

The shower-bath-path

Even private habits are shared



Convention, technology and water consumption

Policy makers usually focus on persuading individuals to save energy, water, and other natural resources. They ask questions like this:

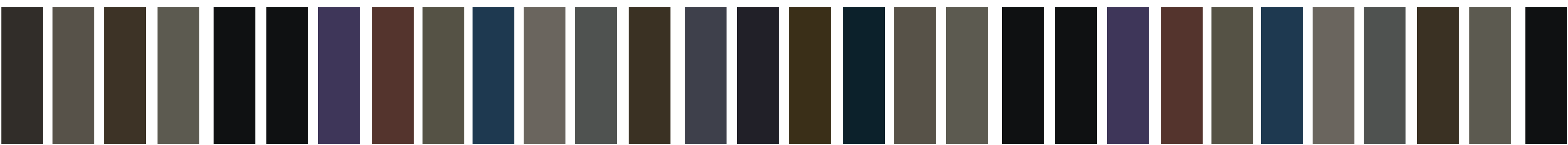
“What can we do to encourage people to move from 150 litres per capita per day to 130 litres per capita per day?”

Patterns of water consumption depend on the characteristics of available technologies (baths, showers), and on when and how these are used.

Private habits of bathing and showering are not as private as they seem. Such habits change over the course of a life time. In combination these changes constitute and reflect collective trends.

People in the UK now take an average of

1.5
baths and
4.5
showers a week



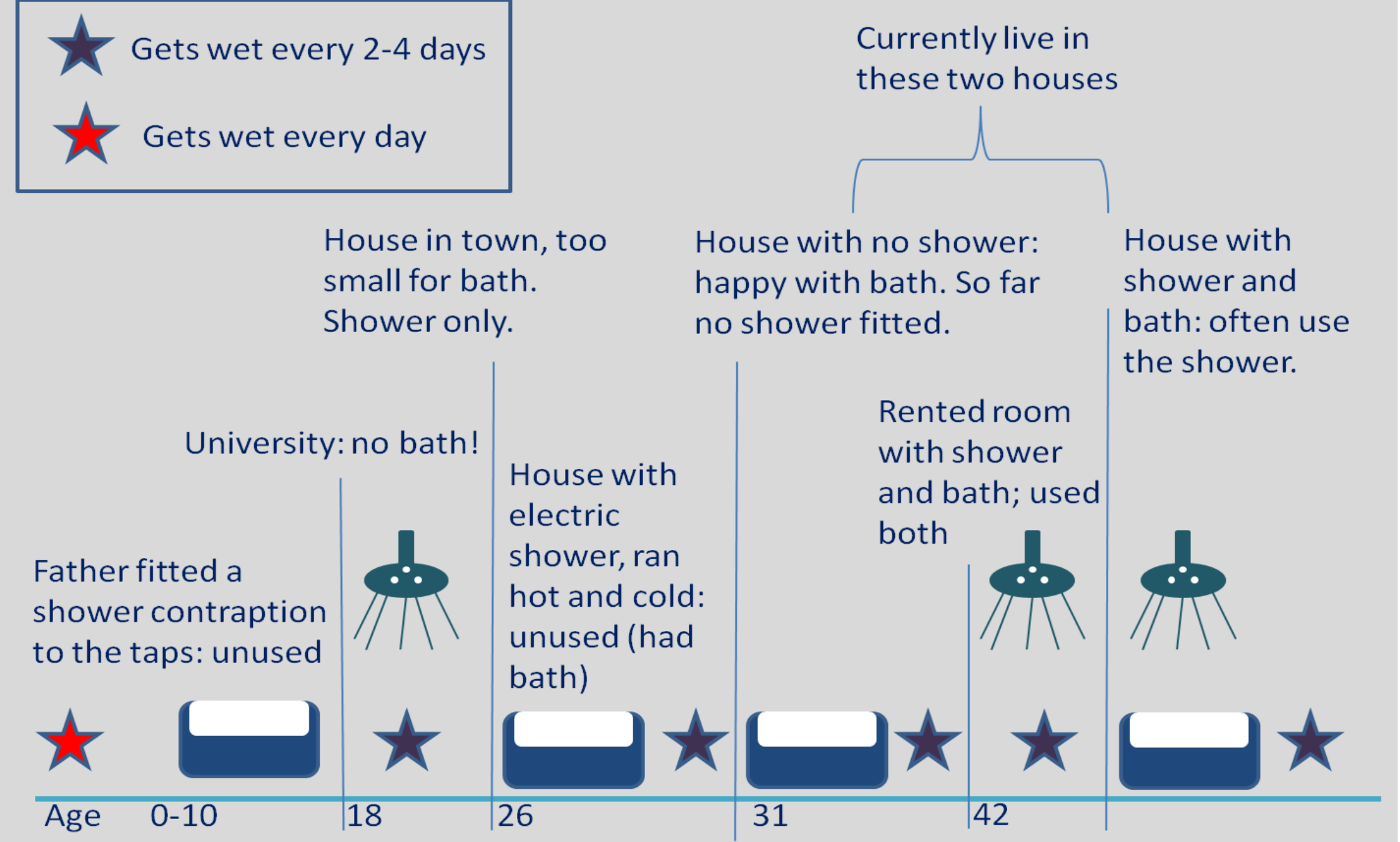
Baths, showers, frequency and annual water use

