

# Severn Trent Water Codes of Practice

**The standards of service you can expect from us**

# 1. Our codes of practice

We operate under a licence which was granted by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This means that there are many laws and regulations which govern what we do and the rights you have as a customer. Independent regulators monitor our business to ensure that we operate fairly. In addition to this we have introduced our own policies and services which go beyond our regulatory obligations.

This document sets out our Codes of Practice. It describes the services we provide, what your rights are as a household customer and what to do if things go wrong. The Codes have been produced in consultation with the Consumer Council for Water (CCW). From time to time we'll revise the Codes and update them to include our improvements in services to you. Nothing in our Codes of Practice affects your rights under the Law, nor is it a contract between the Company and you.

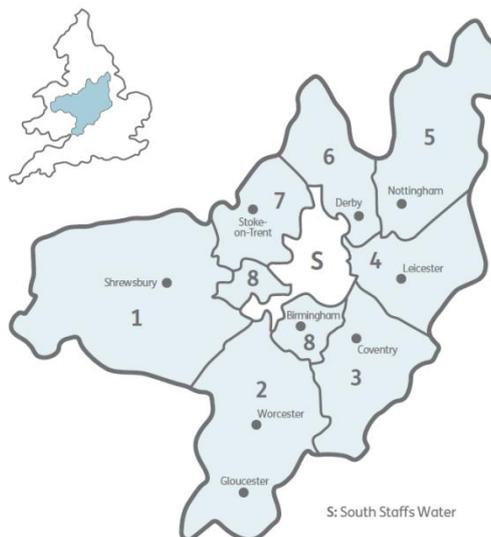
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## 2. Your water supply

### 2.1. Our region

Severn Trent Water, part of Severn Trent Plc, is the world's fourth largest privately owned water company. We serve over eight million people across the heart of the UK, from the Bristol Channel to the Humber, and from mid-Wales to the East Midlands. Maps of our region are available to view for free at our head office.



### 2.2. Water Quality

The quality of water for domestic purposes is controlled by Regulations issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). These incorporate, and in some cases are more stringent than, the requirements of the European Community Drinking Water Directive. Standards are set for the chemical and bacterial quality of the water and also its acceptability – colour, clarity, smell and taste. Our supplies meet the requirements of the Regulations and we aim to maintain and further improve further on this, where necessary.

In line with the Regulations, we must sample and test the water at regular intervals. Our Quality Inspectors visit 20,000 properties each year at random and we're required to maintain records of those tests. Whenever we take a sample of your water following a complaint, we'll give you details of our analysis and our interpretation of the results. If you want to know about the water in your area or if you have a complaint about the quality of your drinking water, please contact us. If you request a copy of the water quality records for the area in which you live we'll send it to you within seven days, free of charge. Please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre (**0800 783 4444**) for more information or go to [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) to request this information directly.

Sometimes the quality and appearance of the water can be temporarily affected by activities on the water distribution network such as emergency fire service use or repair and maintenance work such the water may discoloured or murky with a brown, black or orange colour . A quick fix to resolve discolouration would be run a pencil thin stream of water from the tap nearest your stop tap for 20 minutes (normally your kitchen tap). You can find lots of helpful hints and tips on our website. However, if you are concerned in any way and think there is a serious problem, please contact us straight away.

On very rare occasions, as a precaution it may be necessary to advise you to boil your water or even not to use it at all for drinking and cooking. We'll tell you as soon as possible using the most appropriate method. In these circumstances, we'll work closely with public health and medical experts and appropriate authorities. In the unlikely event of us having to issue an official 'boil water' or 'do not drink' notice in writing, we'll make a payment of £25.

More details can be found in section 9 – Our Guaranteed Standards Scheme (page 46).

### 2.3 Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

These Regulations are national requirements for the design, installation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. Their purpose is to prevent misuse, waste, under consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, to prevent contamination of drinking water.

The Government requires water suppliers to enforce the Regulations, therefore we'll undertake inspections of new and existing installations to check that the Regulations are being met. Where breaches of the Regulations are found, we'll require them to be remedied as soon as practicable. Where breaches pose a risk to health, the water supply to the premises may be disconnected immediately to protect the health of occupants or others fed from the same public supply. It's a criminal offence to breach the Regulations and offenders may face prosecution. Plumbing systems must be designed, installed and maintained to meet the Regulations' requirements. Plumbing must be properly installed and maintained to protect water quality, to make sure safety, ease of access for maintenance, detection of leakage, protection against damage or freezing etc. If you are doing your own installation, make sure you know what requirements you must meet. If you're employing someone else, consider using an approved contractor who will guarantee compliance of the new installation. The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and their Schedules and Statutory Instruments (1999 No. 1148 and No. 1506) are available from HMSO and via the internet ([legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk)).

