

Rose's buckets

How much is enough?

Average household water use in Swindon is 2,750 litres a week, equivalent to 276 buckets of water. With an average of 2.4 people in each household, this works out at about 112 buckets per person per week.

Climate change policy makers tend to focus on efficiency — helping people to reproduce current practices, but with fewer resources. They consequently avoid contentious questions about the sheer scale of contemporary consumption. How much water is 'enough'? And what is it enough for?

These questions raises others about inequality and injustice.

- How do valued social practices come to require the resources they do?
- How are such resources distributed in society?
- How should policy makers respond to the diffusion of unsustainably demanding practices?
- How are 'needs' invented and negotiated?

What aspects of daily life would be different if people used only half the amount of water they do today?

What would you do with 50-60 buckets of water a week?

1 bath	8	23 minutes watering	40	1 bath	8
4 showers	20	2 showers	10	2 showers	10
14 flushes	7	14 flushes	7	10 flushes	5
2 wash cycles	12			5 wash cycles	30
6 minutes watering	10			1 minute watering	2
Total	57	Total	57	Total	55

Policy targets and everyday practices

50-60 buckets per person per week is far below current targets but thinking about how this water might be 'spent' draws attention to:

- The stickyness and flexibility of different water consuming practices— some are more negotiable than others.
- How a target for water use works out in daily life— when people use more or less water, exactly which practices change, how and why?
- How technologies and infrastructures —broadly defined to include lawns, hosepipes, water pressures, washing machines, clothing, toilets— define and structure water consumption.

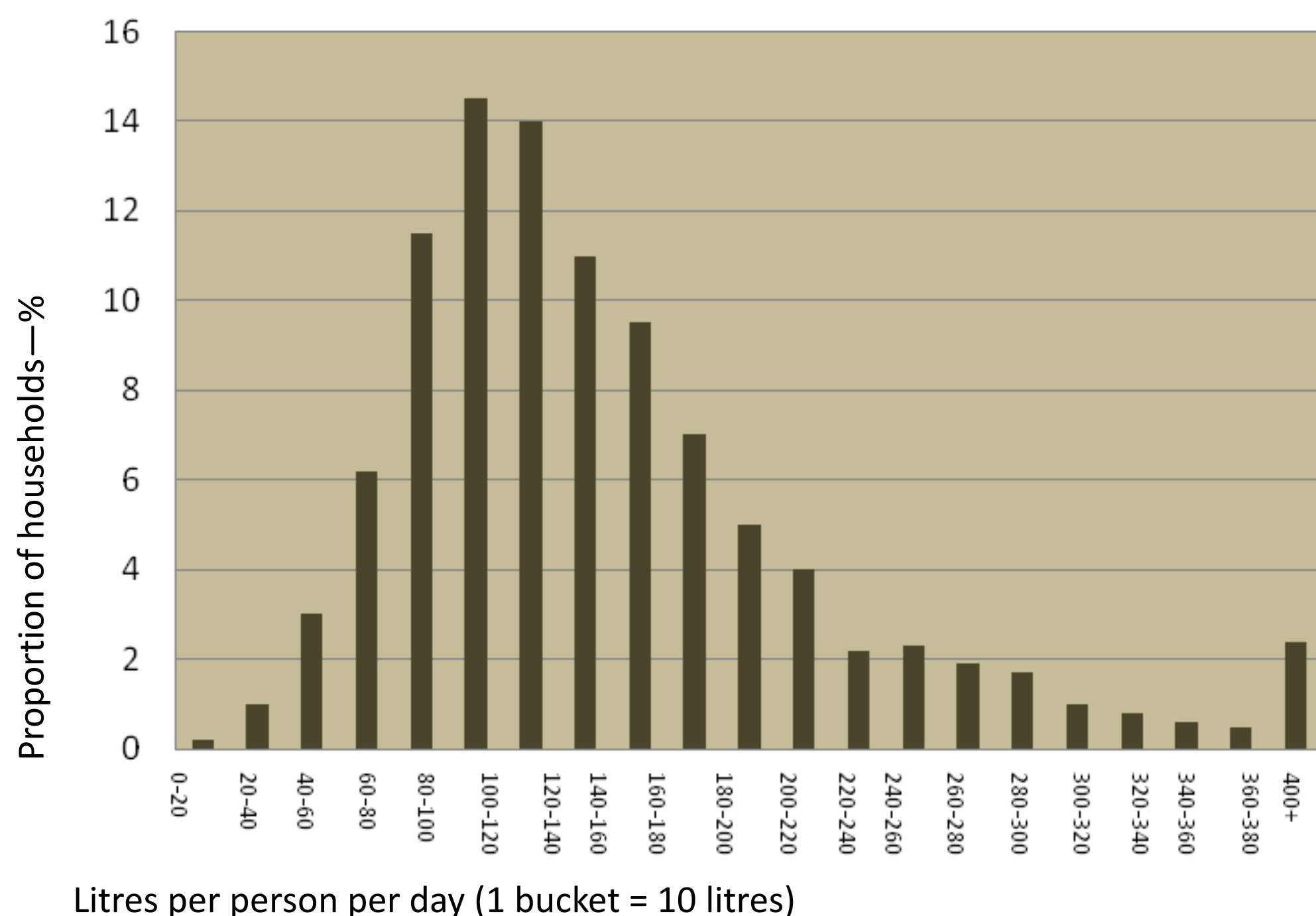


Average household water consumption for a week: 276 buckets

The range of what counts as 'normal' consumption is very wide

For some people, using 50-60 buckets a week (which is about 8 buckets or 80 litres per day) is not at all strange. It is already what they do. For others, being normal involves consuming five or six times as much.

Distribution of water consumption per person per day: from Thames Water unmetered customers



69

Yellow buckets
of kitchen water

174

Blue buckets
of bathroom water

33

Green buckets
of garden water

