

# Ofwat SIM Survey 2016/17 Annual Report

Prepared for: Ofwat

Prepared by: BMG Research



Understanding  
People.

# Objectives

- The overall objective of the research is to provide a robust comparable measure of consumers' experience and satisfaction with the handling and resolution of a recent water or sewerage query by their supplier.
- Combined data for 2015-16 to 2018-19 will be used to support Ofwat's decision on financial incentives in 2019.

# Methodology

- For each water company taking part, a target was set of 200 telephone interviews per wave with customers who have had a water or sewerage query resolved in the previous week, equating to 800 interviews per Water Company per year.
- The following targets have been set for the different aspects of service:
  - 100 billing interviews and 100 operation interviews for Water only companies
  - 67 Billing interviews, 67 Clean operation interviews and 66 Waste interviews for water and sewerage companies
- All surveys were administered using our in-house Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) unit. Each individual water company's survey was undertaken by multiple interviewers to prevent any possibility of interviewer bias.



# Number of interviews achieved per company

	Total 16/17
TOTAL	(15,196)
Affinity Water	813
Anglian Water	808
Bournemouth Water	798
Bristol Water	1,072
Dee Valley Water	765
Northumbrian Water	811
Portsmouth Water	806
Severn Trent Water	811
South East Water	811
South Staffs Water	812
South West Water	808
Southern Water	810
Sutton & East Surrey Water	803
Thames Water	817
United Utilities Water	814
Welsh Water	814
Wessex Water	1,216
Yorkshire Water	807

## Confidence levels

At the 95% confidence level, these sample sizes provide overall levels of accuracy for individual percentages of at least:

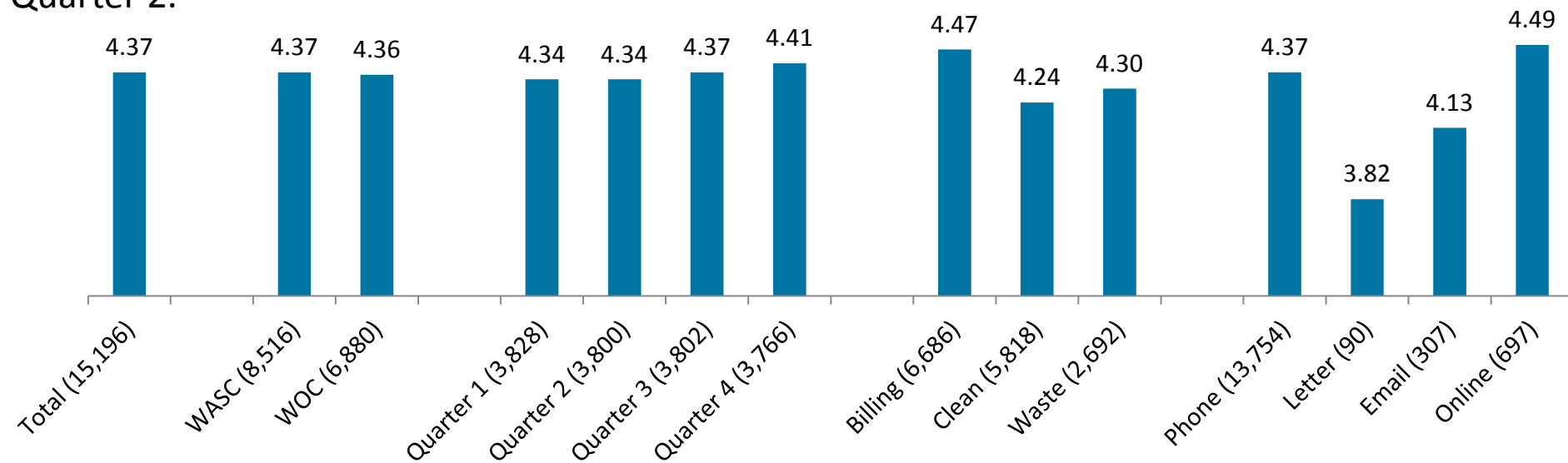
15,196  $\pm$  0.79%;  
 1,216  $\pm$  2.81%;  
 800  $\pm$  3.46%;  
 765  $\pm$  3.54%.

# Satisfaction – Q8 weighted

Customers were significantly more satisfied with the handling of Billing enquiries than either Clean or Waste enquiries.

Those who contacted their water company online were significantly more likely to be satisfied with the handling of their matter than any other method of contact.