### 2.4 Rights of entry

We have statutory rights of entry to customers' premises to investigate compliance with Regulations, to take samples, and carry out surveys and work. Except in an emergency, we'll call at a reasonable time. When exercising our rights of entry, we'll give you 24 hours' notice for investigating Regulations compliance and monitoring water quality and seven days' notice in all other cases. If we haven't given you notice you have the right to refuse entry. Information on the Regulations can be obtained from our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre (**03457 500 500**).

### 2.5 Quantity

We must provide you with enough water for normal domestic purposes - that is drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitation, as well as watering the garden and washing the car, provided a hosepipe is not used. However, we aim to make sure that in normal conditions you can use a hosepipe if you wish.

The weather is becoming increasingly unpredictable and in recent years we have experienced lower than average rainfall for our region, at a time when the demand for water has been rising. We have a duty to promote water efficiency and we have responded to this by putting together a water efficiency plan. This is to make sure that we have enough water to meet your requirements without having to impose restrictions.

Our plans include:

- Investing heavily in new water mains to make sure that our network is strengthened.
- Finding and using new sources of water to supplement our existing resources.
- Reducing the amount of leakage from our pipes and customer's pipes.

- Promoting water savings and efficiency to reduce demand.
- Metering customers who wish to use a garden sprinkler or who have a swimming pool.

More advice on how you can save water can be found on our website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk)

Although we don't anticipate having to do so, we may have to impose temporary restrictions on non-essential uses, such as hosepipes, in extreme conditions. If these persist, we may have to resort to standpipes but we'll make sure that customers affected will receive compensation.

## 2.6 Water Pressure

The company must maintain a minimum pressure in the communication pipe of seven metres static head (0.7 bar). If pressure falls below this on two occasions, each occasion lasting more than one hour, within a 28-day period, the company must automatically make a GSS payment.

Pressure and flow rates in your home can be adversely affected by a number of factors:

- The height of the property above the water main and its height relative to the reservoir.
- The condition and size of the customer's service pipe.
- Whether the property shares a service pipe with other properties.
- Peak demand conditions.

If you think that your water pressure is too low, we'll investigate the cause free of charge. If the cause is our responsibility we'll take appropriate action. If it's not, we'll tell you what you need to do. For further information please contact our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre ([03457 500 500](tel:03457500500)).

If your pressure falls below seven metres head in our service pipe for longer than one hour on two occasions in any 28-day period you'll be entitled to a £25 payment. This applies in normal operating conditions and is limited to one payment per year. Please see section 9 for more information on our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

## 2.7 Supply Interruptions

While we work to provide a constant supply of water, some events will inevitably interrupt the flow. For example, bursts in mains and the failures of pumps or their electricity supply. If there's a problem, contact our Customer Operations Service Centre ([0800 783 4444](tel:08007834444)) and we'll investigate immediately. If the mains supply fails we must restore it as soon as possible. Our target is to do so in less than 12 hours but the larger mains are more difficult to repair and can take longer. If the interruption lasts longer than 24 hours, we must provide you with an emergency supply. [Alternative supplies will only be provided to Non Household Customers \(NHH\) who are classed as sensitive under our sensitive customer guidance or Public Health related site specific arrangements.](#) If we plan to interrupt your supply for more than four hours to do planned maintenance work, we must give you reasonable written notice (normally 48 hours). We'll also inform you of the duration of the interruption. If we fail to give you notice or fail to restore the supply by the time stated, you'll be entitled to a service guarantee payment. Please see section 9 for more information on our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

As part of our programme for checking leaks, we sometimes turn off sections of mains pipe at night in a programmed way to identify the leaks. We usually do this between midnight and 6.00am. These interruptions normally last less than two hours and because the disruption is slight we won't tell you

in advance. If you think that this is likely to cause you a problem, please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre (**0800 783 4444**).

