Retailer Measure of Experience Outputs

August 2021

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 from their wholesaler(s), with an aim to improve communication and begin to measure wholesaler performance in a qualitative format.

Following the success of its pilot survey in August 2019 and Ofwat's approval of change proposal CPW084: 'Introducing a Retailer Measure of Experience (R-MeX) in November 2019, the first R-MeX survey was launched in October 2020 after a short postponement due to COVID-19.

We received responses from 14 retailers for the first R-MeX survey, which covered 87 per cent of supply points and 85.7 per cent of the water consumption in the market. Once the survey closed, the data was compiled by MOSL and in December the wholesalers were sent their individual results and all written feedback.

The second survey was due to take place in April 2021, however, these dates were moved to August and February each year to better align the results with business planning and the Annual Market Audit Report that is produced in April each year. In August 2021, the second R-MeX survey was sent to retailers. We listened to feedback provided on the mechanism used to deliver the survey, consequently opting for an Excel survey which was more favourable to retailers. We kept the questions consistent with the previous survey to allow for easy comparison of the results and to easily note improvements made by the wholesalers. MOSL also made the decision to not send the survey to New Appoint and Variation (NAV) trading parties this year.

R-MeX responses

The survey closed on 6 September 2021. We received completed responses from 14 retailers representing 98.2 per cent of the supply points and 93.6 per cent of the consumption in the market. Whilst the number of retailers who submitted responses stayed the same as the previous survey, we did see an increase in the percentage of the market that was covered. This is due to those retailers submitting reviews for more of the wholesalers they work with.

The league table below outlines the average score received by each wholesaler reviewed, ranked by the 'Overall Service' column. There is also a second table that shows the movement of the scores received to see the movement in scores in comparison to the last survey.

August 2021 R-MeX league table

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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	Affinity Water (WSL)	**7.9**	8.1	7.2	7.8	7.8	8.1	7.4	10	18	56%
2	Portsmouth Water	**7.7**	7.8	7.2	7.0	8.2	7.3	7.7	6	16	38%
2	Yorkshire Water	**7.7**	7.3	7.0	7.1	7.9	7.6	7.7	9	18	50%
4	Anglian Water (WSL)	**7.6**	7.0	7.4	7.1	6.8	8.2	7.7	12	18	67%
4	United Utilities Water	**7.6**	7.1	7.3	7.7	5.0	8.1	7.6	13	18	72%
6	Bristol Water (WSL)	**7.2**	7.4	7.2	7.4	6.6	7.6	7.1	10	18	56%
6	Northumbrian Water	**7.2**	6.4	6.7	7.0	5.0	7.3	7.3	9	18	50%
8	South East Water	**7.1**	7.0	7.1	6.4	5.9	7.5	7.1	8	18	44%
8	South Staffordshire Water	**7.1**	6.4	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.9	7.0	10	18	56%
8	South West Water	**7.1**	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.7	6.9	6.9	9	17	53%
8	Southern Water	**7.1**	7.1	6.9	6.5	6.7	6.9	7.2	9	18	50%
8	Thames Water	**7.1**	6.5	6.4	6.6	7.3	7.3	7.0	12	18	67%
8	Wessex Water	**7.1**	7.2	6.8	7.0	6.4	7.2	7.6	8	18	44%
14	Sutton and East Surrey Water (WSL)	**6.8**	6.8	6.0	6.2	6.8	7.3	7.0	6	15	40%
15	Severn Trent Water	**6.6**	5.8	6.6	6.1	7.3	6.0	7.1	14	19	74%
	Market Average	**7.3**	**7.0**	**6.9**	**6.9**	**6.7**	**7.3**	**7.3**	**145**	**265**	**55%**

