree with each one (n – exc not sure)



A significant majority of the trial audience have not seen anything relating to water saving



Many comments refer to recent comms from UU and things they have seen on TV and social media:

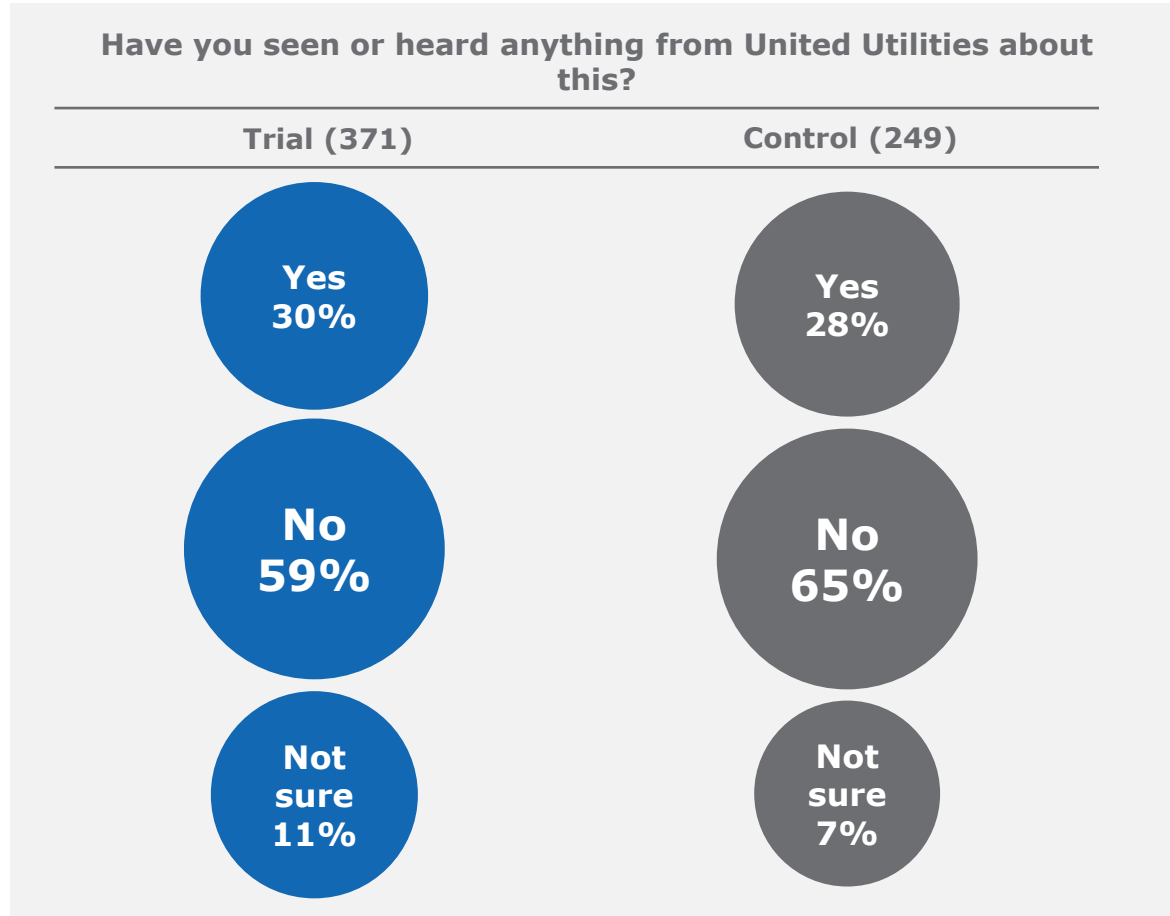
"Emails from UU and also seen the low levels of the local reservoir."

"On the news, read it in the paper and text message"

"It was on the news, we had a wet winter now supplies getting lower because of the spring weather."

Base: Q03A. Have you seen or heard anything in the media or the local area about water saving recently?

Similar proportions of the trial and control audiences recall seeing something from UU













Base: Q03B. Have you seen or heard anything from United Utilities about this?

The trial sample recall information received by UU from email, leaflets and TV



Where have you seen/heard/read this information from United Utilities?

	 United Utilities website	 Online	 Email	 Text	 Leaflet	 Radio	 TV	 NET: Social media	 Other	 Not sure/can't remember
Trial (109)	6%	5%	60%	6%	14%	1%	10%	3%	3%	3%
Control (62)	10%	10%	37%	12%	18%	4%	10%	9%	4%	2%

There is a low level of recall from social media channels.

