



NHH Water Efficiency Visits

Quant and qual
integrated report

13th April
2023

TRINITY
M & QUEEN





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1

Background & method

Background & objectives

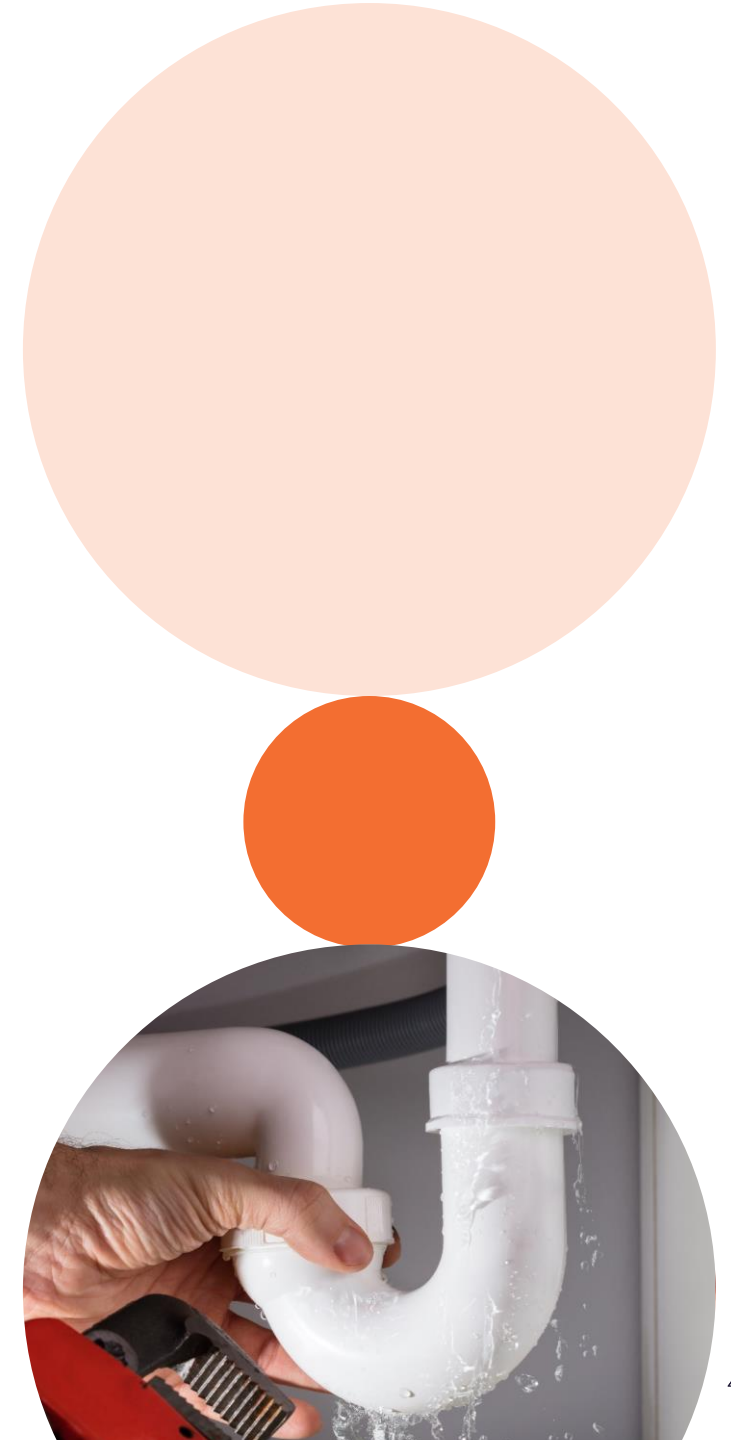
Understanding the appetite for business water efficiency visits

In AMP8, Ofwat will set targets to reduce business water consumption.

There is the potential for considerable water savings in non-household properties (NHH's) – depending on the nature of the business, water consumption may be high. Even in businesses where water use is not high, there is still the potential for water saving measures, such as fixing leaking toilets, taps, urinals and showers, or fitting water saving devices.

Water efficiency visits are a useful method of identifying potential savings. But business take-up had been identified as a risk. Therefore, it was essential for United Utilities (UU) to engage with businesses and understand their comprehension, interest, and barriers to the proposition.

Robust quantitative research with a large representative sample of business customers, backed up with qualitative research, was needed to support the PR24 submission to obtain funding for business water efficiency visits in AMP8 and to optimise the customer proposition.



Background & objectives

The research is needed to support UU's PR24 submission to obtain funding and provide a detailed understanding of how to optimise the proposition



1

Importance of water and water saving behaviours

Understanding how important water and sustainability is to their business, and what they are currently doing or have thought about doing to save water.



2

Appeal and understanding of the proposition

Understanding whether businesses understand the proposition, their level of interest in and what drives their interest.



3

Barriers to the proposition

Exploring why businesses may reject the proposition and any barriers that exist, including practical issues, for example, around opening hours.



4

Optimising the proposition

Covering other topics such as how businesses would like to be communicated with, their thoughts on the term 'visit' (vs. 'audit'), and potential business or public sector bodies they most trust or want UU to partner with.

Quant approach and sample

We conducted telephone surveys with a robust sample of NHH customers in the North West, across a range of sectors

Quant sample profile (1 of 4)

All NHH's

327

telephone surveys (CATI)

These sectors were chosen from a UU scoping exercise, using data obtained from school visits in the UU area and Thames Smarter Business Visits data on other business types.

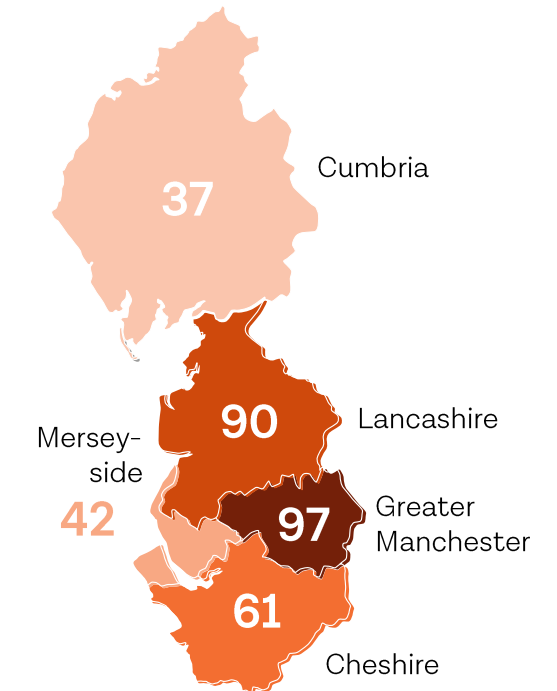
UU estimated that these sectors were likely to have the biggest water saving potential.

By sector



*base too low to report separately

By county (main location)



Question: S1. LOCATION. In which county or counties does your organisation have sites (for example, offices, shops/stores, warehouses, restaurants, cafés, pubs or similar premises)?, S4. INDUSTRY. Which industry does your organisation operate in?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327) | Fieldwork completed between 26th January and 10th March 2023










Quant approach and sample

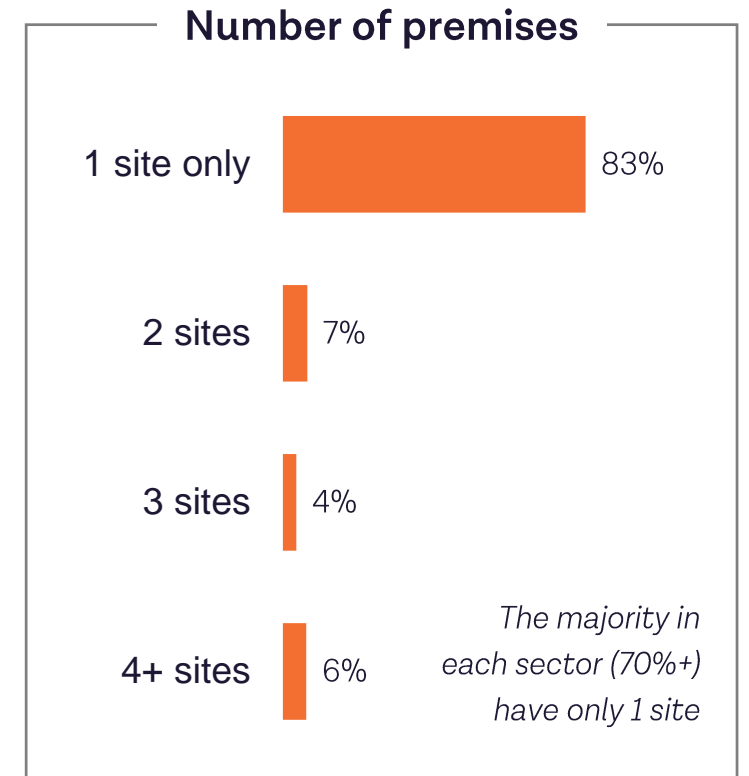
Our sample was predominantly small and medium-sized organisations, typically operating from 1 site only

Quant sample profile (2 of 4)

All NHH's

Business size (headcount)

	All NHH's	 Hairdressers	 Biz services	 Retail	 Hotels	 Pubs	 Manufacturing	 Restaurants	 Health	 Education
1-9	51%	95%	93%	71%	70%	43%	40%	36%	24%	8%
10-49	33%	5%	4%	19%	15%	37%	45%	36%	48%	63%
50-249	9%	0%	0%	3%	3%	10%	15%	9%	10%	23%
250+	3%	0%	0%	3%	6%	3%	0%	6%	10%	3%
Don't know	4%	0%	4%	3%	6%	7%	0%	12%	7%	5%



Question: S1b. NUMBER OF PREMISES. How many sites does your business operate from in the North West?, S9. BUSINESS SIZE (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES). How many people are permanently employed by your organisation in the UK?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Hairdressers (n=22), Biz services (n=27), Retail (n=31), Hotels (n=33), Pubs (n=30), Manufacturing (n=47), Restaurants (n=33), Health (n=29), Education (n=40)

Quant approach and sample

But NHH's often underestimate their water use, so UU may need to tell them they can save more water than they think










Quant sample profile (3 of 4)

All NHH's

Estimated usage (litres per day) – MOSL definition

* Average calculated by taking the mid-point of each range e.g. '100 – 1,000' = mid-point 550. 100 was selected as the 'mid-point' for '<100' and 18,800 as the 'mid-point' for '13,700+'

*Provided by UU, 2021/22 data ***Consumption data for Medical practices, which comprise the majority (55%) of our Health sector sample. Hospitals/Nursing homes use 11,386 lpd on average

	All NHH's	 Retail	 Biz services	 Manufacturing	 Health	 Hairdressers	 Education	 Hotels	 Pubs	 Restaurants
<100	38%	74%	74%	49%	41%	27%	23%	15%	13%	9%
100 – 1,000	30%	13%	11%	19%	31%	41%	40%	33%	40%	55%
1,000 – 3,500	8%	0%	0%	9%	14%	5%	5%	21%	10%	12%
3,500 – 13,700	3%	3%	0%	9%	0%	0%	5%	3%	3%	0%
13,700+	2%	0%	0%	2%	7%	0%	5%	3%	3%	0%
Don't know	18%	10%	15%	13%	7%	27%	23%	24%	30%	24%

Average estimated usage (lpd)*	468	159	1,694	1,954	488	2,226	1,988	1,960	768
Average actual usage (lpd)**	1,310	1,019	8,175	986***	244	4,570	5,389	1,567	1,567

Question: A2. AMOUNT OF WATER BUSINESS USES. How much water does your organisation use? If possible, please check your latest bill, or provide your best estimate.

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Retail (n=31), Biz services (n=27), Manufacturing (n=47), Health (n=29), Hairdressers (n=22), Education (n=40), Hotels (n=33), Pubs (n=30), Restaurants (n=33)










Quant approach and sample

Water plays a different role for different sectors, with some using water for more than just normal domestic use

Quant sample profile (4 of 4)

All NHH's

The role of water in their organisation (Water is vital for...)

	All NHH's	 Pubs	 Hotels	 Retail	 Biz services	 Education	 Manufacturing	 Restaurants	 Hairdressers	 Health
... normal domestic use for our students/customers and employees	95%	100%	97%	97%	96%	95%	91%	91%	91%	90%
...the supply of services our organisation provides	53%	77%	85%	35%	19%	50%	28%	79%	73%	66%
...an ingredient or part of the product or service your organisation provides	53%	87%	79%	29%	7%	63%	28%	94%	73%	41%
...the manufacturing process which is essential to the running of our organisation	39%	47%	42%	16%	4%	38%	45%	76%	59%	31%

Question: S10. ROLE OF WATER IN ORG. Which of the following options apply to you, in relation to the supply of water to your organisation? Water is vital for...

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Pubs (n=30), Hotels (n=33), Retail (n=31), Biz services (n=27), Education (n=40), Manufacturing (n=47), Restaurants (n=33), Hairdressers (n=22), Health (n=29)

Quant approach and sample

Our initial struggle to find participants highlights a key challenge for UU: some organisations pay for water through their landlord and do not deal directly with a water retailer

(Although their response to the water efficiency visit proposition is as positive as those who deal with the water company directly – please see appendix)



The survey initially required participants to be responsible for paying their water bill. But the incidence was relatively low (28% / 14 interviews out of the first 64 who agreed to take part) as many claimed their water bill was included in their lease. This was particularly true for Retail and non-food Manufacturing businesses, but also Education and Hairdressers.



The survey was then adapted to explicitly capture if their water bill was included in their lease and whether it was a fixed or variable amount, and participants were allowed through if it was variable. Incidence rates improved, but non-responsibility for water bills was still a barrier.



The decision was then made to focus on responsibility for financial matters in general within their organisation and accept those not directly responsible for paying their water bill on the basis that they may still save money on their energy bill or want to help the environment. This final change increased the incidence significantly.



The final level of not being directly responsible for water is relatively low (7%) as many in this group were rejected and filtered out in the early stages of interviewing. Of those paying for water through their landlord, approximately 2 in 3 pay a fixed fee and 1 in 3 a variable rate.

Quant approach and sample




As well as reaching people with responsibility for their water bill, UU will need to reach senior decision-makers, especially within micro and small businesses

All of our sample are responsible for financial matters within their organisation. This is based on the findings from the school visits United Utilities undertook in 2021/22. These findings highlighted that the person to approach for the visits needed to be in a senior position with financial responsibility. Different roles were approached within this project but if they didn't have seniority they still had to seek approval from them.

Role / seniority by business size

All NHH's

By business size (headcount)

	1-9	10-49	50+
 Managing Director / Owner / Proprietor OR Board Director	78%	49%	15%
 Senior Manager	8%	25%	36%
 Middle Manager OR Junior Manager OR Admin Support	8%	24%	49%
Other	6%	2%	0%

Qual approach and sample

Following their CATI survey, selected NHH's were invited to take part in a longer, more wide ranging discussion

Approach overview



During a 1 hour conversation on Zoom, they told us about their business and what role water plays in it.

They opened up about issues they had encountered with water, and what actions, if any, they took.

Finally, they were encouraged to respond in detail to the water efficiency visit proposition, telling us what was most appealing, what could be improved, and how it could best be communicated.



Mix of genders and ages



Mix of industry types including Manufacturing, Education, Hospitality, and Hairdressing



Must be responsible for management of water and other commodities at the business



Varied levels of water use and business size

16

participants



2

Water efficiency in context

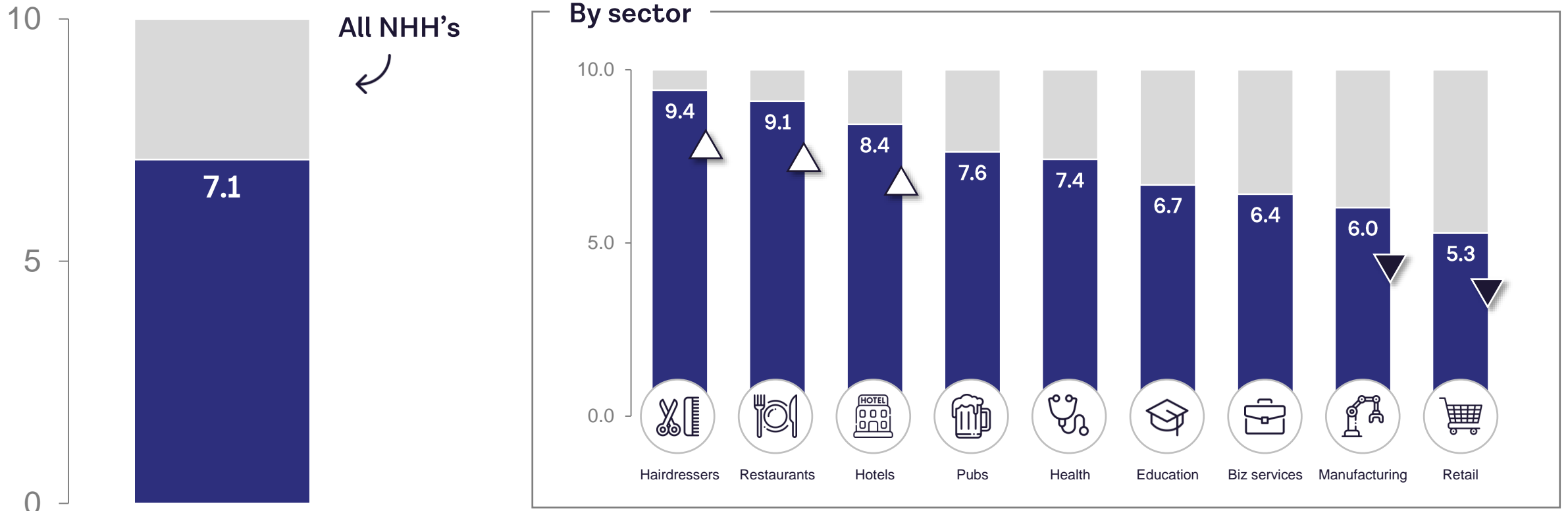
Water efficiency in context

NHH's may claim that water efficiency is important to their organisation...

