

Rural Vulnerability

Working in partnership to help vulnerable customers

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Vulnerability Lead

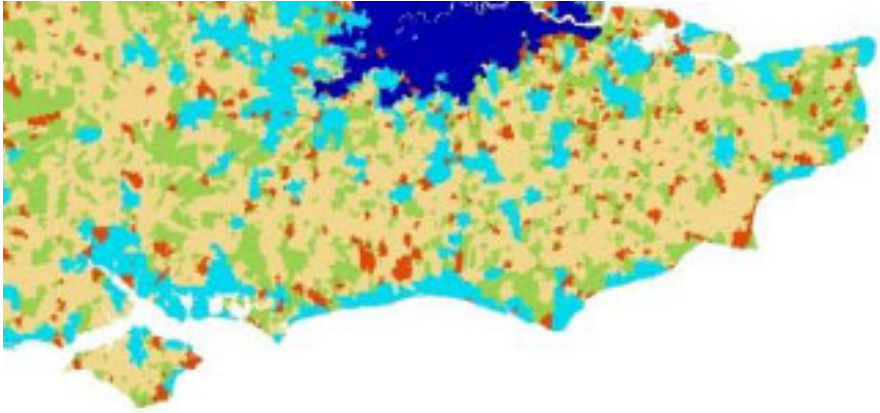


from
**Southern
Water** 

Southern Water – area of operation

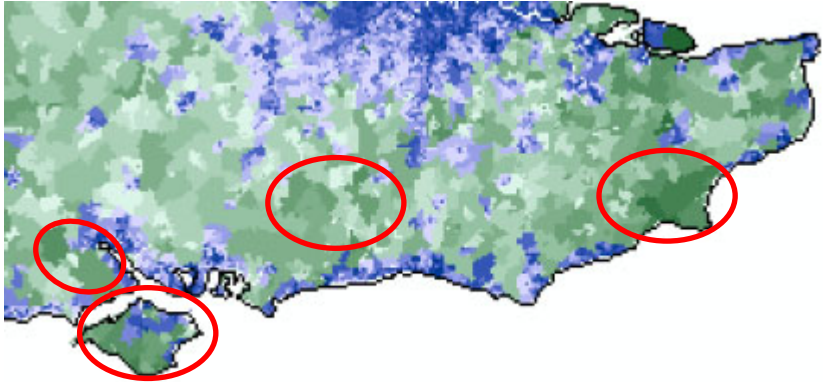
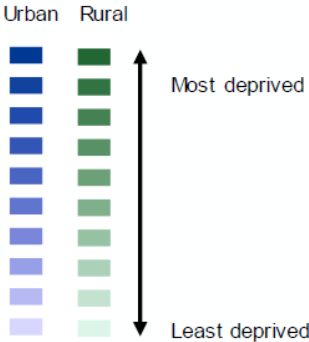


Rural Vulnerability in our area



- Rural / Urban classification 2011**
- Rural hamlet & isolated dwelling
 - Rural hamlet & isolated dwelling in a sparse setting
 - Rural village
 - Rural village in a sparse setting
 - Rural town & fringe
 - Rural town & fringe in a sparse setting
 - Urban city & town
 - Urban city & town in a sparse setting
 - Urban minor conurbation
 - Urban major conurbation

DEFRA's Statistical Digest of Rural England – 2019 edition



What can a water company do?

Financial assistance

- Essentials – 20-90% discount for those with a low income
- Watersure – capped water bills for those with medical needs or large families
- New start – help with debt
- Water Direct – allows customers to make payments from benefits

Priority Services Register

- Allows us to understand which of our customers need additional help
- In an incident, it helps us to prioritise help for those that need it most

Who qualifies

- Are of pensionable age
- Have children under the age of 5
- Have a disability or chronic illness
- Have a long term or short term medical condition
- Have difficulty seeing, hearing or communicating
- Have mental health challenges

Priority Services Register – how does it help?