The majority of message recall is in relation to emails sent regarding water saving methods

There is very limited recall on key messages within the Blackburn campaign, including the water saving pledge and the tag line 'small changes can make a big difference'.

Recall is mostly cited from emails and leaflets received from UU and other media sources such as TV and newspaper rather than on social media.

"General reports in national and local press about possible drought and need to conserve water TV footage of local reservoirs showing huge depletion due to heat Think the local TV channel interviewed representative from UU."

"Highlighting issues about COVID-19 and the warm weather, so even if we need to use more water we should try to use as little as possible e.g. be sure to have the tap turn off."

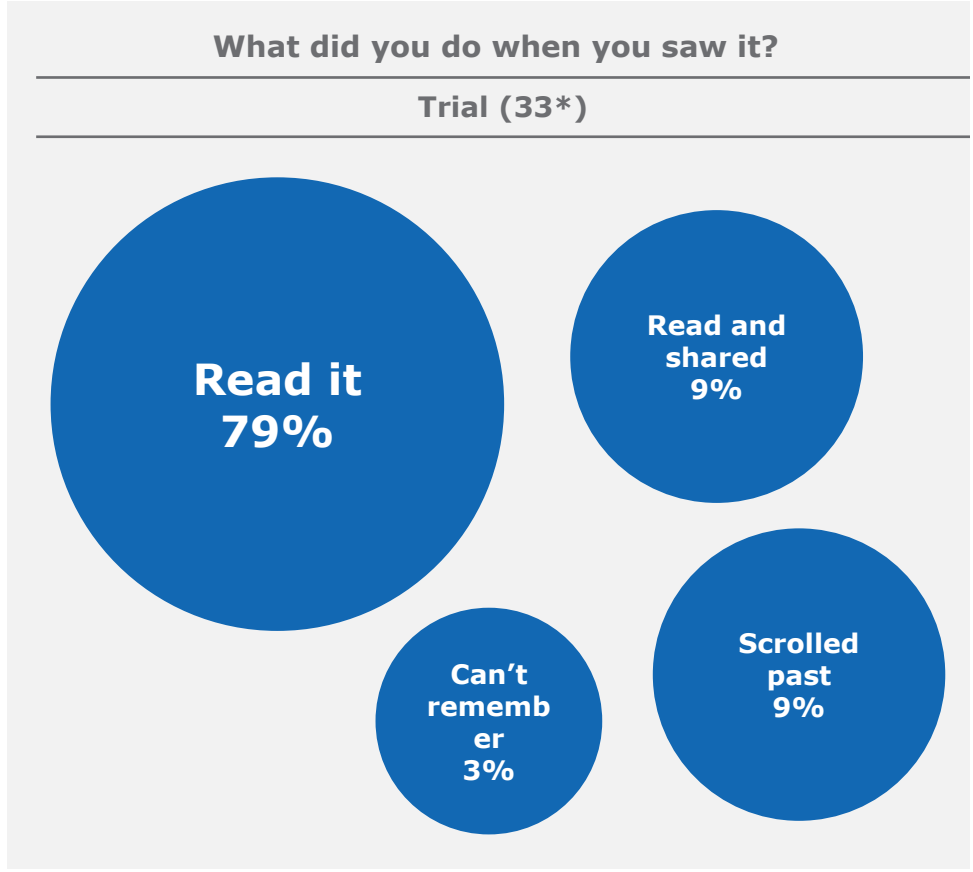
There was one spontaneous recall of the charity pledge to East Lancs hospice:

"East Lancs Hospice, but I can't remember the content."



When prompted on social media awareness, 9% recall seeing something from UU and the majority read it

Have you seen anything from United Utilities on social media in the last week or two about water saving?	
Trial (371)	
Yes	9%
No	80%
Not sure / Can't remember	11%



Segments E – Financially Secure Empty Nesters (17%), Hard Pressed Families (13%) and Struggling Single Pensioners (15%) are most likely to have seen something on social media

Base: Q06A. Have you seen anything from United Utilities on social media in the last week or two about water saving?, Q06B. What did you do when you saw it?