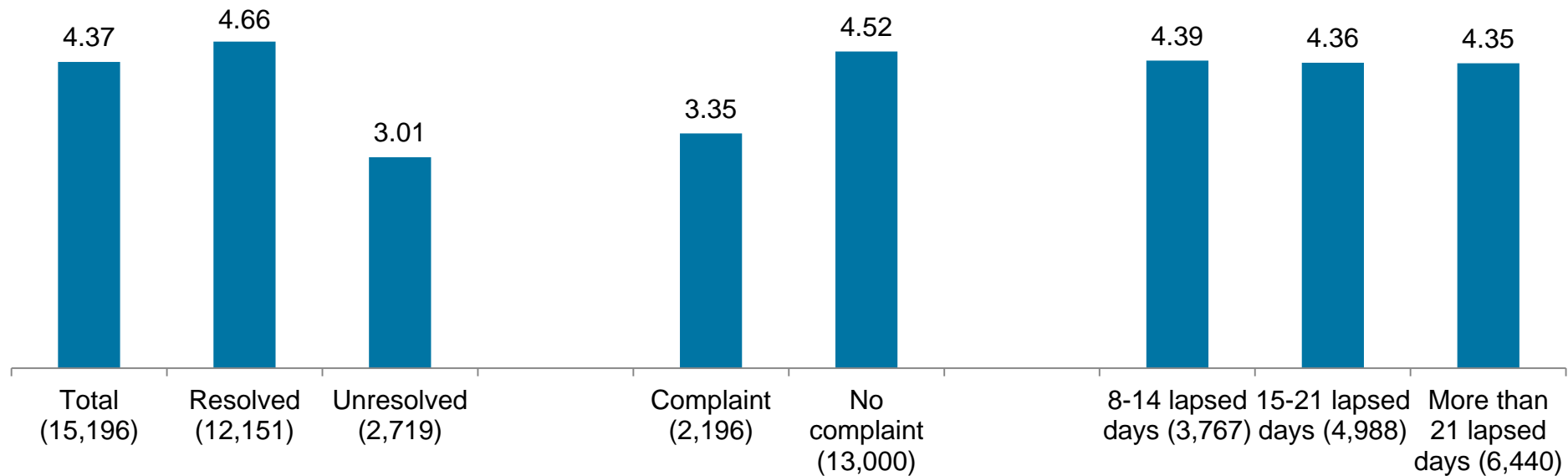
Satisfaction was highest in Quarter 4 of the SIM, significantly so compared to Quarter 1 and Quarter 2.



# Satisfaction – Q8 weighted

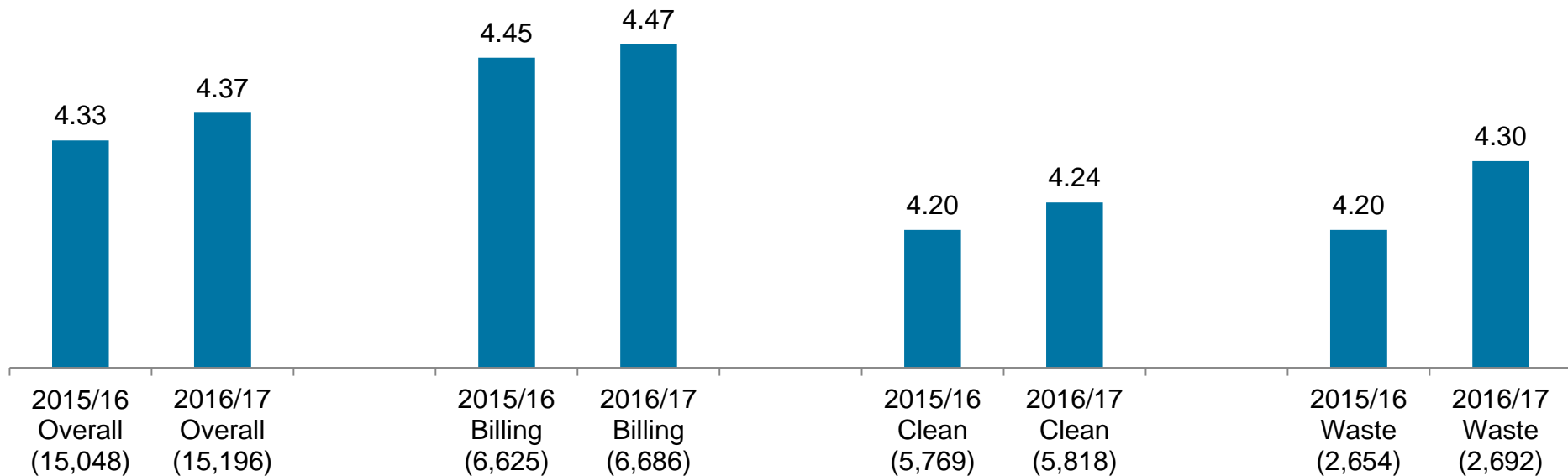
Customers who considered their matter resolved were significantly more likely to be satisfied with the way their enquiry was handled as were those who did not consider their enquiry to be a complaint.

