

**CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL  
INNOVATION**

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**Understanding provision, usage and  
perceptions of free drinking water to  
the public in the UK**

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*Research Report*

April 2017

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# 1 Executive Summary

This report presents research conducted by Keep Britain Tidy in partnership with BRITA to better understand the triggers and barriers to members of the public using reusable water bottles as an alternative to single-use plastic water bottles. A key focus of the research was the role that businesses (particularly those serving food and drinks) play in providing free drinking water to the public while they are out and about, and the potential for these businesses to act as a virtual network of public drinking water fountains at which reusable water bottles can be freely and safely refilled.

## Methodology

Desk research and a public perceptions survey were conducted for the research.

The desk research sought to understand current legislation regarding the provision of free drinking water by businesses and other organisation types to the public. This research was reviewed by an independent solicitors engaged by Keep Britain Tidy to ensure that all interpretations of the legislation were correct.

Desk research was also conducted to identify the range of existing schemes and campaigns across the UK that are aimed at reducing public consumption of single-use plastic water bottles and/or increasing uptake of reusable water bottles.

The public perceptions survey was conducted via an online poll with 2,119 adults across the UK by YouGov. The sample used in this survey was proportionally representative of the broader UK population, in terms of gender, age group and spread across UK government regions. The survey asked respondents about their behaviours, perceptions and motivations regarding their use of reusable water bottles and consumption of single-use plastic water bottles.

## Key findings

### ***Current UK legislation regarding the provision of free drinking water***

- Licensed premises are legally required to provide free drinking water to customers on request (but can charge for the use of a glass or for their service when providing the water) in England, Scotland and Wales (there is no such legislation in Northern Ireland).
- It is not a requirement that this water be filtered, however it must be potable.
- Legislation for England and Wales does not require the free water provided to come from a tap, whereas legislation in Scotland stipulates that 'Tap water fit for drinking must be provided'.
- Unlicensed premises (i.e. venues that are not licensed to serve alcohol) are not legally required to provide free drinking water to customers on request.
- Schools are legally required to provide drinking water for pupils at all times in England, Scotland and Wales.
- All UK employers must provide free drinking water in the workplace for all employees at all times.

### ***Current initiatives and types of businesses that offer free drinking water***

- There currently exists three 'community water schemes' aimed at providing increased access to free drinking water to the public with a view to reducing bottled water consumption. In these schemes, free water is predominately provided by local food and/or drink businesses, particularly smaller independent businesses. The community water schemes identified are:

- the Refill campaign, managed by environmental charity City to Sea
- Tapwater.org
- GiveMeTap! and the associated #MindTheTap campaign.

Other campaigns and initiatives aimed at reducing bottled water consumption include:

- the #OneLess campaign, delivered in partnership by the Zoological Society of London and Selfridges
- LoveTapWater.co.uk
- Join the pipe.

### ***Public perceptions and behaviours regarding reusable water bottles and bottled water consumption***

- The vast majority of respondents (69%) said that they drink tap water generally/at home, while 18% said that they drink bottled water.
- When away from home, however, 30% of respondents said that they tend to drink bottled water purchased from a shop.
- While 34% of respondents said that they mostly drink tap water in a reusable water bottle brought from home (that they refill as required when out and about), these respondents said that they also sometimes, often or always buy bottled water when undertaking various activities away from home.
- There is a strong correlation between the type of water consumed by respondents generally/at home and their source of drinking water when away from home. Respondents who said that they drink filtered tap water at home were significantly more likely to purchase bottled water when out and about compared to those who drink unfiltered tap water. However those who usually drink bottled water were consistently most concerned of all respondents about the cleanliness of tap water and public dispensers.
- Respondents were most likely to use a reusable water bottle when travelling long distances (e.g. by aeroplane, bus or train), exercising and commuting to or at work. It is likely that this is due to a heightened sense of wanting to have free and easy access to water while undertaking these activities, and prepare accordingly, e.g. by habitually packing a reusable water bottle with exercise gear or luggage. People are also more likely to carry backpacks and other bags when undertaking these activities, which may make it easier and thus more likely for them to carry a reusable water bottle. It is suggested that behavioural interventions be designed that help people to habitually incorporate reusable water bottles and other alternatives to bottled water into their other day-to-day activities, for example by providing information, prompts and appropriate facilities at appropriate times throughout.
- Respondents were also most likely to purchase bottled water when travelling long distances, and there is evidence that even those who mostly use a reusable water bottle while undertaking this activity also sometimes, often or always purchase bottled water. It is suggested that this is due to a lack of appropriate drinking water facilities available in transport hubs and transit, and a lack of awareness of the availability of these where they do exist.
- Respondents who drink tap or filtered water consistently displayed higher levels of personal obligation (willingness to drink tap water rather than bottled where available, willingness to put extra time and effort into finding alternatives to bottled water, and feeling of guilt when purchasing bottled water) to avoid bottled water consumption than those who said that they generally drink bottled water. Those who were willing to put extra time and effort into avoiding bottled water tended to select 'helping the environment' as the main benefit of using a reusable water bottle. 'Saving money' was also selected as the main benefit by a high proportion of respondents, however this does not appear to be a strong motivator towards avoiding bottled water if it requires extra time and effort.

- While the majority (71%) of respondents said that they would feel comfortable about asking for a glass of water from a businesses that they had just made, or were about to make, a purchase from, a significantly lower proportion (39%) said that they would feel the same about asking for their reusable water bottle to be refilled. Levels of comfort fell significantly again in circumstances where a purchase from the business is taken out of the equation. Just 13% of respondents would feel comfortable about asking for a glass of water under this scenario, and just 10% when asking for their reusable bottle to be refilled. Yet the majority of respondents (57%) felt that businesses that serve food and/or drinks should be required to provided free drinking water to the public, regardless of whether they are a customer or not. Additionally, most respondents (77%) said that they would view a business less favourably if it refused to give them or someone they know free water on request.
- Significantly, only 25% of respondents agreed that they know their rights when it comes to businesses and public buildings providing free drinking water and there is clear evidence to suggest that improvements to this awareness would increase uptake of reusable water bottles. Respondents indicated that they would be more likely to use a reusable water bottle when out and about if they knew their rights as a consumer to request tap/filtered water from businesses (41%) and if they knew that businesses would willingly fill up their water bottle (55%).
- Being sure that tap water is safe to drink would make 49% of respondents more likely to use a reusable water bottle, therefore interventions aimed at providing improved access to tap/filtered water to the public should ensure that health and safety concerns are addressed.

## **Recommendations**

The research found strong evidence that the UK public seeks greater availability of reliable, free and safe drinking water facilities that they can rely on when out and about, and more information about where they can find such facilities. Such measures are likely to increase the uptake of reusable water bottles and make a significant contribution towards reducing consumption of bottled water. Keep Britain Tidy has seven recommendations (detailed in the main body of this report) aimed at businesses, policy makers, campaign and other organisations working towards this aim.

1. Increase awareness about public rights to drinking water from businesses and public buildings
2. Consider updating current legislation to encourage greater access to free drinking water from businesses
3. Encourage businesses to provide free drinking water to both customers and non-customers, and to promote their willingness to do this to the public
4. Work with transport providers and hubs to improve access to free drinking water for the public when travelling
5. Design interventions to encourage people to habitually incorporate reusable water bottles and other alternatives to bottled water into their day-to-day activities
6. Consider designing reusable water bottles that are easier to carry when on-the-go and when not carrying a bag
7. Raise public awareness of the cleanliness and quality of UK tap water, and filtering on-the-go options.

## 2 Background

The UK consumes approximately three billion litres of bottled water per year, with significant environmental impacts. A one litre polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottle, commonly used as bottled water packaging intended for single use, uses 162g of oil (producing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions equivalent to driving 'a car' for one kilometre) and seven litres of water to produce, and can take over 450 years to biodegrade. While single use plastic water bottles now use less plastic than they did 15 years ago and increasing amounts of recycled plastics, the bottled water market produces 1.5 million tonnes of plastic per year<sup>1</sup>.

Research by WRAP suggests that almost half of all plastic bottles used in the UK are not recycled<sup>2</sup>, while the littering of beverage containers appears to be widespread. Keep Britain Tidy's *Local Environmental Quality Survey of England 2014/15* identified non-alcoholic drinks litter at 52.4% of 7,200 sites surveyed.

Plastics pollution in marine and aquatic environments is an emerging issue globally and research by the European Commission suggests that approximately 80% of marine litter was originally disposed on land<sup>3</sup>. There is evidence that once in marine and aquatic environments, plastic pollution enters the food chain and ultimately our bodies. The rate of plastic pollution is expected to increase as more plastic is used globally, and the World Economic Forum estimates that there could be more plastic than life in the sea by 2050<sup>4</sup>. Reducing the consumption of single-use plastics through avoidance is therefore a crucial aspect of efforts to address a range of environmental pollution issues.

With these impacts in mind, Keep Britain Tidy partnered with BRITA to conduct research to better understand the triggers and barriers to members of the public using reusable water bottles as an alternative to single-use plastic water bottles. A key focus of this research is the role that businesses (particularly those serving food and drinks) play in providing free drinking water to the public while they are out and about, and the potential for these businesses to act as a virtual network of public drinking water fountains at which reusable water bottles can be freely and safely refilled.

### 2.1 Research aim and objectives

The aim of the research was to understand the current 'state of play' with regards to businesses serving drinking water to the public, and public perceptions and attitudes around this.

The research objectives were to identify:

- The legal landscape around which types of businesses are required to offer free drinking water
- Which types of businesses currently offer free tap water
- Current schemes and campaigns across the UK aimed at reducing plastic water bottle consumption
- How the public feels about asking for refills for their reusable water bottles

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<sup>1</sup> Nottingham University, 'Should we be using bottled water?' (2017) <<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/etc/news-water.php>>

<sup>2</sup> Recycle Now (2017) Britain fails to recycle 16 million plastic bottles every day

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, *Our Oceans, Seas and Coasts – Descriptor 10: Marine Litter* (2016), <[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/good-environmental-status/descriptor-10/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/good-environmental-status/descriptor-10/index_en.htm)>.

<sup>4</sup> World Economic Forum, 2016

## 3 Methodology

Desk research and a public perceptions survey were conducted for the research.

The desk research analysed current legislation regarding the provision of free drinking water by businesses and other organisation types to the public, using the online UK Legislation database ([www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)), which is managed by The National Archives on behalf of the UK Government. This research was reviewed by an independent solicitors engaged by Keep Britain Tidy (High Street Solicitors, Liverpool) to ensure that all interpretations of the legislation were correct. The findings of this research are provided at Section 3.1 of this report.

Desk research was also conducted to identify the range of existing schemes and campaigns across the UK that are aimed at reducing public consumption of single-use plastic water bottles and/or increasing uptake of reusable water bottles. The findings of this research are outlined at Section 3.2.

Finally, an online survey was conducted with 2,119 adults across the UK by YouGov. The sample used in this survey was proportionally representative of the broader UK population, in terms of gender, age group and spread across UK government regions. The survey asked respondents about their behaviours, perceptions and motivations regarding their use of reusable water bottles and consumption of single-use plastic water bottles.

The findings of this survey are discussed at Section 3.3. The questionnaire used in the survey is included at Appendix A and a respondent profile is included at Appendix B.

### Statistical significance

Where appropriate, findings from the YouGov public perceptions survey that related to a difference in proportions were tested for statistical significance using a 95% probability. Statistical significance tests are used to determine the likelihood that the same results would be found if the survey was repeated using a different or larger data sample, rather than being due to chance. All difference in proportion findings in this report are statistically significant unless otherwise specified.

## 4 Results and findings

### 4.1 Current UK legislation regarding the provision of free drinking water

#### 4.1.1 Licensed and unlicensed premises

- 1. Licensed premises are required to serve free tap water (but can charge for use of a glass or service when providing the water)**

#### *England and Wales*

All licensed premises in England and Wales are required by law to provide free drinking water to customers upon request<sup>5</sup>. This law applies to all premises that are authorised to supply alcohol under a Premises License (e.g. pubs, bars, nightclubs, cafes, restaurants, takeaway food and drink outlets,

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<sup>5</sup> The Licensing Act 2003 (Mandatory Licensing Conditions) (Amendment) Order 2014, 2014 No. 2440, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2440/contents/made>.

cinemas, theatres, village and community halls) or a Club Premises Certificate (e.g. Royal British Legion, working men’s clubs and rugby clubs). However such premises can charge customers for the use of a glass or their service when serving the free tap water – there is no law to prevent this.

The requirement for licensed premises to provide free water on request first came into force on 6 April 2010 as one of five new mandatory licensing conditions applied to the Licensing Act 2003<sup>6</sup>. This specified that ‘The responsible person shall ensure that free tap water is provided on request to customers where it is reasonably available’. On 1 October 2014 an amendment to this condition came into force. This changed the requirement to provide free ‘tap water’ to free ‘potable water’, so that the Mandatory Licensing Condition now specifies:

*2. The responsible person must ensure that free potable water is provided on request to customers where it is reasonably available.*

The Licensing Act 2003 (Mandatory Licensing Conditions) (Amendment) Order 2014, p. 2<sup>7</sup>.

The UK Home Office’s *Guidance on Mandatory Licensing Conditions*<sup>8</sup> advises that (p. 7):

What is meant by “reasonably available” is a question of fact; for example, it may not be reasonable to expect free water to be available in premises for which the water supply had temporarily been lost because of a broken mains supply and where no alternative (for example, bottled water) is available.

The maximum penalties for breaching a Mandatory Licence Condition are an unlimited fine<sup>9</sup> and/or six months’ imprisonment (Section 136 of Licensing Act 2003). The licensing authority can also review the licence, which may lead to it being revoked, suspended or reduced in licensed hours or allowable activities. In the event of a licensed premises not providing free water, a review of the licence is the most likely course of action.

### **Scotland**

The provision of free potable *tap* water by licensed premises on request has been law in Scotland since 1 October 2011 under Mandatory Conditions for Premises licenses introduced to the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The relevant Condition stipulates that:

*9. (2) Tap water fit for drinking must be provided free of charge on request.*

Schedule 3, Premises Licenses: Mandatory Conditions, *The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005*, 9. (2), p. 101.

The penalties for breach of the mandatory conditions under Schedule 3 are not as severe as those in England and Wales. For example, under the Scottish legislation, a breach is not punishable by

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<sup>6</sup> Licensing Act 2003 (Mandatory Licensing Conditions) Order 2010, 2010 No. 860, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/860/contents/made>.

<sup>7</sup> The Licensing Act 2003 (Mandatory Licensing Conditions) (Amendment) Order 2014, 2014 No. 2440, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2440/contents/made>

<sup>8</sup> Guidance on Mandatory Licensing Conditions: For suppliers of alcohol and enforcement authorities in England and Wales, UK Home Office, September 2014, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/350507/2014-08-29\\_MC\\_Guidance\\_v1\\_0.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/350507/2014-08-29_MC_Guidance_v1_0.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Following the commencement of section 85 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 the cap on fines which can be issued by the Magistrates’ Court for various offences has now been removed. Under this legislation, fines of £5,000 or more are now unlimited, this includes fines for offences committed under section 136 of the Licensing Act, which previously levied a £20,000 fine.



imprisonment or a fine. Instead the establishment's licence may be revoked, suspended or varied- see section 27 of Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

### ***Northern Ireland***

No law regarding the provision of drinking water by licensed premises currently exists. Therefore, licensed premises in Northern Ireland are not legally required to provide drinking water to customers.

Whilst Northern Ireland does not have legislation in place requiring licensed premises to provide free drinking water, it is advisable that premises make it clear that they will charge for water in advance to avoid confusion and any infringement of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

### **2. Unlicensed premises are not required by law to provide free drinking water for customers**

Unlicensed premises (i.e. venues that are not licensed to serve alcohol) are not required by law to provide free drinking water to customers. These types of venues might include unlicensed cafes, restaurants, takeaway food and drink outlets, cinemas, theatres, village and community halls and other venues that do not serve alcohol.

### **3. Temporary events serving alcohol are not legally required to provide free drinking water to customers, but failure to do so may lead to an intervention by the Police or Environmental Health**

A premises user (e.g. an event organiser) can apply for a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) to carry out a 'licensable activity' on unlicensed premises in England or Wales via the local council. Licensable activities include selling alcohol, serving alcohol to members of a private club, providing entertainment such as music, dancing or indoor sporting events, and serving hot food or drink between 11pm and 5am. These events must have fewer than 500 people including staff in attendance at any one time and must last no more than 7 days.

The Mandatory Licensing Conditions that apply to licensed premises under the Licensing Act 2003 do not automatically apply to TENs. However the premises user holding the TEN is expected to adhere to the statutory licensing objectives of the Act. These are 1) the prevention of crime and disorder; 2) public safety; 3) the prevention of public nuisance; and 4) the protection of children from harm. Therefore, if an event is proposed under a TEN that does supply alcohol for consumption on the premises without the supply of free water, there is likely to be an intervention by either the Police or Environmental Health<sup>10</sup>.

### **Other premises types**

No legislation currently exists regarding the provision of free drinking water at the following premises types (provided they are unlicensed):

- Sports ground/stadium
- Leisure centre
- Swimming pool
- Health clubs
- Tourist attractions
- Theatre/concert halls
- Ice rink

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<sup>10</sup> Legal advice provided by City of London Licensing, 21 November 2016.

