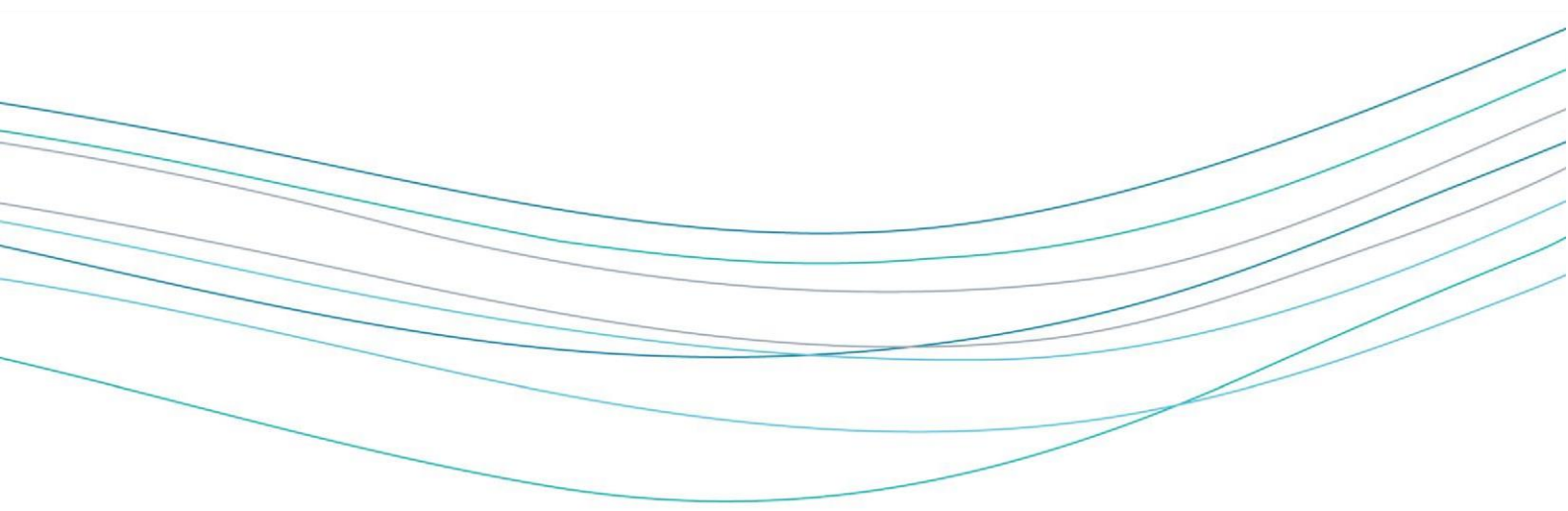


Retailer Measure of Experience outputs

11 December 2020



Background

The Retailer Measure of Experience (R-MeX) survey evolved from a Retailer Wholesaler Group (RWG) workstream, which began in August 2018. Its purpose is to provide retailers with an opportunity to review the services received by their wholesalers, in order to improve communications and begin to measure wholesaler performance in a qualitative format.

The R-MeX was originally launched as a pilot survey in August 2019 and following its success, was submitted as a change proposal in November 2019, [CPW084: 'Introducing a Retailer Measure of Experience \(R-MeX\)'](#). Following Ofwat approval, the first R-MeX survey was intended to launch in April 2020, however, due to the impact of COVID-19 on trading party resources, the survey was postponed until October 2020.

On 5 October, MOSL issued the R-MeX to all retailer Contract Managers and Deputy Contract Managers. The R-MeX consists of 10 questions covering topics such as engagement, communication and data quality, asking retailers to provide a score between 0-10 with the option to provide additional feedback via an open text field. The survey was conducted via Netigate, an independent digital survey platform.

R-MeX responses

The survey closed on 13 November 2020. In total, we received completed responses from 14 retailers, representing 87 per cent of the supply points and 85.7 per cent of the water consumption in the market. In terms of market share, the largest five wholesalers (United Utilities, Thames Water, Severn Trent Water, Anglian Water and Yorkshire Water) received reviews covering on average 97 per cent of their share in the market.

We note that some retailers chose not to respond and some who did respond, did not provide scores or feedback for all wholesalers they worked with. Prior to the next cycle of R-MeX surveys in 2021 we will work with trading parties to seek ways to improve the coverage of responses.

The league table below outlines the average score received by each wholesaler reviewed across seven areas. These areas correspond to the seven areas with a rating score. We have omitted the questions with open text fields only.

The 'overall service' column outlines the average score given by retailers in response to how they would rate that wholesaler overall. We have not included wholesalers who received fewer than three reviews, as we do not believe this shows a true reflection of their positioning in the league table in comparison to those with a higher quantity of responses. We have included in the last column the total number of reviews received by that wholesaler, to provide a frame of reference, when viewing the results.