## **2.8 Responsibility for pipes – our pipes**

The water mains in the public highway are generally ours. Some water mains cross private land and we have powers to lay and maintain those mains. Please see section 8 for information on pipe laying on private land. Normally the service pipe is ours until it reaches the boundary of the highway. Most properties have an underground stop tap at the boundary which is our responsibility.

## **2.9 Responsibility for pipes – your pipes**

The service pipe from the stop tap which takes the water into your house is normally yours (or your landlord's). This part of the service pipe is usually referred to as the customer service pipe. It's your responsibility to maintain your pipe in good order just as you would maintain the plumbing in your house, even when, as in some cases, it runs under other properties before reaching your house. If you have any problems on your pipework, call us and we may be able to help.

## **2.10 Shared customer service pipe**

You may share a service pipe with one or more of your neighbours and the flow of water at your tap may be unacceptably low when your neighbours are using water. If the pipe is in a poor condition, we can require you and your neighbours to share the cost of replacing it with separate pipes. This would improve both the flow and the quality of water at your tap. We can also require separation of a shared pipe if:

- One of the households on the shared pipe falls into payment arrears.
- The houses are converted into a larger number of flats or homes.
- The shared pipe has been tampered with.

If any dispute arises about the circumstances outlined above, it may be referred to our regulator, Ofwat to decide the outcome. You can find details of how to contact Ofwat in section 9.

## **2.11 Leaks**

The legal position is that where there is a leak on your service pipe it is your responsibility to repair it. If your bill seems abnormally high, it may mean that there is a leak on your service pipe or it may be due to high consumption; for example, if a garden hose was used during the period covered by your bill. If you suspect that there is a leak on your pipe, you can check this yourself by:

- Turning off all the taps in the house and making sure that there is no water being used.
- Read the meter and take a note of the reading. Your meter may be internal or external in a boundary box. You should read all of the digits on the meter from left to right, making a note of where the decimal place is.
- Take a second reading after a few hours, ensuring that no water is used in the property in the meantime.
- If the second reading is higher, there may be a leak.
- For more information on leakage please refer to section 7.
- You can also check for other signs of a leak such as areas of lush vegetation during dry periods and other obvious damp patches or a constant noise coming from the pipes in your home that sounds like water being used. Checking for any faults with water flowing through your toilet

overflow (particularly for new bathroom fittings where the overflow is diverted back down the toilet flow) can be useful.

If a leak is discovered on your supply pipe, we all want it repaired quickly. You can repair the leak yourself or use a contractor or plumber of your choice, at your expense. If leaks are not repaired promptly we'll serve notice on you and any other customers concerned, requiring the work to be done at your own cost. If the leak is still running after this notice period has expired, we'll do the work and charge you for the full cost of the repairs or a proportion if the supply is shared. If, in extreme cases, the leak endangers people or property, or threatens to contaminate the public water supply, we can cut off the supply until the leak is repaired. If you suspect there is a leak on your service pipe or you spot a leak in the road, please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre so that we can arrange an appointment to visit. This service is free of charge. If you have a meter fitted outside at the boundary, you'll be paying for the wasted water.

Please refer to section 7. Working to Reduce Leakage (page 29) for more information but in principle:

- When the meter is installed we'll check for any leaks on the service pipe. If we discover a leak we can repair it under our free repair scheme subject to the terms of the scheme or you can arrange for someone else to do the work for you at your cost.
- If there is a leak we'll make an adjustment to the charges provided the leak is repaired promptly and provided that it was not caused by your negligence and was not one you should have known about and could have repaired sooner. This adjustment won't be repeated for subsequent leaks.

Where adjustments are made to water consumption charges a similar adjustment will be made to the sewerage charges. If a leak occurs on your supply, you'll need to complete a leakage claim form which can be obtained from our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre on **03457 500 500**.

## 2.12 Lead pipes

The water we supply is essentially lead-free but traces can be picked up from the service pipe or your own plumbing, if they're made of lead. High lead levels can be a health risk, particularly to young children, so we treat our water to make sure that lead dissolution is kept to an absolute minimum. We monitor lead levels across our area and can provide advice on typical results for your area.

If you have lead pipes you may decide to replace your service pipe and in this case we'll replace our part of the service pipe at the same time, free of charge. If you have a lead service pipe which is shared and you and your neighbours agree to have it replaced, we may request separate pipes to be laid. If you decide to replace your lead service pipe, you may wish to contact your local council who may be able to provide a grant in some circumstances. **Non Household Customers (NHH) are not eligible for the free service.**

If you would like further information on the above, please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre (**0800 783 4444**).