- Cinema
- Historic building/stately homes
- Miscellaneous Hairdresser
- Beauty salon

#### 4.1.2 Schools

#### 4. Schools are legally required to provide free drinking water to all pupils at all times in England, Scotland and Wales

##### **England**

The legislation that sets the standards for schools premises in England stipulates that<sup>11</sup>:

- Suitable water facilities must be provided to pupils
- These need to be readily accessible and located in a separate area from the toilets
- The facilities must be clearly marked 'drinking water'.

##### **Scotland**

The relevant Scottish legislation stipulates that drinking water must be made available for every pupil, free of charge, on public school premises and hostels provided by education authorities for pupils<sup>12</sup>. The Scottish Government guidance notes for the legislation, provided to support local authorities and schools in meeting their legislated duty, state that "...it is important that [water] consumption is actively promoted"<sup>13</sup> (noting that this guidance is not itself legislated but supports the objectives of the relevant legislation).

##### **Wales**

The Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009<sup>14</sup> requires that:

- 5 (1) Local authorities must ensure that a supply of drinking water is available, free of charge, on the premises of any maintained school.
- 5 (2) When deciding how best to discharge its duty under subsection (1) a local authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers under this subsection.

The current statutory guidance (which local authorities and governing bodies of schools must adhere to) states that "Pupils must have easy access at all times to free, fresh drinking water, especially during breakfast sessions and lunchtimes" and that schools should<sup>15</sup>:

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<sup>11</sup> The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 9, [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1943/pdfs/uksi\\_20121943\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1943/pdfs/uksi_20121943_en.pdf); The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi\\_20143283\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf); *Advice on standards for school premises*, Department for Education, March 2015, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410294/Advice\\_on\\_standards\\_for\\_school\\_premises.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410294/Advice_on_standards_for_school_premises.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> 56(b), Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 2007 asp 15, [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/15/pdfs/asp\\_20070015\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/15/pdfs/asp_20070015_en.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> *Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Scotland Act: Health promotion guidance for local authorities and schools*, Scottish Government, p. 17, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/05/08160456/7>.

<sup>14</sup> Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009, 2009 nawm 3, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2009/3/contents>.

- *signpost water stations throughout the school*
- *provide younger children with a cup or glass of water or let them carry water bottles. Where water bottles are used schools should adhere to the cleaning advice provided within the Welsh Government's Think Water guidance*
- *ensure dining room supervisors direct children to available water sources at lunchtime*
- *promote water availability throughout the school*
- *make pupils aware that taps in toilet areas are not an appropriate source of drinking water*
- *allow pupils to drink water freely throughout the day by promoting water on desks – schools working as part of the WNHSS are encouraged to allow water on desks and 87 per cent of schools now do this.*

### **Northern Ireland**

Surprisingly, there does not appear to be any legislation for the provision of free drinking water in schools in Northern Ireland. There has been, however, guidance issued by the Public Health Agency<sup>16</sup> which refers to a joint venture by the Department of Education, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and the Public Health Agency to set compulsory food standards in schools from September 2007. Standard 5 states that children 'must have easy access at all times to free, fresh, preferably chilled water.'

It is also worth noting that the Drinking Water Inspectorate in Northern Ireland is responsible for regulating the quality of drinking water. The power to do so is provided in the Water Supply (Domestic Systems) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010/157. Under this legislation, the power to regulate extends to domestic supply, which includes schools. The water supply in schools must therefore be suitable to drink and meet the standards set out by the EU Drinking Water Directive.

### **4.1.3 Workplaces**

#### **5. All UK employers must provide free drinking water for employees at all times**

All employers are legally required to provide drinking water for all employees in the workplace at all times<sup>17</sup>. This water needs to be:

- readily accessible, in adequate supply and free from contamination
- conspicuously marked by appropriate signage if there is a risk of people drinking other, non-drinking water.

Employers must also provide a sufficient number of suitable drinking cups or other vessels unless the supply of water is via a jet that people can drink from easily.

The UK Health and Safety Executive states that water should preferably come from the main public supply and that bottled water dispensers are acceptable as a second supply<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> *Healthy eating in maintained schools: Statutory guidance for local authorities and governing bodies*, Guidance document no: 146/2014, June 2014, p. 8, <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/160226-healthy-eating-maintained-schools-en-v2.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> A copy of which can be accessed at: [http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Nutritional%20Standards%20other%20food%20drinks%20single%2009\\_10\\_0.pdf](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Nutritional%20Standards%20other%20food%20drinks%20single%2009_10_0.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, 1992 No. 3004, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/3004/contents/made>; Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993, 1993 No. 37, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/1993/37/contents/made>.

## 4.2 Initiatives and businesses that currently provide access to free drinking water

As identified in Section 4.1 of this report, licensed premises in England, Scotland and Wales are legally required to provide free drinking water to customers, but can charge for the use of a glass and/or service, and have no such obligation to non-customers. Unlicensed premises have no legal obligation to provide free drinking water to customers or non-customers. Therefore, all types of businesses can technically charge members of the public for the provision of drinking water. Despite this, a large number of businesses choose not to, providing free drinking water without additional charges to either customers-only or both customers and non-customers. These range from businesses that actively commit to the practice by being members of 'community water' schemes, through to those that have no company policy in place but tend to provide free water to their customers as part of their service. This section discusses the range of schemes and practices currently in place regarding the provision of free drinking water by businesses, with a particular focus on refilling personal water bottles.

### 4.2.1 Community water schemes

Community water schemes operate in a similar way to the community toilet schemes managed by local authorities across the UK. Local businesses sign up to a scheme on a voluntary basis and commit to providing free drinking water to members of the public, regardless of whether they have made a purchase. Businesses show that they are members of the scheme by displaying stickers or posters in their window. However, unlike community toilet schemes, community water schemes tend to be run by charities and no grant is offered to participating businesses for their service. The research identified at least six community water schemes are currently operating in the UK, as summarised below.

#### Refill campaign – City to Sea<sup>19</sup>

Environmental charity City to Sea launched Refill in Bristol in September 2015 and Refill schemes are now being established in Devon, Bath, Bude and Dorset. The campaign aims to reduce the consumption of disposable plastic water bottles by making it easy, convenient and cheap to refill personal water bottles at participating cafes, shops, hotels and other businesses. Events and festivals have also adopted the Refill scheme. These businesses indicate that they are participants in the scheme by displaying a Refill sticker on their window. In doing so, they commit to welcoming members of the public to refill their water bottles for free, regardless of whether they have made a purchase.

More than 200 businesses are currently signed up to the scheme. These are overwhelmingly independent businesses; while a handful of 'chain' businesses are represented, it appears that this is the initiative of the individual stores rather than a company-wide policy or practice, as other stores in the area that are from the same chain have not signed up. The majority (around 60%) of the businesses are from the hospitality industry, including cafés/takeaway food and drinks outlets (approximately 31% of participating businesses), pubs/bars/nightclubs (17%) and restaurants (13%). Community arts centres and galleries also feature prominently amongst scheme members (9%). The remaining 30% is made up of a broad range of businesses and other organisations, including clothing, accessories and sports retailers, hotels and hostels, offices, opticians, butchers, fishmongers, hairdressers/beauticians, science and environment centres, a bank, a pharmacy, a dry cleaner and a yoga studio.

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<sup>18</sup> *Welfare at Work – Guidance for employers on welfare provisions*, Health and Safety Executive, INDG293(rev1), 2011, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> [www.refill.org.uk](http://www.refill.org.uk)

Refill has a mobile phone app aimed at incentivising users to remember to take their personal water bottles with them to use the refill stations. The app user can earn ten points each time they refill their water bottle at one of the participating refill stations, with a reward of a free Refill-branded stainless steel water bottle (valued at £15) once they reach 1000 points. This app has the added benefit of helping City to Sea to monitor the impacts of their campaign by tracking the (assumed) number of water bottle refills.

#### [tapwater.org](http://tapwater.org)

This scheme, managed by a not-for-profit organisation of the same name, is similar to the Refill campaign. It aims to reduce the consumption of disposable plastic water bottles in the UK by making it easy for people to access free tap water while out and about via a network of participating businesses. More than 1000 businesses and other organisations are currently signed up. These are predominantly located in London and are again mostly independent cafes, restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway food outlets.

tapwater.org uses money raised by sales of its 'lifebottle®' water bottles to help fund the development of its network, though people seeking refills via its network can use any type of water bottle. tapwater.org also sells mains-fed water filters for use in restaurants and workplaces, and offers company sponsorship of water filters in public places such as schools, colleges, hospitals, train stations and shopping plazas at £15 per week.

#### [GiveMeTap!](http://givemetap.org) **Scheme and #MindTheTap campaign**

This scheme, managed by a not-for-profit organisation of the same name, funds clean, safe drinking water in communities across Africa by installing water pumps subsidised by sales of its reusable water bottles in the UK. The scheme has sold over 65,000 bottles since June 2011 and as a result, has installed 20 water projects across Africa, which it says has helped over 16,000 people gain access to clean water for life.

IN 2013, GiveMeTap! launched its #MindTheTap campaign which, like the Refill campaign, aims to make it easier for the London public to access free drinking water while on-the-go by partnering with local businesses (generally cafes, pubs and restaurants) that are willing to provide this to both customers and non-customers. #MindTheTap has a specific focus on building its network around entrances to London Underground tube stations, beginning with Zone 1. This appears to be in part due to health and safety concerns – its website states that:

*“Last year there were 767 cases of fainting on the London Underground, some due to commuters being dehydrated, which led to delays and perhaps stopped you getting where you needed to be!”<sup>20</sup>*

Like Refill, GiveMeTap! has released an app for users to locate nearby taps and businesses where they can refill their bottles. However, GiveMeTap! implies that in order to get free refills, users need a GiveMeTap! bottle, which is presumably a feature of its social enterprise model, however it is not known whether this is the case in practice.

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<sup>20</sup> GiveMeTap! #MindTheTap campaign website, <<http://taps.givemetap.co.uk/mindthetap>>.

### 4.2.2 Other campaigns and initiatives

#### [#OneLess campaign](#)<sup>21</sup> – *Zoological Society of London and Selfridges*

The #OneLess campaign is an initiative of Project Ocean, a long-term partnership between the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and Selfridges which is now in its sixth year.

The #OneLess campaign started in 2015 when Selfridges was the first retailer in the UK to permanently remove all single-use plastic water bottles from sale in its stores restaurants and FoodHalls, alongside plastic carrier bags. Customers are encouraged to use Selfridges reusable water bottles and can refill in store. The Zoological Society of London followed in June 2016 when it ceased selling single-use plastic bottles across both of its zoos. Both zoos now stock Water in a Box, an alternative type of disposable bottled water that uses single-use recyclable paperboard packaging.

#OneLess is a continuing campaign that now aims to make London the first capital city to stop using single-use plastic bottles. Current partners include Thames Estuary Partnership, Comms Inc, Forum for the Future, New Economics Foundation (NEF), Fauna and Flora International, ClientEarth, Institute for European Environmental Policy and the Marine Conservation Society.

#### [LoveTapWater.co.uk](#)

In 2013, a business-backed community project in Bath addressed the issue of single use plastic by launching 'Water Hole' fountains around the city, allowing residents and visitors to have access to free tap water while on-the-go. Backed by Wessex Water and Bath and North East Somerset Council, a water dispenser providing free, fresh drinking water was installed in Bath City Centre and a planning is in place to install a further six.

The project was funded by Alternative Source, a charity set up to raised funds for overseas clean water projects. In return, profits from the sale of LoveTapWater stainless steel bottles are being donated to Alternative source and other water-based charities.

#### [Join the pipe](#)<sup>22</sup>

Join the pipe is a 'social network' of tap water drinkers that aims to build the 'longest water pipe in the world'. Like GiveMeTap!, this social enterprise uses sales from tap water stations and reusable water bottles to fund drinking water and sanitations projects in developing countries. The organisation is based in the Netherlands, but has networks across Europe, Canada, Singapore and Australia.

## 4.3 Public perceptions and behaviours

This section of the report presents and discusses the findings of a public perceptions survey with 2,119 adults across the UK, conducted by YouGov. The questionnaire used in the survey is included at Appendix A and a respondent profile is included at Appendix B.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.zsl.org/conservation/habitats/marine-and-freshwater/one-less>

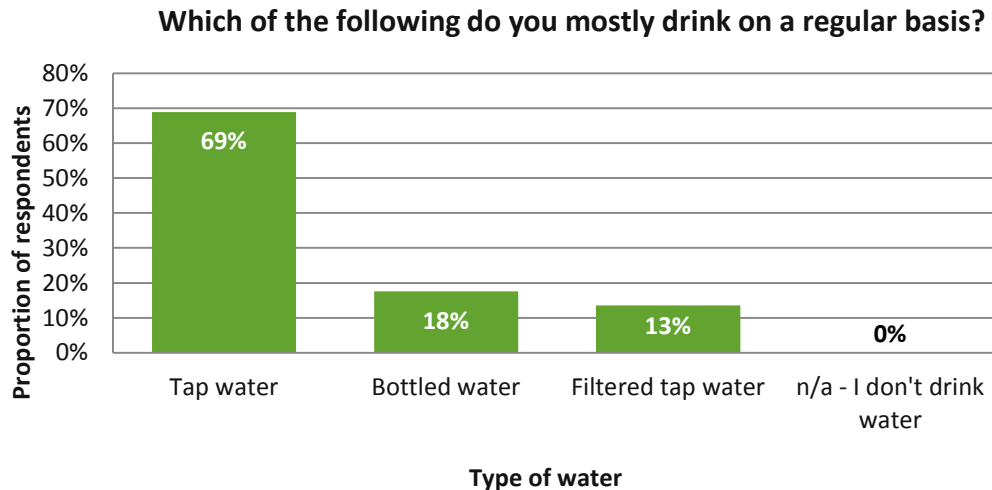
<sup>22</sup> <http://join-the-pipe.org/>

### 4.3.1 Drinking water sources at and away from home

#### 4.3.1.1 Type of water generally consumed

The vast majority of respondents (69%) said that they generally drink tap water as opposed to bottled water (18%) and filtered tap water (13%), as shown in Figure 1. No respondents reported that they don't drink water on a regular basis.

Figure 1: Type of water mostly consumed by respondents

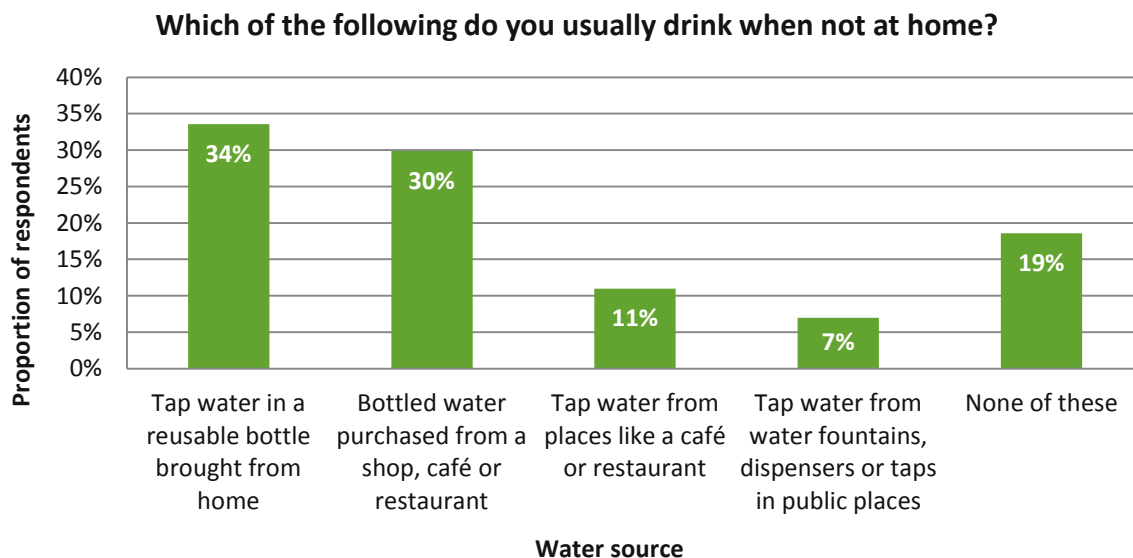


Base: All UK respondents = 2119

#### 4.3.1.2 Source of water consumed when away from home

When away from home, while most respondents (34%) reported that they drink tap water in a reusable water bottle brought from home that they refill as required, a relatively large proportion (30%) said that they drink bottled water purchased from a shop. Just 7% of respondents indicated that they source their drinking water from public water fountains or taps while out and about.