Importance of water efficiency to business (average importance)

All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▽ lower than total



Question: A4. IMPORTANCE OF WATER EFFICIENCY TO BUSINESS. Considering all your organisational priorities, how important is water efficiency on a scale of 1 to 10? 1 being low and 10 being high.

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Hairdressers (n=22), Restaurants (n=33), Hotels (n=33), Pubs (n=30), Health (n=29), Education (n=40), Biz services (n=27), Manufacturing (n=47), Retail (n=31)

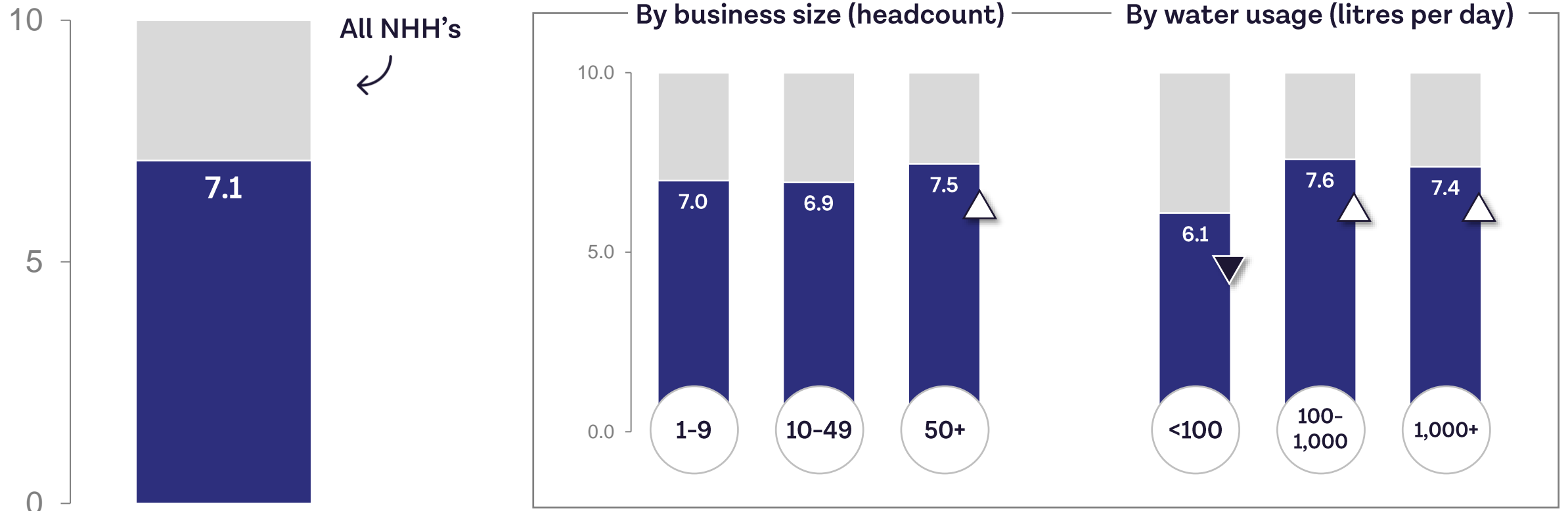
Water efficiency in context

...especially if they are in larger organisations or with higher levels of water use...

Importance of water efficiency to business (average importance)

All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▽ lower than total



Question: A4. IMPORTANCE OF WATER EFFICIENCY TO BUSINESS. Considering all your organisational priorities, how important is water efficiency on a scale of 1 to 10? 1 being low and 10 being high.
Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: 1-9 employees (n=167), 10-49 employees (n=107), 50+ employees (n=39), <100 l/d (n=125), 100-1,000 l/d (n=99), 1,000+ l/d (n=45)

Water efficiency in context

And water may be genuinely important if they've recently experienced an issue

“

You wouldn't believe what we see in our hotel. Sometimes people leave the sink running on a bottle of wine in their room while they're out, and obviously that's a massive waste – and sometimes the sink overflows!



Hotels

”

“

In the salon, I use water for washing hair, making drinks, cleaning etc. When I refurbished, there was a burst pipe and the water was hitting the ceiling – I had to put my hand over it until the plumber arrived.



Hairdressers

”

“

At the nursery we try and educate the kids to only use what water they need. We have those timer taps but in the past they have got stuck so they're on the whole time – we had to get a plumber out asap to help.



Nursery

”

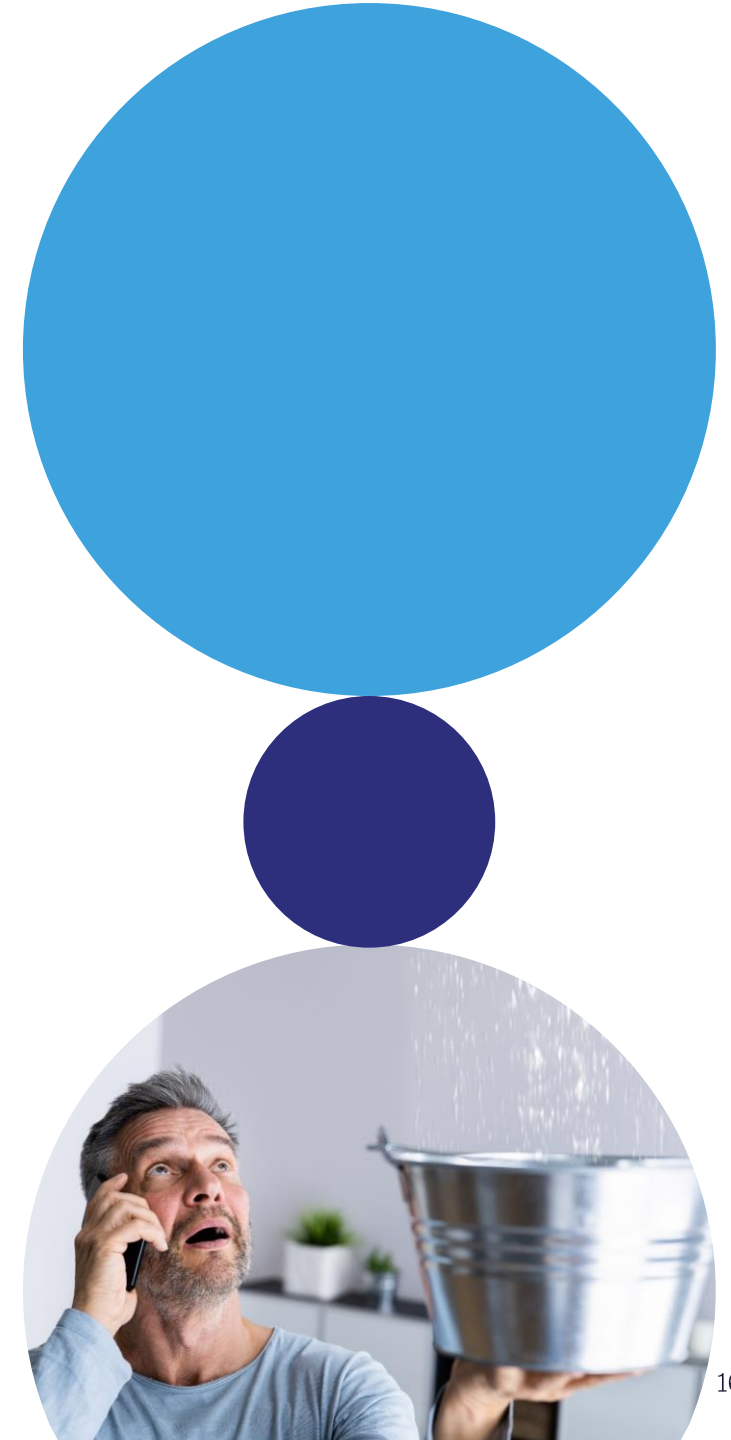
“

We used to have a leak in the toilet and it was streaming everywhere, the toilet was flooded! On top of this, our bills were sky high! Once we got it fixed our bills came right down which was a massive relief.



Pharmacy

”



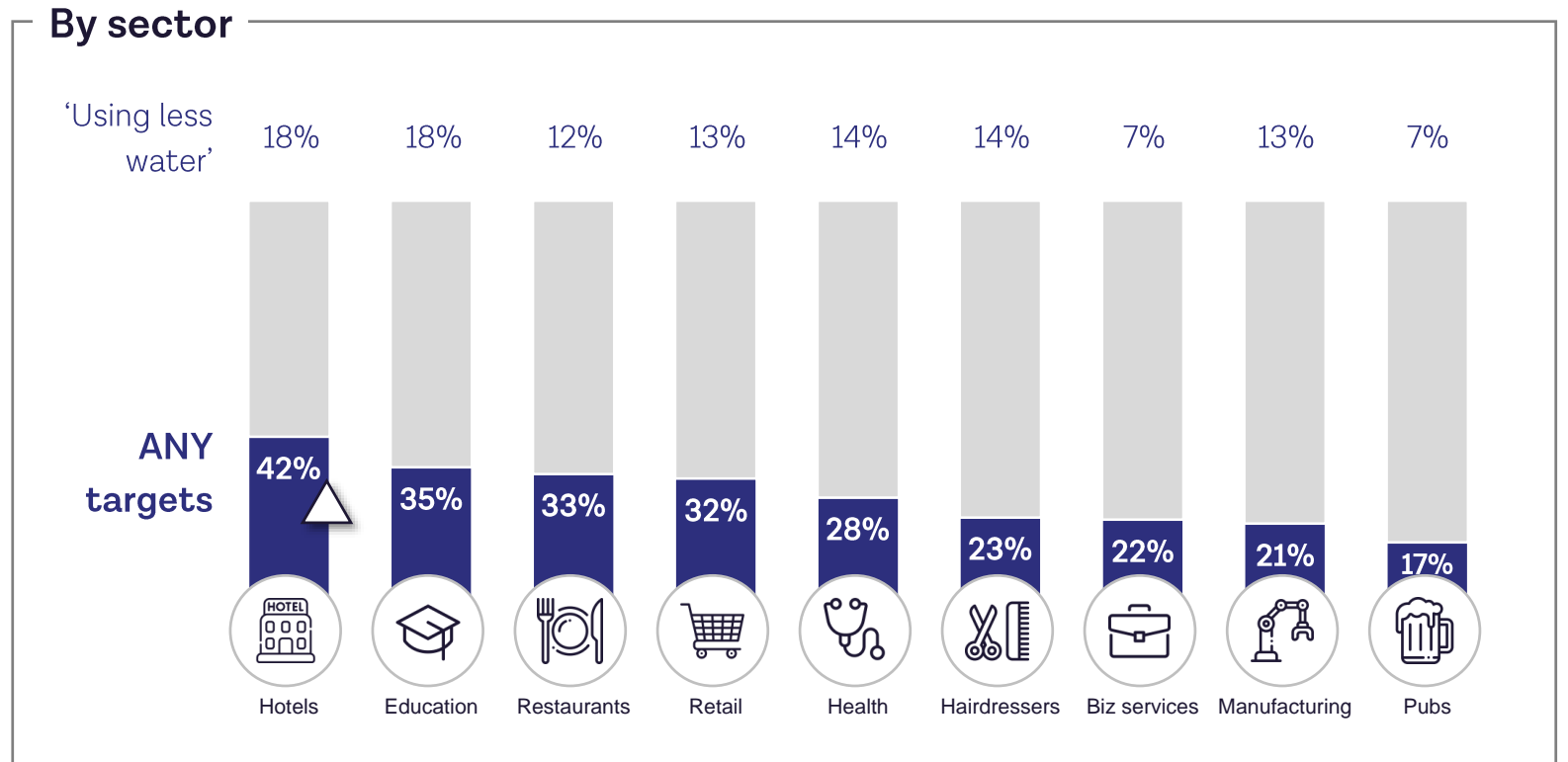
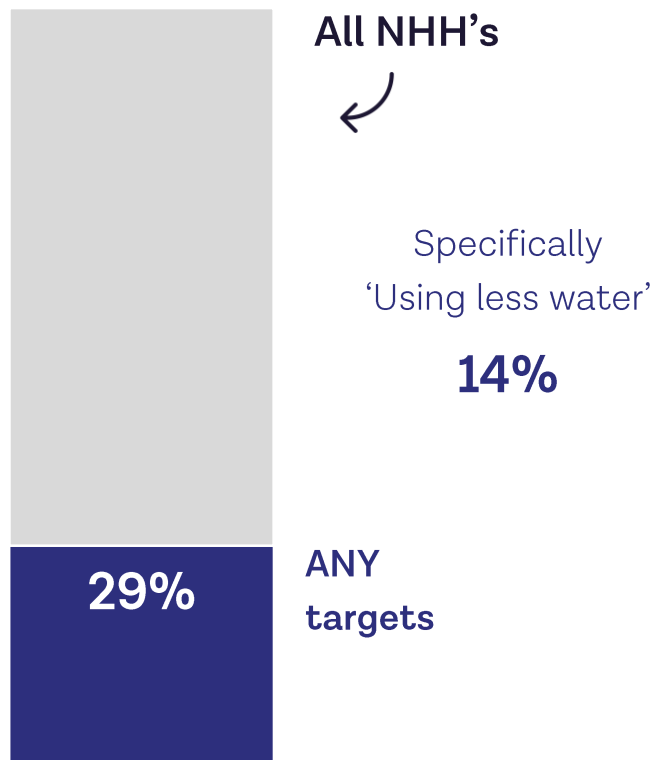
Water efficiency in context

But this does not necessarily translate into sustained action: few NHH's have set targets to use less water

Have ANY sustainability targets

All NHH's

▲ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: A1. SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS. What, if any, sustainability targets or initiatives does your business have?

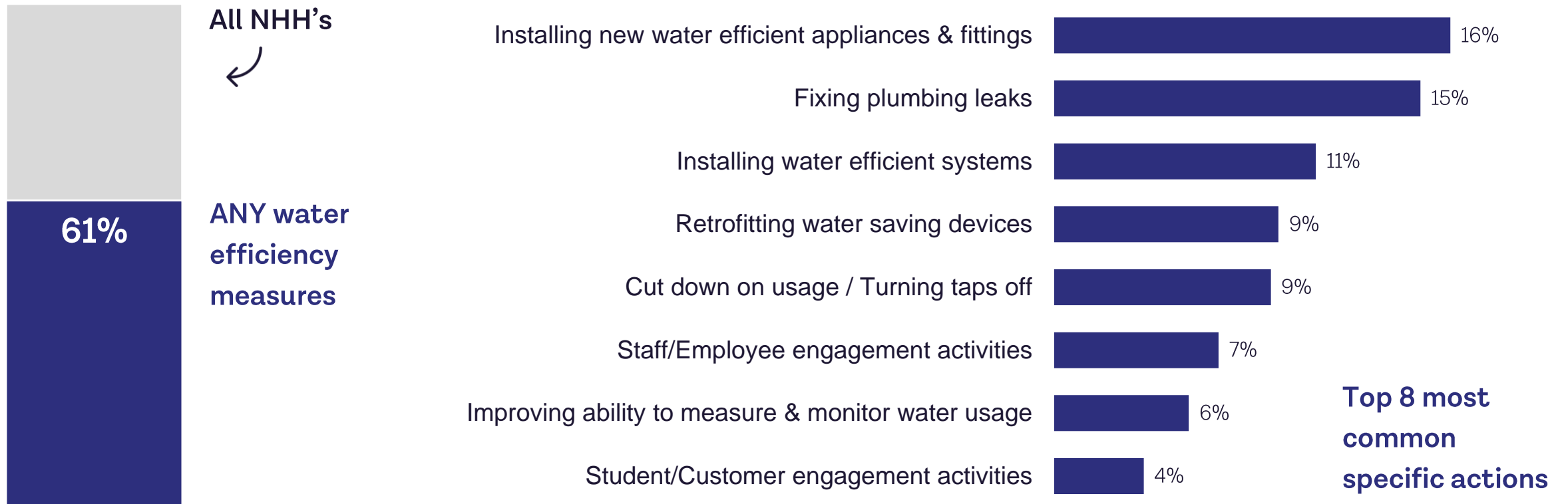
Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Hotels (n=33), Education (n=40), Restaurants (n=33), Retail (n=31), Health (n=29), Hairdressers (n=22), Biz services (n=27), Manufacturing (n=47), Pubs (n=30)

Water efficiency in context

NHH's may have taken 'water efficiency actions' in the past 5 years, perhaps installing new appliances or fixing leaks

Water efficiency measures taken in the past 5 years

All NHH's



Question: A6. WATER EFFICIENCY MEASURES. What actions, if any, has your organisation taken in the past 5 years to save water?



