



Safe&SuRe

Water management

Importance of Workforce in Creating a Resilient Water Sector

Kate Baker, Samuel Tang, Chris Sweetapple, Sarah Ward,
Chad Staddon, Trevor Bishop, Patric Bulmer and David Butler

University of Exeter, United Kingdom

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k.baker2@exeter.ac.uk



Safe & SuRe water management

Safe: *Reliable*

SuRe: Sustainable and Resilient

Aim of the S&S research project:

To develop a new paradigm for 'Safe & SuRe' urban water management in the UK in response to emerging challenges and global uncertainties



Overview

1. Are the workforce and customers ready for a culture shift to create a more resilient sector?
2. What are the threats that water companies are facing in making the shift to create a more resilient workforce?
3. Can the resilience-building measures reported be mapped onto the Safe & SuRe interventions framework?

Methodology

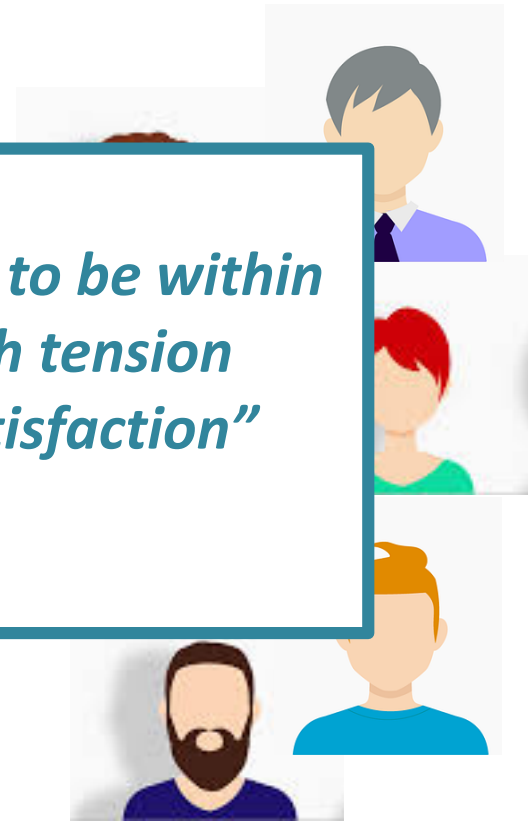
- **Water and sewerage companies:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five water and sewerage companies
- **Ofwat:** Semi-structured interview with Director of Strategy & Planning. Ofwat are responsible for overseeing the sector and setting price limits for water and sewerage services



1a. Are customers ready for a culture shift to create a more resilient sector?

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- Water
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- Customer expectations have increased

*“Customer expectations need to be within the limitations of budget, with tension between affordability and satisfaction”
(Water company one).*



1b. Is the workforce ready for a culture shift to create a more resilient sector?

- A resilient workforce
- Operational excellence
- Problem solving
- Exciting work

“Water companies need to make staff feel passionate and rewarded by doing the routine work very well instead of fixing a major problem”
(Water company five)



Safe & SuRe Interventions Framework

Poor leadership
Lack of resources
Geography
Staff Profile

2. Threats water companies are facing in making the shift to create a more resilient workforce

3. Mapping resilience-building measures, reported by the water companies & Ofwat, onto the Safe & SuRe interventions framework

Limited knowledge of customer appetite...

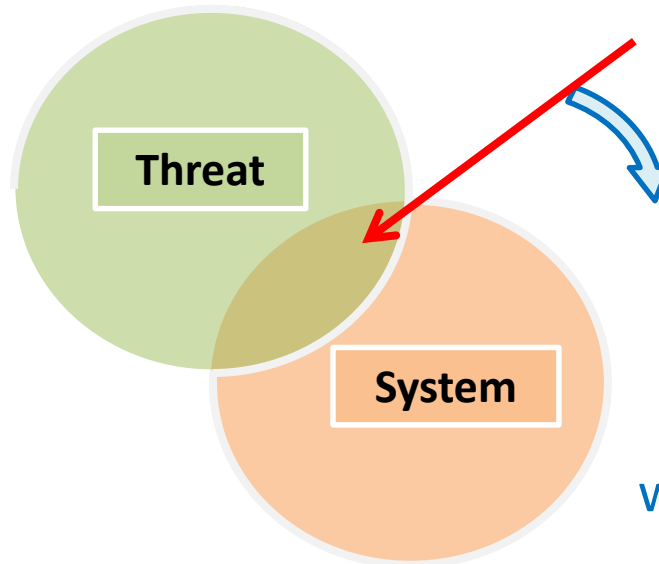
Unorganised workforce with poor engagement with customers



Safe & SuRe Interventions Framework

Mitigation: 'Any physical or non-physical action taken to reduce the frequency, magnitude or duration of a threat'

