Press Release from the Natural Source Waters Association

For immediate use

**Research shows consumer preference for soft drinks over tap water**

Research[[1]](#footnote-1) conducted on behalf of the Natural Source Waters Association reveals that consumers are more likely to choose a soft drink if natural source bottled waters[[2]](#footnote-2) are unavailable – rather than finding a water fountain or refill station.

When asked what they would do if they went into a shop looking to buy a natural source water, and it was not available, over 37% of all respondents said that they would buy another drink, which is likely to be less healthy. This rose to nearly 47% of 45 to 54 year olds. 19.5% said they would find another shop and only 22% said they would ask for tap or find a water fountain. 14% said they would go without a drink completely, again not good for overall health, and worryingly this rose to more than one in five in the over 55s.

Tam Fry, Chairman and Spokesman for the National Obesity Forum, said, “Working together to tackle rising levels of obesity has never been more important. As the healthiest choice when it comes to staying hydrated, water should always be available next to other soft drinks on the shelf, in the chiller, and in the same packaging.”

Johanna Hignett, Nutritionist and Member of the British Dietetic Association, said, “Natural source waters play an important role in providing a healthy hydration option. Many people choose them over tap as they prefer the taste or like that they haven’t been chemically treated.”

All natural source water sold in the UK comes from land that is protected and kept free from pollution through responsible environmental management. The water is safe to drink at the source without chemical treatment or processing, and it is a legal requirements that it is bottled at source. This also helps to preserve the quality and unique properties of the water. Whilst we support all ways to encourage choosing water for healthy hydration, tap water, which need to undergo treatment to make it safe to drink, cannot replace natural source waters as they are fundamentally two different offerings.

48% of respondents said they preferred drinking natural source waters as they know that they haven’t been chemically treated. This response was strongest in the West Midlands and North West of England where over 55% of people agreed with that statement. Overall one in five people said that they did not like the taste of tap water where they live. These findings, when combined, show that for many people choosing a natural source water is a positive decision, not just for health, but also either because they appreciate that it is natural or because they prefer the taste.

This research clearly shows the important role natural source waters play, providing an appealing, healthy soft drink option, whether at home or out and about.

**Packaging facts:**

* All natural source water bottles are 100% recyclable, that includes the cap and label.
* All UK local authorities collect PET plastic drinks bottles for recycling.
* When recycled, a PET plastic drinks bottle can come back as another bottle.
* Drinks companies are increasingly using recycled material in packaging and with the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme, we expect the availability of high quality recycled material to increase, allowing for greater use.

**ENDS**

Notes for editors:

1. The Natural Source Waters Association, formerly the Natural Hydration Council, represents producers of natural source waters. Membership includes the majority of natural source water producers in the UK, as well as leading importers.
2. Tam Fry is Chairman and Spokesman for the National Obesity Forum, a member of the Expert Advisory Team, Action on Sugar, and Patron of the Child Growth Foundation.
3. The research was conducted by Censuswide between 25th and 29th October 2019. There were 2,004 respondents, over 16 years old, male and female across the UK.
4. For more information go to [www.naturalsourcewaters.org.uk](http://www.naturalsourcewaters.org.uk) or call 0208 996 5115.
1. Censuswide, Oct 2019. 2,004 respondents, 63% of whom said they drank natural source waters and 37% said they did not. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Natural Mineral or Spring Water. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)