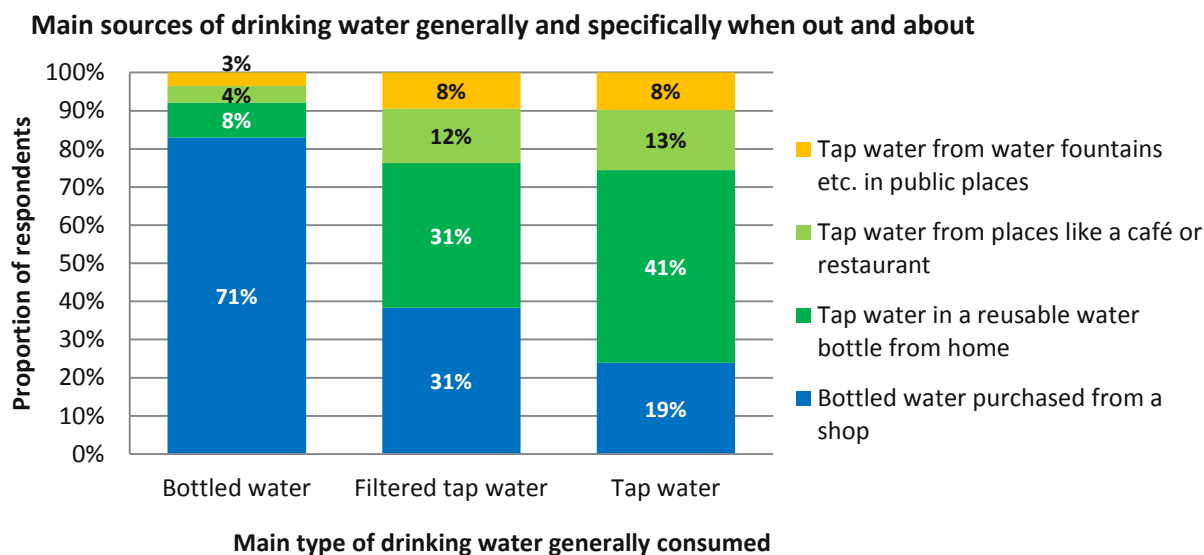
Figure 2: Source of water mostly consumed by respondents when away from home



Base: All UK respondents = 2119

There is a strong correlation between the type of water consumed by respondents generally (i.e. at home) and what people drink when they are away from home, as shown in Figure 3. Interestingly, respondents who generally drink filtered water at home were significantly more likely to purchase bottled water when out and about compared to those who do not drink filtered tap water at home. This indicates that concerns about the cleanliness of tap water may drive bottled water consumption outside of the home, and further evidence of this is discussed at Section 4.3.2.

**Figure 3: Source of water mostly consumed – generally vs when away from home**



Base: Bottled water = 373; filtered tap water = 286; tap water = 1,460.

#### 4.3.1.3 Source of water consumed when undertaking different activities

Respondents were most likely to use a reusable water bottle when travelling long distances (e.g. by bus, train or aeroplane), exercising and when commuting to and/or at work (Figure 4). It is likely that people associate these activities with a heightened need for free and easy access to drinking water, and plan or take action accordingly, for example by habitually packing a bottle with exercise gear. Additionally, people may be more likely to use backpacks and other bags that allow bottles to be easily carried when undertaking these activities compared to others, such as going to a restaurant or cinema. These findings suggest that behavioural interventions that encourage people to plan to incorporate reusable water bottles into other activities may be beneficial in encouraging uptake of reusable water bottles.

During the latter two activities, exercising and commuting/at work, respondents were also least likely to purchase bottled water, whereas respondents were most likely to purchase bottled water when travelling long distances. This may be due to a number of factors. Firstly and specifically relevant to air travel, the ban on liquids at airport security gates may put some people off carrying their own reusable water bottle when travelling by aeroplane. Several airports now offer water fountains for refilling water bottles beyond their security gates, however finding information about these in advance of visiting the relevant airport can be difficult. Desk research by Keep Britain Tidy found very little information available on official UK airport websites, alongside evidence of passengers seeking this information from others via online forums such as TripAdvisor, indicating the need for this information. Further research is required to understand public awareness of water facilities in airports and their influence on behaviours, however interventions that highlight the facilities to passengers when preparing for their

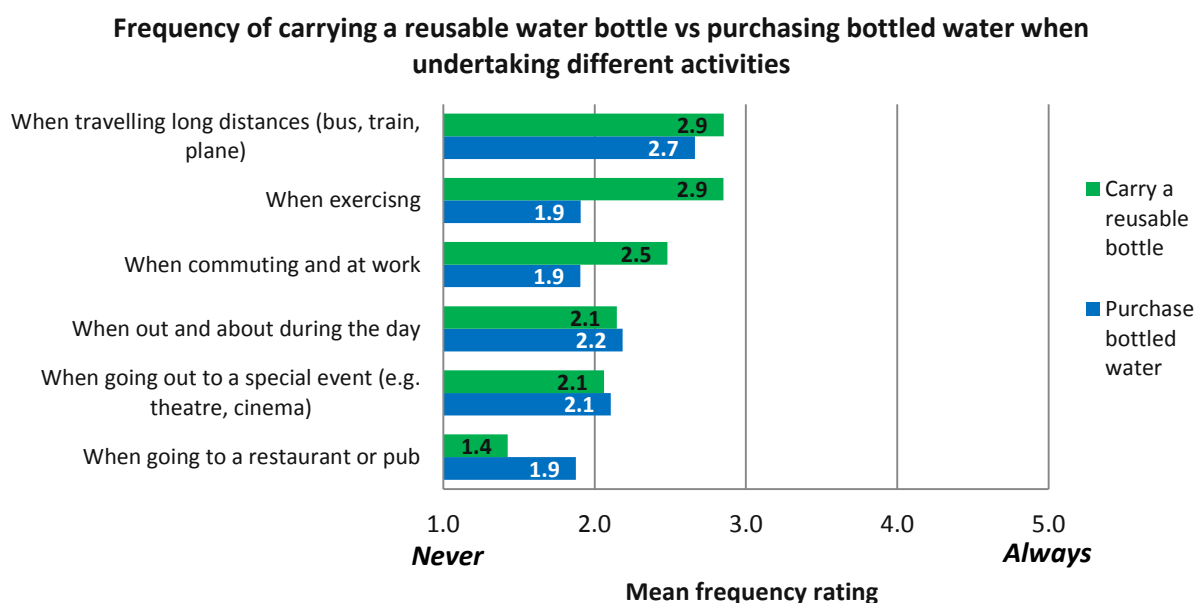


trips may be beneficial. Where these facilities are not available, the interventions could highlight the availability of free water bottle refills from food and beverage outlets once through airport security.

Secondly, the relatively high proportion of people purchasing bottled water when travelling long distances is likely to be influenced by a lack of access to free drinking water. Once on a flight, bus or train, it can be difficult for travellers to access drinking water for refilling bottles. While many airlines will refill personal water bottles on long-haul flights, there may be little awareness of this service amongst passengers, and this service is generally not available on trains and buses. This suggests that even those who tend to carry reusable bottles may be compelled to purchase bottled water when their own water runs out. Indeed, 40% of respondents (base = 2,056) who said that they sometimes, often or always carry a reusable water bottle when travelling long distances said that they also sometimes, often or always purchase bottle water when undertaking this activity. Efforts to improve facilities and access to water for people in transport hubs and while in transit may therefore be beneficial for reducing bottled water consumption. Again, to maximise uptake, such efforts would need to make it easy for people to find the relevant information to allow them to plan reusable water bottle usage into their journeys.

Respondents were more likely to purchase bottled water than carry a reusable water bottle when ‘out and about during the day (e.g. shopping or meeting with friends)’, when ‘going out to a special event (e.g. the theatre, cinema, a sporting or music event)’ and when going to a restaurant or pub. Interventions should therefore be designed to specifically target these activities, for example by helping people to plan to incorporate alternatives to bottled water into these activities (e.g. by prompting people to remember to bring a reusable water bottle at appropriate times and by ‘nudging’ people towards alternatives to bottled water when at shops and venues) and by providing appropriate facilities.

Figure 4: Use of a reusable water bottle and bottled water when undertaking different activities

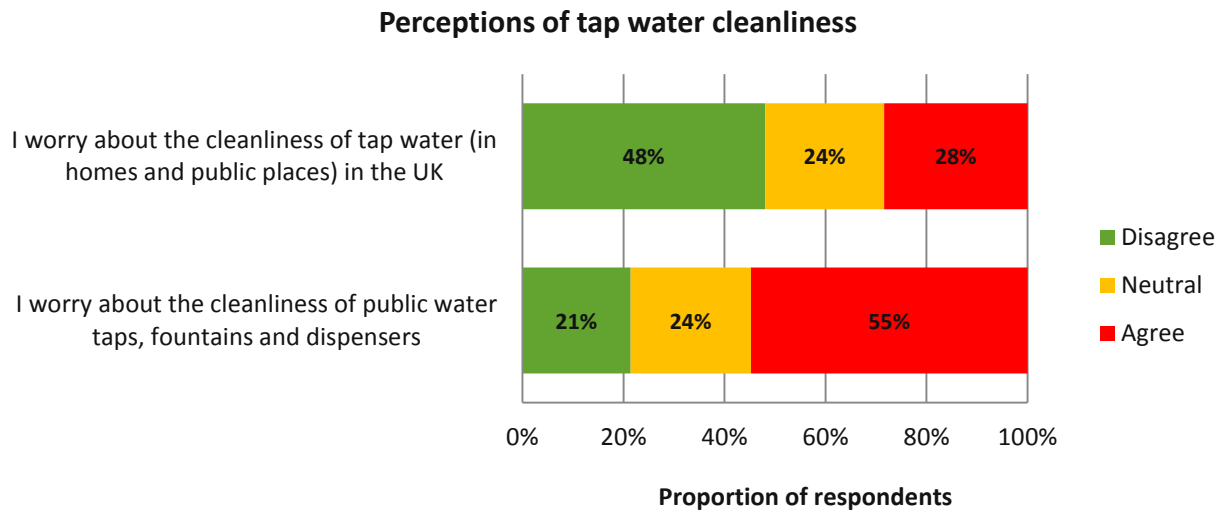


Base: When travelling – carry a reusable bottle = 2056, purchase bottled water = 2065; when exercising – carry a reusable bottle = 1974, purchase bottled water = 2067; when commuting and at work – carry a reusable bottle = 1166, purchase bottled water = 1171; when out and about – carry a reusable bottle = 2068, purchase bottled water = 2067; when going to a special event – carry a reusable bottle = 2051, purchase bottled water = 2064; when going to a restaurant or pub – carry a reusable bottle = 2056, purchase bottled water = 2062.

### 4.3.2 Perceptions of cleanliness

There were clear concerns amongst respondents about the cleanliness of tap water in the UK, particularly with regards to public water taps, fountains and dispensers, with 55% of respondents agreeing that they worry about the cleanliness of these facilities (Figure 5).

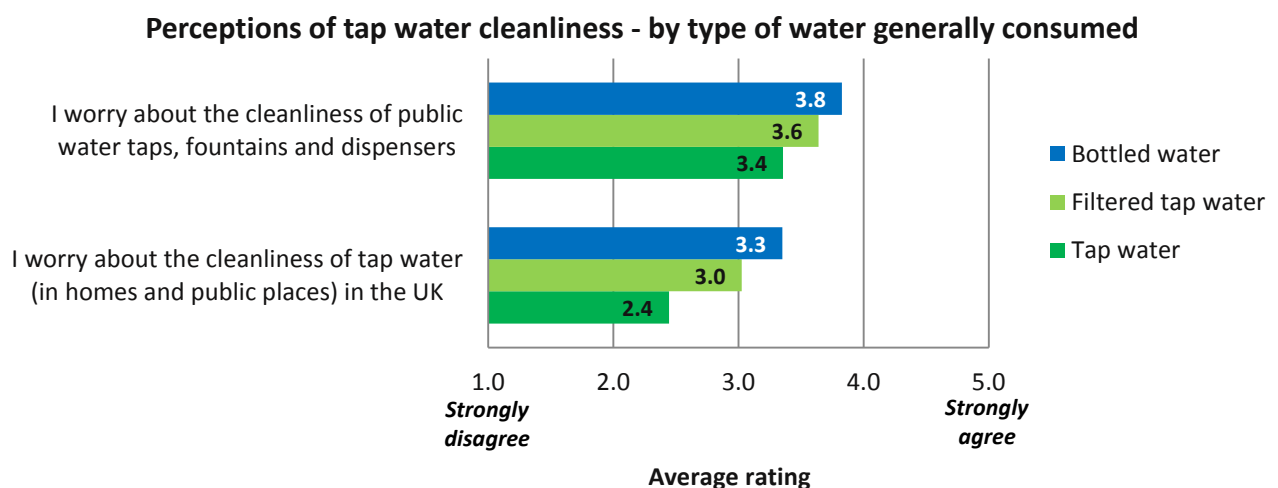
Figure 5: Perceptions of tap water cleanliness in the UK



Base: Cleanliness of public water tap, fountains and dispensers = 2062; cleanliness of tap water (in homes and public places) in the UK = 2073.

This is a key concern in efforts to increase uptake of reusable water bottles in place of bottled water when away from home, as there is a clear correlation between perceptions of cleanliness and the type of water consumed, both generally/at home (Figure 6) and specifically when away from home (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Perceptions of tap water cleanliness and type of water generally consumed

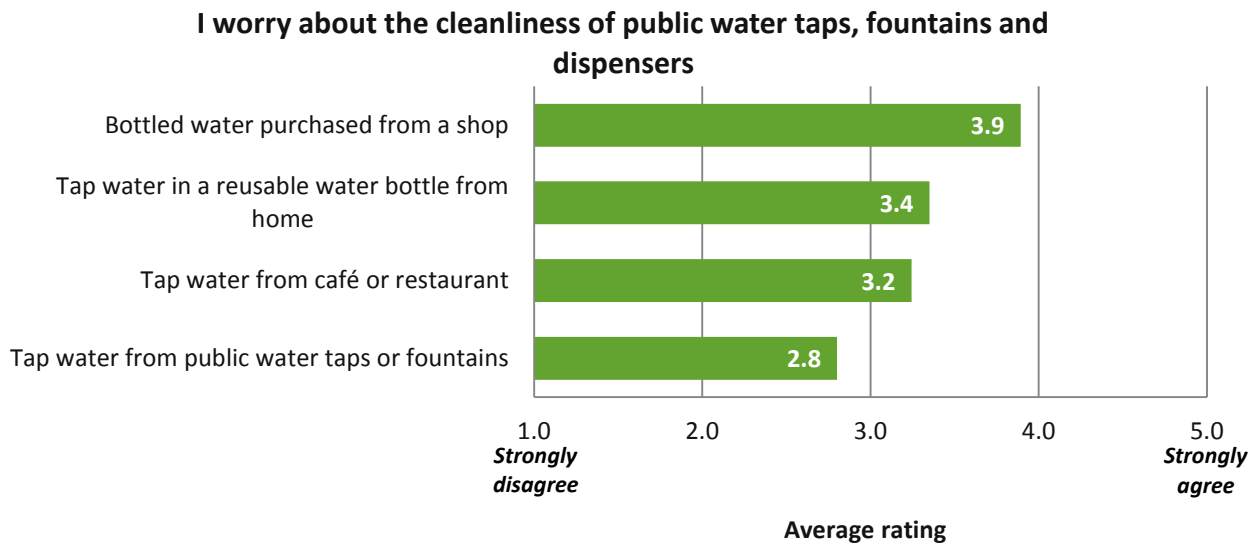


Base: Cleanliness of public water tap, fountains and dispensers – bottled water =362, filtered tap water = 280, tap water - 1420; cleanliness of tap water (in homes and public places) in the UK – bottled water =363, filtered tap water = 284, tap water – 1426.

As shown in Figure 7, a greater proportion of respondents who said that they usually drink bottled water when away from home said that they were concerned about the cleanliness of public water taps and other dispensers. Efforts to address these concerns, for example by improving public water facilities and/or by alleviating unwarranted anxieties about the cleanliness of public water facilities, could

therefore be beneficial in encouraging use of reusable water bottles in place of bottled water when away from home. This finding also highlights the value of using existing networks of hospitality businesses as providers of free drinking water for the public, as facilities that tend to be maintained as part of these businesses' day-to-day activity and as facilities that are likely to be perceived as cleaner than those in public places.

Figure 7: Perceptions of tap water cleanliness and type of water consumed when away from home

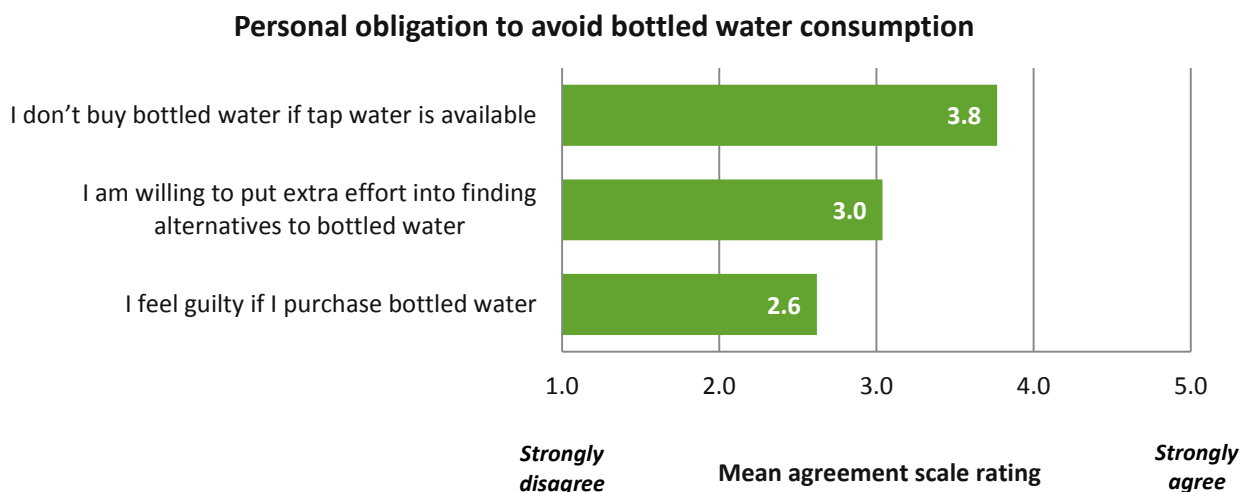


Base: Bottled water purchased from a shop = 624; tap water in a reusable water bottle = 697; tap water from a café or restaurant = 230; tap water from public water taps or fountains = 146.