### 2.13 Badly rusted service pipe

Old iron service pipes can become badly rusted inside. The rust restricts the flow through the pipe and may discolour the water. If this is the case then we'll replace our part of the service pipe and suggest you replace your part.

### 2.14 Electrical earthing – warning

The earthing of the electrical installation in the home is an important safety measure and the householder's own responsibility. The use of metal water pipes as a means of providing electrical earthing for the property was once common practice. However, this method has not been permitted since 1966. It is important you appreciate that the vast majority of new water mains and service pipes (including replacements) are now plastic and therefore totally unsuitable as a means of electrical earthing. Whenever we come across metal water service pipes that could be used as electrical earthing we'll leave a card with you to draw your attention to the potentially dangerous practice. In these circumstances, we strongly advise you to contact your electricity supply company or other approved electrical contractor to discuss the matter. They may recommend that you have the earthing arrangements to your property checked and they are entitled to charge for this service.

### 2.15 If you want a new water service (New Connections)

We must connect all new premises to our water mains if you ask us to do so and if the supply is required for domestic purposes. Alternatively, on development sites connections can be carried out by an approved contractor working to our self-lay scheme if authorised in advance (Accredited on the Lloyds register).

All new connections will be metered and charged according to our metered tariffs.

We sometimes require developers to fit Severn Trent supplied water meters on new service connections usually this is only required on internal meters and large diameter connections bulk meters. Severn Trent will install external meters at the boundary when possible. Where we make the new connection you'll have to meet our costs which include:

- The cost of making the connection.
- The cost of laying our part of the service pipe and arranging for it to be metered.
- Appropriate reinstatement of the highway.
- Traffic management.

Where the new connection is made by an approved contractor you'll have to meet our costs which include administration and inspection fees.

In addition, for all new connections you must also pay an infrastructure charge which is a fixed contribution to the cost of developing the local water and waste network for supplying additional demand.

To obtain a new connection, you must first complete an application form, and pay the associated fee, providing relevant details. We'll then inspect the site and send you a quotation if you'd like us to do the work. Before we can make a connection we must be satisfied that:

- Your part of the service pipe has been laid to our specification and complies with the Water Supply Regulations.

- A separate service pipe has been provided to each of the buildings or premises that are separately occupied.
- The Regulations have been or will be complied with.
- You've obtained the necessary consent from others (e.g. landlords).
- Relevant charges for making the connection have been paid.

Once you've done this, paid the necessary charges, laid your part of the service pipe and told us, we must connect the service pipe to the mains within 21 days.

Normally we'll agree a time with you to make the connection but the period may be extended where working restrictions are imposed under the Traffic Management Act. This may take longer if offsite reinforcement is required prior to making the connection.

If we fail to meet these deadlines and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us. Any dispute relating to such connection may be referred to Ofwat; more details can be obtained from our Developer Services Team (**0800 707 6600**) or email us at [new.connections@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:new.connections@severntrent.co.uk).

## 2.16 I want a new main

If you ask for a new main to serve several properties we'll provide it, but you and any other applicants must pay any difference between the income we receive for charges for water supplied for domestic purposes from the main and our reasonable costs in providing the main. You can choose to pay these costs over a 12 year period or in one lump sum. We may also require some security from you before beginning the work.

For our part, we must provide the main within three months of you signing the agreement containing the terms on which we do so. If we fail to meet this deadline and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us. If we can't agree the amount you must pay or the amount of security you should give, either party can refer the matter to Ofwat for a decision.

Alternatively, if it has been agreed in advance, you can choose to have a main laid by approved installers (accredited on the Lloyds register). Where this is done, you'll have to pay for the design to be done or checked and for us to test the main and make the connection to our distribution network. Any dispute in respect of the amount we require you to pay or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give can be referred to Ofwat for determination.

When a property is connected to our water mains or sewerage system for the first time, we must make sure that we can deliver the same high standard of service as a result of the extra demand.

For all new connections you must pay an infrastructure charge which is a fixed contribution towards additional investment in our local distribution system. The charge is in addition to the actual cost of making a connection.

