



Sewer blockages

Thank you to everyone who took part in our 4th online survey. We received just over 1,000 responses which is great.

We deal with thousands of sewer blockages each year and these can lead to nasty smells in gardens, flooding and sewage backing up into people’s homes and pollution of rivers. They can also result in thousands of pounds a year in plumbing bills.

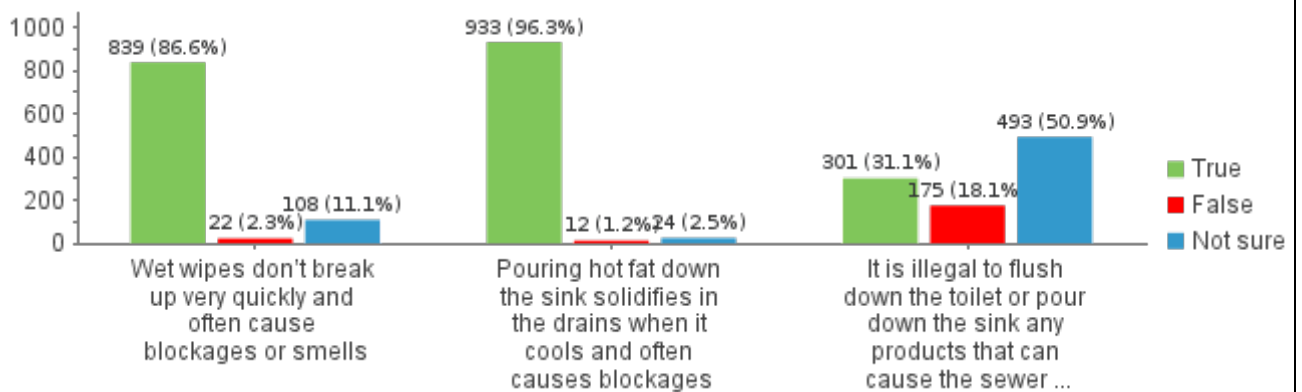
We wanted to understand your attitudes towards sewer blockages and disposal of waste products. It was really encouraging to see that the majority of our customers know the right way to dispose of household waste safely.

We know we need to work harder to encourage and educate everyone to do the right thing. We will use the response to this survey in our campaign work. Here’s how you answered.

We asked you about wet wipes, pouring fat down the sink and if it is illegal to flush any products down the toilet that can cause the sewer to block.

- 87% of you are aware that wet wipes don’t break up very quickly and often cause smells or blockages, only 13% of you disagreed or weren’t sure
- 96% of you felt that hot fat poured down the sink solidifies when it cools and often causes blockages
- Only 31% of you thought it was illegal to flush anything down the toilet that can cause a blockage and 69% of you were either not sure or did not agree – it is in fact illegal and persistent offenders can be prosecuted.

Based on your own knowledge, which of the following statements do you know to be true, false or are you not sure?



We asked you how you would dispose of so called “flushable” wipes

- 63% of you unsurprisingly said you would flush them down the toilet

We find that although they are advertised as “flushable” these wipes don’t break down very quickly and routinely cause blockages in sewers.

Here is a list of household waste items. We asked you where you think each item should be disposed of by ticking the most appropriate box. This is what you told us:

	Toilet	Sink	Bin – black bag	Bin - food waste	Other - Please explain below
Toilet paper	97.4%	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.2%
Cotton buds	0.8%	0.0%	97.7%	0.3%	1.2%
Tampons	19.2%	0.2%	76.0%	0.4%	4.2%
Sanitary towels	3.2%	0.0%	90.7%	0.3%	5.8%
Dental floss	2.6%	0.8%	94.8%	0.2%	1.5%
Nappies	0.4%	0.1%	94.6%	0.3%	4.6%
Baby wet wipes/facial wipes	2.5%	0.0%	95.8%	0.4%	1.2%
Flushable wipes	62.6%	0.5%	36.0%	0.1%	0.8%