### 4.3.3 Personal obligation to avoid bottled water

65% of respondents said that they do not purchase bottled water if tap water is available, however respondents demonstrated low levels of personal obligation to avoid bottled water consumption where no tap water is available. Just 33% of respondents agreed that they are willing to put extra time and effort into finding alternatives to bottled water, while 26% of respondents agreed that they feel guilty if they purchase bottled water.

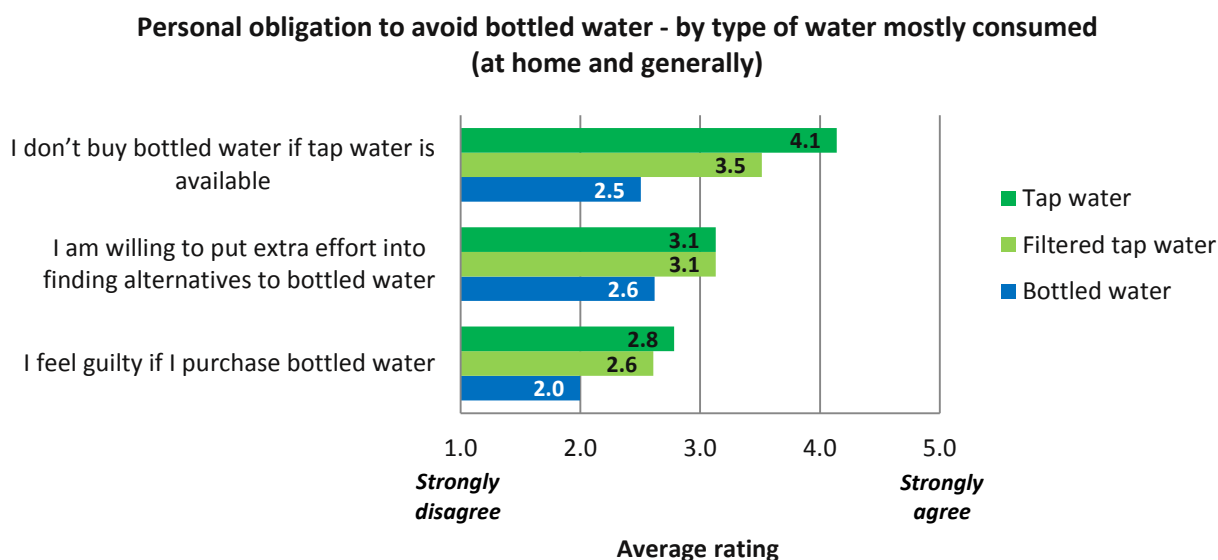
Figure 8: Personal obligation to avoid bottled water consumption



Base: I don't buy bottled water if tap water is available = 2064; I am willing to put extra effort into finding alternatives to bottled water = 2005; I feel guilty if I purchase bottled water = 2062.

Respondents who mostly consume tap or filtered water (at home and generally) consistently displayed higher levels of personal obligation to avoid purchasing bottled water and higher levels of guilt when they do (Figure 9). Interventions that highlight to consumers the benefits of using a reusable water bottle in place of bottled water, and that address the perceived disadvantages, may help to encourage people to put extra effort into avoiding bottled water, as discussed in the following section (Section 4.3.4).

Figure 9: Personal obligation to avoid bottled water consumption

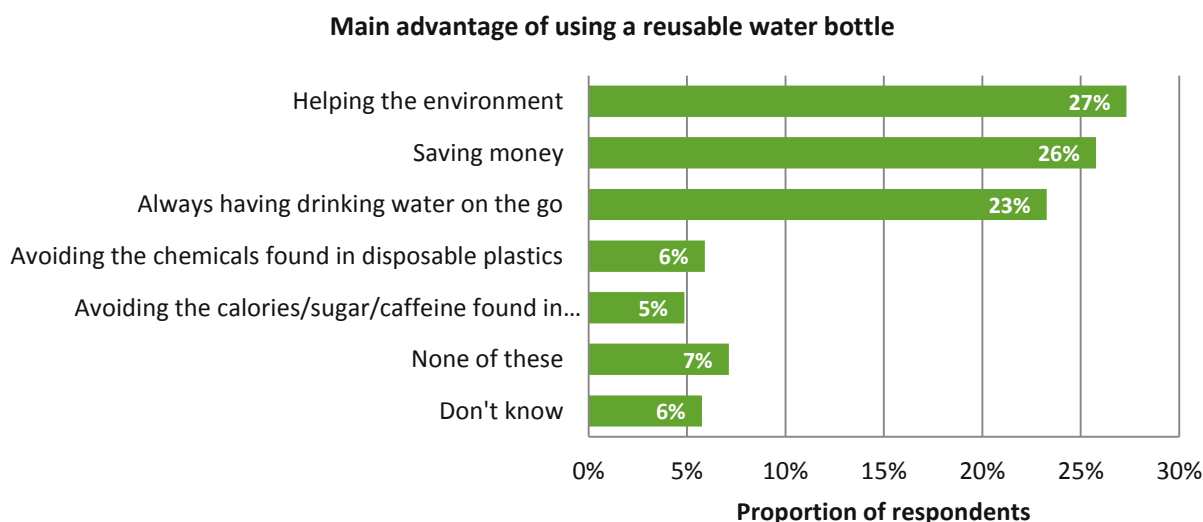


Base: I don't buy bottled water if tap water is available – tap water = 1420, filtered tap water = 280, bottled water = 364; I am willing to put extra effort into finding alternatives to bottled water – tap water = 1376, filtered tap water = 277, bottled water = 352; I feel guilty if I purchase bottled water – tap water = 1417, filtered tap water = 283, bottled water = 362.

#### 4.3.4 Drivers and barriers of reusable water bottle usage

When asked what the main advantage of using a reusable water bottle is, respondents overwhelmingly chose either 'helping the environment' (27%), 'saving money' (26%) or 'always having drinking water on the go' (23%) (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Main advantage of using a reusable water bottle

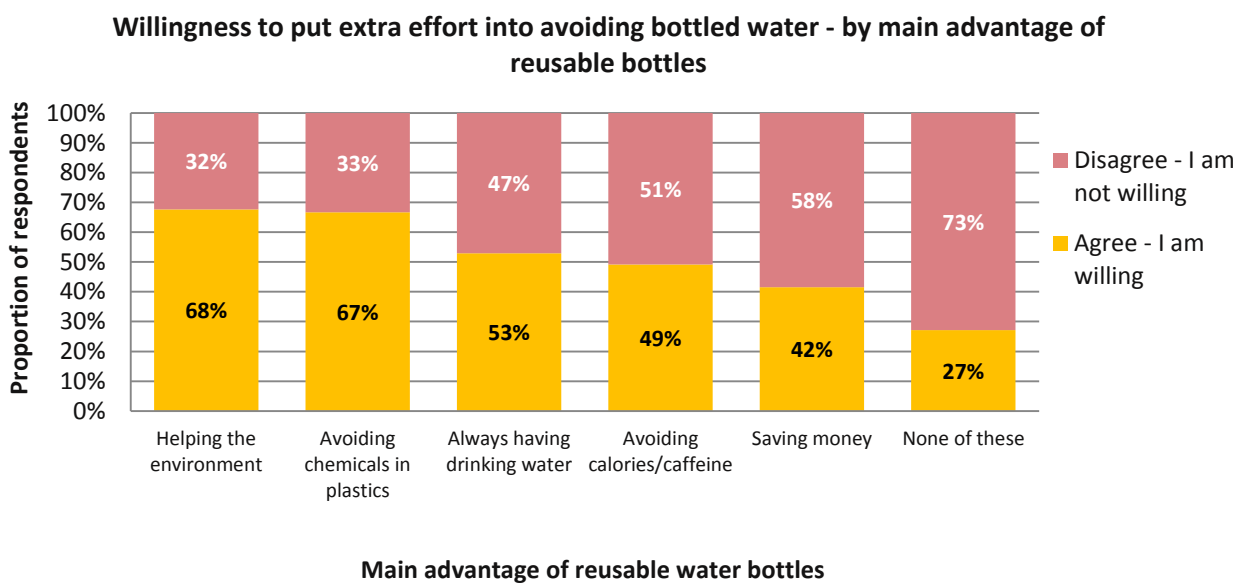


Base: All UK respondents = 2119

Perceptions of the main advantages of reusable water bottles appear to have an influence on personal obligation to avoid bottled water consumption. Respondents who elected ‘helping the environment’ as the main advantage of using a reusable water bottle were significantly more likely to agree (‘tend to agree’ and ‘strongly agree’) that they were willing to put extra effort and time into finding alternatives to bottled water. Conversely, those who did not elect a main advantage of reusable bottles (‘none of these’) were significantly more likely to indicate that they were *not* willing to put extra effort and time into finding alternatives to using bottled water (Figure 11). Interestingly, ‘saving money’ does not appear to be as strong a motivator towards avoiding bottled water if it requires extra time and effort.

This suggests that interventions that highlight monetary savings from using a reusable water bottle may not be as effective in reducing bottled water consumption as appeals to other values, such as environmental, societal and personal health and wellbeing.

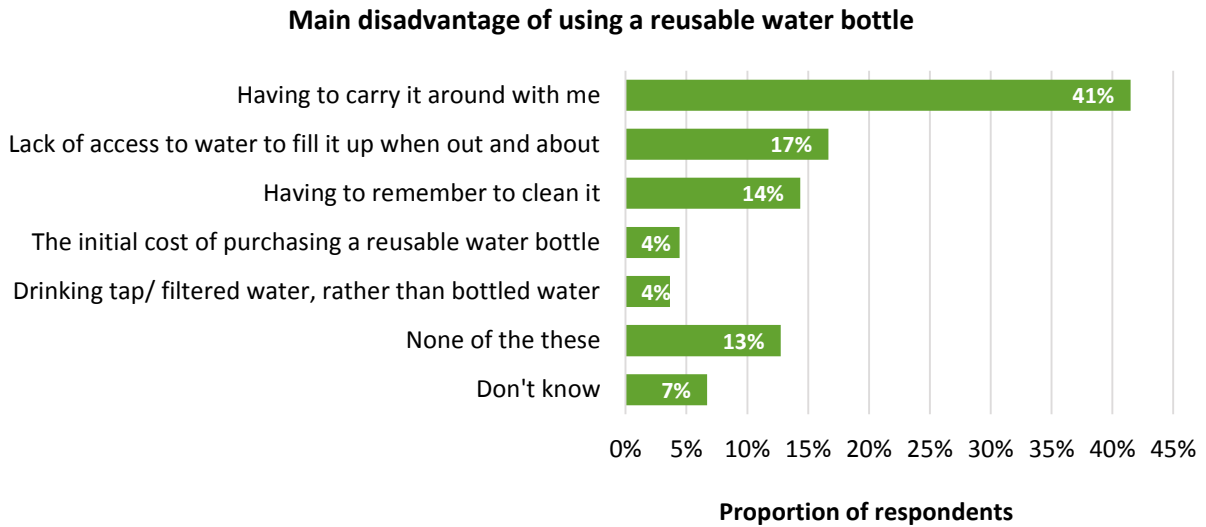
**Figure 11: Willingness to put extra effort into avoiding bottled water – by main advantage of reusable water bottles**



*Base: Helping the environment = 390; avoiding chemicals in plastics = 78; always having water on the go = 293; avoiding calories/caffeine = 61; saving money = 315; none of these = 81. Analysis excludes ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘Don’t know’ responses.*

The main disadvantage of using a reusable water bottle for the majority of respondents (41%) was ‘having to carry it around with me’ (Figure 12).

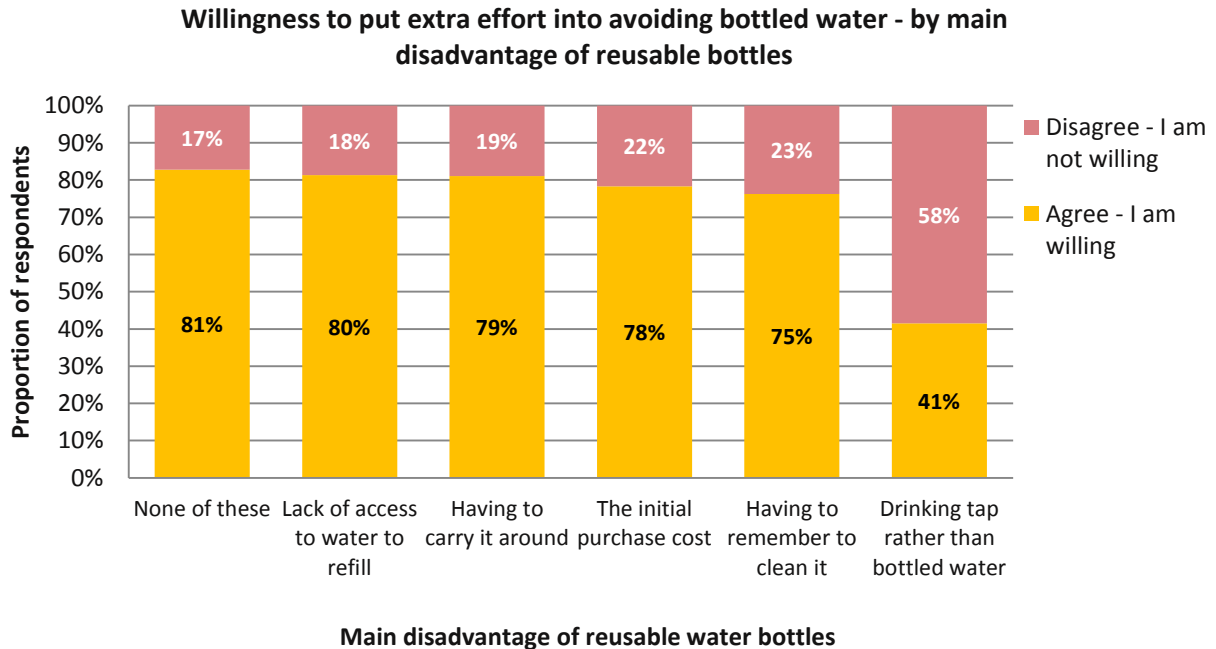
Figure 12: Main disadvantage of using a reusable water bottle



Base: All UK respondents = 2119.

However, perceptions of disadvantages of reusable water bottles do not appear to have a major influence respondents’ willingness to put extra effort into finding alternatives to bottled water, except where respondents elected ‘drinking tap/filtered water, rather than bottled water’ as the main disadvantage (Figure 13).

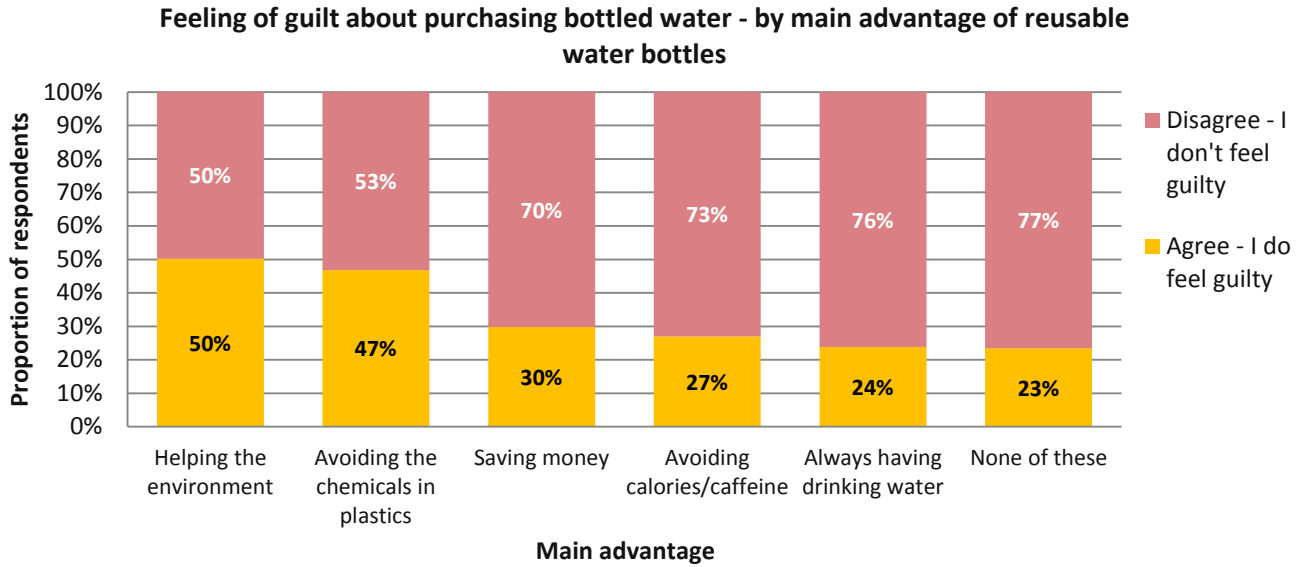
Figure 13: Willingness to put extra effort into avoiding bottled water – by main disadvantage of reusable water bottles



Base: None of these = 208; lack of access to water to refill = 309; having to carry it around = 734; the initial purchase cost = 83; having to remember to clean it = 245 = drinking tap rather than bottled water = 66. Analysis excludes ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ and ‘Don’t know’ responses.