Base: All NHH respondents (n=327)

Water efficiency in context

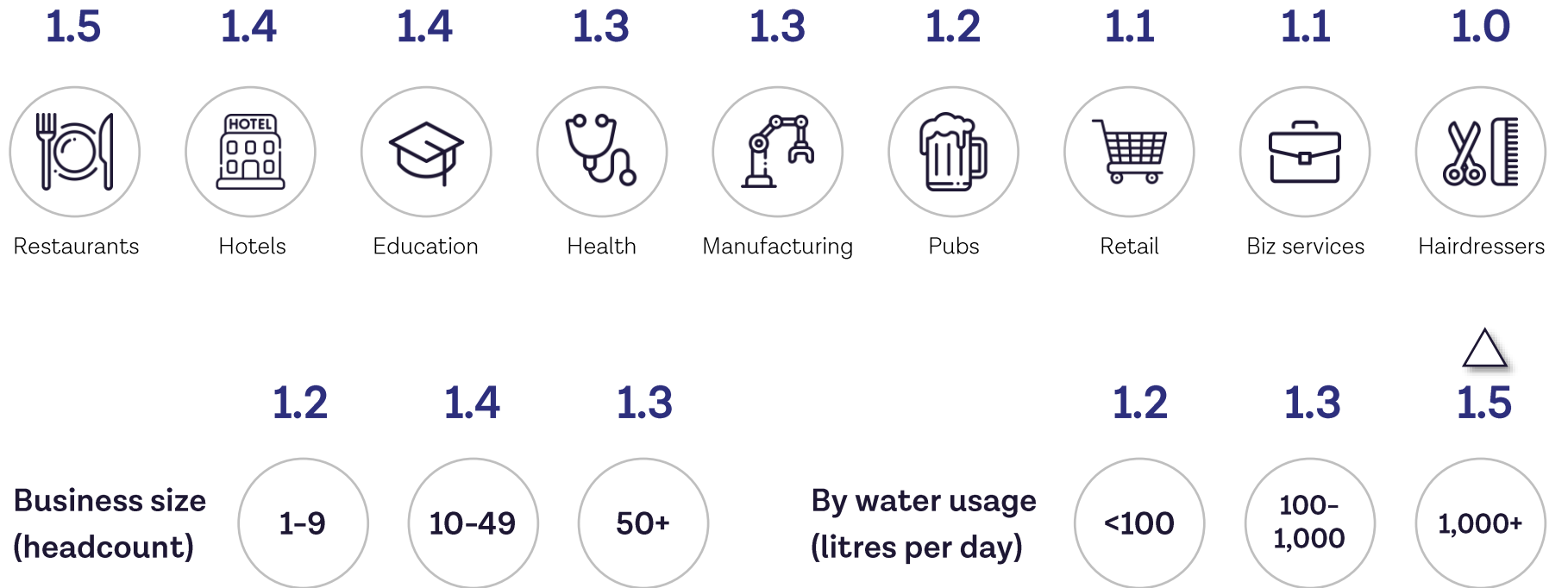
But with only 1.3 actions taken on average in the past 5 years, water efficiency is clearly a low salience issue

Average number of water efficiency measures taken in the past 5 years

All NHH's

 Notably higher /
 lower than total

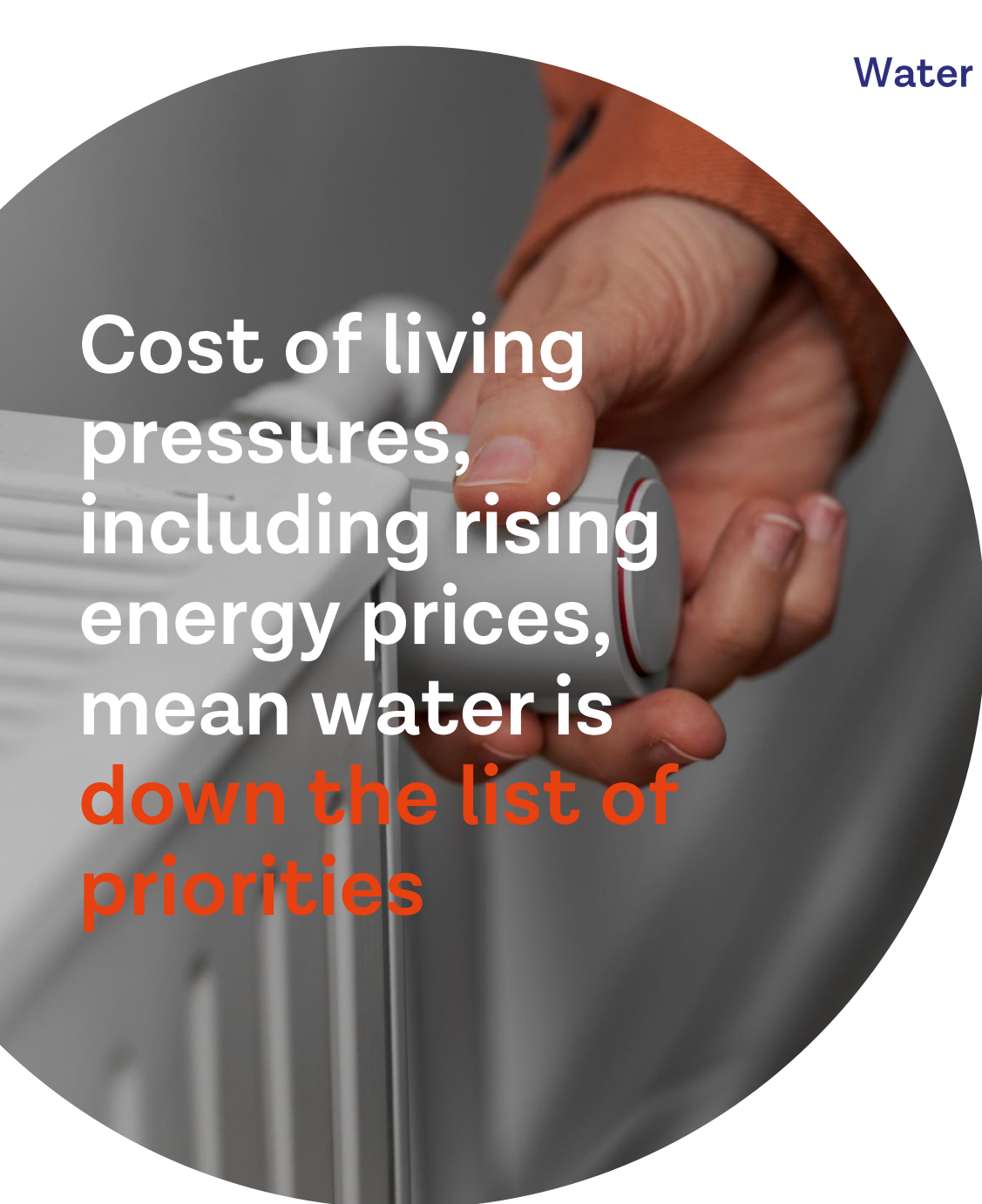
All NHH's
1.3



Question: A6. WATER EFFICIENCY MEASURES. What actions, if any, has your organisation taken in the past 5 years to save water?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Restaurants (n=33), Hotels (n=33), Education (n=40), Health (n=29), Manufacturing (n=47), Pubs (n=30), Retail (n=31), Biz services (n=27), Hairdressers (n=22)

1-9 employees (n=167), 10-49 employees (n=107), 50+ employees (n=39), <100 l/d (n=125), 100-1,000 l/d (n=99), 1,000+ l/d (n=45)



Cost of living pressures, including rising energy prices, mean water is down the list of priorities

Water is down the pecking order

Water tends only to be a priority when there is a problem.

Energy price rises mean gas and electric are to the forefront

Some businesses have seen their energy costs double in the past year, meaning there is more incentive than ever to drive costs down through behaviour change (e.g. using less) and material changes (e.g. more efficient heating / lightbulbs).

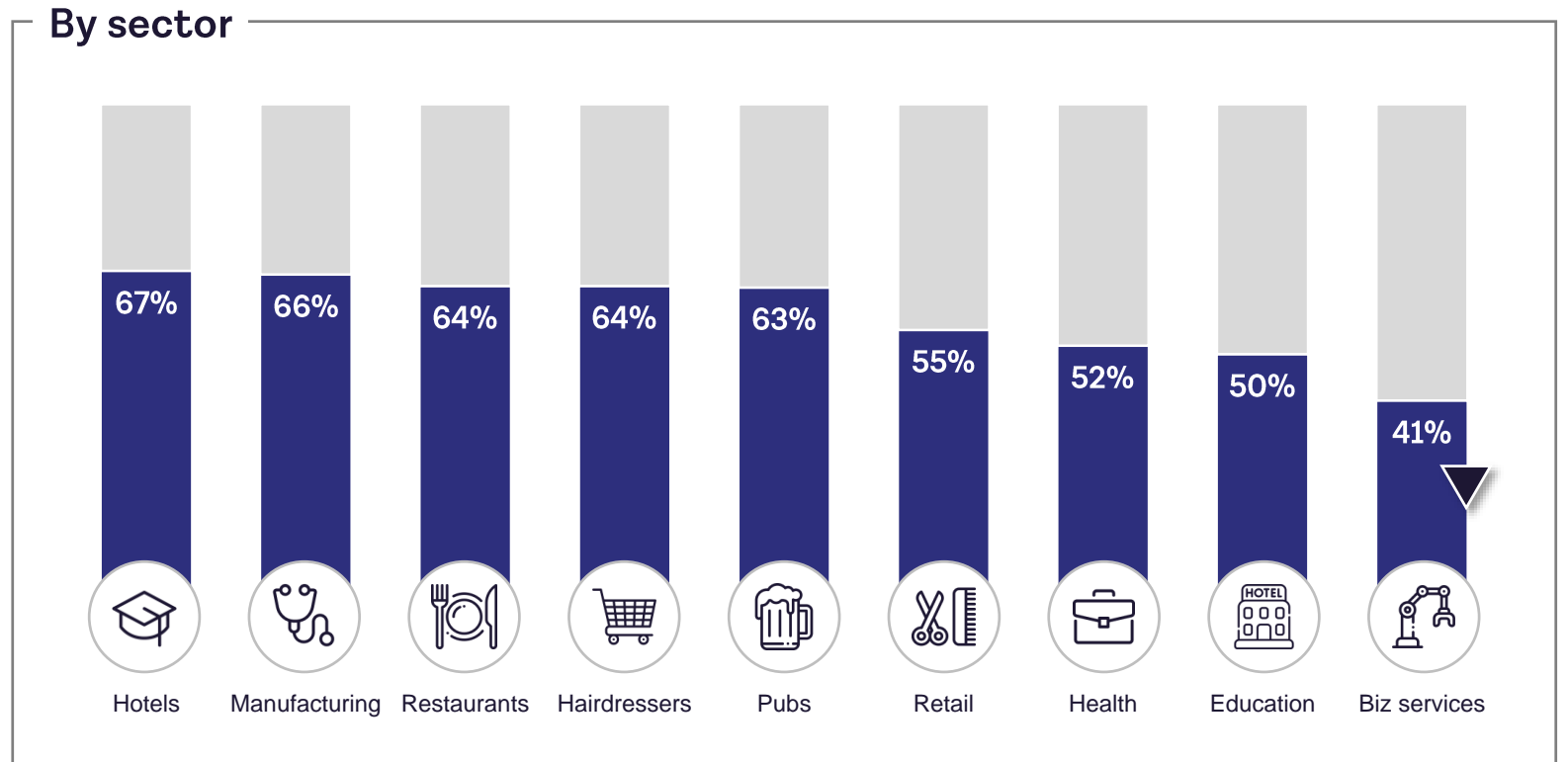
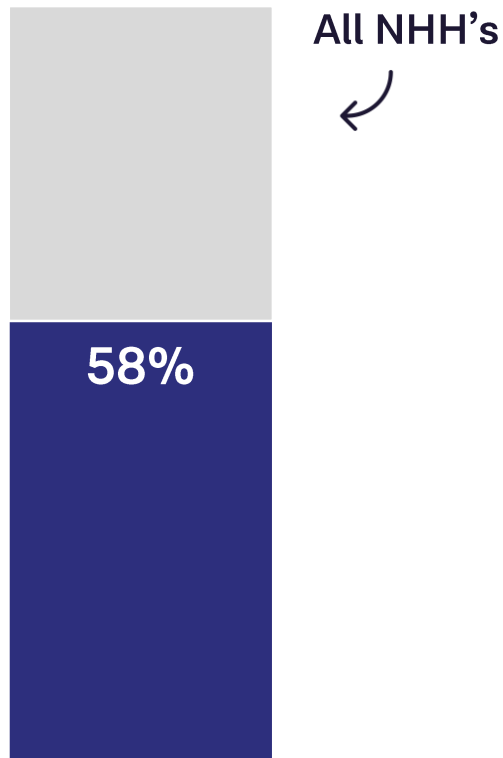
Water efficiency in context

This is despite most NHH's claiming to be aware of the link between saving water and saving energy

Aware of the link between saving water and saving energy (% answering 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale)

All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: A9. LINK BETWEEN SAVING WATER AND SAVING ENERGY. Eliminating waste and reducing water use could save your organisation money on your water bill, and if you are reducing the hot water that your organisation uses this could help reduce your energy bills too. Before today, to what extent were you aware of this link between saving water and saving energy, on a scale of 1 to 10? 1 being 'Completely unaware' and 10 being 'Completely aware'.

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Hotels (n=33), Manufacturing (n=47), Restaurants (n=33), Hairdressers (n=22), Pubs (n=30), Retail (n=31), Health (n=29), Education (n=40), Biz services (n=27)

3

Response to the proposition

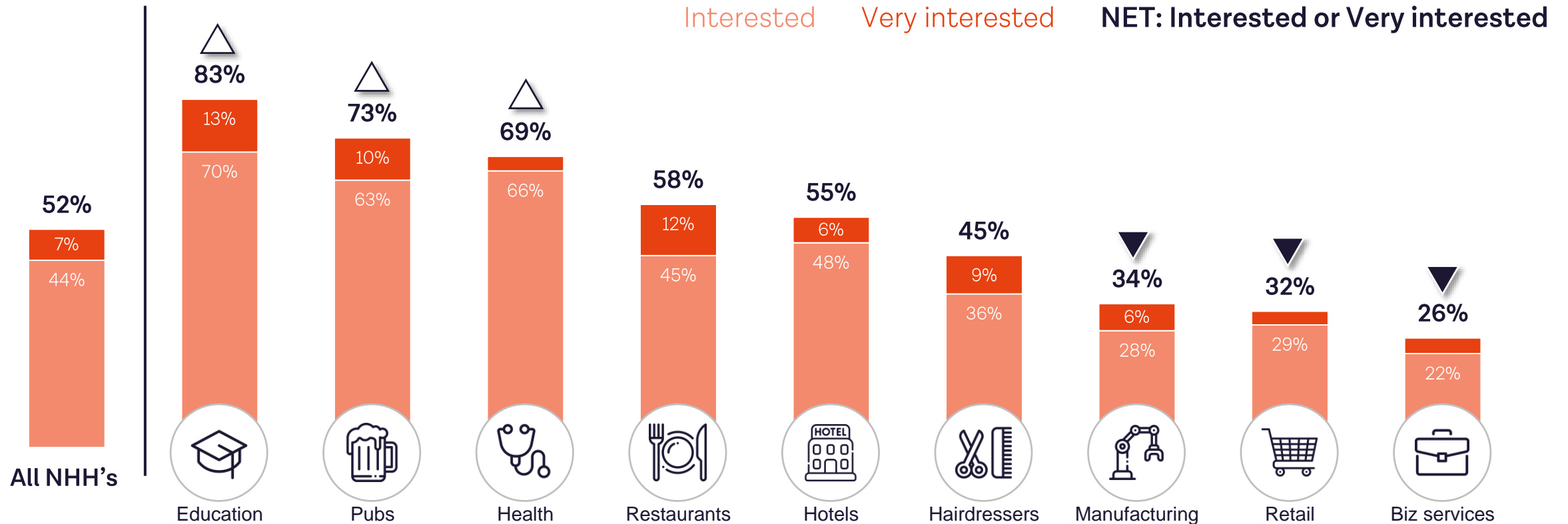
Response to the proposition

Some sectors are more interested in learning about how they can save water, especially Education, Pubs, and Health