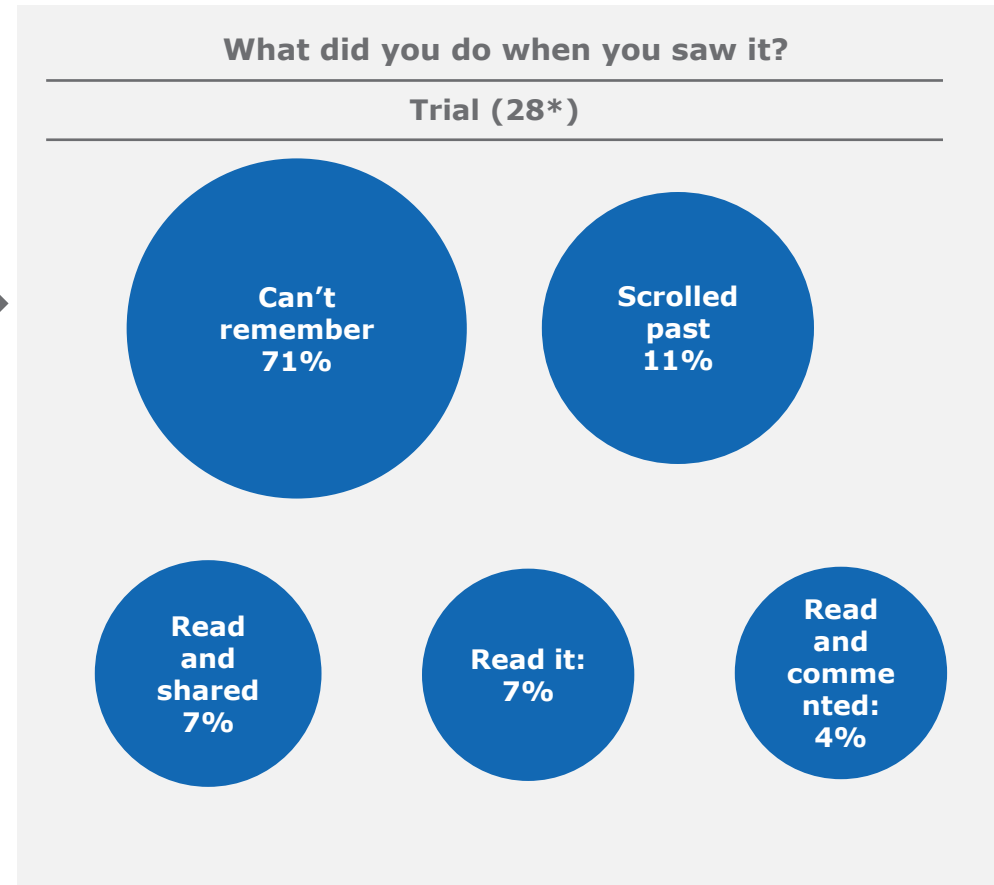
*low base

Recall of social media messaging from other sources is low



Have you seen anything about water saving over the last week or two on the social media accounts for the following?

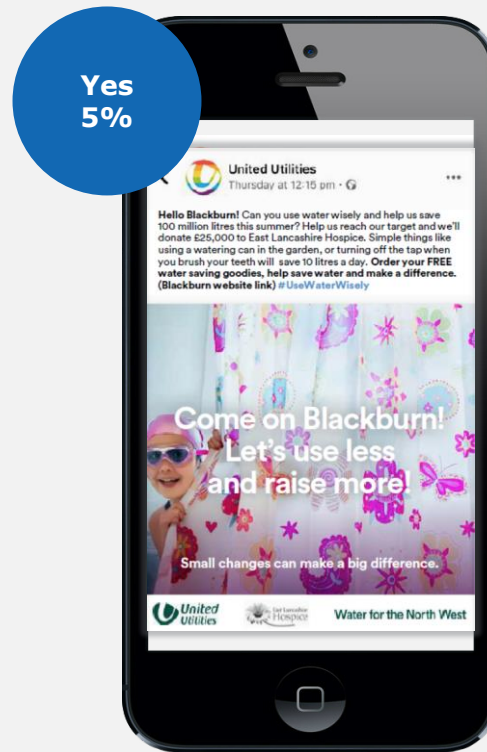
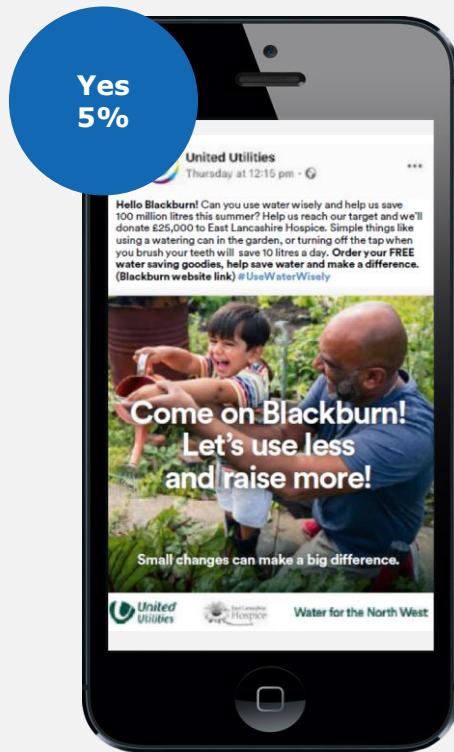
	Trial (371)
East Lancs Hospice	1%
Local MP	1%
Local community group	-
No / I'm not sure / Can't remember	98%