Respondents who elected ‘helping the environment’ and ‘avoiding chemicals found in disposable plastics’ as main advantages of using a reusable water bottle were more likely to say that they feel guilty about purchasing bottled water than those who elected other main advantages (Figure 14).

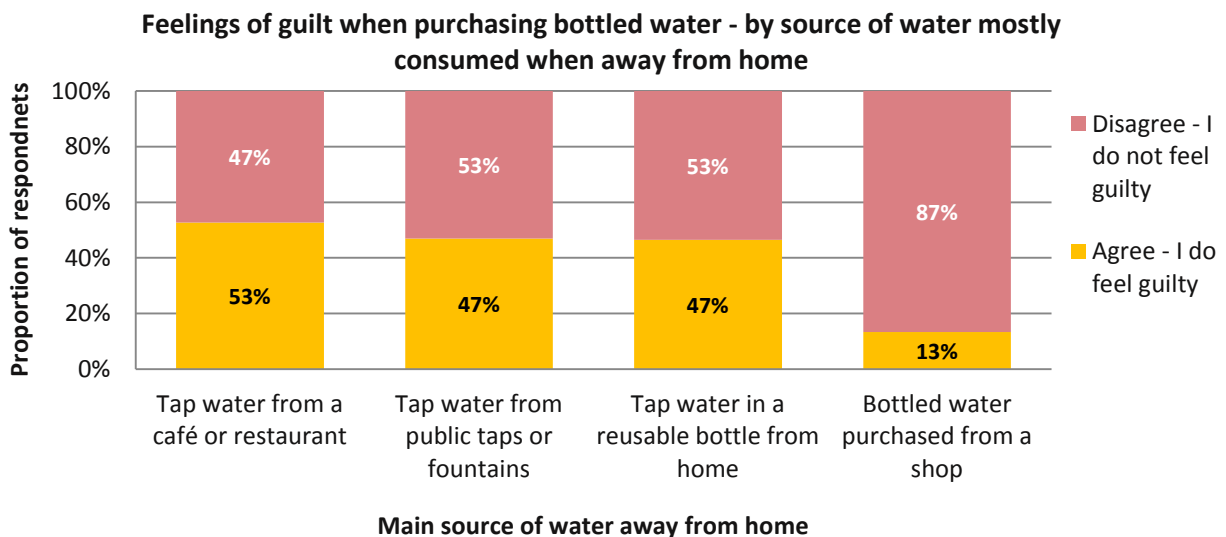
Figure 14: Feelings of guilt about purchasing bottled water – by main advantage of reusable water bottles



Base: Helping the environment = 436; avoiding the chemicals in plastics = 94; saving money = 403; avoiding calories/caffeine = 74; always having drinking water = 377; none of these = 98. Analysis excludes 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 'Don't know' responses.

The results suggest that people who mostly drink tap water when away from home are significantly more likely to feel guilty about purchasing bottled water than those who mostly consume bottled water when away from home (Figure 15). However the extent to which feelings of guilt about purchasing bottled water actually prevents the behaviour amongst those who say they generally drink tap water is unclear, and further research to understand this is recommended.

Figure 15: Feelings of guilt about purchasing bottled water – by main advantage of reusable water bottles



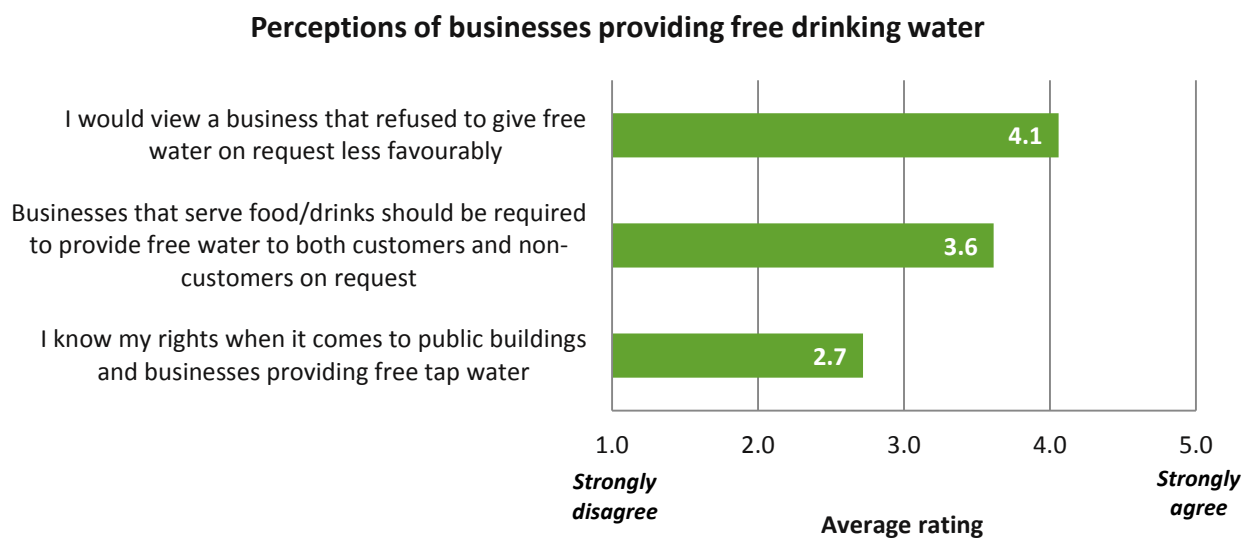
Base: Tap water from a café or restaurant = 504; tap water from public taps or fountains = 165; tap water in a reusable bottle from home = 115; bottled water purchased from a shop = 518.

#### 4.3.5 Perceptions of businesses offering free drinking water

The overwhelming majority (73%) of respondents (base = 2,042) agreed that there should be greater availability of free tap water across the UK.

When asked specifically about the role of businesses in providing free tap or filtered water, 57% of respondents agreed that businesses that serve food and/or drinks should be required to, regardless of whether they are a customer or not, while 77% of respondents (base = 2,043) said that they would view a business less favourably if it refused to give them or someone they know free water on request. Yet only 25% of respondents (base = 1903) agreed that they know their rights when it comes to businesses and public buildings providing free drinking water (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Perceptions of businesses providing free drinking water**

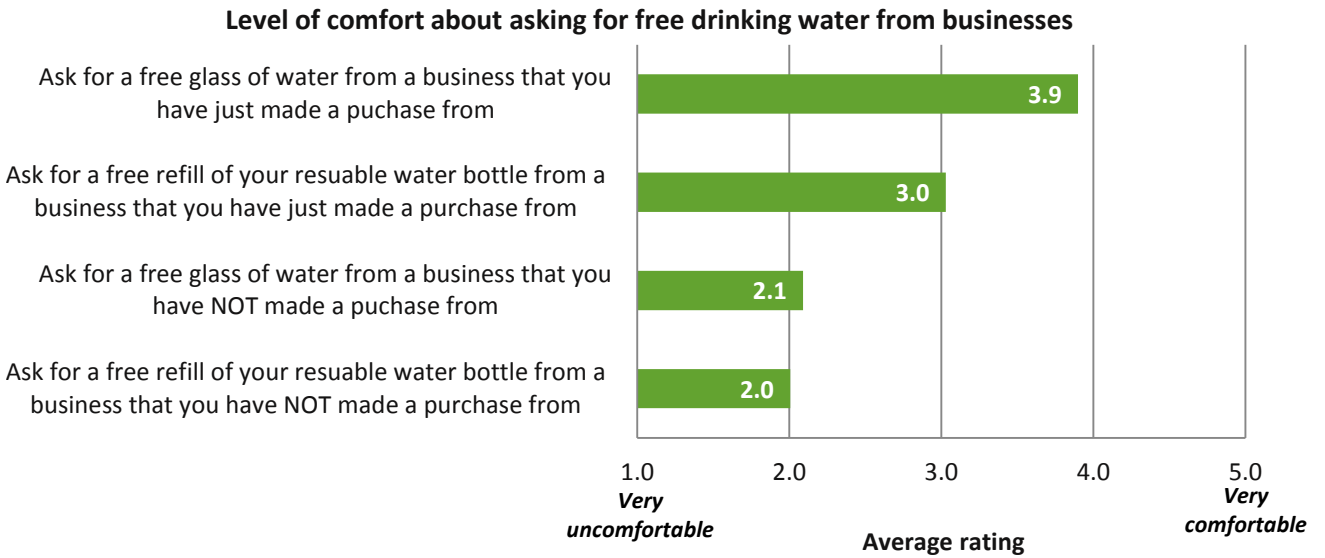


*Base: I would view a business less favourably = 2043; business that serve food/drinks should provide free water = 2040; I know my rights = 1903.*

The majority (71%) of respondents felt ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ comfortable about asking for a glass of water from a businesses that they had just made, or were about to make, a purchase from. A significantly lower proportion of respondents (39%) said that they would feel the same about asking for their reusable water bottle to be refilled from a business that they were purchasing from. When a purchase from the business is taken out of the equation, however, the proportion of people who would feel comfortable about asking for water drops drastically. Just 13% of respondents would feel ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ comfortable about asking for a glass of water under this scenario, and just 10% would about asking for their reusable bottle to be refilled. The average ratings of comfort provided by respondents on a scale of one to five, where one is very uncomfortable and five is very comfortable, are shown in Figure 17.



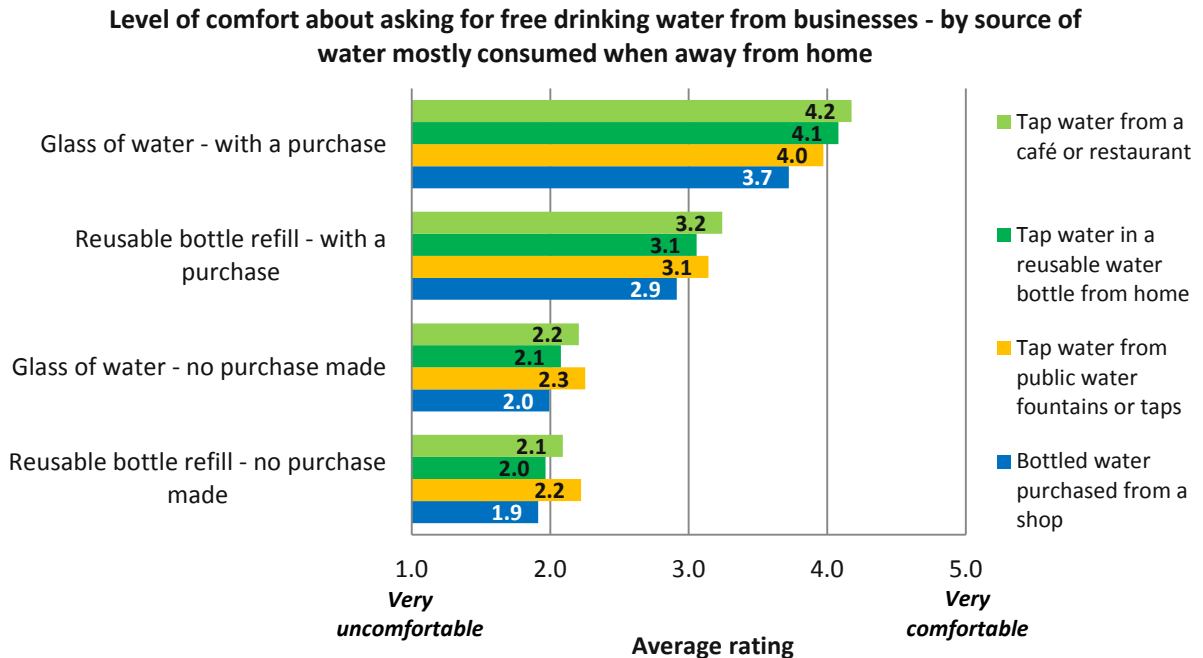
Figure 17: Perceptions of businesses providing free drinking water



Base: A free glass or water from a business that you have just purchased from = 2033; reusable water bottle refill from a business that you have just purchased from = 1989; a free glass or water from a business that you have not purchased from = 2019; reusable water bottle refill from a business that you have not purchased from = 1990.

Respondents who mostly drink bottled water when away from home consistently indicated lower levels of comfort about asking for free tap water from businesses (Figure 18).

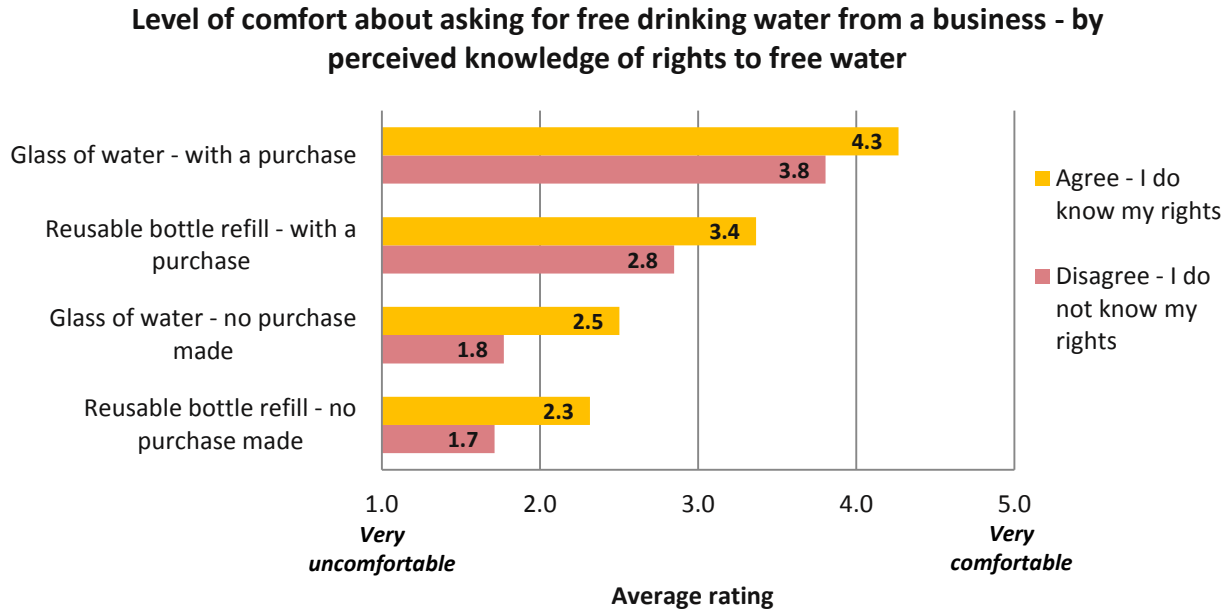
Figure 18: Level of comfort about asking for free drinking water from businesses – by source of water mostly consumed when away from home



Base: Glass of water – with purchase: tap water from café or restaurant = 227, tap water in reusable water bottle = 698, tap water from public water fountains or taps = 146, bottled water = 614; Reusable bottle refill – with purchase: tap water from café or restaurant = 220, tap water in reusable water = 691, tap water from public water fountains or taps = 141, bottled water = 601; Glass of water – no purchase: tap water from café or restaurant = 227, tap water in reusable water bottle = 694, tap water from public water fountains or taps = 146, bottled water = 608; Reusable bottle refill – no purchase: tap water from café or restaurant = 220, tap water in reusable water bottle = 691, tap water from public water fountains or taps = 141, bottled water = 601.