Poor Leadership



Mitigate ->
Talent spotting & investment



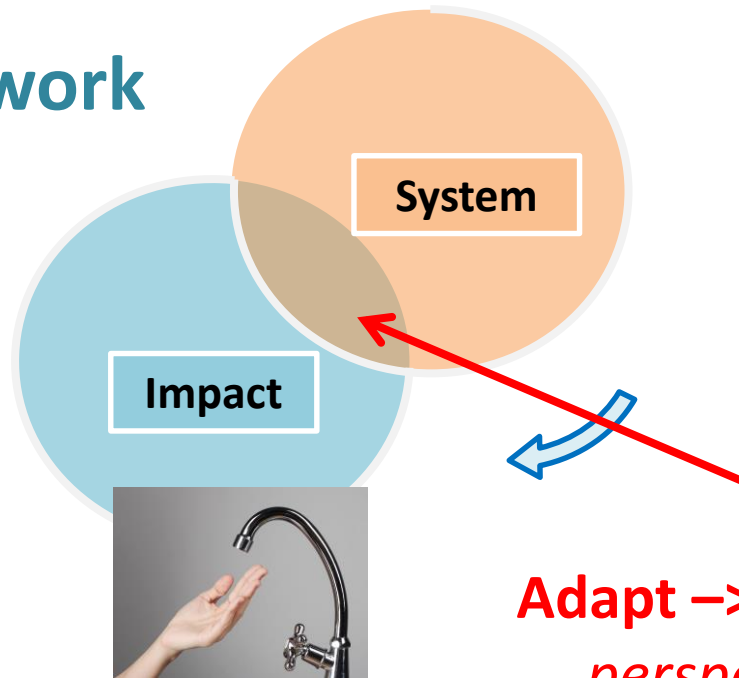
Disorganised workforce with poor engagement with customers

*“Having the capabilities of pulling out the top candidates”
(Water company three).*

Safe & SuRe Interventions Framework

Adaptation: ‘Action taken to modify specific properties of the water system to enhance its capability to maintain levels of service under varying conditions’

Limited knowledge of customer appetite...

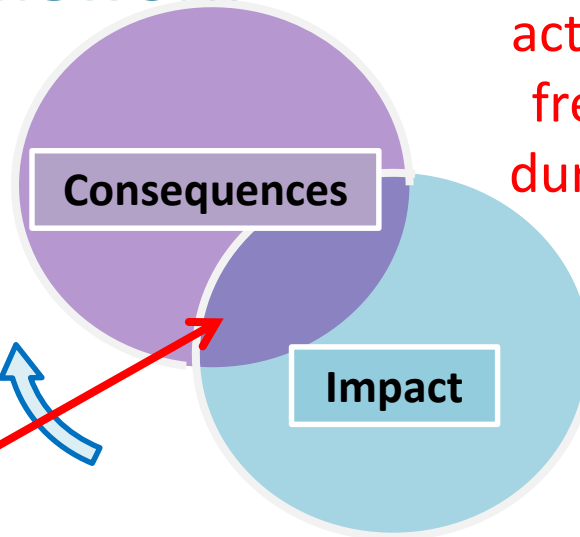


Adapt → *Diversify perspectives, communication, training*

*“Diversity needs to be encouraged at all levels in the company”
(Water company three).*

Safe & SuRe Interventions Framework

Unhappy customers...

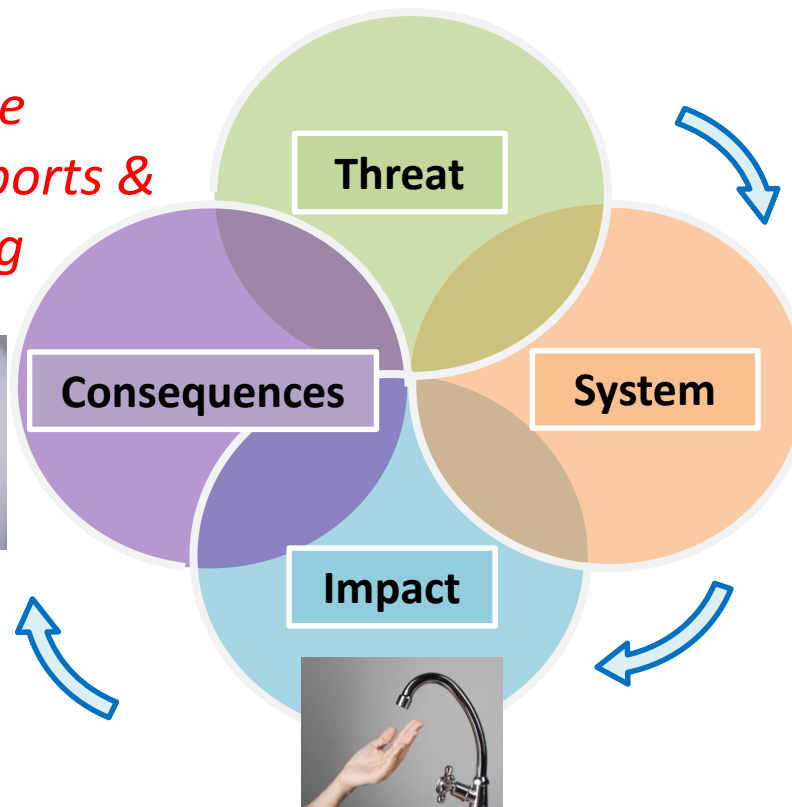


Coping: 'Any preparation or action taken to reduce the frequency, magnitude or duration of an impact on a recipient'

Cope -> *Utilise goodwill & ensure flexibility*

“Having procedural approaches to resilience is fanciful as all droughts and floods are never the same” (Water company two).

Learning -> Produce failure/learning reports & embedding learning



Learning: 'Embedding experiences and new knowledge in best practice'



*“Failure still has the old-fashioned understanding. [The water sector] is in contrast to the aviation industry which has a no blame policy. Although failure is natural it goes against human nature, we want to succeed”
(Water company two).*

Conclusions

- People are fundamental in creating any paradigm or regime shift
- Main threats and failure modes for resilience learning in the water sector were highlighted as poor leadership, lack of resources, geography and the changing staff profile
- Safe and SuRe framework worked a powerful toolkit to raise awareness of the need to tailor approaches

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