Wholesalers League Table (Min 3 reviews)



Rank	Wholesaler	Overall service	Speed and quality of responses to service requests	Level of communication	Quality of data maintenance and improvement	Effectiveness of systems and notifications	Level of engagement and support	Effectiveness of financial policies	Reviews	Potential Reviews	Reviews Rate
1	Bristol Water	8.5	8.5	8.1	7.9	8.2	9.1	8.4	8	17	47%
2	Portsmouth Water	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.6	8.0	9.0	6.8	5	16	31%
2	Wessex Water	8.0	8.3	8.0	8.1	7.7	7.7	8.1	7	17	41%
4	Affinity Water (WSL)	7.8	8.1	7.3	7.9	8.2	8.1	7.2	8	17	47%
5	Anglian Water (WSL)	7.7	7.0	7.6	6.7	7.3	8.1	7.4	10	17	59%
5	Yorkshire Water	7.7	8.0	6.8	6.6	7.9	8.0	7.7	9	17	53%
7	SES Water	7.6	7.2	6.6	6.8	7.8	7.8	7.6	5	15	33%
7	South East Water	7.6	7.4	7.8	7.2	6.6	7.8	7.2	5	17	29%
7	South West Water	7.6	7.3	7.3	6.4	6.9	8.1	6.6	9	15	60%
7	United Utilities Water	7.6	7.9	7.3	7.7	5.9	7.9	8.2	9	17	53%
11	Southern Water	7.3	7.5	7.5	6.2	7.0	7.7	7.8	6	17	35%
12	Northumbrian Water	7.2	7.1	7.3	6.6	6.9	7.0	7.8	9	17	53%
13	Severn Trent Water	6.6	5.8	6.7	5.7	6.2	6.9	6.1	9	18	50%
14	South Staffordshire Water	6.3	5.8	6.8	6.0	5.5	6.0	6.3	6	17	35%
15	Thames Water	5.9	5.3	5.8	4.7	6.6	6.8	6.2	9	17	53%
	Market Average	7.4	7.3	7.2	6.8	7.1	7.7	7.3	114	251	45%

We would note the strong performance of some trading parties across most, if not all, service areas.

Whilst many scores were mid-range (with each area scoring between five and seven), we commend Bristol Water, Portsmouth Water and Wessex Water for strong results.

We also note the generally strong performance by Water only Companies (WoCs) with three of those appearing at the top of the league table (Bristol Water, Portsmouth Water and Affinity Water). However, these wholesalers received less than half the reviews that could have been given. The reasons for which we will explore as we analyse future R-MeX surveys.

Wessex Water was the highest scoring wholesaler that provides both water and sewerage services (WaSC.). The comparison between possible versus actual reviews is prominent in retailer responses - several retailers chose to only review a small number of the wholesalers they hold contracts with. We acknowledge that this may be as a result of limited numbers of customers served in these areas to form a broader view of service levels received and are keen to understand the reasons behind the reviews provided. We are also keen to hear from the 13 retailers that chose not to take part in the R-MeX.

The area which received the highest scores from retailers overall was 'level of engagement and support' with both Bristol Water and Wessex Water receiving the highest scores on the table in this section. The comments showed that most retailers felt supported by their wholesalers, however, suggested they needed more regular meetings, increased automation with systems and consist points of contact.

We would also note the need for improvement from Thames Water, South Staffordshire Water and Severn Trent Water who scored low across speed and quality of response, quality of data maintenance and effectiveness of financial policies.

We have provided wholesalers with the detailed responses submitted by retailers and would expect these to form the basis for ongoing discussions and improvement plans. In order to gather a holistic view of wholesaler performance, it is important to view these results alongside publications such as [Ofwat's RISE report](#) and [MOSL's Operational Performance Standards \(OPS\) Peer Performance League Tables](#). This will enable trading parties to build a richer picture of how individual wholesalers perform and are perceived in the market.

Next steps

Wholesalers were sent their individual results on Monday 7 December. This includes all written feedback. We ask wholesalers to use these responses to action the appropriate improvements within their organisations. In the lead up to the next R-MeX survey in 2021, we are keen to work with wholesalers to understand how, and where, they are planning to use the feedback to make improvements.

We will also take onboard retailer feedback and ensure that changes are made to improve the format of the survey moving forward. This may include the use of an Excel spreadsheet, as an alternative to a digital survey.

We also recognise that the timing of the survey is important and due to the number of Requests for Information (RFIs) issued during this period may have negatively impacted the quantity and quality of responses received.

We will use the responses from the second survey to begin gathering comparative data that can be used to inform future improvements. The next survey is due to be published in March/April. We will work with trading parties to ensure the timing of the survey allows for a timely and comprehensive response.