Interested in learning more about what their business could do to save water

All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▽ lower than total



Question: A7. INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOW TO SAVE WATER. To what extent are you interested in learning more about what your organisation could do to save water?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Education (n=40), Pubs (n=30), Health (n=29), Restaurants (n=33), Hotels (n=33), Hairdressers (n=22), Manufacturing (n=47), Retail (n=31), Biz services (n=27)

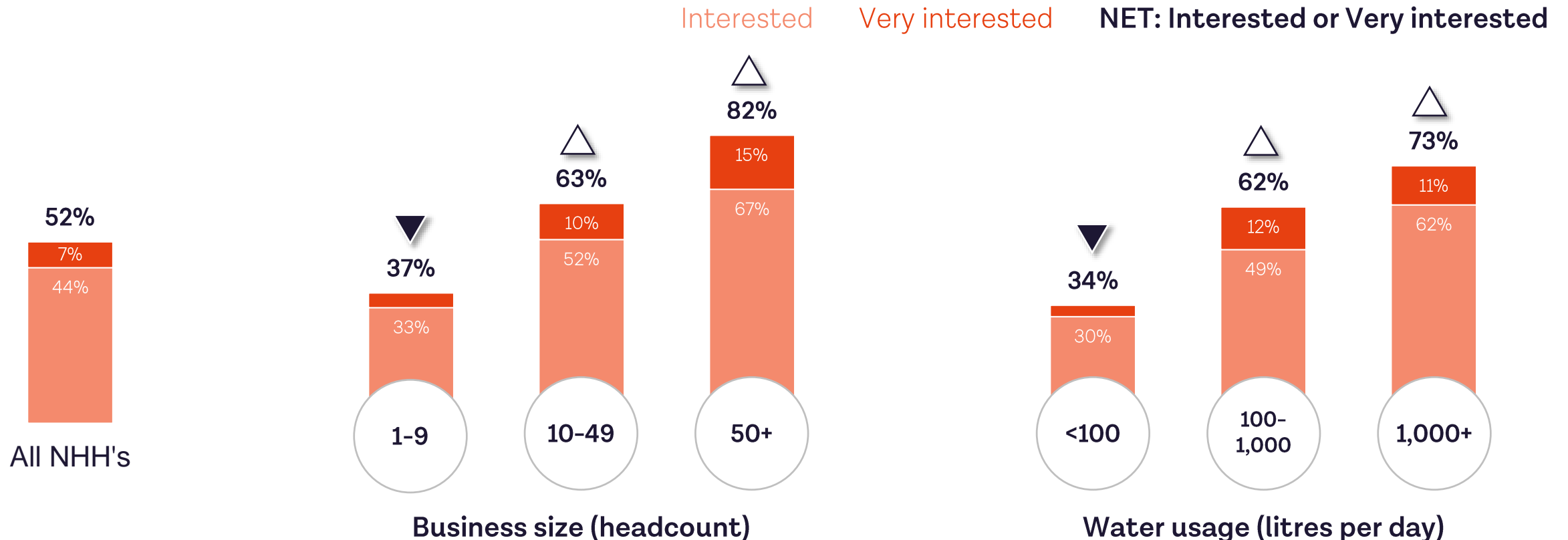
Response to the proposition

...as well as larger organisations or those with higher levels of water use

Interested in learning more about what their business could do to save water

All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: A7. INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOW TO SAVE WATER. To what extent are you interested in learning more about what your organisation could do to save water?

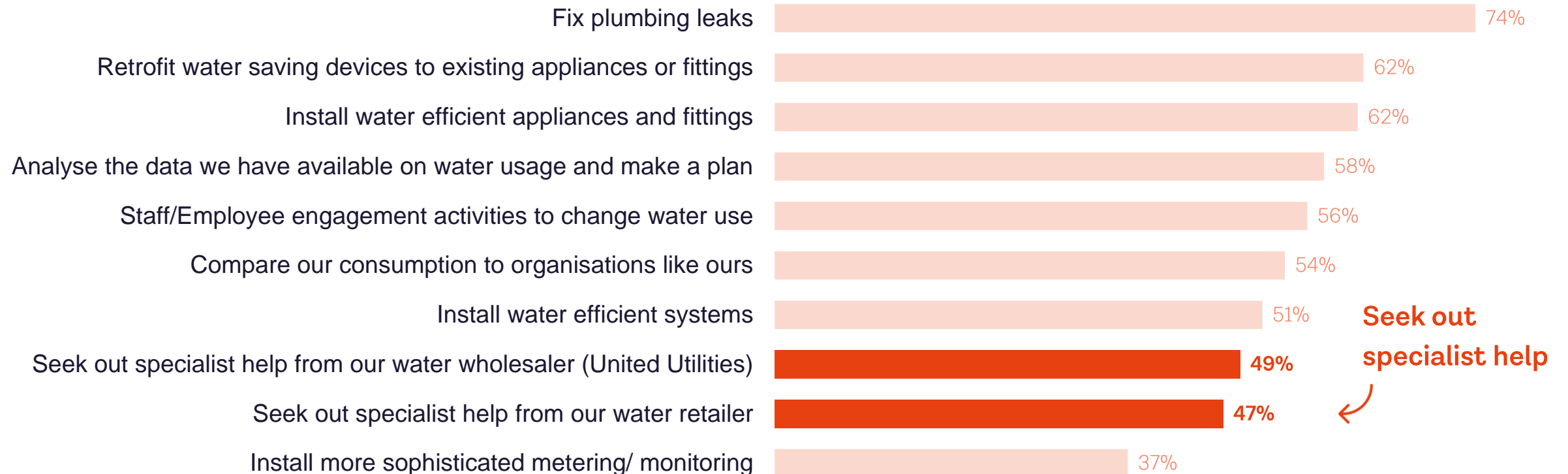
Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), 1-9 employees (n=167), 10-49 employees (n=107), 50+ employees (n=39), <100 l/d (n=125), 100-1,000 l/d (n=99), 1,000+ l/d (n=45)

Response to the proposition

But they may not think to approach UU for help, so UU will need to be proactive and reach out to NHH's

Steps their organisation would take to reduce their water consumption (top 10)

NHH's who are interested in learning more about what they can do to save water



Question: A8. INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOW TO SAVE WATER. If you were trying to reduce your water consumption (further), what would your first steps be?

Base: NHH respondents interested in learning more about what they can do to save water (n=169)

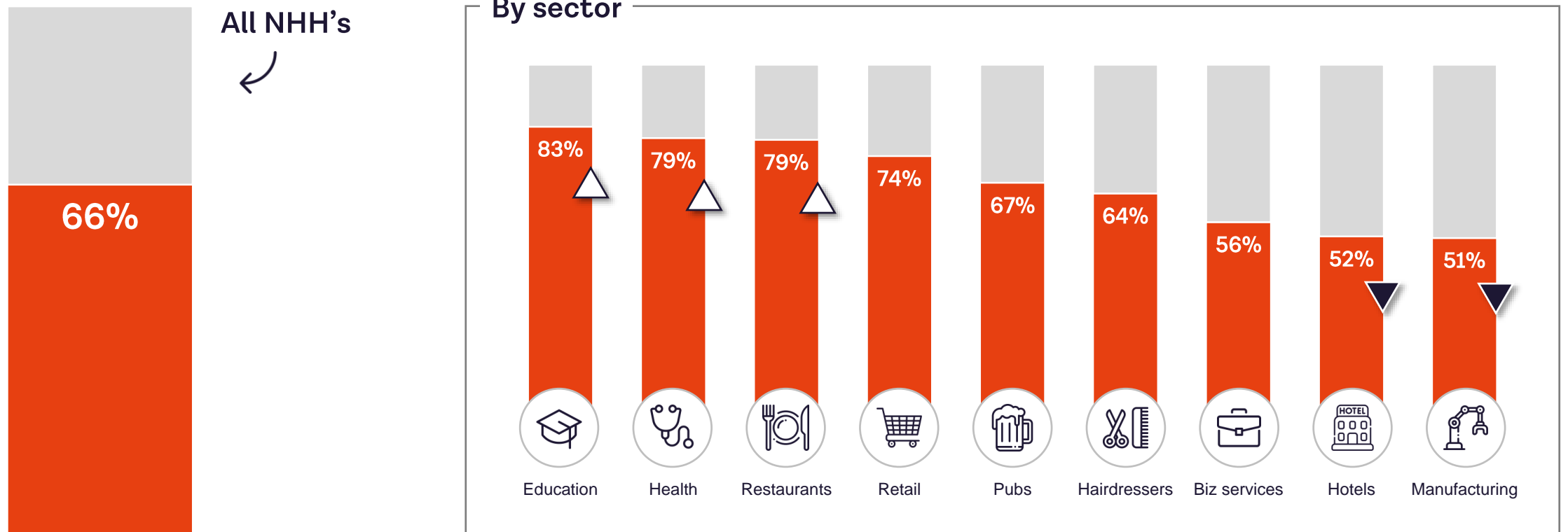
Response to the proposition

The overall response is likely to be positive, and UU should prioritise organisations in the Education and Health sectors

Overall opinion of water efficiency visits (% answering 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale)

All NHH's

▲ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: B2. OVERALL OPINION OF THE PROPOSITION. What is your overall opinion of the idea of free water efficiency visits as described previously, on a scale of 1 to 10? 1 being 'Extremely poor' and 10 being 'Excellent'.

Please see appendix for proposition text read out / shown as part of this research

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Education (n=40), Health (n=29), Restaurants (n=33), Retail (n=31), Pubs (n=30), Hairdressers (n=22), Biz services (n=27), Hotels (n=33), Manufacturing (n=47)

Response to the proposition

Many NHH's immediately see the benefit of having a visit

“

There's a benefit for us because we're signed up to a Green Tourism company and they list our property. The greener we are, the higher we get listed up their page of hotels.



Hotels

“

“

Why wouldn't you do it? It's free access to expertise you wouldn't otherwise have. It could be an annual thing like with your electrics, fire alarms, and boilers etc. A yearly check. The fact it's free is even better.



Pubs

“

“

It's a fantastic idea. It's their duty to make sure there is enough water for everyone and for regeneration. It's really generous and it shows they're taking responsibility.



Nursery

“

Responses to the proposition in the qual were overwhelmingly positive



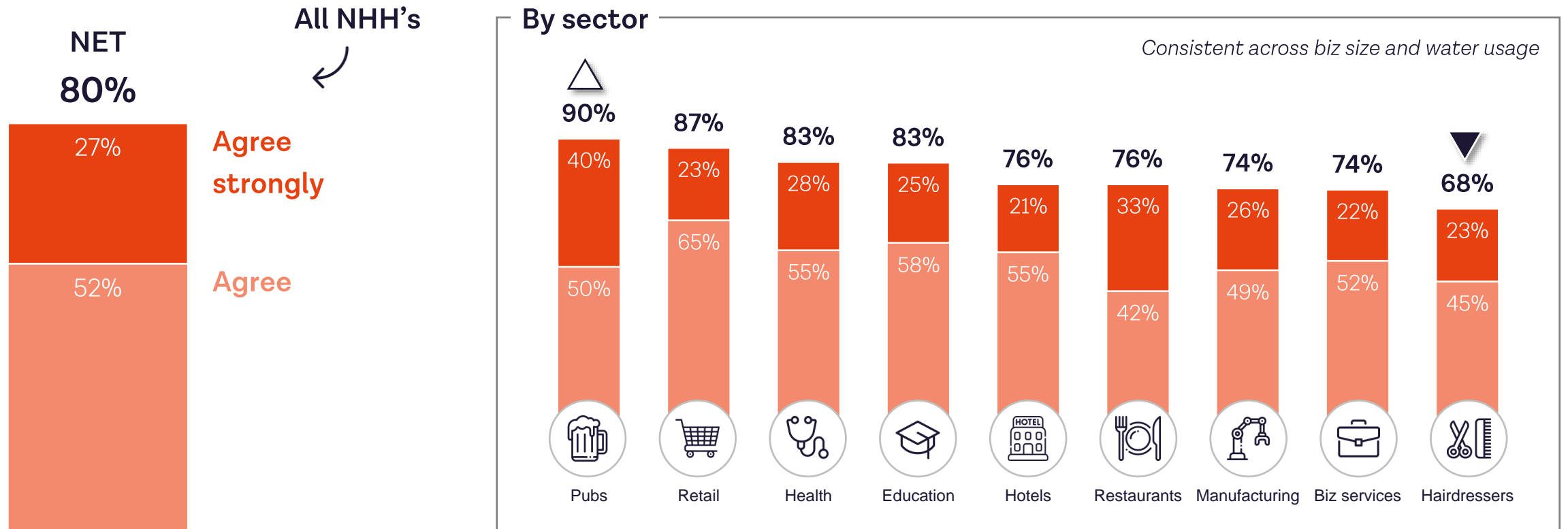
Response to the proposition

Most NHH's found the proposition easy to understand, so UU won't need to explain it in extreme detail..

Ease of understanding water efficiency visits

All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: B1a. EASE OF UNDERSTANDING. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the idea of a water efficiency visit is easy to understand?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Pubs (n=30), Retail (n=31), Health (n=29), Education (n=40), Hotels (n=33), Restaurants (n= 33), Manufacturing (n=47), Biz services (n=27), Hairdressers (n=22)

Response to the proposition

But there are a few points that may require clarification, including what is covered and when the visit can take place

“

It needs to be obvious what is free and what is not. Presumably the labour is free on the first visit but I'd need to pay for parts? It's got to be clear.



“

“

I'm not sure it would be relevant for us as we've made quite a few changes already. But if they could give 4 or 5 simple bullet point examples of the sort of things they would do, I could glance and ask myself, 'Have I done that?'



“

“

Obviously we have young children here, so any plumber would need to be supervised. Kids aren't comfortable with strangers in the building so we'd need control over when the visit happened – either weekends or half terms ...



“

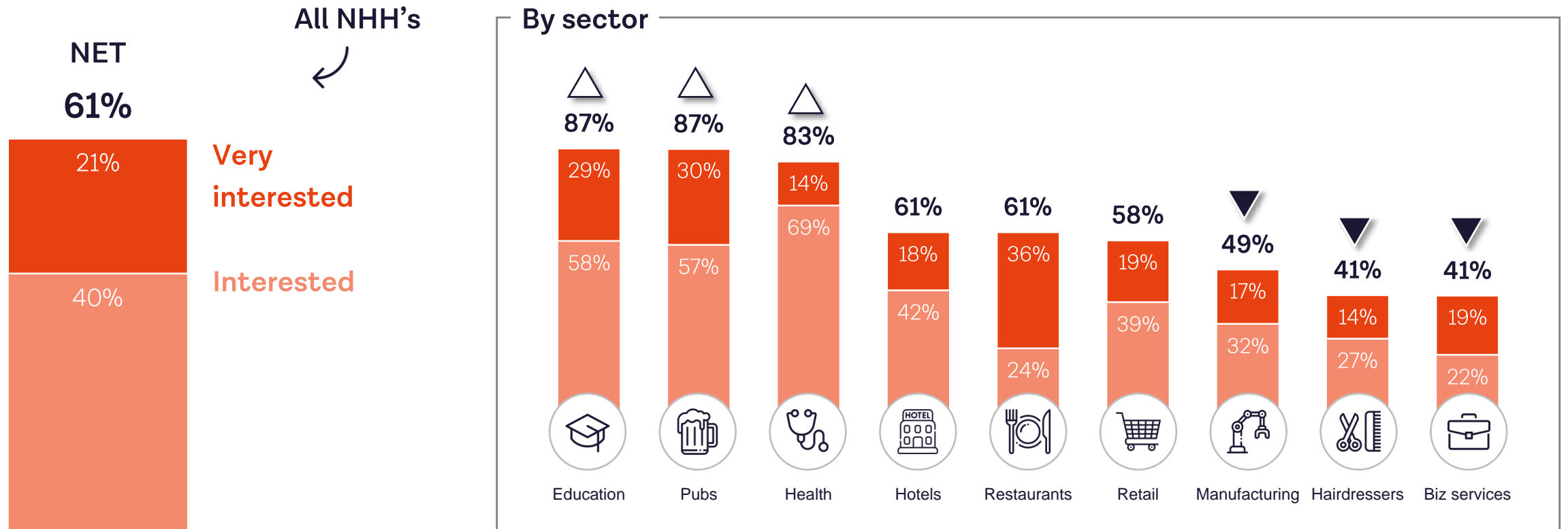


Response to the proposition

Interest in having a water efficiency visit is high, and again UU should prioritise Education and Health, as well as Pubs

Interest in having a water efficiency visit
All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▽ lower than total



Question: B3a. INTEREST IN THE PROPOSITION. How interested are you in having a water efficiency visit?

