

## **WATER LABEL COULD HELP REDUCE WATER POVERTY SAYS BMA**

The unified Water Label could help consumers make better choices, saving water and reducing water poverty, says BMA CEO Yvonne Orgill. Yvonne called for more support for the Water Label in a week when a disabled mother from Yorkshire was in the news because she could not afford to pay her water bill.

Shirley Widdop, from Keighley said she was holding back on using water for washing or to flush the WC because her bill had risen by 35%. "I am on a water meter and because I'm on a low income, I constantly worry about the bill being too high," says the 51-year-old, who lives with two of her children.

Yvonne says, "Water is our most precious commodity, one that everyone should have access to, making this news story particularly distressing, but this is not an isolated incident. A report on poverty from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that arrears for water bills are now the most common form of debt for the poorest families.

"The industry must take seriously the issue of saving water in the bathroom. How much water we use in the home is becoming a burning issue, with 22% of all the water used in the home down to toilets and 25% from showers, bathroom are increasingly under the spotlight.

"A study by the Energy Saving Trust estimated that we use 840 billion litres of water each year for showers and flush more than 740 litres down the loo, equating to enough water to fill 300,000 Olympic swimming pools.

If we are to achieve the Government's ambitious target of reducing water consumption from around 142 litres to only 80 litres per person per day, we must take action and the Water Label is a great place to start.

"Many manufacturers have developed water saving products but we need greater support for the Label and help to communicate its benefits. It is currently used on 12,500 products and supported by 144 brands. We have the opportunity to drive forward real change and to help people like Shirley, to have the water they need in their home."