## 2.17 Infrastructure Charges

When a property is connected to our water mains or sewerage system for the first time, we must make sure that we can deliver the same high standard of service as a result of the extra demand. For all new connections you must pay an infrastructure charge which is a fixed contribution towards additional investment in our local distribution system. The charge is in addition to the actual cost of

making a connection. Infrastructure charges are intended to make sure that the costs of the investment are met from a one-off charge to new properties as and when they are connected rather than from higher charges to existing properties.

If the infrastructure charges, or part of them, are not paid within 14 days of connection, or if an agreement to pay the charges is terminated incorrectly, then we have the right to recover the charges. If part of the infrastructure charges has already been paid, then this amount will be treated as a credit and subtracted from the total charge. The infrastructure charge for a domestic supply is agreed annually and agreed with Ofwat. Details on our charges can be found at <https://www.stwater.co.uk/building-and-developing/regulations-and-forms/application-forms-and-guidance/>

## 3. Dealing with waste water

We provide and maintain a system of public sewers, which take the waste water from your buildings and drains to our sewage treatment works. The system of pipes which carry the waste water is called the foul sewerage system.

We also collect rain water run-off from roofs, as well as from some roads and other paved areas, and transfer it to suitable watercourses and rivers through surface water sewerage systems. In some older systems rain water is connected to a shared system which also takes foul water away and these are often referred to as combined sewers.

### 3.1 Types of Sewers

The three main types of sewer are:

- **Surface water sewers:** carry rainwater which runs off roofs and roads directly into rivers, watercourses and eventually the sea.
- **Foul sewers:** carry the waste from toilets – water which has been used for cooking and washing and effluent from industrial premises – to sewage treatment works.
- **Combined sewers:** carry both the rainwater run-off from roofs and roads, as well as water which has been used for domestic and industrial purposes, to sewage treatment works.

While most of our sewerage system flows downhill using gravity, in low lying areas we also use pumping stations to pump flows uphill to our sewage treatment works. Each pumping station has at least one pressurised pipe. These pumping stations vary in size – some will have large buildings while others only have a small control kiosk. All are powered by electricity and are installed with monitoring systems to flag up if a maintenance visit is needed.

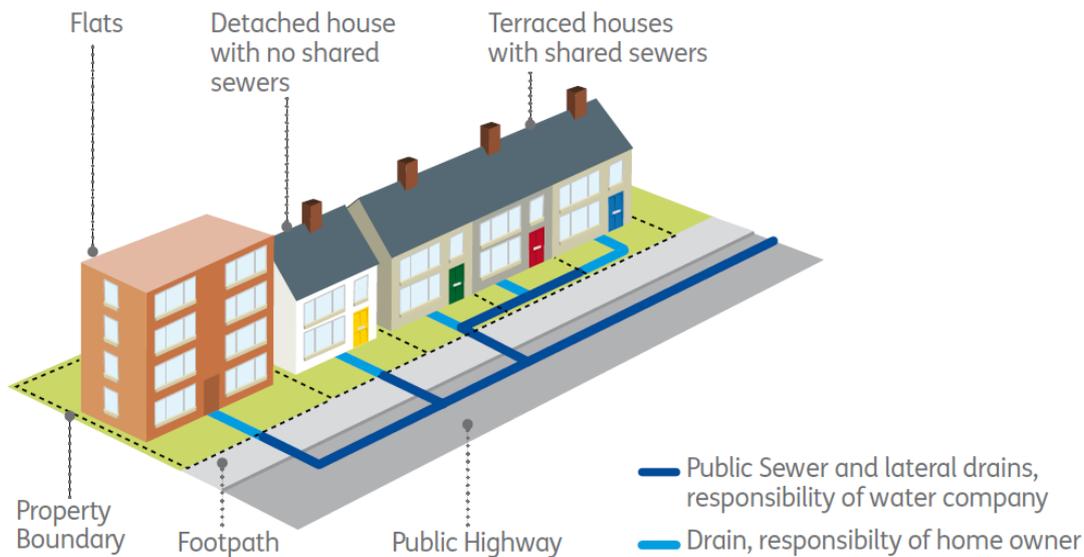
### 3.2. Sewers we're responsible for

We're responsible for the majority of the sewers which drain buildings and roofs that serve residential areas and industrial complexes. We also adopt most sewers built as part of new development. Most of these sewers are situated under roads and public areas but can also be located on private land.