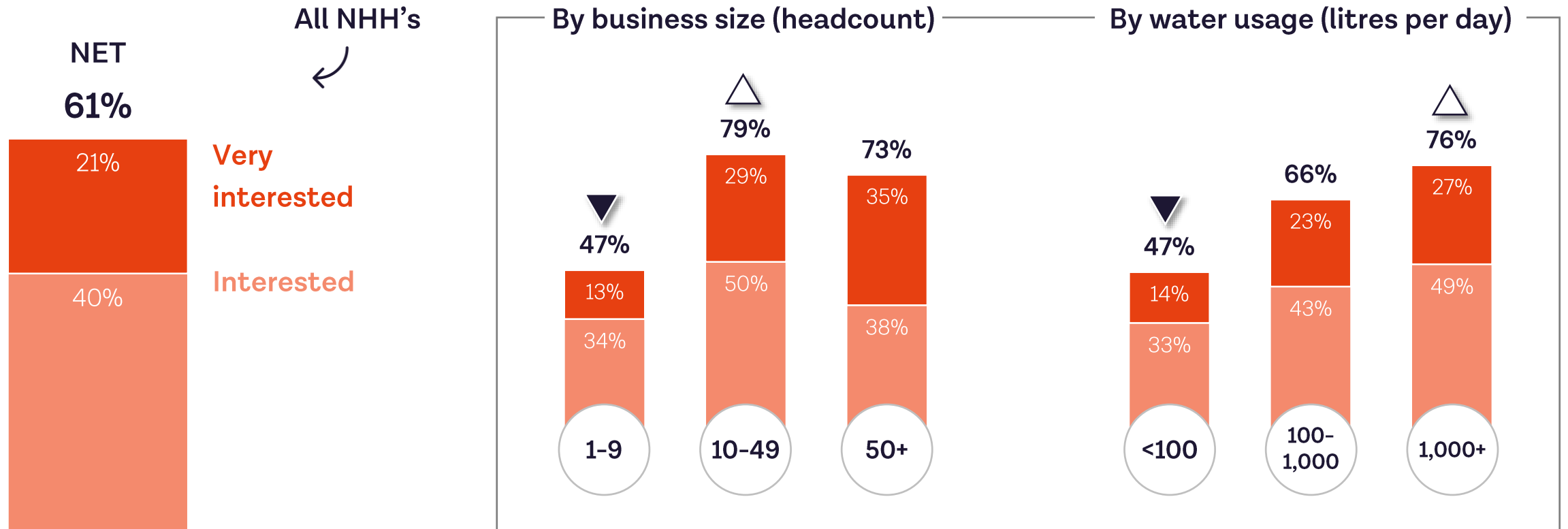
Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: Education (n=38), Pubs (n=30), Health (n=29), Hotels (n=33), Restaurants (n=33), Retail (n=31), Manufacturing (n=47), Hairdressers (n=22), Biz services (n=27)

Response to the proposition

...whilst de-prioritising smaller organisations with minimal levels of water use

Interest in having a water efficiency visit
All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: B3a. INTEREST IN THE PROPOSITION. How interested are you in having a water efficiency visit?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), From left to right: 1-9 employees (n=167), 10-49 employees (n=107), 50+ employees (n=39), <100 l/d (n=125), 100-1,000 l/d (n=99), 1,000+ l/d (n=45)

Response to the proposition

And keep in mind how business size and sector interact: UU may want to target e.g. larger Manufacturing organisations

Interest in having a water efficiency visit (% Interested or Very interested)

Sectors split by business size

Fewer than 10 employees

More than 10 employees



Caution: very low base sizes on this page (as low as n=8). Results are indicative only

The **Health** and **Education** organisations in our sample are **predominately small / medium / larger*** (10+ employees), which partly explains their higher levels of interest.

The **Hairdressers** and **Business service** organisations in our sample are **predominately micro*** (<10 employees), which partly explains their lower levels of interest.

Question: B3a. INTEREST IN THE PROPOSITION. How interested are you in having a water efficiency visit? | * Based on the UK / EU classification of business sizes

Base: Manufacturing (1-9 employees) (n=19), Manufacturing (10+ employees) (n=28), Retail (1-9 employees) (n=22), Retail (10+ employees) (n=8), Hotels (1-9 employees) (n=23), Hotels (10+ employees) (n=8), Pubs (1-9 employees) (n=13), Pubs (10+ employees) (n=15), Restaurants (1-9 employees) (n=12), Restaurants (10+ employees) (n=17)

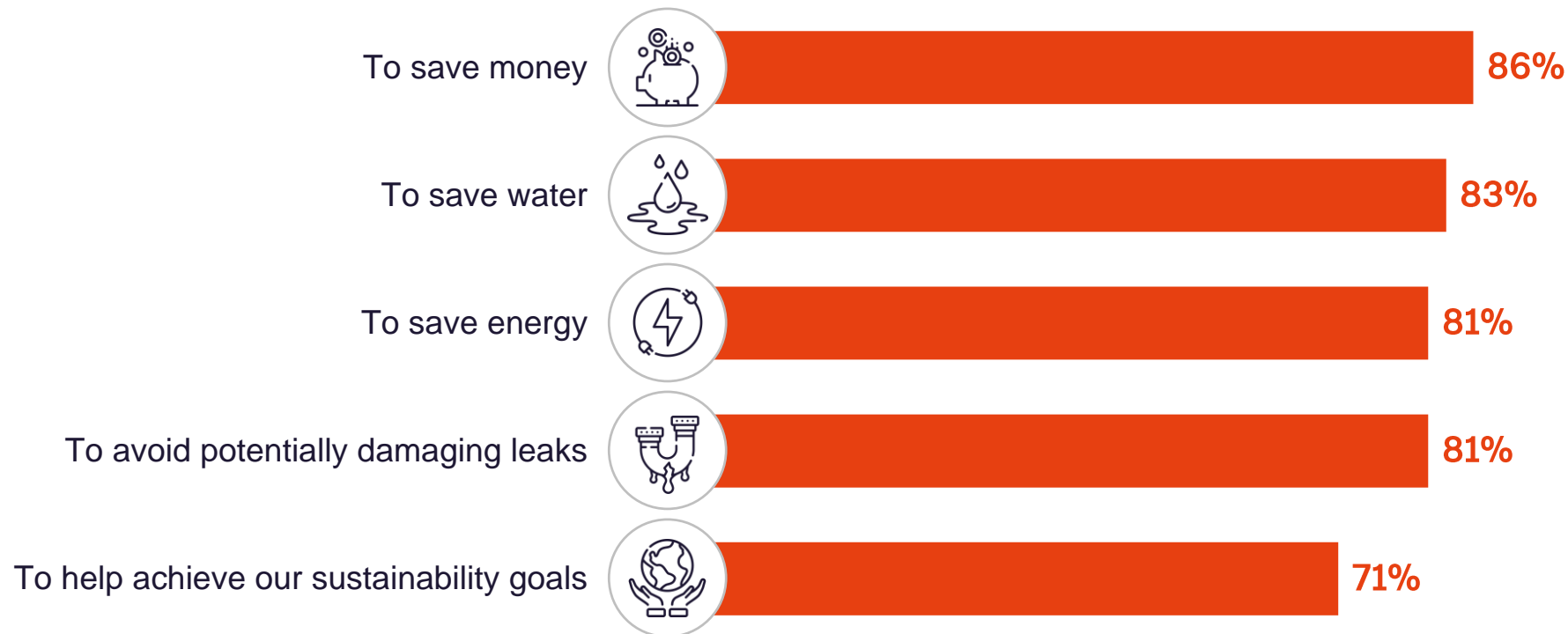
Response to the proposition

A range of factors drive interest in the proposition and all these should be mentioned in customer communications..

Reasons that would motivate them to have a water efficiency visit

NHH's who haven't taken part in water efficiency visit before

A driver of interest



Question: B4a. DRIVERS OF INTEREST IN PROPOSITION. Which of the following reasons, if any, would motivate you to have a water efficiency visit?

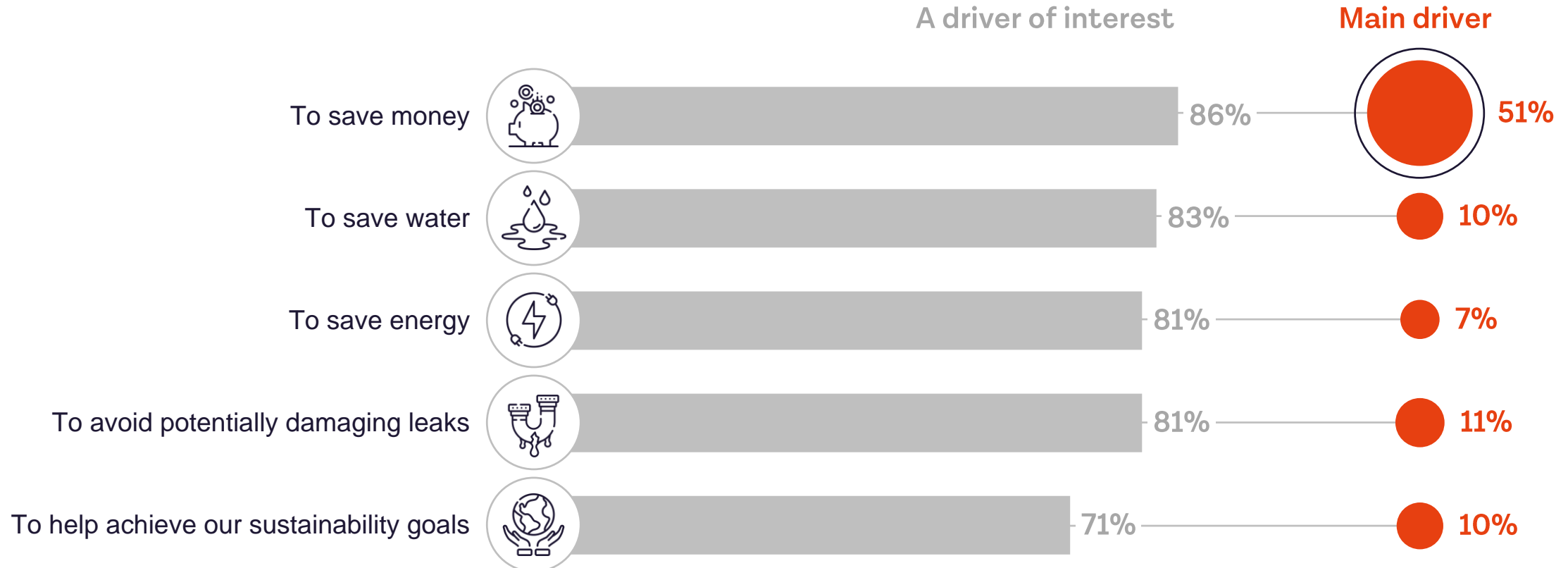
Base: NHH respondents who haven't taken part in water efficiency visit before (n=325)

Response to the proposition

But it is likely that saving money will be the clinching argument that persuades NHH's to participate

Main reason that would motivate them to have a water efficiency visit

NHH's who haven't taken part in water efficiency visit before



Question: B4b. MAIN DRIVER OF INTEREST IN PROPOSITION. And what is the main reason that would motivate you to have a water efficiency visit?

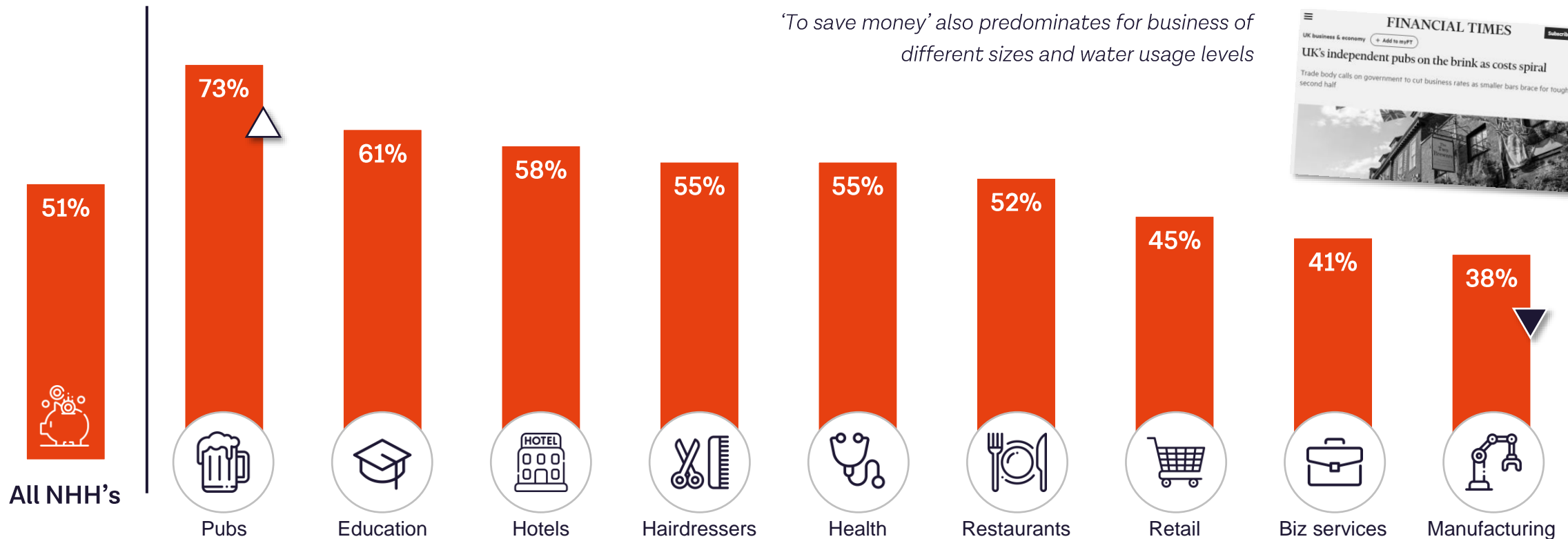
Base: NHH respondents who haven't taken part in water efficiency visit before (n=325)

Response to the proposition

Especially Pubs, many of which are under immense financial pressure as their costs spiral

To save money is the main reason that would motivate them to have a water efficiency visit
NHH's who haven't taken part in water efficiency visit before

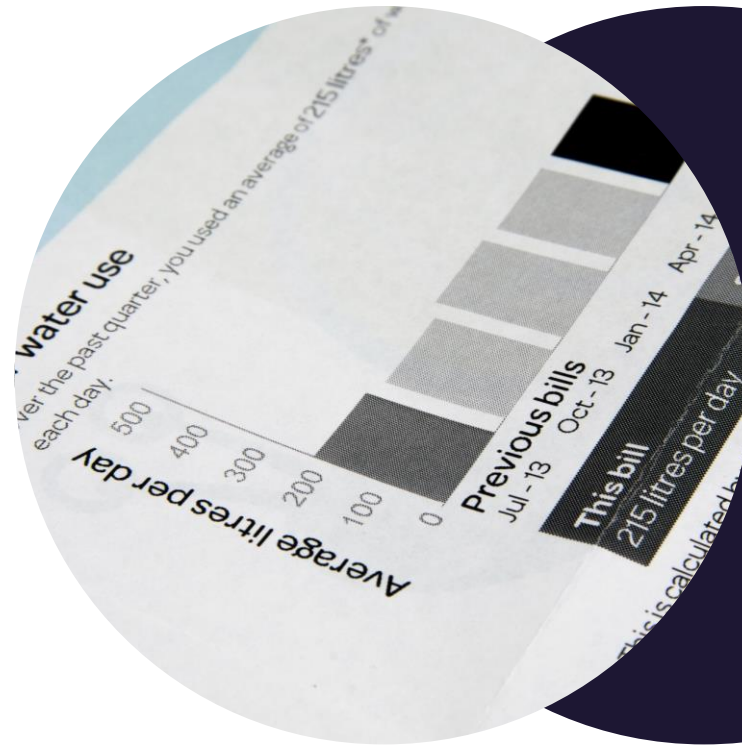
▲ Notably higher /
▼ lower than total



Question: B4b. MAIN DRIVER OF INTEREST IN PROPOSITION. And what is the main reason that would motivate you to have a water efficiency visit?