When prompted on the specific campaign assets there is a 5% recall on both

Do you recall seeing either of these images on social media over the last week or two? (221)



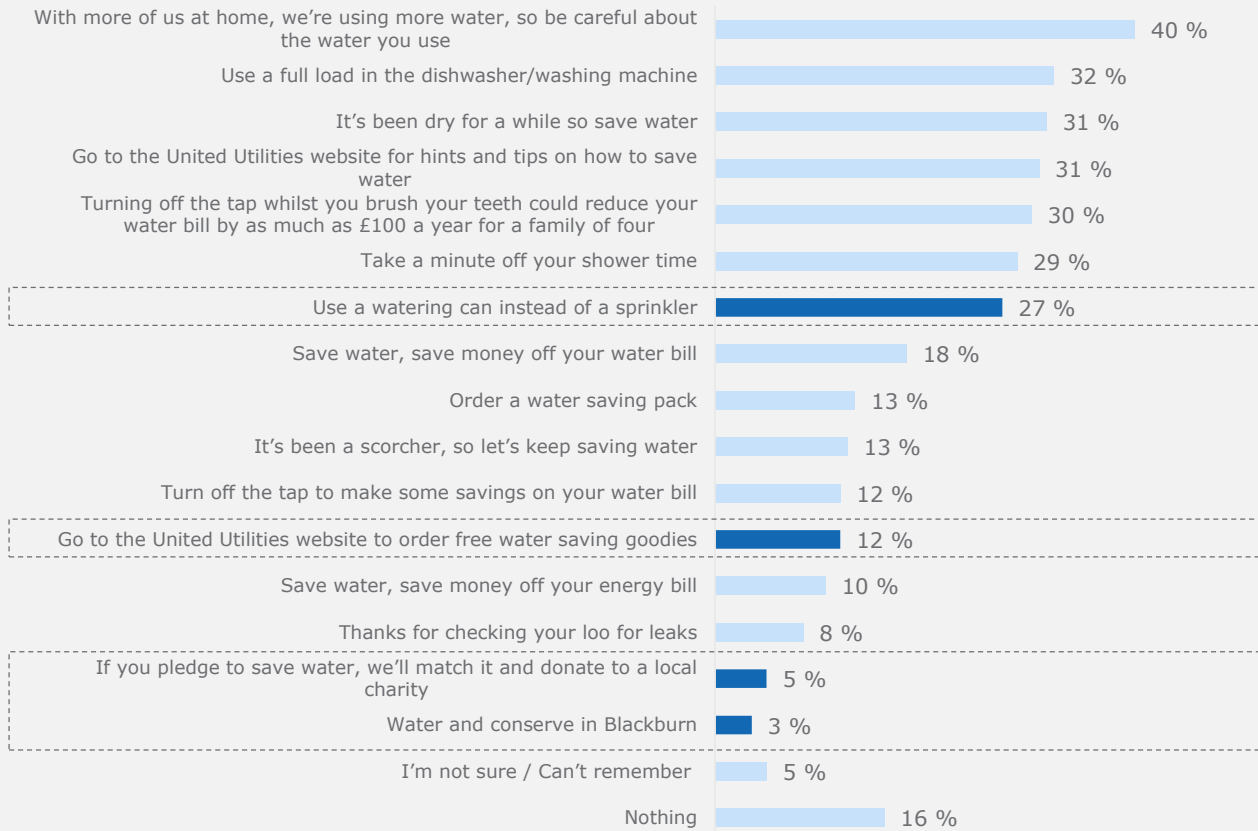
Again, due to the low levels of recall, there are no significant differences to note. Those who recall seeing the comms are from a mix of demographics.