The length of time that had elapsed between the initial contact and the data of interview had no significant impact on satisfaction.



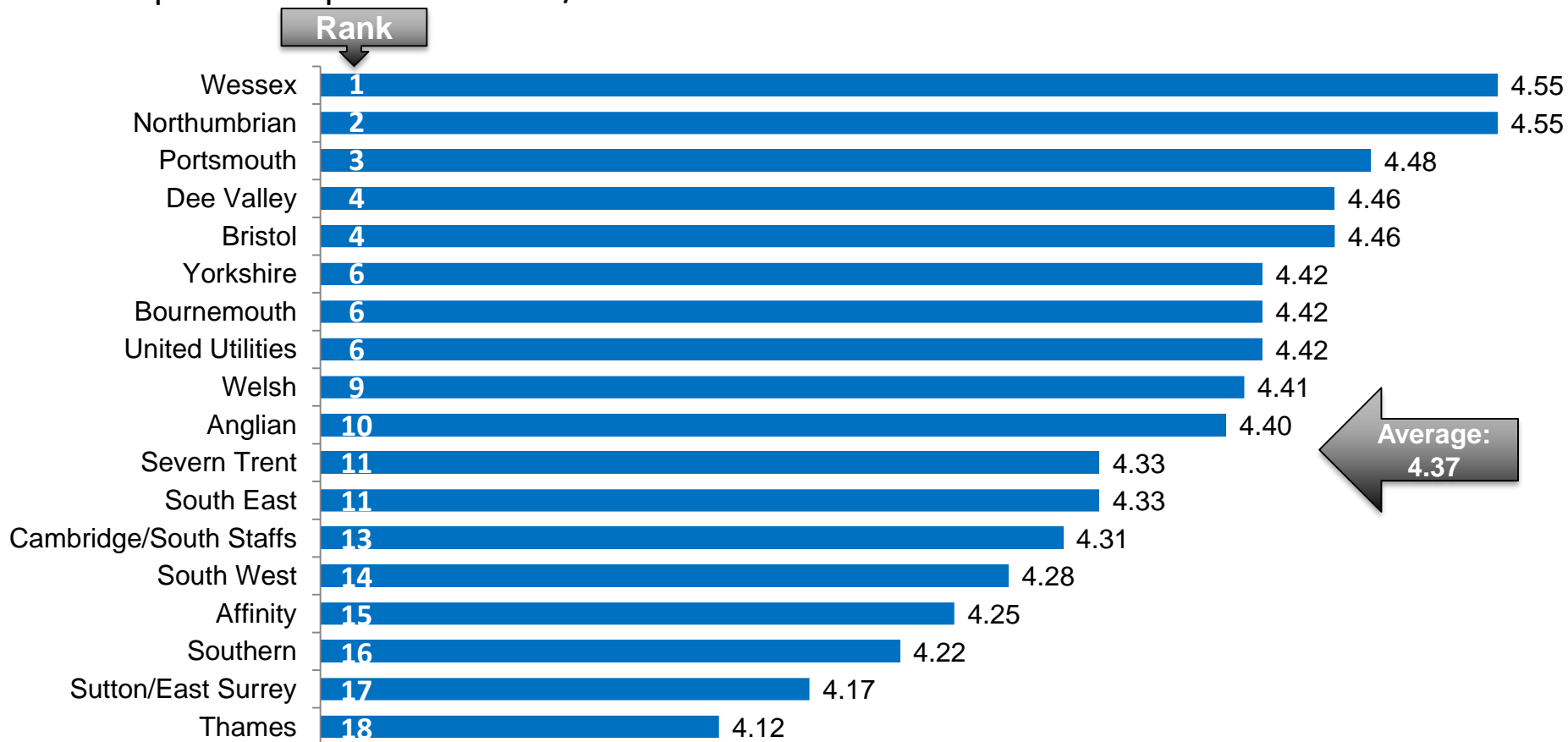
# Satisfaction – Q8 weighted

Satisfaction with query handling has significantly improved across the industry since 2015/16. This increase is driven by the significant improvements in satisfaction with the handling of Clean and Waste queries.