General assistance to priority services customers includes:

- Talking bills / Audio bills
- Large print, braille or digital bills
- Text phone / Mini-com
- Password on the account
- Bills sent to representative
- “Knock and Wait”
- Individual case management (in extreme cases)

Assistance in an incident:

- Informing vulnerable customers as soon as possible if there is a problem
- Getting water delivered where needed
- Working with others to provide additional help
- Ensuring information is provided in a format that is understandable
- Taking care that customers are clear if action is needed (i.e. boil water)

Challenges we face in helping vulnerable customers



Identification

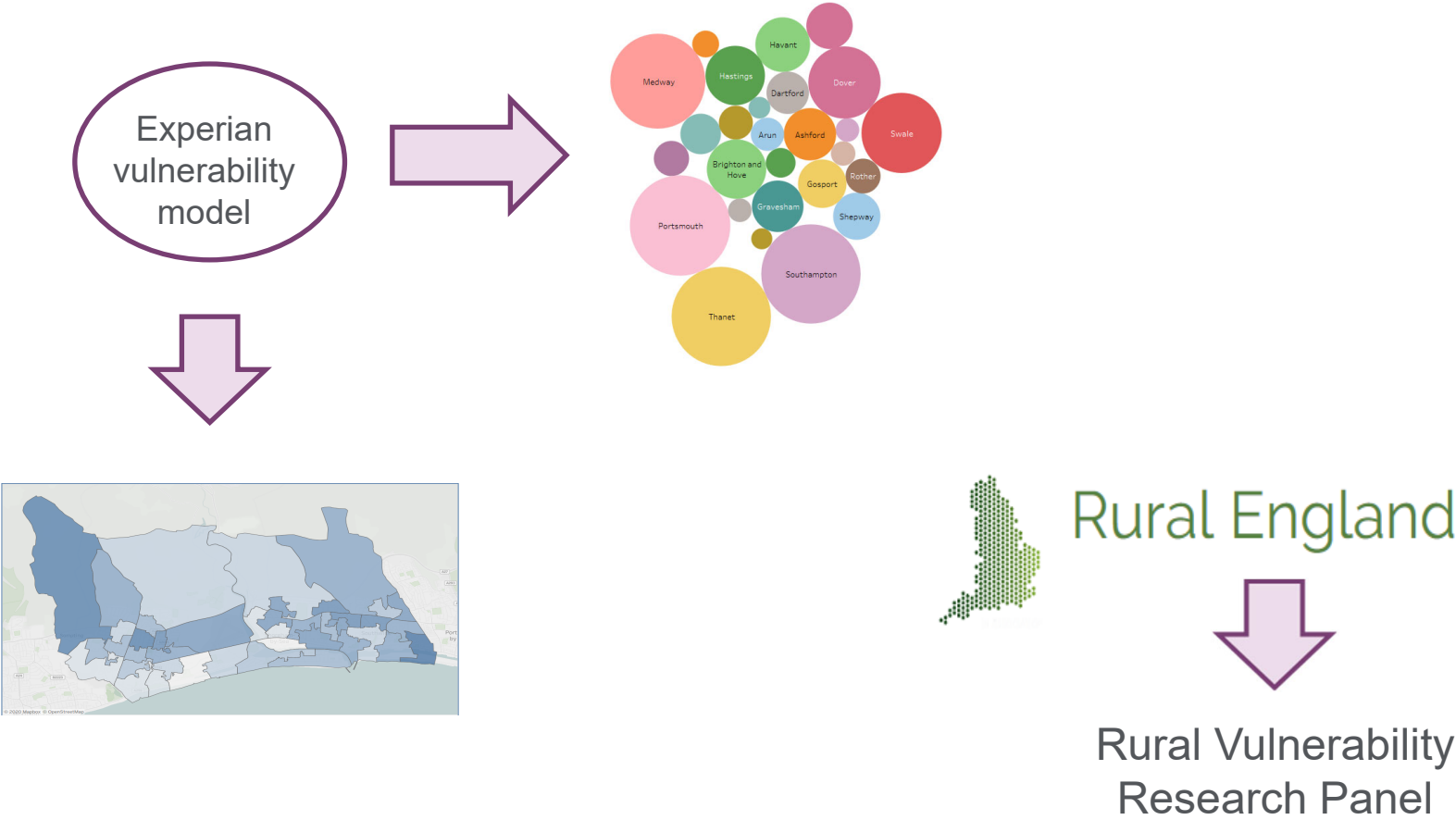
Lack of awareness



Distrust



Working in partnership – research/modelling



Working in partnership – projects

Data-sharing



Joint projects



Working in the community



Any questions?