Base: NHH respondents who haven't taken part in water efficiency visit before (n=325), From left to right: Pubs (n=30), Education (n=38), Hotels (n=33), Hairdressers (n=22), Health (n=29), Restaurants (n=33), Retail (n=31), Biz services (n=27), Manufacturing (n=47)

And
qualitatively,
financial self-
interest was the
most compelling
benefit



“
When does it start? It's free and it can save me and my business money.
B&B
”

“
Anything to help me save money in the current climate would be helpful, and this could help.
Pharmacy
”

“
My job involves managing budgets, so saving costs in the long run would be the biggest benefit.
Manufacturing
”


Response to the proposition


UU may need to persuade less water-intensive organisations that even they can make savings and see a tangible benefit


Spontaneous reasons for not being interested in having water efficiency visit


NHH's who are not interested in having a water efficiency visit


**We don't
use
enough
water...**


“ Just because I don't think it would benefit me regarding the amount I use.
 **Retail** ”

“ Don't use much water in the first place, therefore not ideal for a visit.
 **Health** ”

“ Because I think we do everything we possibly can now.
 **Hotels** ”

“ Because I don't think we have a problem, we have no leaks or anything like that, I've got a good plumber who checks this regularly.
 **Hotels** ”

“ Just because I genuinely don't think we can. I'm an engineer and I don't believe we could be more efficient than we are.
 **Manufacturing** ”

“ We don't use that much water. We only use it for brews.
 **Business services** ”

Response to the proposition

When approached, NHH's will understand why UU is offering this service for free and trust UU to deliver it

Perceptions of water efficiency visits (% agree or agree strongly)

All NHH's



High levels of trust and understanding are consistent across sectors, as well as businesses of different sizes and water usage levels

4

Optimising the proposition

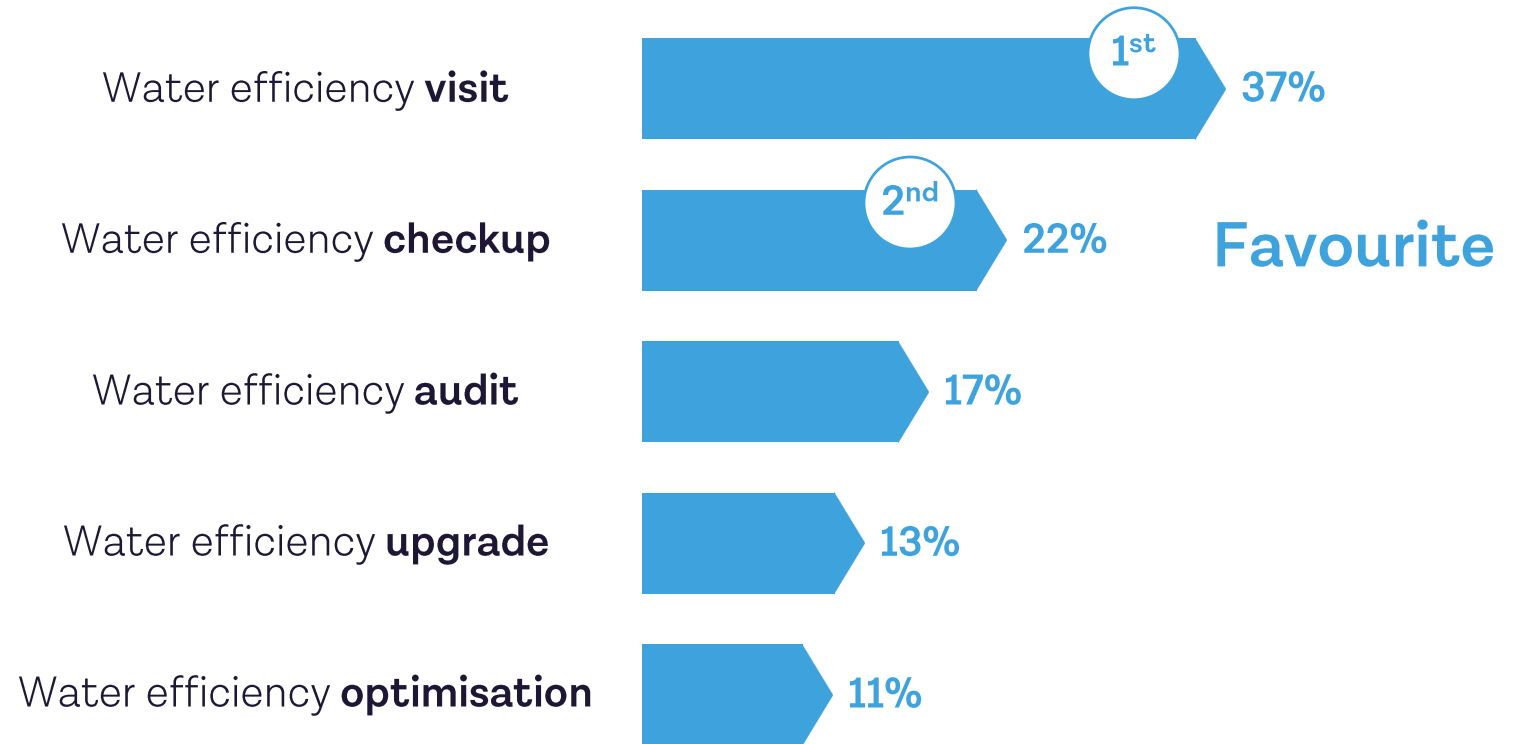
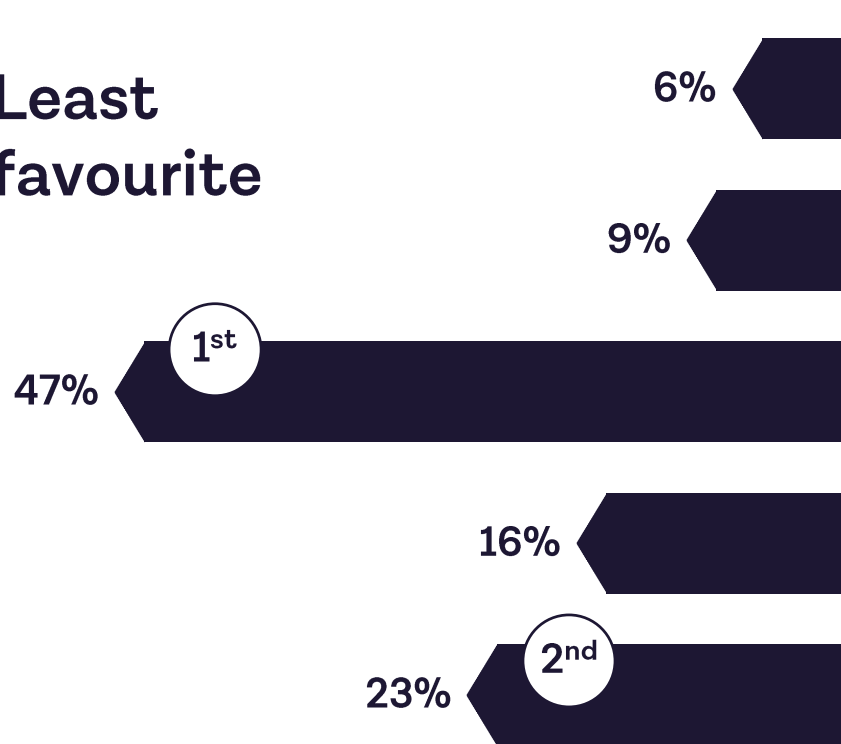
Optimising the proposition

With no clear consensus, 'Visit' may be the best name under consideration, whilst 'Audit' should be avoided

Preferred name for the proposition

All NHH's

Least favourite



Question: C3. AUDIT VS. VISIT. 'Water efficiency visits' is just one possible name for the service we've been asking about. Here are some alternative names. Please let us know which one is your favourite and which one is your least favourite.

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327)

Optimising the proposition

‘Checkup’ and ‘Visit’ also went down well in the qual

Visit

- ✓ More friendly and approachable – not an inspection (Hairdressers)
- ✓ Better – self-explanatory (Nursery)
- ✓ Not exciting but okay (B&B)

Audit

- ✗ More to do with compliance than offering a benefit (Nursery)
- ✗ Sounds official. Like a visit from the taxman (Pubs)
- ✗ Sounds like you’d be under scrutiny (Manufacturing)

Checkup

- ✓ Explains what it is. You’d feel reassured – like an annual health checkup (Manufacturing)
- ✓ Quite nice. More friendly than ‘audit’ (Nursery)

Optimisation

- ✗ Long-winded, but better than ‘audit’ (Pubs)
- ✗ Overcomplicated (Manufacturing)
- ✗ Pretentious (Hairdressers)

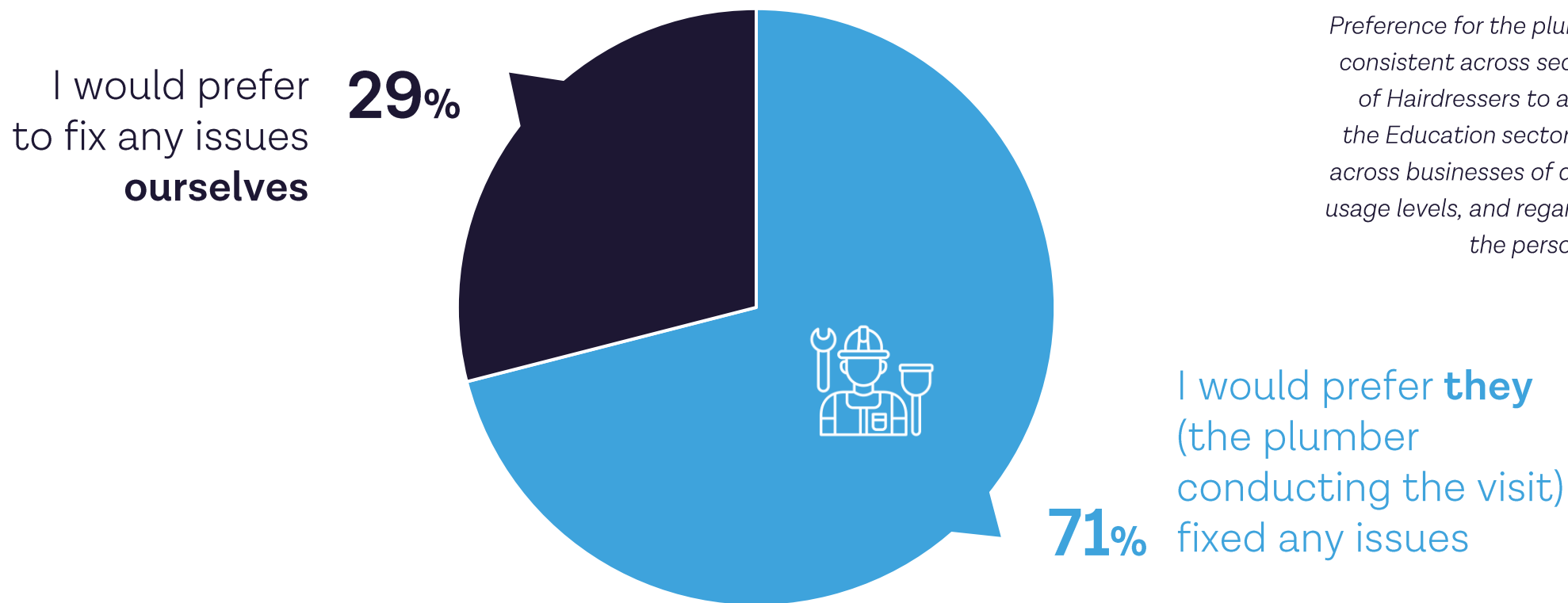


Optimising the proposition

UU should emphasise that the plumber will be able to fix any minor issues identified during a visit

Who they would like to fix any issues identified during the visit

All NHH's



Preference for the plumber fixing any issues is consistent across sectors (from a low of 59% of Hairdressers to a high of 88% of those in the Education sector). This is also consistent across businesses of different sizes and water usage levels, and regardless of the seniority of the person answering the survey.

Question: B6. RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIXING ISSUES. If a plumber identified any issues, would you prefer that they fixed these (for example, fixing leaking taps, toilets and urinals, or fitting water saving devices, at no cost to you), or would you prefer to handle the fix of any issues yourself?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327)

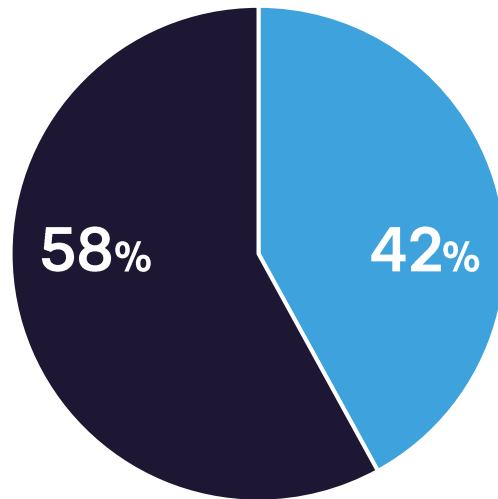
But UU will need to be flexible for different sectors, with some unable to have the visit during normal opening hours

When they would prefer the visit to take place

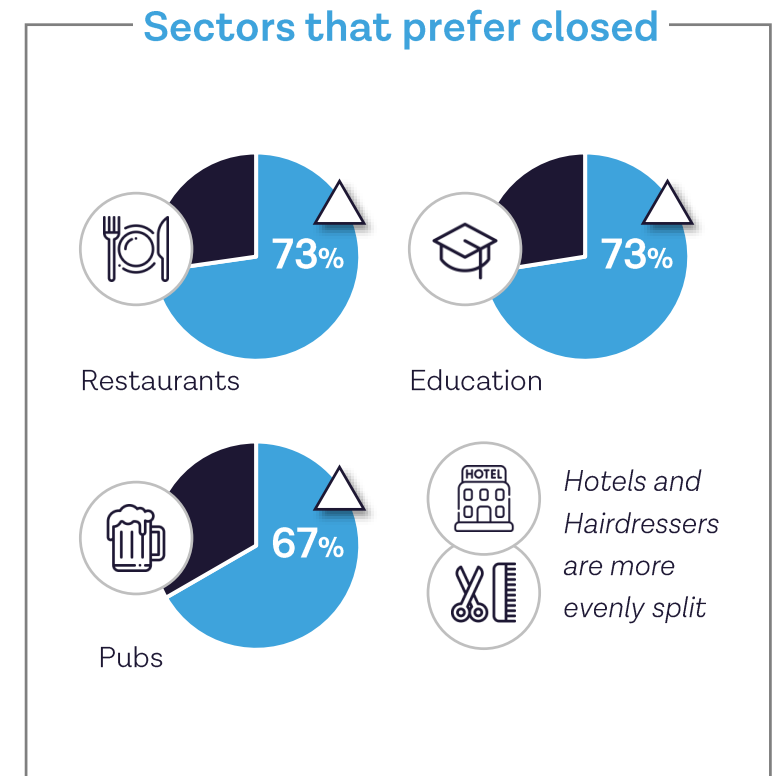
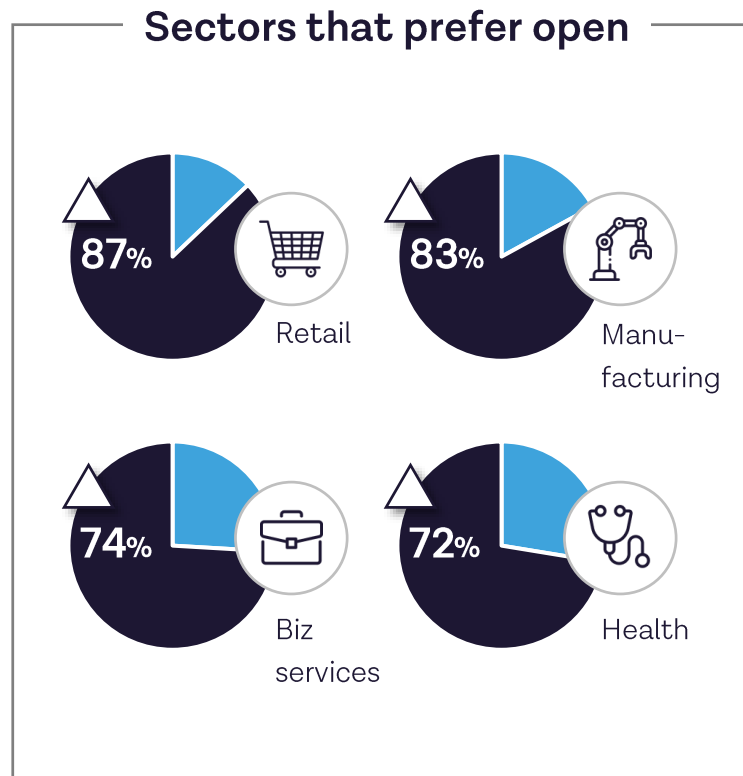
All NHH's

△ Notably higher /
▽ lower than total

Within normal school/
business hours (**open**)



When the school/
business is **closed**



Question: C1. WHEN THE VISIT WOULD TAKE PLACE. If you had a water efficiency visit, when would be the best time to do it?