# Satisfaction – Q8 weighted

Wessex Water achieved the highest overall satisfaction score in 2016/17. WASCs made up three of the top five companies in 2016/17.





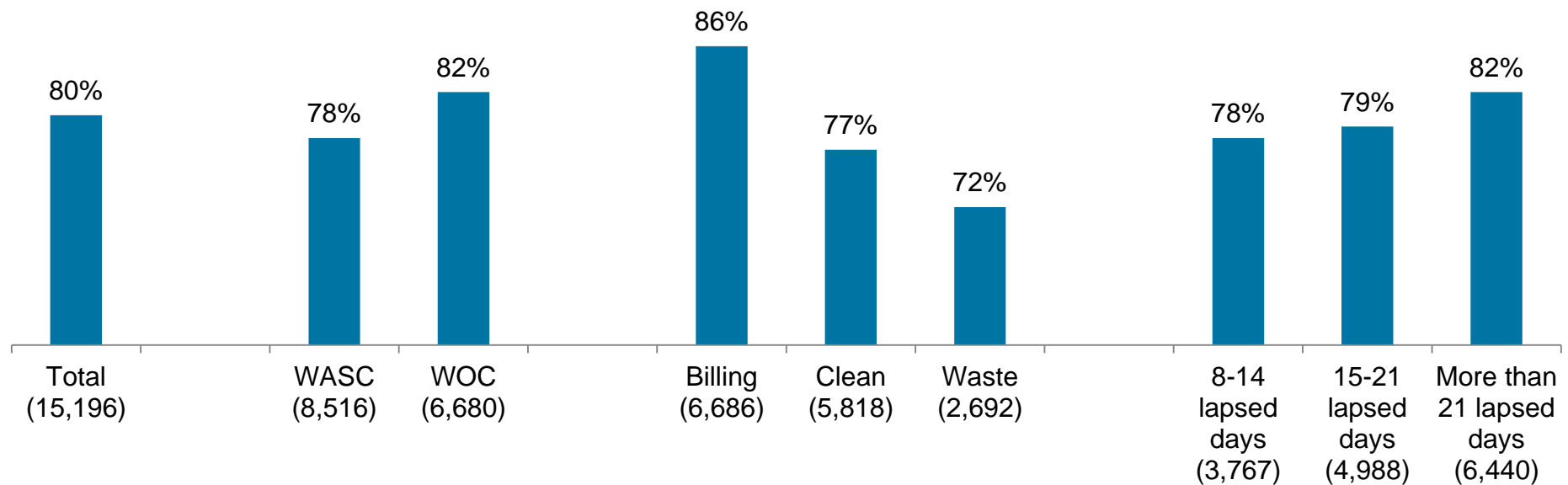
# Satisfaction – Q8 weighted

Company	Q8	Confidence Interval	Rank	Significant Difference
<b>Wessex</b>	4.55	±0.05	1	Significantly above industry average
<b>Northumbrian</b>	4.55	±0.05	2	Significantly above industry average
<b>Portsmouth</b>	4.48	±0.05	3	Significantly above industry average
<b>Dee Valley</b>	4.46	±0.07	4	Significantly above industry average
<b>Bristol</b>	4.46	±0.05	4	Significantly above industry average
<b>Yorkshire</b>	4.42	±0.07	6	
<b>Bournemouth</b>	4.42	±0.07	6	
<b>United Utilities</b>	4.42	±0.07	6	
<b>Welsh</b>	4.41	±0.07	9	
<b>Anglian</b>	4.40	±0.07	10	
<b>Industry Average</b>	4.37			
<b>Severn Trent</b>	4.33	±0.07	11	
<b>South East</b>	4.33	±0.07	11	
<b>South Staffs</b>	4.31	±0.07	13	
<b>South West</b>	4.28	±0.07	14	Significantly below industry average
<b>Affinity</b>	4.25	±0.07	15	Significantly below industry average
<b>Southern</b>	4.22	±0.07	16	Significantly below industry average
<b>Sutton/East Surrey</b>	4.17	±0.07	17	Significantly below industry average
<b>Thames</b>	4.12	±0.07	18	Significantly below industry average