When prompted, the trial audience cite a range of key points and messages

Core campaign messages

Can you recall any of the following key points or messages? (143)



Despite there being some recollection, the key messages within the community based Blackburn campaign have a lower level of recall compared to messaging that many people may have been exposed to from other sources, including emails from UU and other media outlets.

The pledge message is most likely to be recalled by segments C – Technology Dependent Young Families (12%) and F Hard Pressed Families) (18%)

Despite low recall of the campaign, there is still a good level of call to action



Having seen or heard any of this information on water saving from United Utilities, please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements	Trial	
	% Agree	% Disagree
It made me change my behaviour to more actively save water (134)	60%	13%
It made me visit the United Utilities website to find out more about water saving (133)	26%	49%
It made me order/look into ordering water saving products (133)	33%	38%
It made me pledge to United Utilities that I will save water (132)	34%	32%
It provided helpful advice (134)	71%	7%
It made me talk to friends / family about how we can save water (135)	36%	35%

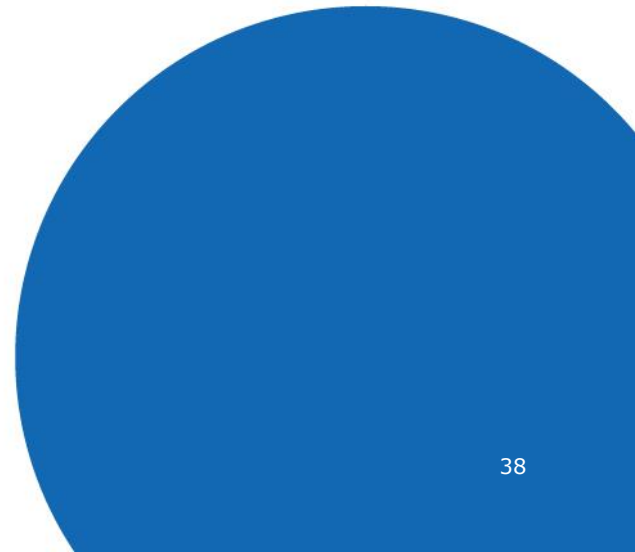
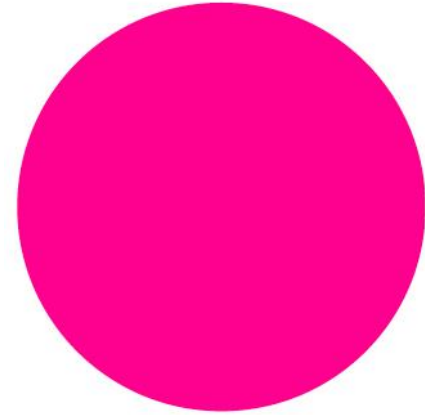
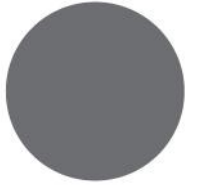
60% of the trial sample have changed their behaviour regarding water saving as result of messaging from UU. **Segment F (Hard Pressed Families) are the most likely to have stated this (82%)**

It is clear from the campaign recall (both prompted and unprompted), that this call to action is unlikely to be solely a direct result of the community based social media campaign, but more a result of other communication received via email and leaflets.