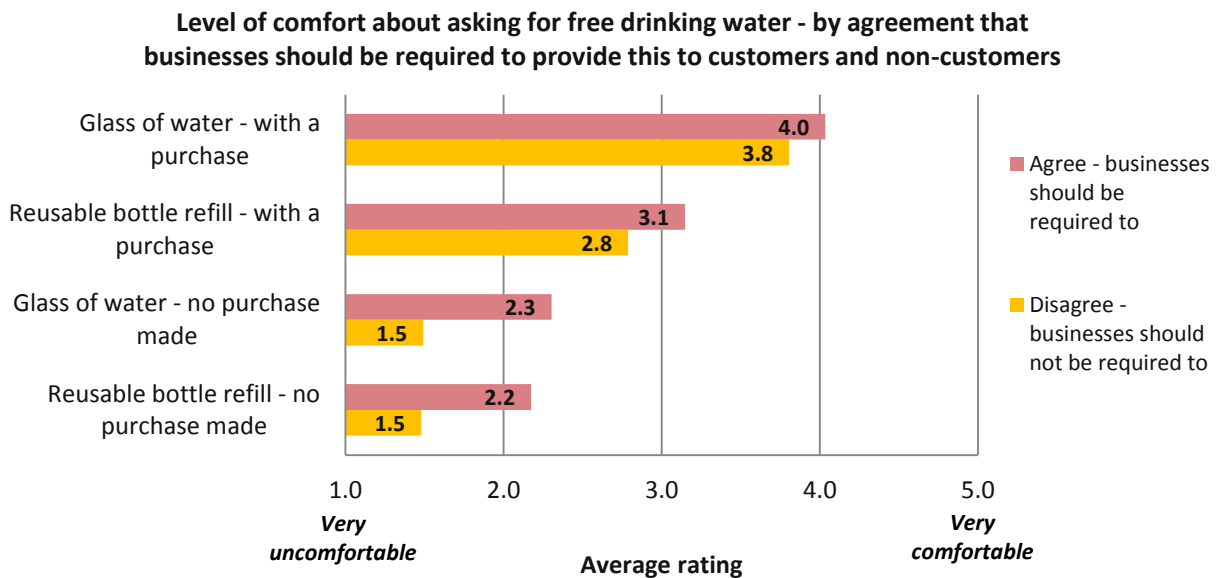
Respondents who said that they knew their rights when it comes to businesses providing free tap water were more likely to indicate that they felt comfortable about asking a business for free drinking water (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Level of comfort about asking for free drinking water from businesses – by source of water mostly consumed when away from home



Base: Glass of water – with purchase: agree = 470, disagree = 820; Reusable bottle refill – with purchase: agree = 465, disagree = 804; Glass of water – no purchase: agree = 470, disagree = 818; Reusable bottle refill – no purchase: agree = 463, disagree = 803.

Figure 20: Level of comfort about asking for free drinking water from businesses – by source of water mostly consumed when away from home



Base: Glass of water – with purchase: agree = 1155, disagree = 421; Reusable bottle refill – with purchase: agree = 1128, disagree = 418; Glass of water – no purchase: agree = 1150, disagree = 419; Reusable bottle refill – no purchase: agree = 1128, disagree = 417.

### 4.3.6 Increasing uptake of reusable water bottles

There is strong evidence that greater availability of tap/filtered drinking water facilities would increase uptake of reusable water bottles across the UK, with 55% of respondents indicating that this would make them ‘a bit more’ or ‘a lot more’ likely to use a reusable water bottle when out and about. It appears that the public view businesses as having a role to play in the provision of drinking water facilities – again, 55% of respondents felt that this would make them more likely to use a reusable water bottle. A large proportion of respondents (49%) indicated that being sure that water is safe to drink would encourage them to use a reusable water bottle. Therefore interventions aimed at providing improved access to tap/filtered water to the public should ensure that health and safety concerns are addressed.

| Would each of the following circumstances make you more or less likely to use a reusable water bottle when out and about? | Proportion of respondents ('a bit more' and 'a lot more' likely) |
|---|--|
| If I knew that businesses would willingly fill up my water bottle   | 55%  |
| If there was greater availability of tap/filtered water   | 55%  |
| If I could be sure that water is safe to drink for refilling my bottle when out and about                                 | 49%  |
| If I knew my rights as a consumer to request tap/filtered water   | 41%  |
| Better designed reusable water bottles e.g. lighter, more stylish, more durable.  | 41%  |
| If I had the ability to filter tap water while on the go  | 35%  |

Base: All UK respondents = 2119.

## 5 Recommendations

This research found strong evidence that the UK public seeks greater availability of reliable, free and safe drinking water facilities that they can rely on when out and about, and more information about where they can find such facilities. Such measures are likely to increase the uptake of reusable water bottles and make a significant contribution towards reducing consumption of bottled water. The following recommendations are aimed at businesses, policy makers, campaign and other organisations working towards this aim.

### 1. Increase awareness about public rights to drinking water from businesses and public buildings

This research found clear evidence that a large proportion of UK public does not feel aware of its rights when it comes to asking for drinking water from businesses and public buildings. It is therefore strongly recommended that efforts be made to increase awareness of current legislation regarding this requirement, for example through awareness campaigns and education. Such measures should target both the public and those required to provide the water on request (i.e. licensed premises). Awareness campaigns could be delivered generally (e.g. through media campaigns), as well as via targeted interventions (e.g. posters on toilet doors and behind bars, and on menus).

### 2. Consider updating current legislation encourage greater access to free drinking water from businesses

Current UK legislation only requires licensed premises to provide free drinking water to customers, and even then, a loophole in the legislation means that businesses can choose to charge customers a for the use of a glass and/or for service. It is recommended that current legislation be updated to:

- prohibit businesses from charging customers for the use of a glass and/or service when providing free drinking water;
- expand the types of businesses required to provide free drinking water to all those that serve food and/or drinks, regardless of whether they are licenses.

### **3. Encourage businesses to provide free drinking water to both customers and non-customers, and to promote their willingness to do this to the public**

This research found that the UK public feels uncomfortable about asking businesses for free drinking water in a reusable water bottle when making a purchase, and in either a glass or reusable water bottle when no purchase is being made. It is strongly recommended that businesses be encouraged to offer free drinking water to both customers and on-customers on request, and to actively promote this to the public (e.g. on shop fronts). This research identified a number of community water schemes that are successfully working with local businesses to this end – for example, the Refill, tapwater.org and GiveMeTap! schemes. These use window stickers and mobile phone applications to identify and promote to members of the public those businesses that are members of the scheme, and which are therefore willing to provide free drinking water to both customers and non-customers. It is therefore recommended BRITA, government and other organisations explore opportunities for working with such schemes to increase their reach and effectiveness. Utilising drinking water infrastructure that is already in place and maintained by local businesses is an efficient and cost effective way to build a network of safe and accessible public drink water facilities.

Keep Britain Tidy has heard anecdotal evidence that businesses can benefit financially from community water schemes, as they encourage new customers. This research also found that members of the public view businesses that refuse to provide free drinking water less favourably. Such considerations should be highlighted to businesses when engaging them to sign up to community water schemes.

### **4. Work with transport providers and hubs to improve access to free drinking water for the public when travelling**

This research found evidence that the public seeks easy access to drinking water when they are travelling long distances. A relatively large proportion of survey respondents said that they were likely to carry a reusable water bottle when travelling, however a high proportion was also likely to purchase bottled water when undertaking this activity. Improving access to free drinking water when travelling long distances by aeroplane, train, bus or car can be thought of as ‘low hanging fruit’, as people are more likely to remember to pack a reusable water bottle when preparing for their journey, and to carry a bag that will allow them to easily carry a reusable water bottle. Yet there is currently a lack of public water fountains and taps at transport hubs such as airports, train and bus stations and motorways service stations, and where these do exist, very little information is provided to allow the public to plan accordingly. It is therefore strongly recommended that efforts be made to improve current drinking water infrastructure at transport hubs and (where possible) on public transport, and to compliment this with timely information and ‘nudges’ to encourage utilisation. For example, information about water facilities could be provided on transport provider website, tickets and signage. ‘Nudge’ style prompts could be used to remind transport users to pack a reusable water bottle (e.g. when purchasing tickets or in travel information emails) and to draw attention to water facilities on site (e.g. by increasing the salience of the water facility itself or by using pavements stickers or footprints to nudge people towards the nearest facility).

## **5. Design interventions to encourage people to habitually incorporate reusable water bottles and other alternatives to bottled water into their day-to-day activities**

This research found evidence to suggest that people habitually pack reusable water bottles when undertaking certain activities such as long distance travel, exercise and when commuting to or at work. However people were less likely to pack a reusable water bottle, and more likely to purchase bottled water, when going out and about during the day, when going to a special event such as a concert or to the cinema, and when going to a pub or restaurant. It is therefore recommended that interventions be design to encourage people to pack a reusable water bottle when undertaking these activities and to access free drinking water once away from home. Values-based education and campaigns are recommended to raise build motivation and personal commitment towards avoiding bottled water (for example, this research found that ‘helping the environment’ appears to be a strong motivator – personal and societal health and wellbeing are other intrinsic values that could also be beneficial). Interventions should also be designed to prompt people to pack a reusable water bottle, to ask a business for a refill or glass of water, and to draw attention to public drinking water facilities where appropriate. For example, timely prompts could be designed to engage people at different points throughout the day, such as when looking up the weather or news in the morning, when entering and leaving transport stations, when arriving at a shopping centre or main street, and so on.

## **6. Consider designing reusable water bottles that are easier to carry when on-the-go and when not carrying a bag**

It is recommended that new reusable bottle designs be explored that allow people to more easily carry them while out and about without a carry bag. For example, these could include small, slim, rectangular bottles designed to be carried in a pocket, similar to a hipflask; bottles made of materials that allow them to expand when filled, but collapse when less full or empty; and belt

## **7. Raise public awareness of the cleanliness and quality of UK tap water, and filtering on-the-go options**

This research found evidence that people who generally tend to consume bottled water as opposed to tap water are motivated by concerns of tap water cleanliness. Yet tap water in the UK is amongst the cleanest in the world. It is therefore recommended that efforts be made to raise public awareness of the high standard of cleanliness and quality of tap water in the UK, in itself and in comparison to bottled water standards. Raising awareness of options for filtering tap water on-the-go may also be beneficial for encouraging uptake of reusable water bottles where concerns about the cleanliness of tap water still exist. It is recommended that research be conducted to better understand the drivers of concerns about tap water cleanliness to ensure that interventions to address this are targeted and effective.

# **6 Conclusion**

This research found evidence that a large proportion of the UK public is willing and able to take action to reduce its consumption of bottled water. However a number of barriers appear to be preventing widespread uptake of reusable water bottles and/or drinking water facilities when out and about. These include a lack of awareness regarding rights to drinking water from businesses, a lack of confidence about asking businesses for free drinking water, a lack of access to free drinking water facilities when out and about, and a lack of information about where to find these where they do exist. Based on the findings of the research, Keep Britain Tidy believes that with greater support from government, business and other sectors, local

businesses that serve food and/or drinks could be effectively utilised as a 'virtual' network of public water fountains. Indeed a number of schemes aimed at encouraging this have been identified. In addition, this report has made a number of recommendations aimed at increasing uptake of reusable water bottles as an alternative to bottled water via intervention to provide better and more timely information, infrastructure and prompts.

# Appendix A – public perceptions survey questionnaire

## Public perceptions survey

1. Which ONE, if any, of the following do you mostly drink on a regular basis?

*single code*

- a) Tap water
- b) Filtered tap water
- c) Bottled water
- d) Not applicable – I don't drink water

For the following question, by 'reusable water bottle', we mean a bottle for carrying water or other drinks which is designed to be refilled over and over again. This does not include plastic water/drinks bottles intended for single use.

2. Thinking specifically about drinking water when you are not at home...

Which, if any, of the following do you usually drink?

*Randomise; single code*

- a) Tap water in a reusable water bottle that you have brought with you from home and that you refill as required
- b) Tap water from water fountains, dispensers or taps in public places
- c) Tap water from places like as a café or restaurant
- d) Bottled water that you have purchased from a shop, café or restaurant
- e) None of these.

As a reminder, 'reusable water bottle', we mean a bottle for carrying water or other drinks which is designed to be refilled over and over again. This does not include plastic water/drinks bottles intended for single use.

3. How frequently, if at all, do you tend to carry a reusable water bottle with you when you are doing each of the following? (Please select one option on each row)

*RANDOMISE*

|  | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Always | Don't know / can't recall |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|---------------------------|
| When out and about during the day, e.g. shopping or meeting with friends                           | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      | 6                         |
| When exercising  | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      | 6                         |
| When commuting and at work   | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      | 6                         |
| When traveling long distances, e.g. by bus, train or plane   | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      | 6                         |
| When going to a restaurant, bar or pub   | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      | 6                         |
| When going out to a special event e.g. going to the theatre, the cinema, a sporting or music event | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4     | 5      | 6                         |

4. How frequently, if at all, do you tend to purchase bottled water when you are doing each of the following? (Please select one option on each row)

*RANDOMISE*

|  | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Usually | Always | Don't know / Not applicable |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|-----------------------------|
| When out and about during the day, e.g. shopping or meeting with friends                           | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4       | 5      | 6                           |
| When exercising  | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4       | 5      | 6                           |
| When commuting and at work   | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4       | 5      | 6                           |
| When traveling long distances, e.g. by bus, train or plane   | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4       | 5      | 6                           |
| When going to a restaurant, bar or pub   | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4       | 5      | 6                           |
| When going out to a special event e.g. going to the theatre, the cinema, a sporting or music event | 1     | 2      | 3         | 4       | 5      | 6                           |

5. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (Please select one option on each row)

*RANDOMISE*

|  | Strongly disagree | Slightly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly agree | Strongly agree | Don't know / Not applicable |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| I am willing to put extra effort and time into finding alternatives to using bottled water   | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| I feel guilty if I purchase bottled water  | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| I don't buy bottled water if tap water is available  | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| I worry about the cleanliness of tap water (in homes and in public places) in the UK   | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| I worry about the cleanliness of public water taps, fountains and dispensers   | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| I know my rights when it comes to public buildings and businesses providing free tap water   | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| Businesses that serve food and/or drinks should be required to provide free tap or filtered water to people on request, regardless of whether they are a customer or not | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| If a business refused to give free tap or filtered water on request to me or someone I know, I would view them less favourably   | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |
| There should be greater availability of free tap water across the UK (e.g. more water fountains, more buildings that offer free tap water, etc.)                         | 1                 | 2                 | 3                          | 4              | 5              | 6                           |



6. How comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel if you were to do each of the following actions?

|   | Very uncomfortable | Fairly uncomfortable | Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable | Fairly comfortable | Very comfortable | Don't know |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| <b>Ask for a free glass of water</b> from a café, shop or other type of business that you have just made, or plan to make, a purchase from  | 1                  | 2                    | 3                                     | 4                  | 5                | 6          |
| <b>Ask for a free glass of water</b> from a café, shop or other type of business that you <u>have not</u> made, and do not plan to make, a purchase from  | 1                  | 2                    | 3                                     | 4                  | 5                | 6          |
| <b>Ask for your reusable water bottle to be refilled with free drinking water</b> from a café, shop or other type of business that you have just made, or plan to make, a purchase from               | 1                  | 2                    | 3                                     | 4                  | 5                | 6          |
| <b>Ask for your reusable water bottle to be refilled with free drinking water</b> from a café, shop or other type of business that you <u>have not</u> made, and do not plan to make, a purchase from | 1                  | 2                    | 3                                     | 4                  | 5                | 6          |

As a reminder, 'reusable water bottle', we mean a bottle for carrying water or other drinks which is designed to be refilled over and over again. This does not include plastic water/drinks bottles intended for single use.

