

Water Advisory Body finds communication is the main concern for Irish Water customers

- The Water Advisory Body publishes survey of Irish Water Customers

Dublin, Ireland – 05 May 2022: The Water Advisory Body (WAB) has today published a survey of Irish Water customers. The survey, asked a targeted group of customers who live in areas that had recent issues with their water supply. It looked at Irish Water’s communication in terms of clarity, timeliness, efficiency, professionalism, and overall experience. The survey also attempts to gauge how this group of customers (both residential and business) would like to be communicated with in the future.

Key *customer service findings* of this targeted survey include:

- Two in three (66%) households experienced issues with their water in the last 6 months.
- Households are more likely to contact their County Council, rather than Irish Water, if they experience a water related issue.
- One in three households (33%) surveyed in these areas are still experiencing water issues.
- The majority of people (79%) who suffered from disruptions, were not made aware in advance that there may be disruptions/issues to their water supply.
- More than four in ten residents (45%) of these areas expect more water issues in the next few months.

Key *findings* of the selected businesses contacted for the survey include:

- Half of all businesses surveyed claim they have not experienced water related issues at their premises.
- 7 in 10 businesses (70%), when they experienced disruption, were not given a timeframe on how long the issue would last.
- 7 in 10 businesses (70%) found out about the issue themselves rather than through an official body.
- 4 in 10 businesses (40%) stated that if given more advance notice of an issue, it would have made their experience better and 7 in 10 (70%) businesses agreed they would like to receive more personal updates from Irish Water.
- Businesses are slightly more likely to think of calling Irish Water if they experience water issues rather than the Council/Local Authority.

Commenting on the findings, Chairperson of the WAB Paul McGowan said: *“It is clear from the findings of our survey that there is confused communication between Irish Water and its customers. We have on the one hand households contacting their Local Authority rather than Irish Water whenever they experience any kind of disruption, whereas businesses do the opposite and contact Irish Water first. There is a clear*

disconnect here that will need to be rectified to ensure communication is streamlined and as efficient as possible.”

We recommend Irish Water engages with its customers on the correct avenues to contact Irish Water if ever an issue or disruption arises and to provide significant advance notice of disruption where possible.”

The survey was carried out between 26th of October to 7th December 2021, with a pool of 628 residential and 400 business customers in areas where Irish Water had recently carried out maintenance or remedial work.

Paul McGowan concluded by saying: *“We also recommend that Irish Water’s response time for customer complaints and issues be improved in order to avoid, households and businesses having to make follow up calls to the Company.*

The Water Advisory Body (WAB) has invited Irish Water to discuss any insights arising from the findings of this survey and to consider actions to address the findings.

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About the WAB

The Water Advisory Body (the WAB) is an independent statutory body established under Part 7 of the Water Services Act 2017. The WAB was formally established on 1 June 2018. Every three months the WAB prepares a report on Irish Water. Each report is prepared for the Oireachtas and is published on the WAB’s website. For further information on the WAB, including previous reports, see www.wateradvisorybody.ie