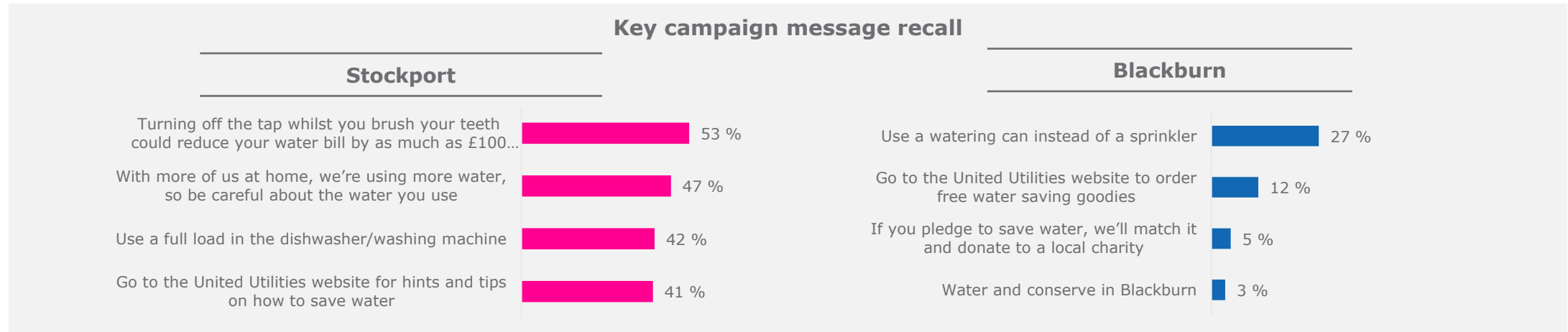
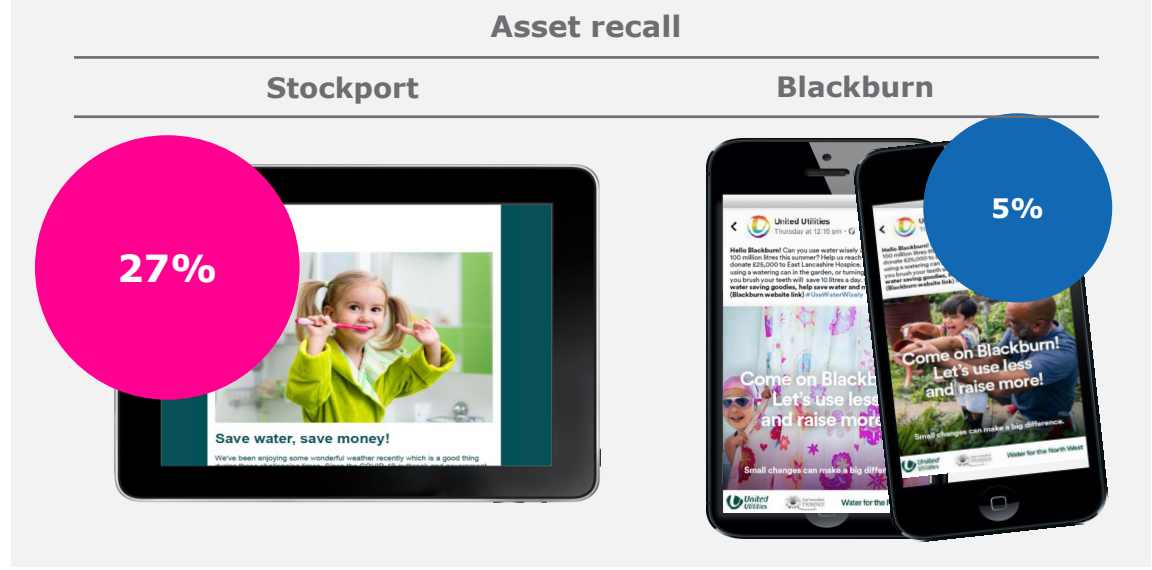
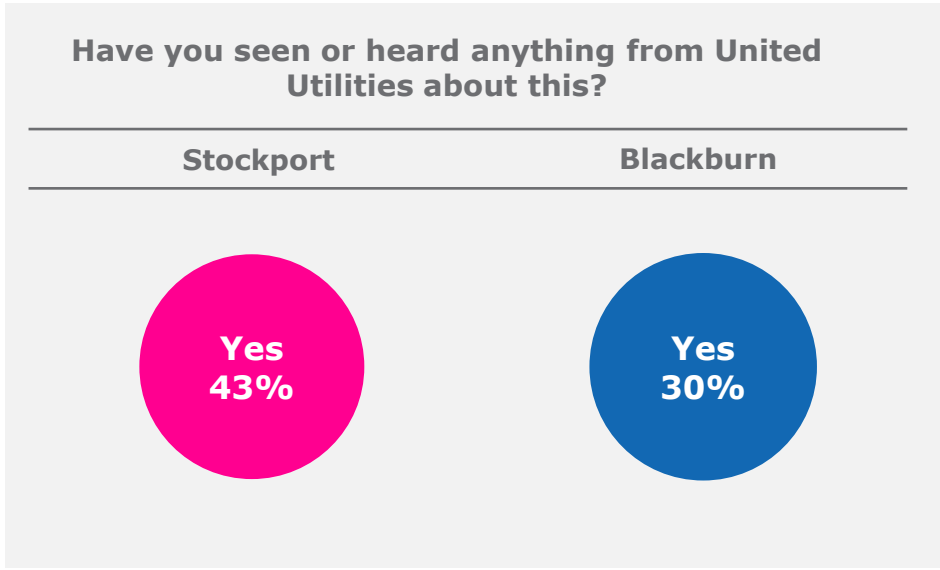
Of those who have just started thinking about saving water, 75% agree that comms from UU have made them change their water saving behaviour.