7. Which of the following do you see as the main advantage of using a reusable water bottle? *Single code*

- a. Helping the environment
- b. Saving money
- c. Always having drinking water on the go
- d. Avoiding the chemicals found in disposable plastics
- e. Avoiding the calories/sugar/caffeine found in other drinks
- f. None of the above

8. Which of the following do you see as the main disadvantage of using a reusable water bottle? *Single code*

- a. Having to carry it around with you
- b. Having to remember to clean it
- c. Lack of access to water to fill it up when out and about
- d. Drinking tap/filtered water, rather than bottled water
- e. The initial cost of purchasing a reusable water bottle
- f. None of the above

9. Would each of the following circumstances make you more or less likely to use a reusable water bottle when out and about, or would it make no difference? (Please select one option on each row)

|   | <b>A lot less likely</b> | <b>Fairly less likely</b> | <b>It would make no difference</b> | <b>Fairly more likely</b> | <b>A lot more likely</b> | <b>Don't know</b> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| If there was greater availability of tap/filtered water                                   | 1                        | 2                         | 3                                  | 4                         | 5                        | 6                 |
| If I knew my rights as a consumer to request tap/filtered water                           | 1                        | 2                         | 3                                  | 4                         | 5                        | 6                 |
| Better designed reusable water bottles e.g. lighter, more stylish, more durable.          | 1                        | 2                         | 3                                  | 4                         | 5                        | 6                 |
| If I had the ability to filter tap water while on the go                                  | 1                        | 2                         | 3                                  | 4                         | 5                        | 6                 |
| If I knew that businesses would willingly fill up my water bottle                         | 1                        | 2                         | 3                                  | 4                         | 5                        | 6                 |
| If I could be sure that water is safe to drink for refilling my bottle when out and about | 1                        | 2                         | 3                                  | 4                         | 5                        | 6                 |

## Appendix B – public perceptions survey respondent profile

| <b>Gender</b>      |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Female             | 1159        |
| Male               | 960         |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>2119</b> |

| <b>Age group</b>   |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 18-24              | 250         |
| 25-34              | 233         |
| 35-44              | 371         |
| 45-54              | 398         |
| 55+                | 867         |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>2119</b> |

| <b>Nation</b>      |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| England            | 1786        |
| Northern Ireland   | 54          |
| Scotland           | 176         |
| Wales              | 103         |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>2119</b> |

| <b>Region</b>            |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| East Midlands            | 171         |
| East of England          | 192         |
| London                   | 261         |
| North East               | 80          |
| North West               | 230         |
| Northern Ireland         | 54          |
| Scotland                 | 176         |
| South East               | 292         |
| South West               | 191         |
| Wales                    | 103         |
| West Midlands            | 185         |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 184         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>       | <b>2119</b> |

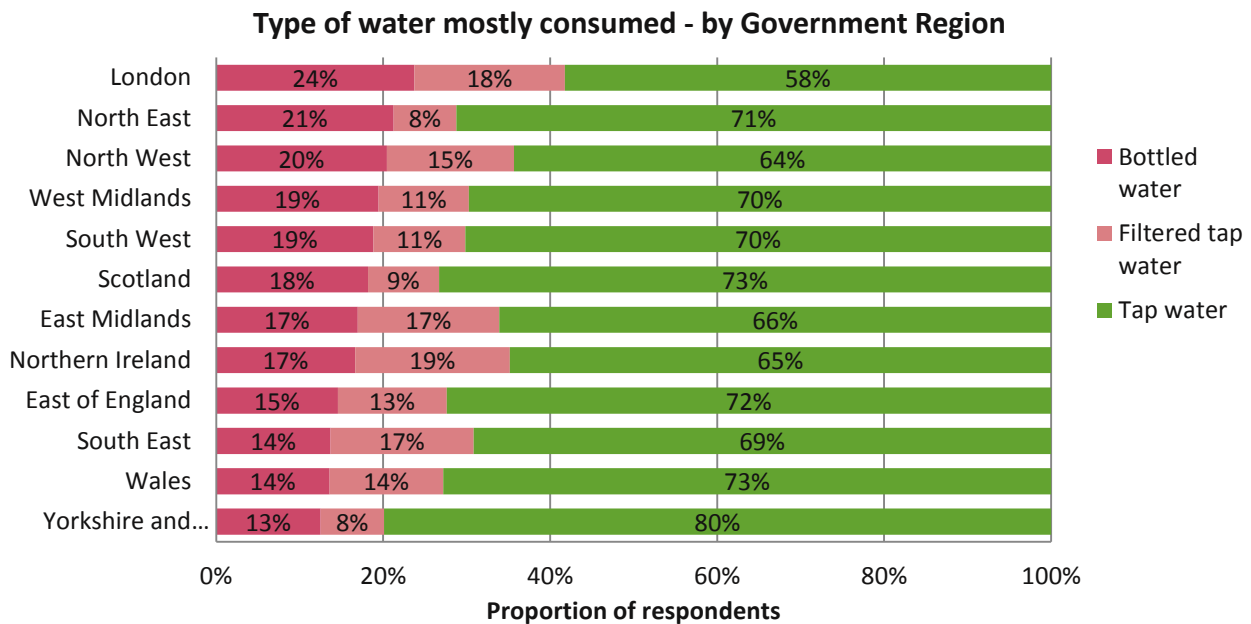
| <b>Employment status</b>                      |             |
|---|-------------|
| Full time student                             | 141         |
| Not working                                   | 153         |
| Other   | 49          |
| Retired                                       | 505         |
| Unemployed                                    | 77          |
| Working full time (30 or more hours per week) | 863         |
| Working part time (8-29 hours a week)         | 287         |
| Working part time (Less than 8 hours a week)  | 44          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                            | <b>2119</b> |

| <b>Number of children in household</b> |             |
|--|-------------|
| No children                            | 1589        |
| 1 child                                | 258         |
| 2 children                             | 188         |
| 3 to 4 children                        | 52          |
| 5 or more children                     | 7           |
| Don't know/prefer not to say           | 25          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                     | <b>2119</b> |

| <b>Social grade</b>   |             |
|---|-------------|
| A - High managerial, administrative or professional                                       | 277         |
| B - Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional                               | 373         |
| C1 - Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional          | 679         |
| C2 - Skilled manual workers   | 352         |
| D - Semi and unskilled manual workers   | 194         |
| E - State pensioners, casual or lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only | 244         |
| <b>Grand Total</b>  | <b>2119</b> |

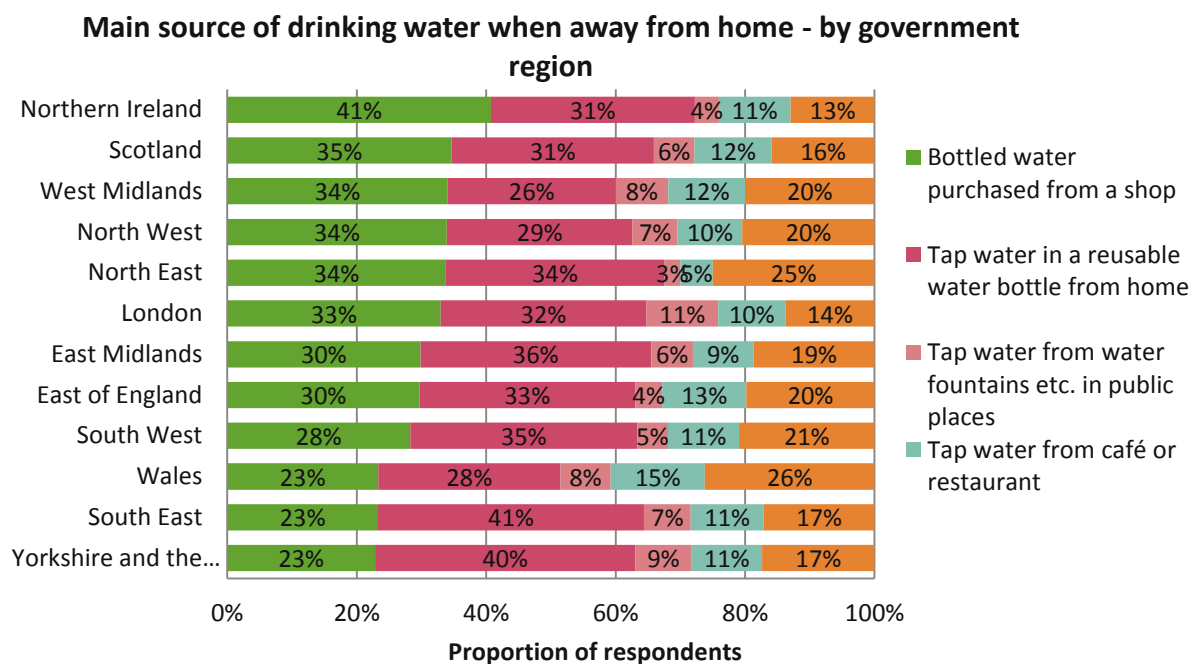
# Appendix C – public perceptions and behaviours by Government Region

Figure 21: Type of water mostly consumed – by Government Region



Base: London = 261, North East = 80, North West = 230, West Midlands = 185, South West = 191, Scotland = 176, East Midlands = 171, Northern Ireland = 54, East of England = 192, South East = 292, Wales = 103, Yorkshire and the Humber = 184.

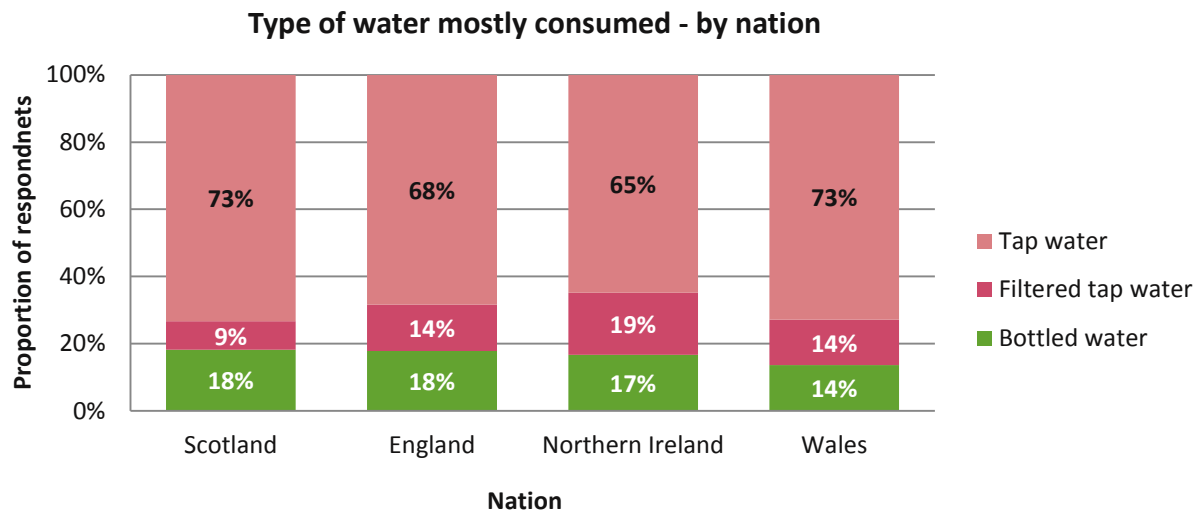
Figure 22: Main source of drinking water when away from home – by Government Region



Base: London = 261, North East = 80, North West = 230, West Midlands = 185, South West = 191, Scotland = 176, East Midlands = 171, Northern Ireland = 54, East of England = 192, South East = 292, Wales = 103, Yorkshire and the Humber = 184.

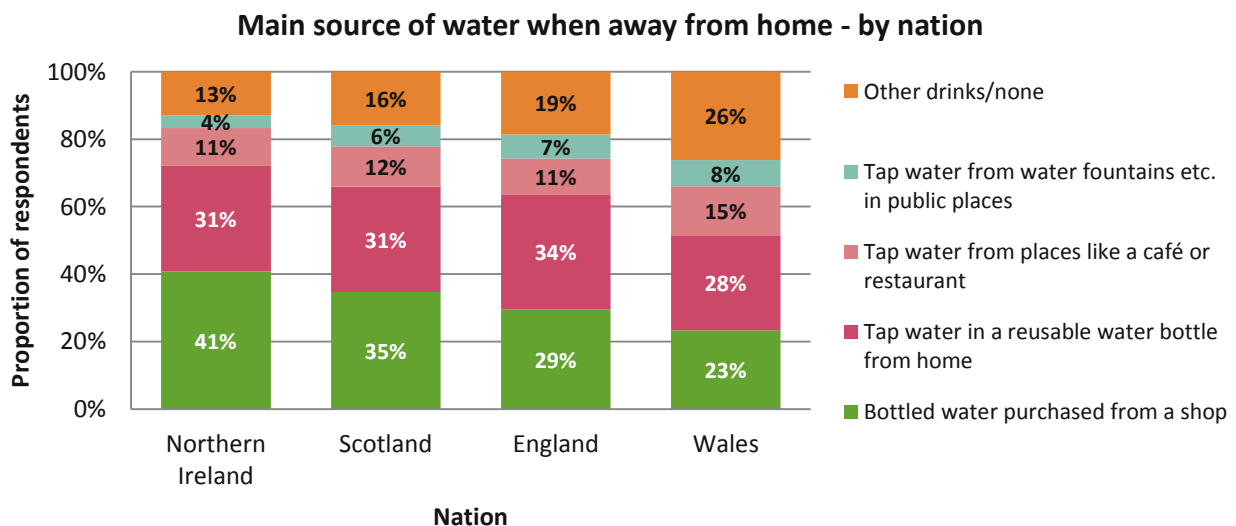
## Appendix D – public perceptions and behaviours by nation

Figure 23: Type of water mostly consumed – by nation



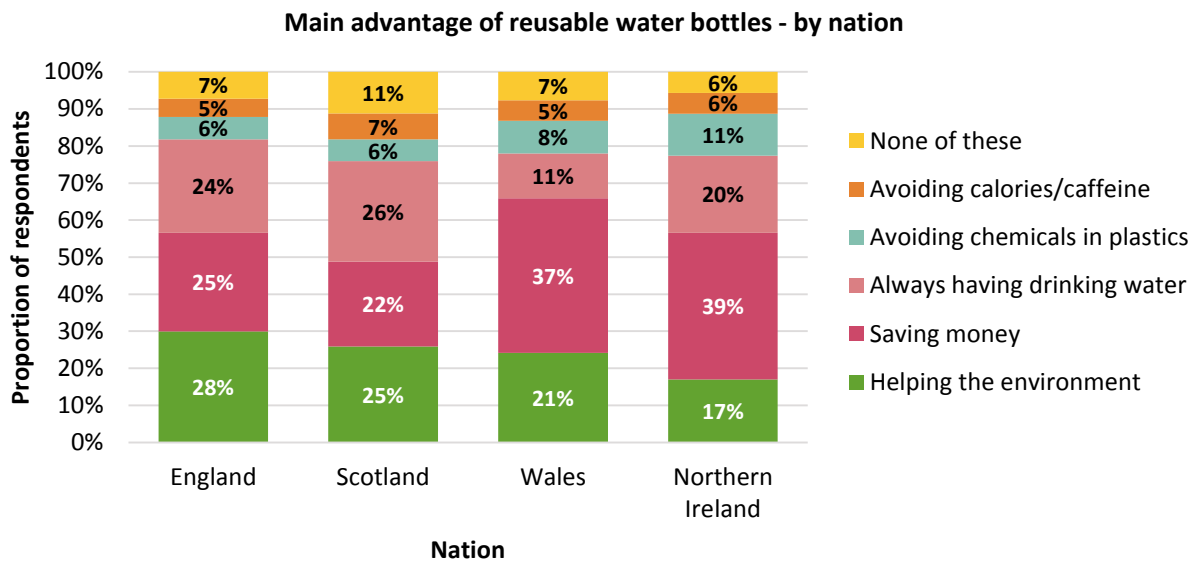
Base: Scotland = 176, England = 1,786, Northern Ireland = 54, Wales = 103.

Figure 24: Main source of water when away from home – by nation



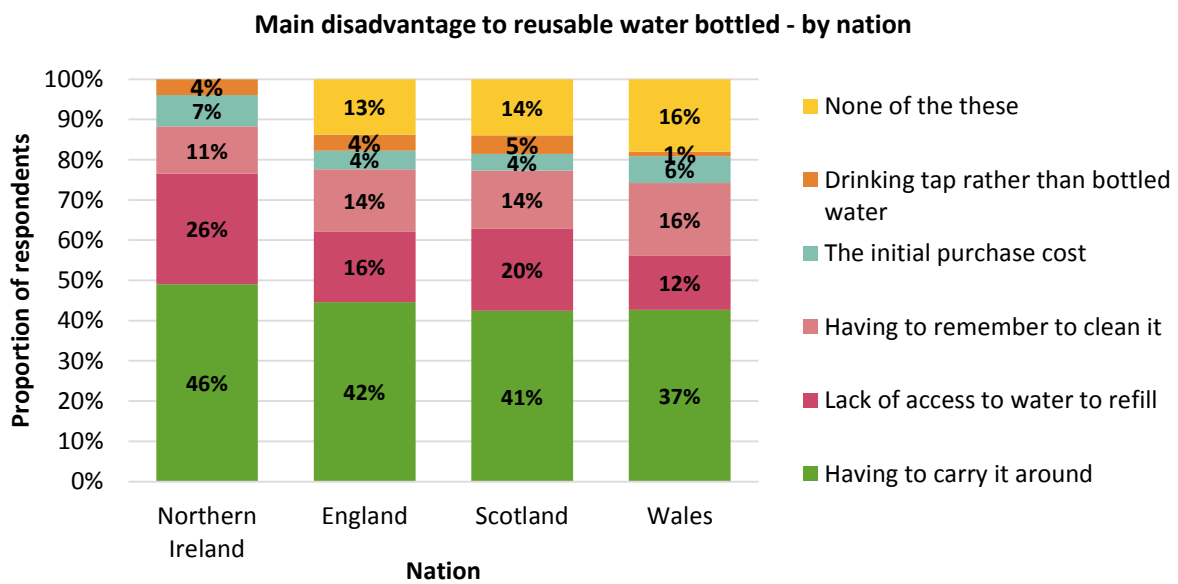
Base: Northern Ireland = 54, Scotland = 176, England = 1,786, Wales = 103.

Figure 25: Main advantage of reusable water bottles – by nation



Base: England = 1786; Scotland = 176; Wales = 103; Northern Ireland = 54. Graph excludes 'don't know' responses.

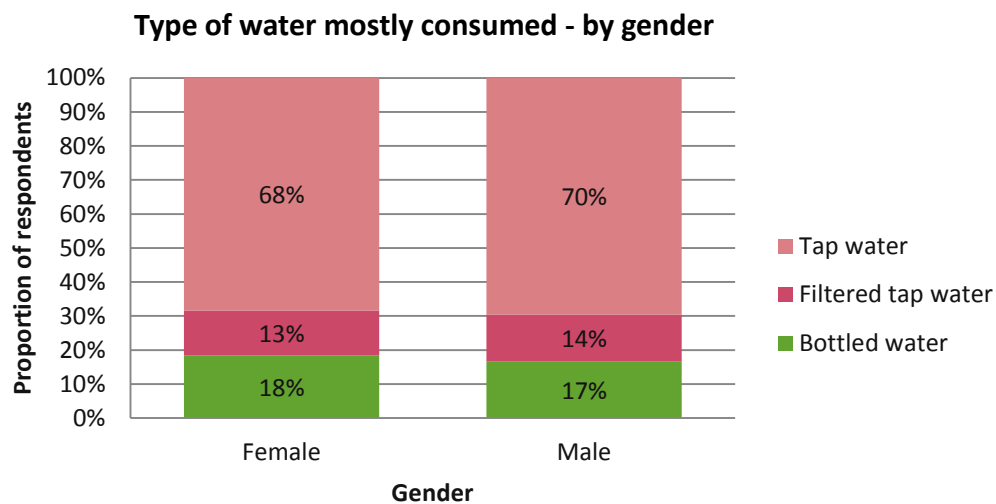
Figure 26: Main disadvantage of reusable water bottles – by nation



Base: England = 1786; Scotland = 176; Wales = 103; Northern Ireland = 54. Graph excludes 'don't know' responses.