Comparison against previous survey results

August 2021 v October 2020

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
Affinity Water (WSL)	0.1	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	-0.4	0.0	0.2	2
Portsmouth Water	-0.3	0.0	-0.4	-0.6	0.2	-1.7	0.9	1
Yorkshire Water	0.0	-0.7	0.2	0.5	0.0	-0.4	0.0	0
Anglian Water (WSL)	-0.1	0.0	-0.2	0.4	-0.5	0.1	0.3	2
United Utilities Water	0.0	-0.8	0.0	0.0	-0.9	0.2	-0.6	4
Bristol Water (WSL)	-1.3	-1.1	-0.9	-0.5	-1.6	-1.5	-1.3	2
Northumbrian Water	0.0	-0.7	-0.6	0.4	-1.9	0.3	-0.5	0
South East Water	-0.5	-0.4	-0.7	-0.8	-0.7	-0.3	-0.1	3
South Staffordshire Water	0.8	0.6	-0.1	0.4	1.0	0.9	0.7	4
South West Water	-0.5	-0.4	-0.5	0.2	-0.2	-1.2	0.3	0
Southern Water	-0.2	-0.4	-0.6	0.3	-0.3	-0.8	-0.6	3
Thames Water	1.2	1.2	0.6	1.9	0.7	0.5	0.8	3
Wessex Water	-0.9	-1.1	-1.2	-1.1	-1.3	-0.5	-0.5	1
Sutton and East Surrey Water (WSL)	-0.8	-0.4	-0.6	-0.6	-1.0	-0.5	-0.6	1
Severn Trent Water	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.4	1.1	-0.9	1.0	5

We would note the continuous strong performance of trading parties across all the reviewed service areas. Whilst many scores had minimal or no change in comparison to last year (as seen by the yellow hue on the comparison table) this assures MOSL that performance remains consistent and for the most part, good across all wholesalers.

Most scores remained mid-range (between 6.0 and 7.0) however, we commend Affinity Water, Portsmouth Water, Anglian Water and United Utilities for scoring 8.0 or above in one or more categories. With 31 more reviews than we received last year, there has been a lot of movement in the league table positions. However, the overall service scores decreased slightly with the market average moving from 7.4 to 7.3. Of all wholesalers surveyed, only three improved their score in this area. We continued to see strong performance from Water only Companies (WoCs) with two of those appearing in the top three places. In the last survey, however, WoCs sat only in the top half of the table, in comparison to this survey where they are more widely distributed and also appear in the lower half of the table.

Although we have seen a score decrease in most of the measured areas, we have seen increases for most wholesalers in the 'Quality of data maintenance and improvement' section. The biggest decreases are seen in the 'Effectiveness of systems and notifications' and 'Level of engagement and support', closely followed by the 'level of communication' and 'speed and quality of responses to service requests' areas.

In the previous R-MeX results summary we noted the need for improvement from Thames Water, South Staffordshire Water and Severn Trent Water, who each scored low across 'Speed and quality of response', 'Quality of data maintenance' and 'Effectiveness of financial policies'. We are pleased to see that all three wholesalers showed improvement in some, if not all, of these areas and we commend Thames Water for being the only wholesaler to see increases across all measured areas. Thames Water also have the biggest increase of any of the scores, with an increase of almost two for 'Quality of data maintenance and improvement' followed by increases of more than one for 'Overall Service' and 'Speed and quality of responses to service requests'.

The biggest decreases seen in the results are Northumbrian Water and Bristol Water for 'Effectiveness of systems and notifications', and Portsmouth Water and Bristol Water for 'Level of engagement and support'. Whilst these decreases could come from a decrease in service, they could also be due to a higher number of reviews received or differences in the person responding. For example, for one retailer, the response for the last survey was submitted by the director who submitted higher scores, compared to results submitted by the operations manager this year. We will work with these wholesalers to better understand the feedback they received and put steps in place to improve.

Next steps

The individual results and all written feedback was shared with wholesalers on Monday 20 September. We urge all wholesalers to use these responses to action the necessary improvements within their organisations. We are keen to work with all wholesalers in the lead up to the next R-MeX survey in February 2022 to understand how and where they are planning to use the feedback to make improvements.

MOSL will also review any feedback received on the survey itself, including the mechanism of collating the responses. If we implement any changes based on the feedback received, we will communicate these before the publication of the next R-MeX.

The next survey is due to be held in February 2022 and the results published in March 2022.