	Litres per year
A bath every three days	8,881
An electric shower every three days	3,285
A power shower every day	30,660
A bath everyday	26,645
An electric shower everyday	9,855

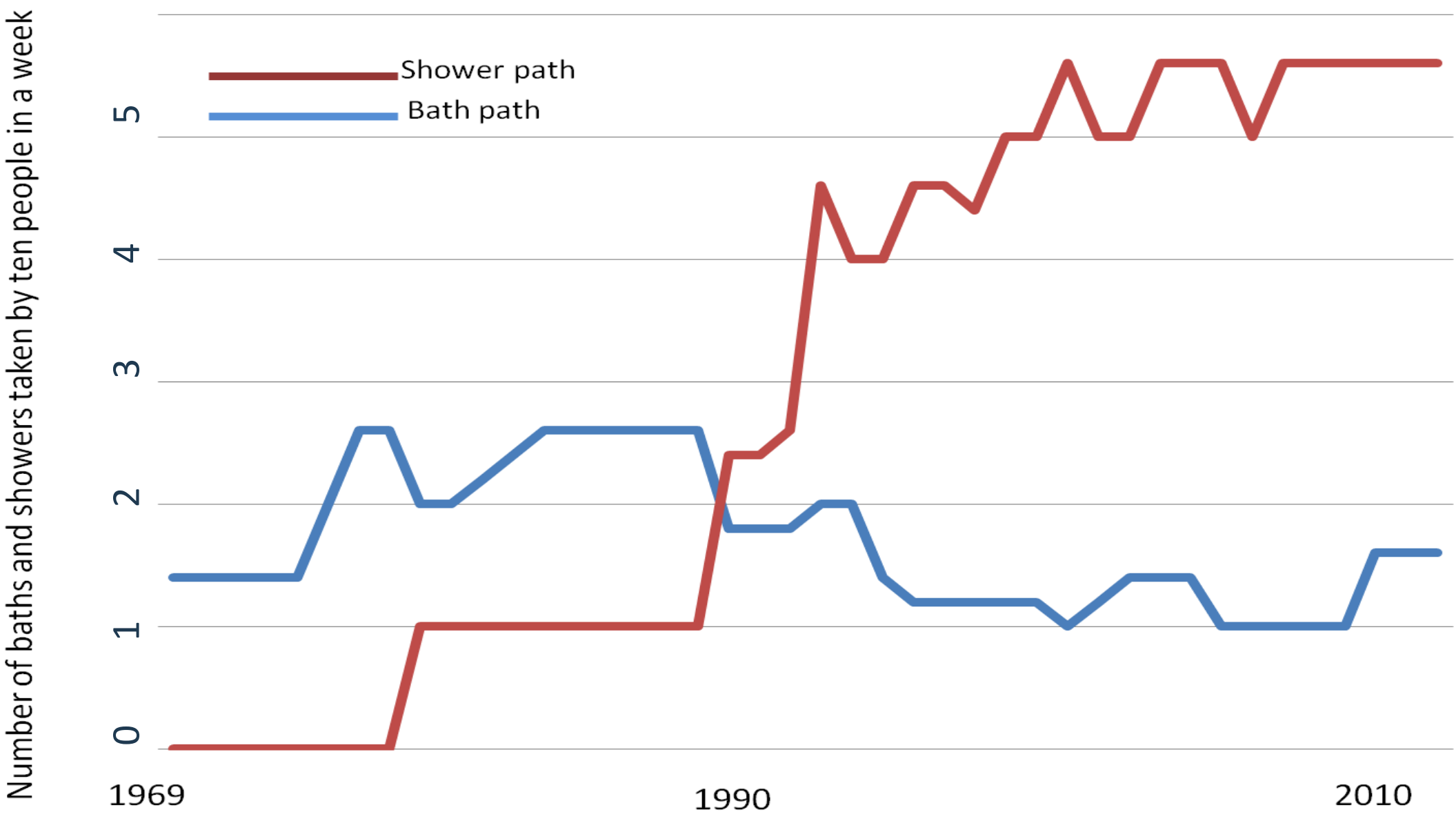
Critchley and Phipps, (2007) ‘Water and Energy Efficient Showers’ United Utilities/JMU