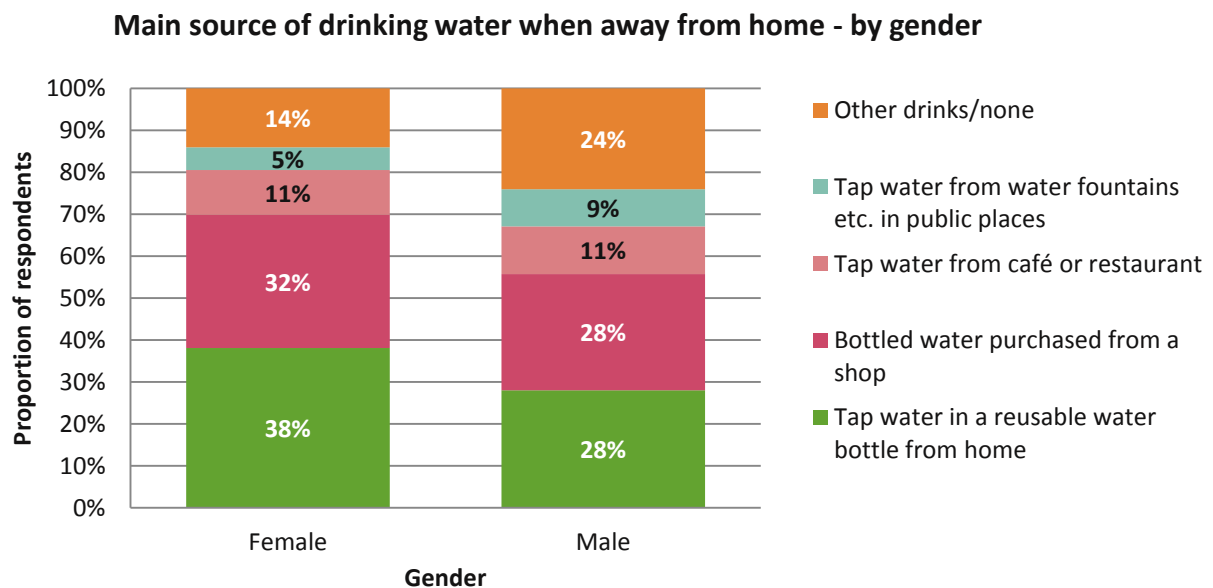
# Appendix E – public perceptions and behaviours by gender

Figure 27: Type of water mostly consumed – by gender



Base: Female = 1,159; Male = 960.

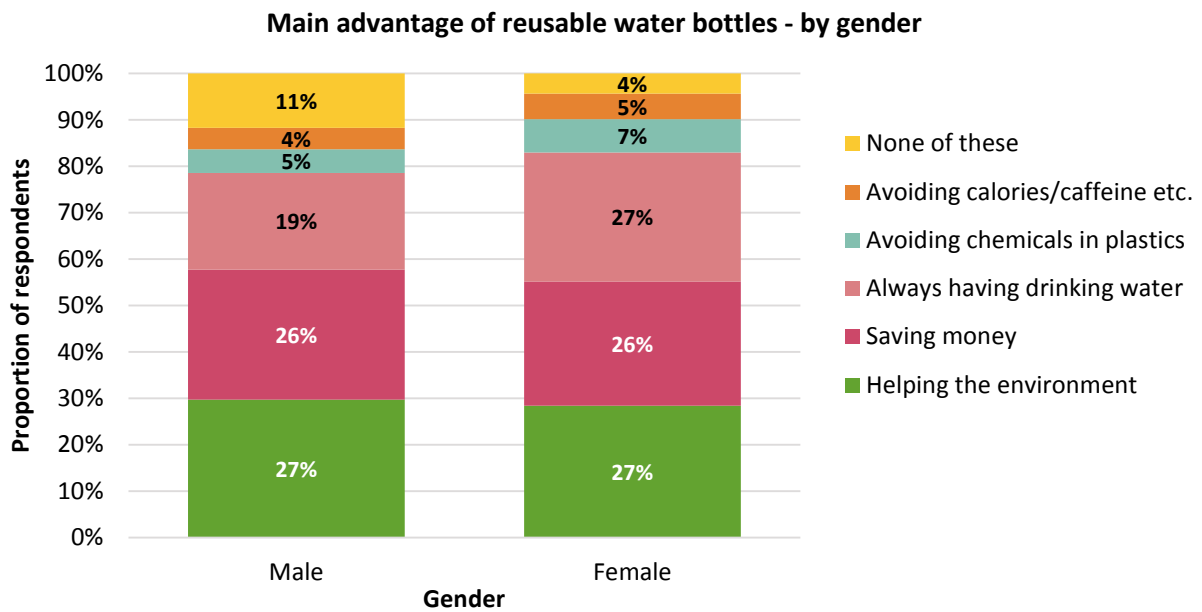
Figure 28: Main source of drinking water when away from home – by gender



Base: Female = 1,159; Male = 960.

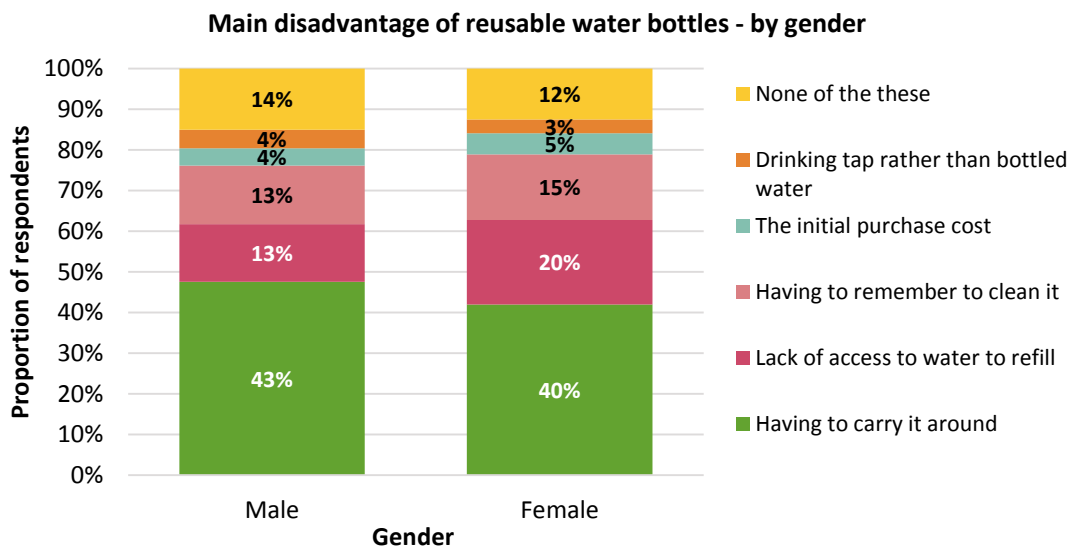


Figure 29: Main advantages of reusable water bottles – by gender



Base: Male = 960; female = 1159. Graph excludes 'don't know' responses.

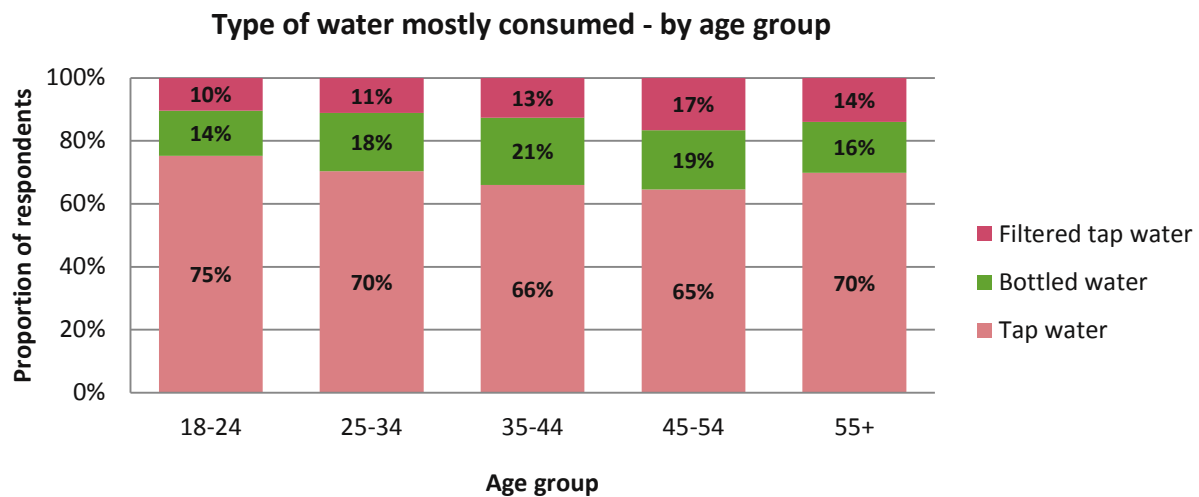
Figure 30: Main disadvantages of reusable water bottles – by gender



Base: Male = 960; female = 1159. Graph excludes 'don't know' responses.

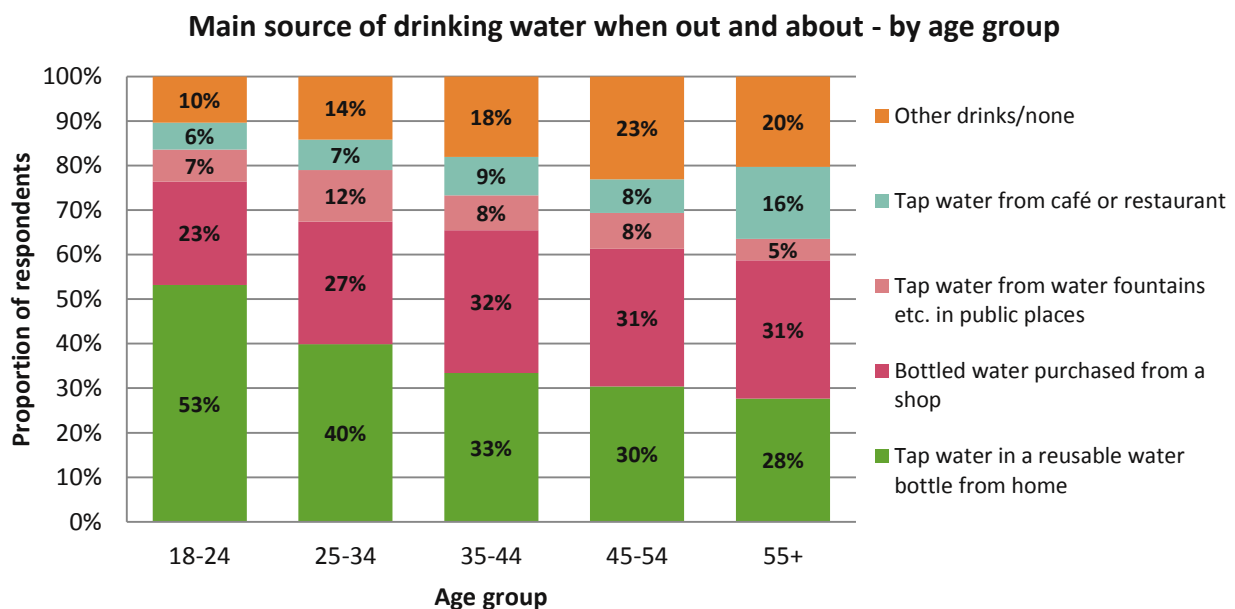
# Appendix F – public perceptions and behaviours by age group

Figure 31: Type of water mostly consumed – by age group



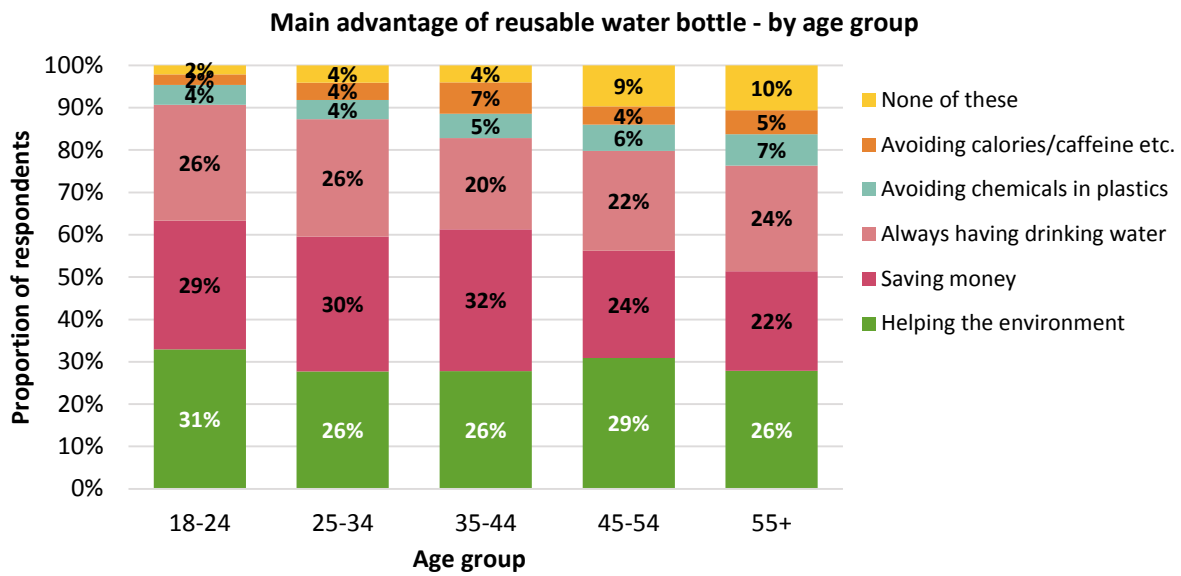
Base: 18-24 = 250, 25-34 = 233, 35-44 = 371, 45-54 = 398, 55+ = 867.

Figure 32: Main source of drinking water when away from home – by age group



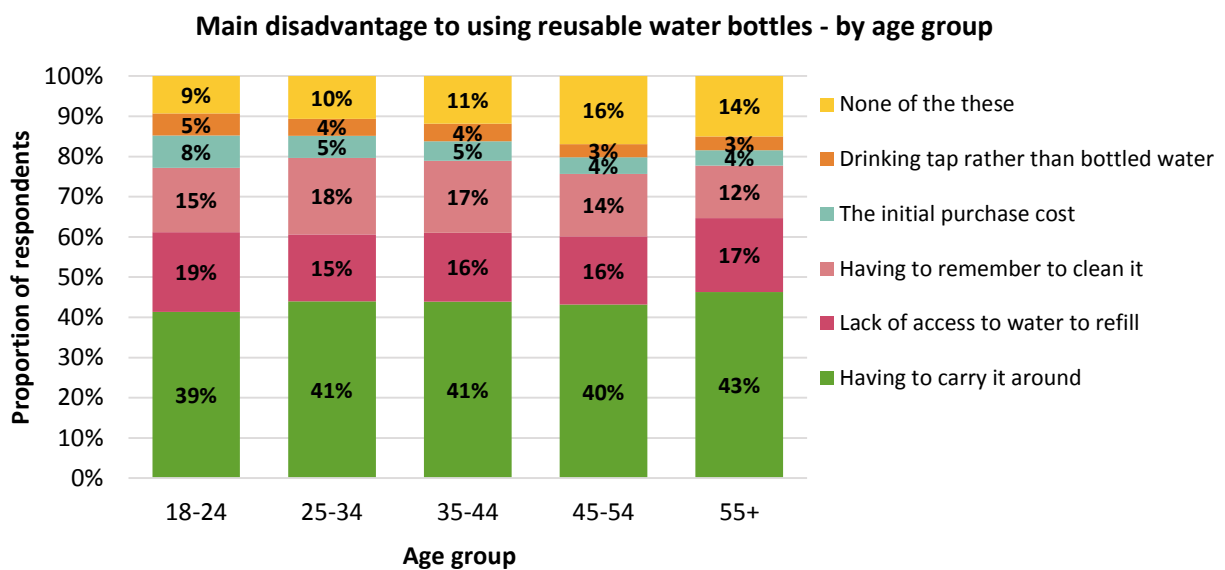
Base: 18-24 = 250, 25-34 = 233, 35-44 = 371, 45-54 = 398, 55+ = 867.

Figure 33: Main advantage of reusable water bottles – by age group



Base: 18-24 = 250; 25-34 = 233; 35-44 = 371; 45-54 = 398; 55+ = 867. Graph excludes 'don't know' responses.

Figure 34: Main disadvantage of reusable water bottles – by age group



Base: 18-24 = 250; 25-34 = 233; 35-44 = 371; 45-54 = 398; 55+ = 867. Graph excludes 'don't know' responses.



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