# Resolutions - unweighted

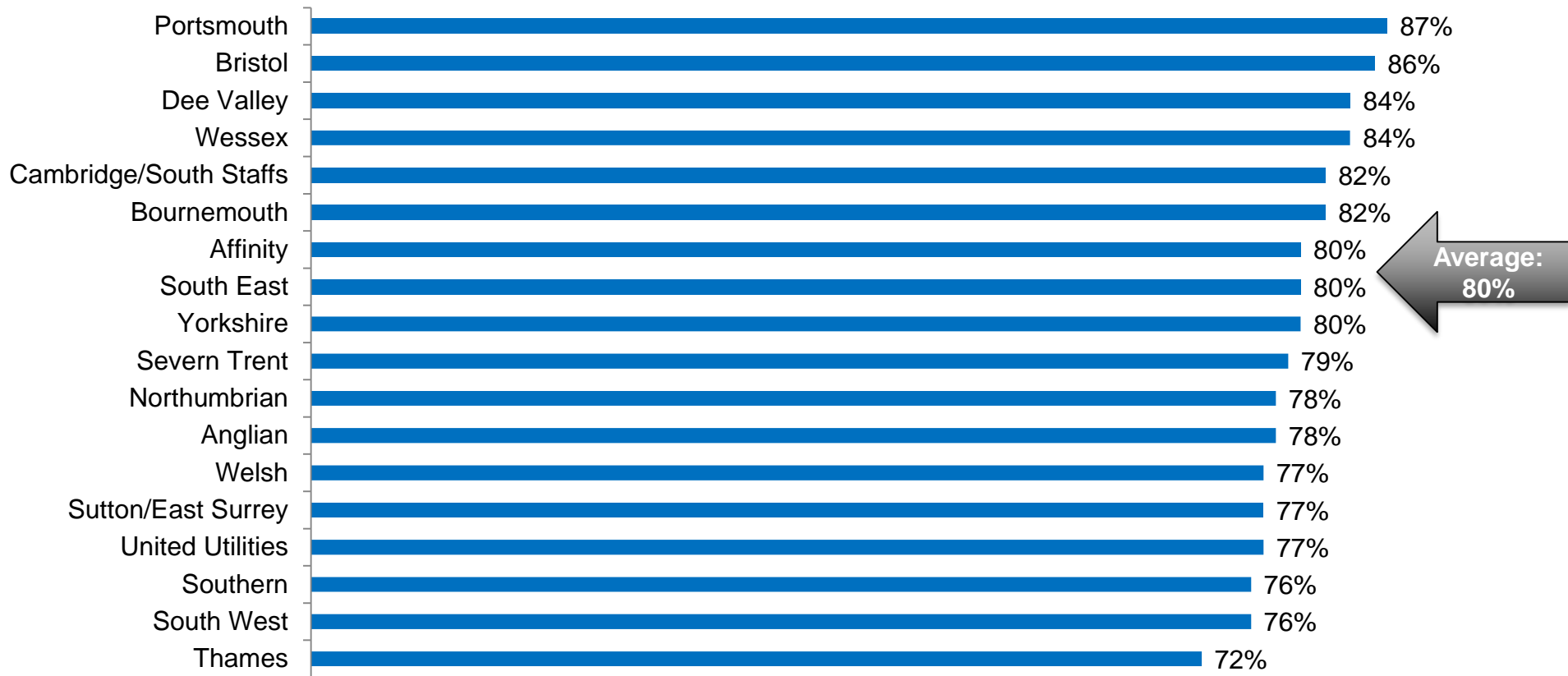
Overall, four in five (80%) customers considered the matter they contacted about fully resolved. Billing enquiries were significantly more likely to be resolved than Clean or Waste enquiries.

WOC customers were significantly more likely to consider the matter they contact about resolved



# Proportion of Resolved Contacts - By Company - unweighted

Portsmouth Water had the highest proportion of customers who felt their query was resolved. Thames Water had the lowest proportion of resolved contacts.



# Conclusions

- SIM results have improved significantly since 2015/16 overall and this is largely driven by the significant increase in the mean satisfaction score for Clean and Waste queries. Billing's SIM score remains significantly higher than Clean or Waste. In the previous year, 2015/16 WOCs performed significantly better than WASCs, however, this year the SIM scores were very similar for WOCs and WASCs.
- Although customer contact via online represented only a small proportion (one in twenty-five) of customers, the SIM score for online contact was significantly higher than those who contacted by any other means. Telephone was by far the most common means of customer contact and the SIM score by this method of contact was second only to the SIM score of the online contact.
- Four in five customers considered the matter they contact about to be resolved. This figure is significantly higher for Billing queries than Clean or Waste. Those who considered the matter to be resolved were significantly more likely to be satisfied than those who considered the matter to be unresolved.

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