Changing habits over the life course

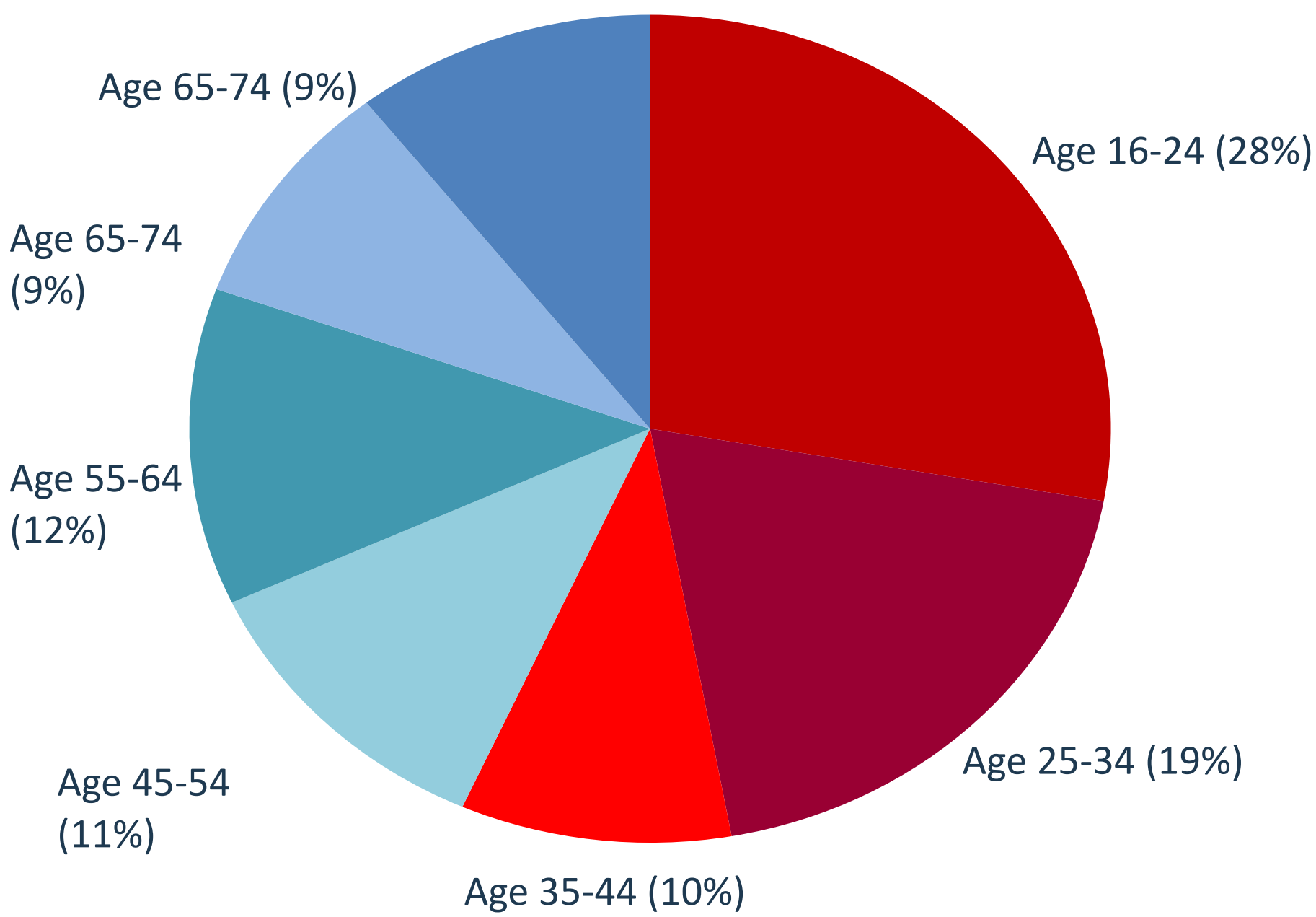


Private habits constitute collective trends



Private habits vary systematically: younger people take longer showers

Age distribution of people who spent more than 8 minutes taking a shower. Based on data from the Save Water Swindon Survey, 2010, WWF, Waterwise and Thames Water.



Someone who used to have a bath a couple of times a week and who now has a daily power shower (of seven minutes) will have more than trebled the water they use in keeping clean (or in relaxing, waking up and staying fresh).

Showering under a power shower requires 12 litres of water a minute. Showering like this for seven minutes a day takes 30,660 litres a year. Each extra minute adds another 4,380 litres per year.