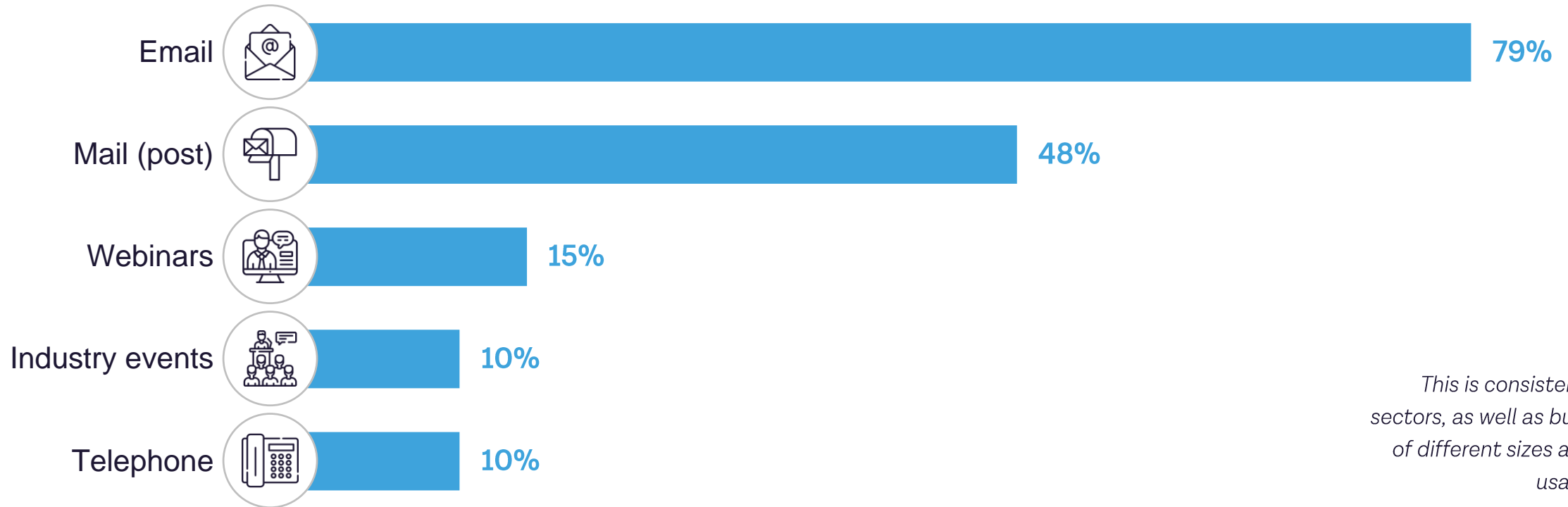
Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), Retail (n=31), Manufacturing (n=47), Biz services (n=27), Health (n=29), Restaurants (n=33), Education (n=40), Pubs (n=30)

Optimising the proposition

UU should contact NHH's about water efficiency visits via email and post

How they would like to be communicated with about water efficiency visits or water saving advice

All NHH's



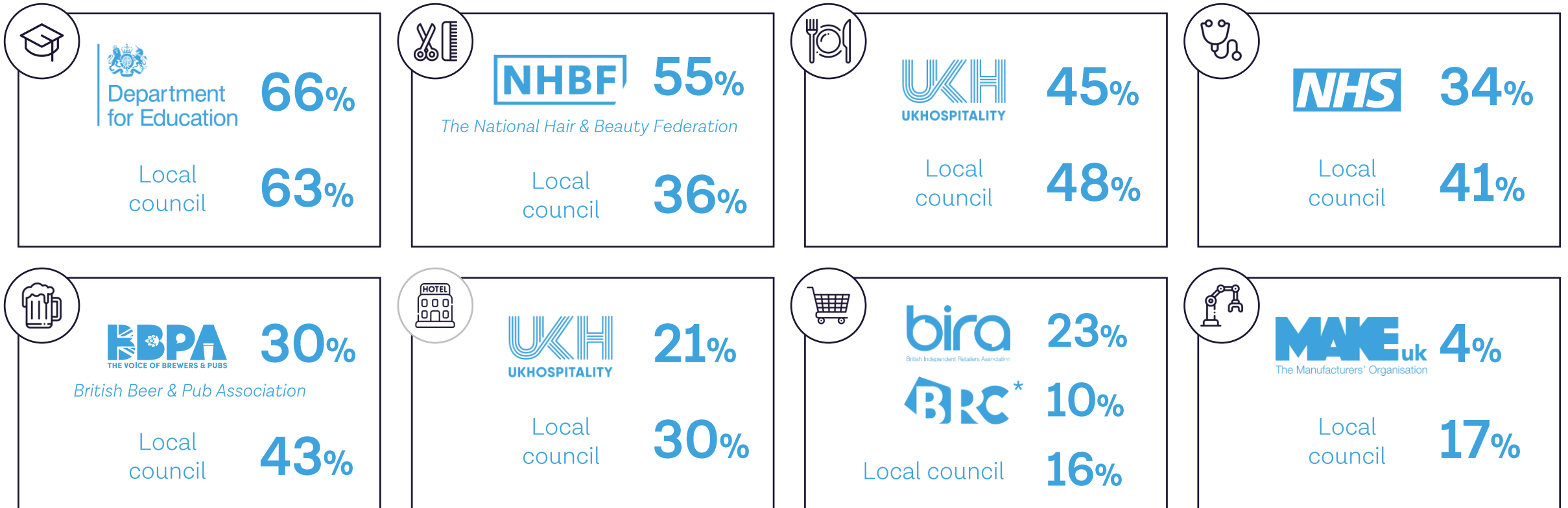
This is consistent across sectors, as well as businesses of different sizes and water usage levels

Optimising the proposition

Partnering with The DfE is likely to encourage take-up in Education, but other industry bodies may be less influential

Industry bodies / partners that would make them more likely to participate in a visit

All NHH's



Question: C4a. TRUSTED BODIES TO PARTNER WITH. Here are some bodies that represent your sector. If United Utilities/your water retailer were to partner with them, would you be more or less likely to participate in a water efficiency visit? | * British Retail Consortium

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), Education (n=40), Hairdressers (n=22), Restaurants (n=33), Health (n=29), Pubs (n=30), Hotels (n=33), Retail (n=31), Manufacturing (n=47)

Optimising the proposition

And UU might consider other partners, with Green Tourism potentially a great fit for hospitality

Other suggested bodies that UU / their water retailer could partner with

All NHH's



Question: C4b. OTHER TRUSTED BODIES TO PARTNER WITH. And are there any other bodies that United Utilities/your water retailer could partner with to make you more likely to participate in a water efficiency visit?

Base: All NHH respondents (n=327), Education (n=40), Hairdressers (n=22), Restaurants (n=33), Health (n=29), Pubs (n=30), Hotels (n=33), Retail (n=31), Manufacturing (n=47)

5

Summary & recommendations

Water efficiency in context

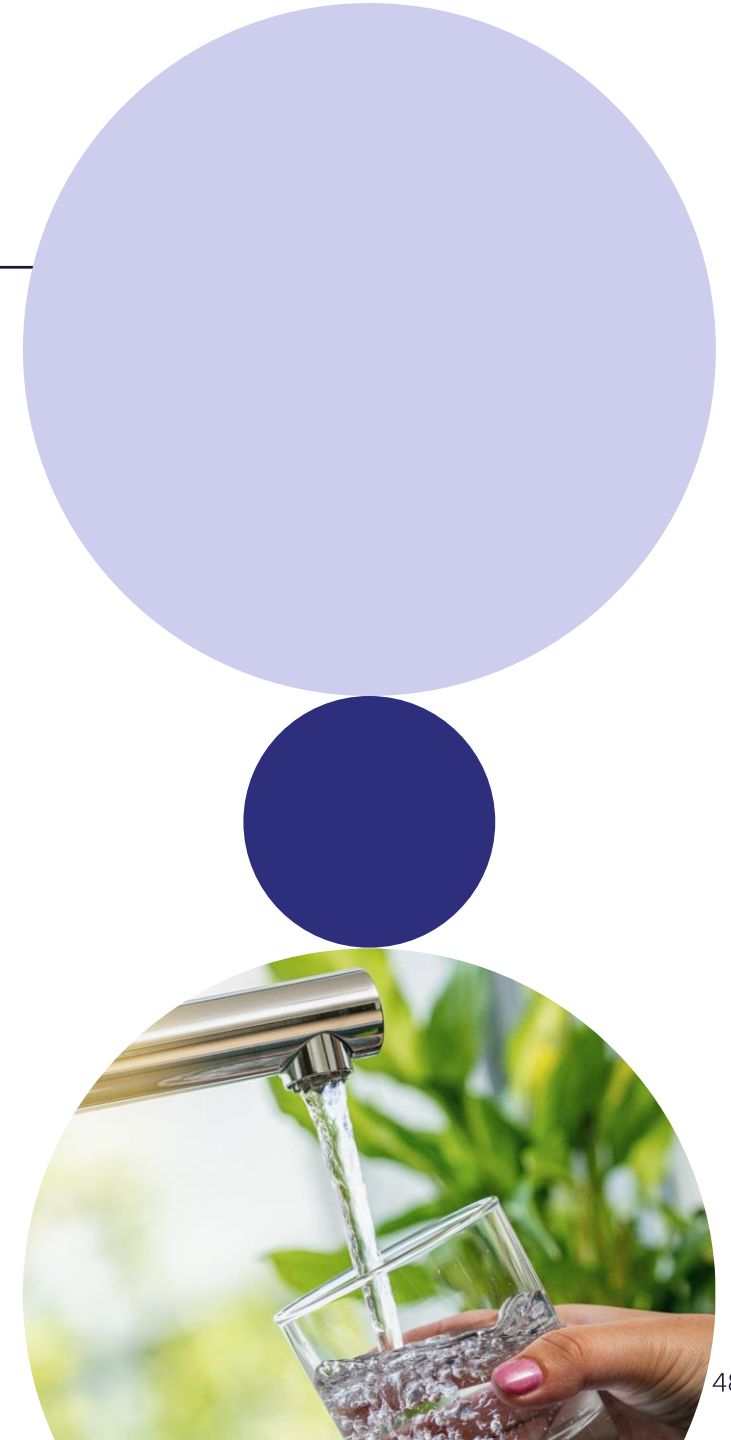
NHH's may claim that water efficiency is important to their organisation. And when serious problems with their water supply occur, such as leaks, water can suddenly become an all-encompassing priority. But this does not necessarily translate into sustained action, with few NHH's setting targets to use less water (or indeed, setting sustainability targets of any kind).

NHH's may have taken 'water efficiency actions' in the past 5 years, perhaps installing new appliances or fixing leaks. But with only 1.3 actions taken on average in the past 5 years, water efficiency is clearly a low salience issue. And increasingly with

cost of living pressures, including rising energy prices, water is down the list of priorities for NHH's.

UU will need to cut-through and raise the salience of water efficiency as an issue.

And our initial struggle to recruit participants, because so many pay for their water as part of their lease, means that UU will need a compelling proposition that pre-empts the type of objections we routinely heard e.g. 'Our landlord deals with all of that', 'You'll have to speak to the landlord' etc.



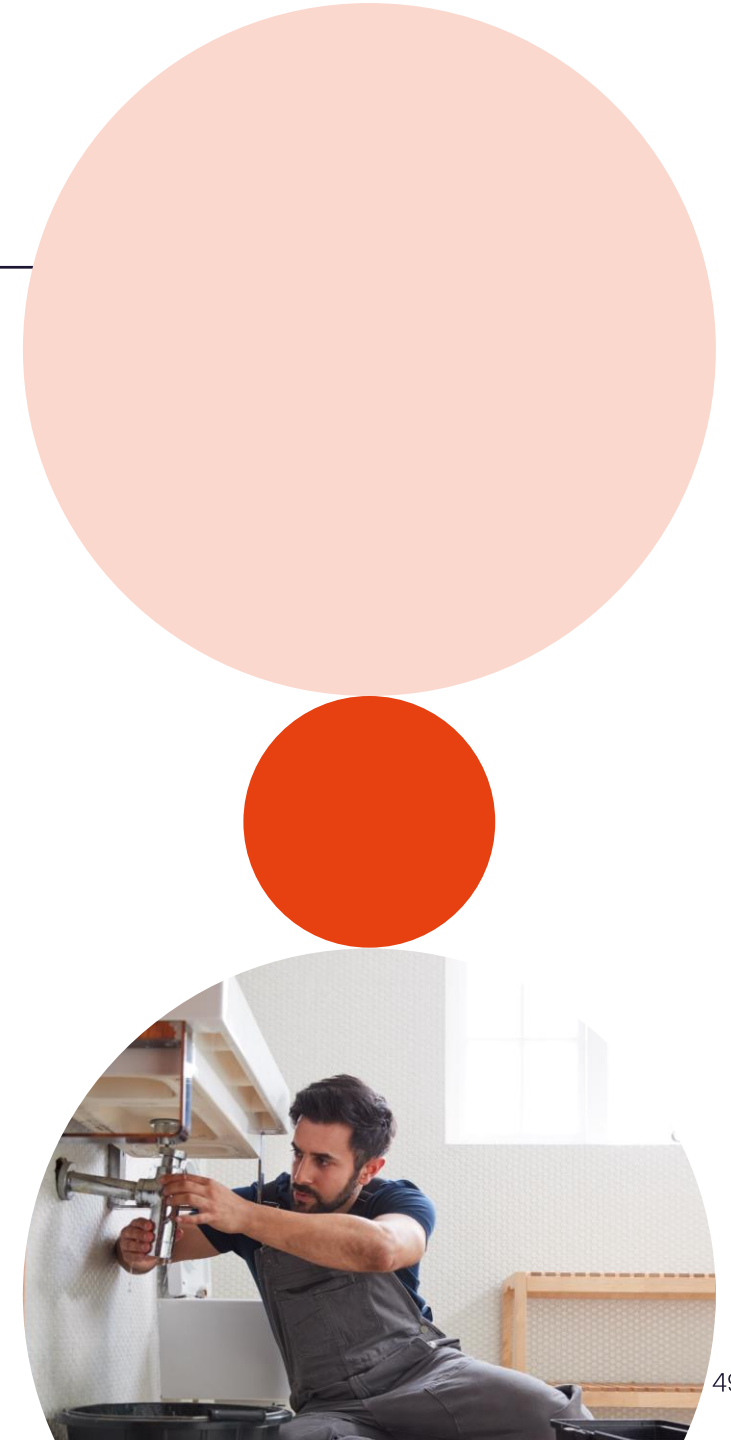
Response to the proposition

Some sectors are more interested in learning about how they can save water, especially Education, Pubs, and Health, as well as larger organisations or those with higher levels of water use. But they may not think to approach UU or their water retailer for help, so UU / retailers will need to be proactive and reach out to NHH's.

The response to water efficiency visits is likely to be positive. And most NHH's find the proposition easy to understand, so UU won't need to explain it in extreme detail. But UU may need to clarify a few points, including what is covered (e.g. parts and labour?) and when the visit can take place.

Because of their claimed interest in having a visit, UU should prioritise Education, Health, and Pubs, whilst de-prioritising Hairdressers and smaller Manufacturing and Business service organisations with lower levels of water usage.

A range of factors drive interest, including saving water and energy, and all should be mentioned in customer communications. But a clear focus on saving money will be key to persuading NHH's to participate. This is especially true for Pubs, many of which are under immense financial pressure as their costs spiral.



Optimising the proposition

With no clear consensus, 'Visit' may be the best name under consideration, whilst 'Audit' should be avoided as it sounds like a visit from the taxman!

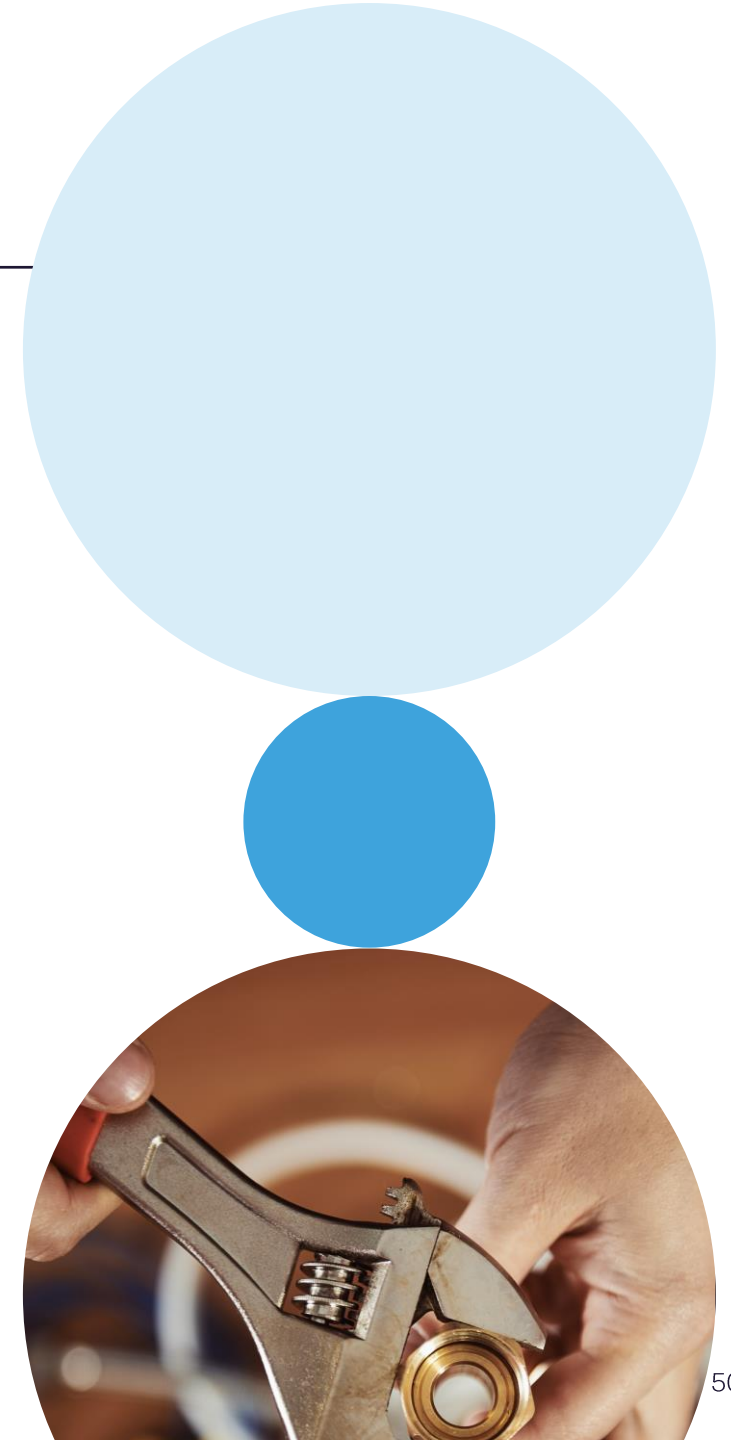
As part of the proposition, UU should emphasise that the plumber will be able to fix any minor issues identified.