### 3.3 Adoption of private sewers on 1 October 2011

On 1 October 2011, legislation transferred ownership of all shared waste water pipes (sewers) and lateral drains which connect to the public system to water companies. All waste water pipes serving more than a single property are now our responsibility. Where pipes only serve one property, we're only responsible for the pipe from the point where it leaves the curtilage (generally the boundary of your property). These are called lateral drains. All pipes within a property boundary that serve just a single property are referred to as private drains and remain the responsibility of the property owner.

The diagram below explains these responsibilities and shows the normal layout of most drain and sewer systems which applies to most property types. For ease, the diagram only shows a single system, but most properties have two separate systems draining them – one for waste water and one for rainwater.



Any self-contained sewerage systems remain the responsibility of the private owner. For example septic tanks, private treatment facilities that don't connect to the public sewerage system, as well as the pipes which connect your property to the plant/tank.

If you're buying a property, your solicitor should undertake searches that confirm which pipes will be your responsibility. You're responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of all pipes that remain private, and it's a good idea to check their condition (e.g. ask the owners if they have experienced any problems, or survey the pipes).

Most of our sewers are situated under roads or public open spaces, however occasionally our sewers may run through private land. In this case we need to preserve a right of access for maintenance and legal protection against building over or near our pipes. Where we need to lay or maintain pipes in your land, we'll follow a Code of Practice for working on private land. Please refer to section 8 for more information. There are restrictions on how close you can build to any public sewers that run across your land. Ofwat can consider complaints about work on private land under section 181 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

### 3.4 Adoption of private pumping stations

The legislation which transferred private drains and sewers into water company ownership also included private pumping stations which transferred to us on or before 1 October 2016.

We are not obliged to adopt pumping stations which only serve a single property as these will remain in private ownership.

### 3.5 What we're NOT responsible for

We're not responsible for maintaining road gullies, highway drains, land drainage, ground water, watercourses, culverted watercourses or rivers. Where the performance of our sewerage systems is being unduly affected owing to interaction with other systems we will work with the respective authorities.

### 3.6 Maps of our sewers

It's our duty to keep a map showing the position of public sewers and you have a right to view it. It's free to view sewer records at our head office in Coventry and paper copies can be ordered through our website at a cost of £24. Just go to [stwater.co.uk/sewer-map](http://stwater.co.uk/sewer-map)

Please note that while the responsibility for previously privately owned sewers transferred to us in October 2011, our records won't show all the transferred sewers yet. We'll build up this record over time as we respond to incidents and progressively map the transferred network.

### 3.7 Clearing blockages on private drains

Blockages in sewers can result in smells, back-up of sewage, flooding or pollution. If we receive a call from you notifying us of a blockage that needs clearing we'll try to establish whether the blockage is within our network or within the pipework that you're responsible for. If the blockage is in your pipework, we won't send a team out and it will be your responsibility to either deal with it yourself, pay a drain clearing company to clear the problem or resolve it via your insurer.

Where we can't confirm the location of a problem through our questions, or where we believe the problem to be in our pipework, we'll send out a drain clearing team. If they discover the problem is actually on the pipe you're responsible for, they'll let you know. You can then either use an independent drainage contractor to carry out any necessary work, or we'll offer to clear the blockage. There's a charge for this service and you'll be offered an upfront fixed price to clear the blockage. If you can't pay for the service, or would prefer to resolve it yourself, we'll leave the job at that point. The service we provide on your pipework will only be to restore flow in the pipe; it won't be to repair the drain. If the pipework is broken, you may be insured and may want to contact your insurer to have the drain repaired.

### 3.8 Protection against flooding from public sewers

We aim to make sure there's sufficient capacity in our sewer systems to protect homes from sewer flooding. Unfortunately during severe storms, the amount of rainfall entering the sewers can exceed the capacity of the pipes and result in sewer flooding. This type of flooding is referred to as hydraulic overloading.

Over the past few years the amount of rainwater entering our sewers has been increasing, often as a result of paving over front gardens and covering over grassed areas which previously allowed rainwater to naturally drain into the ground. There has also been an increasing trend towards more intense short duration rain storms which increase the speed that rainwater gets into the sewers and increases the chance that sewer capacity will be exceeded.

We plan to protect areas at high risk of flooding due to hydraulic overloading following heavy rainfall, but there may still be occasions during extreme weather when it's not physically possible for the sewerage system to cope with the volume of flow.