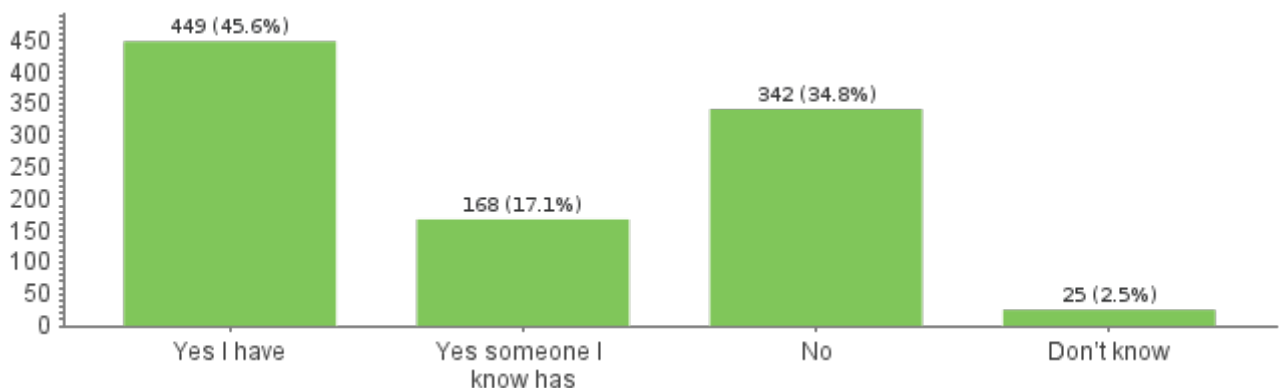
Your toilet can really only cope with human waste and toilet paper. It’s always best to put all wet wipes including so called ‘flushable’ wipes and tampons in your black bin.

To find out more about safe disposal of waste see www.wessexwater.co.uk/customers

We also asked if you, or any of your friends or family, had experienced a blocked sewer or drain in the past?

- 63% of you or your family and friends have experienced blockages

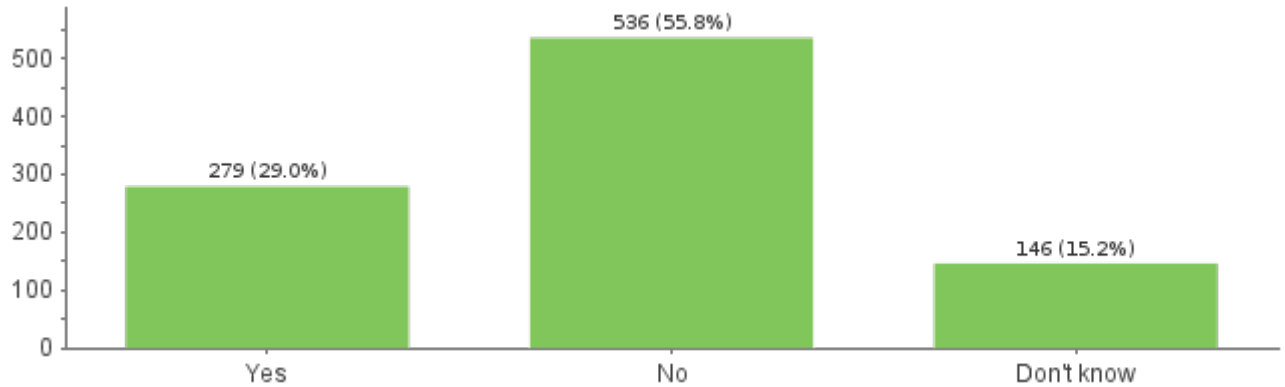
We find that wipes including so called “flushable” wipes are the biggest cause of blockages.



Lastly, we asked if you had ever seen advice or information from Wessex Water on how to prevent blockages or what should and shouldn't be flushed down the toilet or poured down the sink.

- Only 29% of you said that you had

This means that we need to work much harder to get the message out to our customers.



What next?

Our next survey will be in spring and we hope you will be able to take part.

Thank you once again for being a member of 'have your say'.

**Sue Lindsay
Head of Customer Relations Wessex Water**