In terms of when the visit should take place, UU will need to be flexible for different sectors. For example, Pubs and Restaurants (many of which will be closed during the day and/or very busy during their core opening hours), have a strong preference for the visit taking place out-of-hours. But businesses with more standard 9-5

opening hours (Retail, Business services, Manufacturing) have a strong preference for the visit taking place during normal working hours.

UU should contact NHH's about water efficiency visits via email and post.

And UU should continue to partner with The Department for Education to encourage take-up in the Education sector. But beware that this strategy may not transfer to other industries, where their professional bodies are likely to be less influential (although partnering with local councils may be helpful).



6

Appendix

Delivering high quality research (1 of 2)

Based on feedback on from the water sector and research experts, Ofwat has set out minimum standards for high-quality research

In delivering this research for United Utilities (UU), Trinity McQueen has aimed to follow best practice in each of the following areas:

Useful and contextualised

- We established clear research and business objectives in discussion with UU i.e. what the research needed to achieve and how UU would use the findings
- We provided clear, evidence-based recommendations to UU
- We contextualised the findings e.g. drawing on our wider knowledge of the water industry, as well as the cost of living crisis and other pressures that businesses are facing

Neutrally designed

We designed the survey and discussion guide to be neutral and free from bias. For example:

- Using balanced question wording e.g. ‘How much do you agree or disagree...’
- Using balanced scales i.e. an equal proportion of positive and negative responses
- Randomising statements to mitigate order effects

We have also avoided the selective use of quotes or data, and highlighted where base sizes are low and may impact the validity of the findings.

Fit for purpose

- We piloted the survey to identify any issues with the questionnaire and reduce the overall length of the survey
- We avoided forced choice questions i.e. we provided ‘Other’ and ‘None of these’ options where appropriate
- We used interviewer-administered methods (not self-completion) which meant trained interviewers could clarify any points of misunderstanding for participants
- We explained any jargon or technical language to participants

Delivering high quality research (2 of 2)

Based on feedback on from the water sector and research experts, Ofwat has set out minimum standards for high-quality research

In delivering this research for United Utilities (UU), Trinity McQueen has aimed to follow best practice in each of the following areas:

Inclusive

- We used telephone interviews to reach a large, diverse population in terms of location, business size, and sector – not only those on online B2B panels
- We scheduled surveys and interviews at times convenient for participants

Shared in full with others

- We have provided detailed information on the methodology for the research
- The full final report and research materials will be published on the UU's research library webpage

Independently assured

All research was conducted by Trinity McQueen, an independent market research agency. UU collaborated with Your Voice, the Independent Challenge Group, who reviewed all research materials and provided a check and challenge approach on the method and findings.

Continual

We have identified areas that could be explored in further primary or secondary research. And the outputs of the research will feed into the PR24 submission, with the insight being used across business plans.

Ethical

We conducted the research in line with the ethical standards of the Market Research Society:

- We obtained willing (voluntary) co-operation from participants
- The research was conducted honestly, objectively and without unwelcome intrusion or harm to participants
- The purpose of the research and end use of the data was transparent
- We will preserve participant's anonymity and confidentiality

Proposition text

Used in the survey and qualitative interviews

Read out during the telephone survey

United Utilities benefits from reduced water usage by businesses, as it means more water is available to meet customer needs now and in the future, so it is considering offering a free evaluation of business water efficiency. They will arrange for a plumber or plumbers (depending on business size) to visit your premises and identify minor leaks and areas where water is being wasted.

Minor leaks, including taps, toilets and urinals, will be repaired as part of the visit, and if the business consents, water saving devices such as tap aerators, displacement bags in cisterns and urinal controls will be installed where appropriate.

There would be no cost to your business and as a result you could benefit from lower water bills, and potentially lower energy bills too if you use hot water. We believe a shop could save around 600 litres per day, a hotel 5,900 litres per day and a leisure centre 6,900 litres per day.

Shared during the qualitative interview

1. As a business that receives your water supply from United Utilities, you would be offered a free evaluation of your organisation's water efficiency.
2. You would book a suitable date and time for this to take place.
3. It would be carried out by a plumber or plumbers depending on the size of the business.
4. The time it takes depends on the size of the organisation and the potential for water saving. A primary school takes on average ½ day and a secondary school takes on average 1 day.
5. It does not require supervision unless the business chooses to do this.
6. There is no charge for this - United Utilities benefits from reduced water usage. This will help ensure they have an adequate supply of water to meet customer needs now and in the future, whilst also protecting the environment.

The idea is to identify and fix leaking toilets, dripping taps and uncontrolled urinals. If the organisation consents, water saving devices can also be installed where appropriate, such as tap aerators, displacement bags in cisterns, shower heads/regulators and urinal controls.

Eliminating waste and reducing water use could save your business money on your water bill and reduce your energy bills too if you are using hot water. A small trial with 60 schools resulted in average estimated savings of approximately 5,000 litres per day per school. It could also contribute to any wider sustainability goals your business might have.

Based on these findings we believe a shop could save around 600l/day, a hotel 5,900l/day and a leisure centre 6,900l/ day.

Responsibility for dealing with water

The response to the proposition is similar amongst those who pay their water bill directly vs. through their landlord

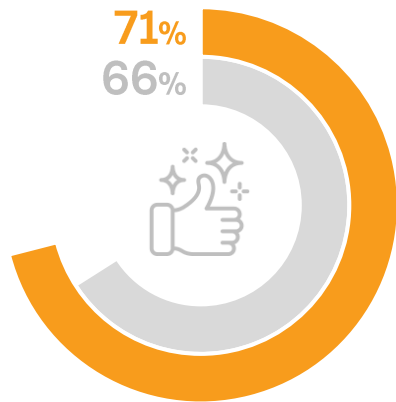
Response to the proposition

With different levels of responsibility

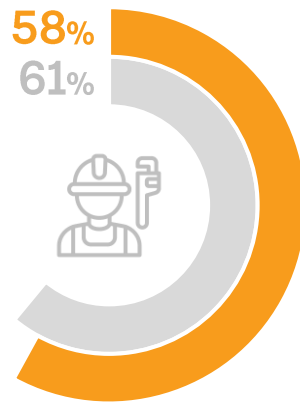
△ Notably higher / lower than landlord-payees
▼

Pay for water bill via their landlord

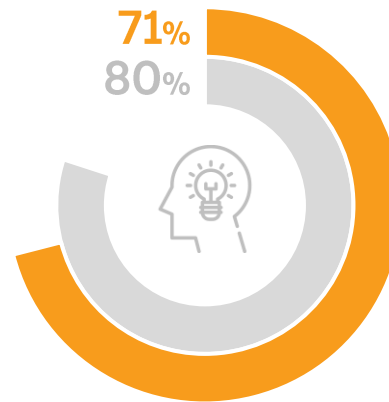
Personally responsible for their water bill



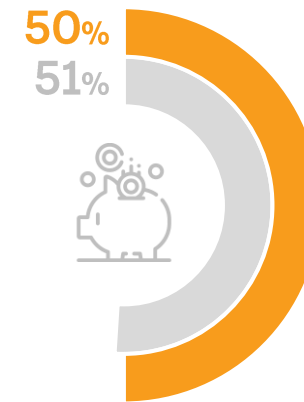
Overall opinion of water efficiency visits
(% answering 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale)



Interested in having a water efficiency visit
(% Interested or Very interested)



Easy to understand water efficiency visits
(% Agree or Agree strongly)



Saving money is the main driver of interest

Trust UU + retailer **92%** 78%

Clear why UU is offering **88%** 88%

Trust UU to deliver **88%** 78%

Trust retailer to deliver **88%** 70% ▼

Clear why this is free **79%** 81%

Sports & recreation

Indicatively, the Sports sector's response to the proposition is in line with NHH's in general

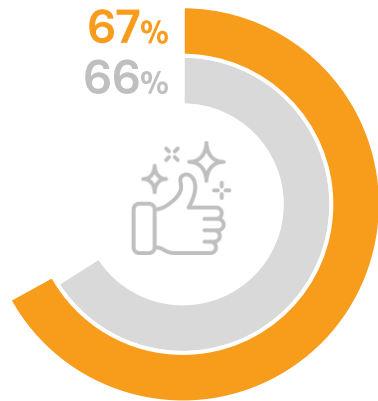
Response to the proposition

In the sports / recreation sector vs. All NHH's

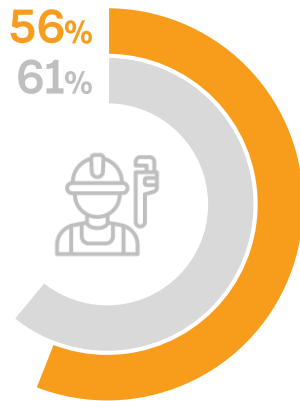
Sports / recreation

All NHH's

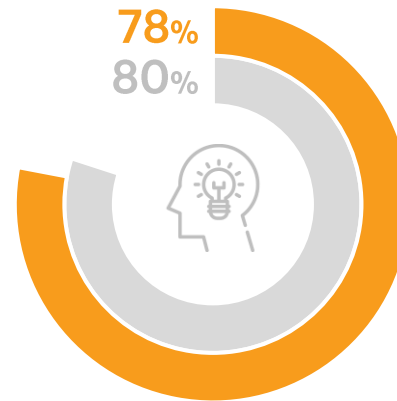
Caution: very low base (n=9).
Results are indicative only



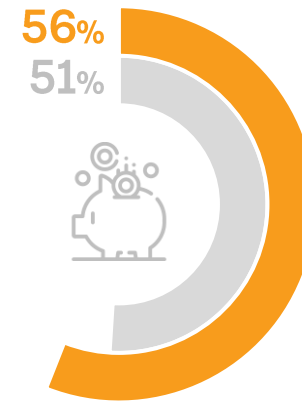
Overall opinion of water efficiency visits
(% answering 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale)



Interested in having a water efficiency visit
(% Interested or Very interested)



Easy to understand water efficiency visits
(% Agree or Agree strongly)



Saving money is the main driver of interest

Clear why UU is offering	89%	88%
Trust UU + retailer	89%	79%
Clear why this is free	78%	81%
Trust UU to deliver	78%	79%
Trust retailer to deliver	67%	72%

By county

The response is broadly consistent by county, but NHH's in Cumbria are slightly less interested in having a visit...

Response to the proposition

By county

Merseyside

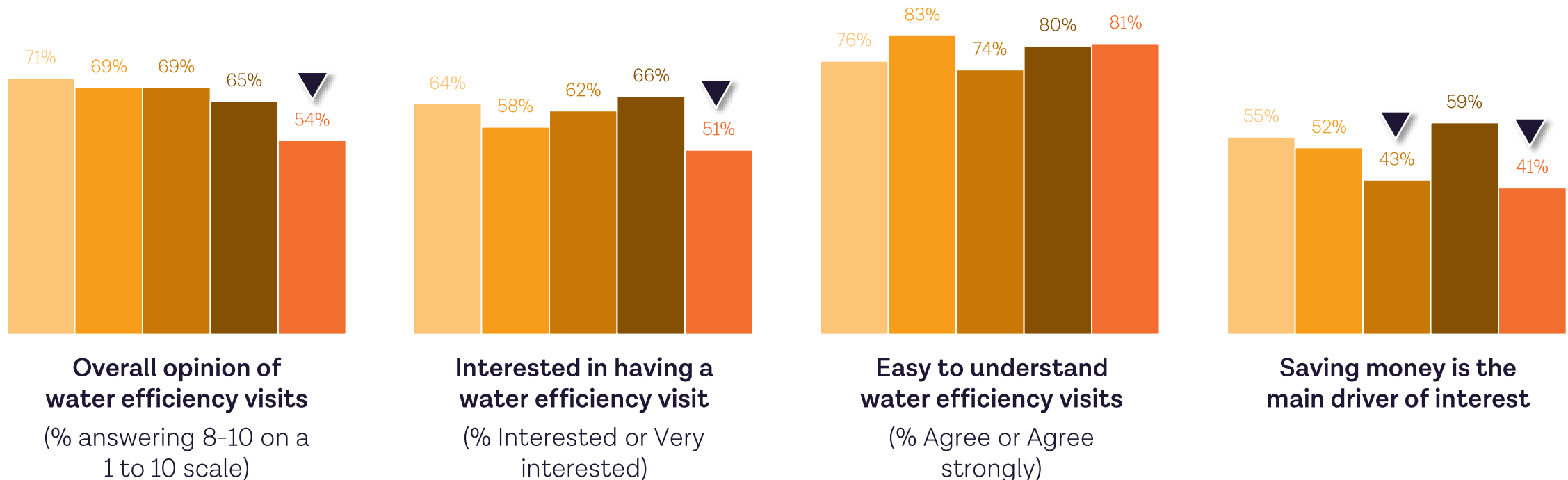
Lancashire

Cheshire

Greater Manchester

Cumbria

▲ Notably higher /
▼ lower than average



Question: B1a, B2, B3a, B4b

Base: Merseyside (n=42), Lancashire (n=90), Cheshire (n=61), Greater Manchester (n=97), Cumbria (n=37)

By county

But this is related to the types of business we surveyed in Cumbria: fewer large organisations, no Health or Education

Business size (headcount) and sector

By county

	Cumbria	Merseyside	Lancashire	Cheshire	Greater Manchester
1-9	68%	36%	59%	52%	43%
10-49	30%	43%	27%	31%	36%
50-249	0%	10%	9%	10%	10%
250+	3%	5%	1%	3%	5%
Don't know	0%	7%	4%	3%	5%

...which we know are more interested in the proposition

	Cumbria	Merseyside	Lancashire	Cheshire	Greater Manchester
Hotels	27%	5%	18%	2%	4%
Retail	16%	7%	8%	7%	11%
Pubs	16%	5%	10%	8%	8%
Restaurants	16%	19%	8%	11%	5%
Manufacturing	14%	7%	21%	11%	13%
Biz services	5%	7%	8%	11%	8%
Hairdressers	0%	7%	2%	13%	9%
Health	0%	21%	8%	5%	10%
Education	0%	17%	6%	18%	18%

By county

But this is related to the types of business we surveyed in Cumbria: fewer large organisations, no Health or Education

Business size (headcount) and sector

By county

	Cumbria	Merseyside	Lancashire	Cheshire	Greater Manchester
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250+	3%	5%	1%	3%	5%
Don't know	0%	7%	4%	3%	5%

...which we know are more interested in the proposition

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Retail	16%	7%	8%	7%	11%
Pubs	16%	5%	10%	8%	8%
Restaurants	16%	19%	8%	11%	5%
Manufacturing	14%	7%	21%	11%	13%
Biz services	5%	7%	8%	11%	8%
Hairdressers	0%	7%	2%	13%	9%
Health	0%	21%	8%	5%	10%
Education	0%	17%	6%	18%	18%

Sample outcomes

The key information is highlighted yellow, which reiterates the scale of the landlord issue...

Before we changed the screening criteria to allow all financial decision makers to complete the survey, 74 people were willing to take part but we screened them out because they paid for their water through their landlord, which resulted in a relatively low incidence rate of 36%.

Screen out conditions

Successful Interviews	327
No tone	603
Fax or modem	16
Wrong number	258
S1. No sites in required counties	7
S1b. No sites / Completely from home	22
S2. Not responsible for water	1
Original S2 (water is included in rent) – changed/removed at n=130	74
S2a. Other selected (not landlord)	49
S2b. Pay landlord fixed rate/Don't know	0
Quota reached	33
Duplicate	20
Refused	2,005
Cut off	438
General call back/person not available	1,486
Call Back	576
Busy	898
Answering machine	1,922
No response	1,846
Total Sample Called	10,581

Total screened out	153
Total screened (Screen outs plus interviews)	480
Qualifying incidence (overall - n=327)	68%
Qualifying incidence (before changes - n=130)	36%



NHH Water Efficiency Visits

Quant and qual
integrated report

13th April
2023

TRINITY
MCQUEEN