Of those who said that it has made them pledge to UU that they will save water, only 11% recall seeing the 'pledge' messaging.

Campaign comparison



Recall of the campaign is higher in Stockport



Base: Q08B. Can you recall any of the following key points or messages?

Despite varying levels of exposure to the campaign, call to action is consistent across both trial areas

Having seen or heard any of this information on water saving from United Utilities, please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements	Stockport		Blackburn	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
It made me change my behaviour to more actively save water	44%	30%	60%	13%
It made me visit the United Utilities website to find out more about water saving	26%	50%	26%	49%
It made me order/look into ordering water saving products	27%	47%	33%	38%
It made me pledge to United Utilities that I will save water	N/A	N/A	34%	32%
It provided helpful advice	72%	11%	71%	7%
It made me talk to friends / family about how we can save water	35%	37%	36%	35%

% who have changed behaviour as a result of info from UU – TOTAL SAMPLE

Stockport

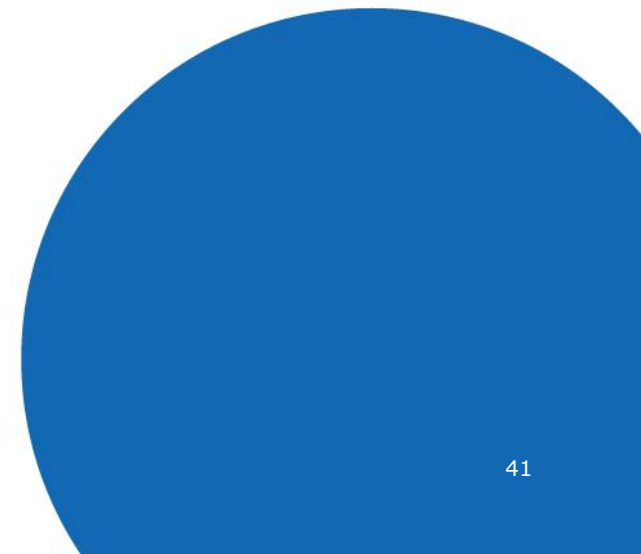
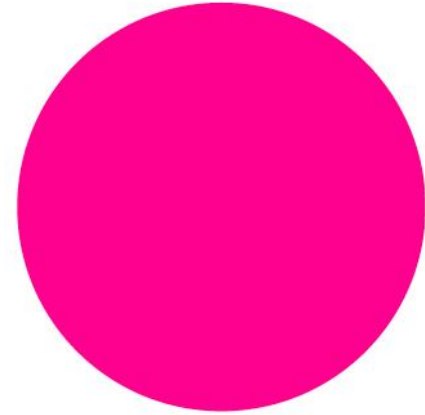
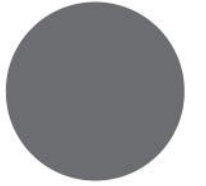
23%

Blackburn

22%

Base: Q09A. Having seen or heard any of this information on water saving from United Utilities, please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: All recalling comms

Key take outs



Key take outs

The direct comms approach (Stockport) has been more successful than the community approach (Blackburn)

Having said this, both sets of research results are clouded somewhat by other communications which went out at the same time (from UU and other media outlets)

As a result of any communication the customer has been exposed to, an average of 52% said they'll change their behaviour, this accounts to 23% of the total trial areas

The messages that have had the greatest impact, and those to take forward to future campaigns are:

Money saving as a result of an action (i.e. £100 saved per year by turning off tap whilst brushing teeth)

Using a watering can instead of sprinkler

The impact Covid-19 has had on water usage and how we can think about using less as a result (however this is likely to have less impact over time)

For more information



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