Sewer flooding can also happen when pipes block, collapse or are affected by backing up when pumping stations breakdown. Around 80% of flooding problems are caused by these types of problems.

Most flooding incidents caused by blockages are a result of the wrong things being flushed down toilets, such as nappies, sanitary products and cleaning wipes, or where fat, oil and grease are poured down kitchen sinks. These then stick to the inside of pipes, solidify and restrict the flow in the sewer. These types of problems will often result in smells or can affect toilet flushing. You can find more information on what not to flush and order a free fat trap at [stwater.co.uk/cleandrains](http://stwater.co.uk/cleandrains)

If you need to report a flooding problem please call our 24-hour Customer Operations Service Centre (**0800 783 4444**).

Where the incident disrupts service or causes flooding to property, we'll aim to arrive as soon as possible. We aim to attend within four hours but during times of exceptionally heavy rainfall, when there are a large number flooding incidents, it may take a little longer.

We'll give you a named contact if you've suffered internal flooding, as well as more information which explains what happens next and our responsibilities. We'll also provide an explanation of the cause of the flooding within 10 working days if requested.

We're not legally liable for loss or damage caused by flooding from public sewers unless we've been negligent. If you're affected by flooding and it has resulted in loss or damage to your property, your insurance company should be able to help. If you're not insured or you're facing hardship because of an incident, then please get in touch and we'll try to help. However, it's your responsibility to be properly and adequately insured.

We'll make sure the problem is dealt with quickly and that we do as much as we can to help afterwards. In nearly all circumstances we'll give you practical advice and help to clear up any mess. We can carry out a basic clean up as a gesture of goodwill if you ask us to, as long as it can be done without contaminating or damaging any of your personal belongings.

If your property is flooded internally from the public sewerage system then you'll be entitled to a payment which may be a full refund of your sewerage charge for the year, from a minimum of £150 up to a maximum of £1,000. You'll receive an amount that matches the sewerage charges for your property.

If you've suffered external sewer flooding from the public sewerage system in your garden or driveway then you'll be entitled to a payment, which may be 50% of your sewerage charge, from a minimum of £75 to a maximum of £500. Please see section 9 for more information on our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

For more information on sewer flooding and how to prevent it, go to [stwater.co.uk/sewer-flooding/](http://stwater.co.uk/sewer-flooding/)

### **3.9 Pollutions from wrong connections**

Every year we investigate a large number of pollution reports affecting local watercourses which are caused by incorrect connections to the sewer and these can take a considerable amount of time to investigate. It is important that connections are made to the correct type of sewer. For example, pollution can arise if foul flows are connected into surface water drains or sewers which then run into local watercourses.

Most problems are associated with the installation of washing machines or dishwashers, where outlet pipes are accidentally connected to a surface water drain instead of the foul drain. Chemicals and food waste can then contaminate the watercourse and affect water quality. Wrong connections can also occur from extensions when new toilets and sinks are incorrectly connected to the surface water drain.

If you are making any new connection to the foul or waste drains, please ensure that the connection is to a foul or combined drain/sewer. Information on how to correctly install a washing machine or dishwasher will be included in the device's instruction leaflets, and your local council will be able to advise you about any building regulation requirements concerning building drainage.

### **3.10 New sewer connections**

You're entitled to have your drain or sewer connected to our public sewer network, as long as it meets certain practical requirements. There will be a charge for this service which is explained below. It's your responsibility to make sure the location and depth of the sewer is correct so that we're able to connect it. Please note, although you can view our sewer records at our head office (or through our website as mentioned previously) they can contain some discrepancies.

### **3.11 Connection to an existing public sewer**

Before connecting, you'll need to give us details of the drain or sewer to be connected, where you intend to connect it to and how the connection will be made. We'll let you know within 21 days whether your proposals are acceptable. We can refuse to connect if the connection is not suitable for our sewer and we'll explain the reason for any refusal. For example, we won't agree to connect a foul drain to a surface water sewer and we won't allow surface water pipe to be connected to a foul/combined sewer if there's a suitable surface water sewer available. If you disagree with our decision, you can appeal to our regulator, Ofwat whose contact details can be found in section 9.

For each new sewer connection you'll have to pay:

- **An Assessment Fee:** This covers our cost to assess your connection proposals, inspection of the work and, where relevant, transferring responsibility for the lateral drain or sewer to us.
- **An Infrastructure Charge:** This is a fixed contribution to the cost of developing the local sewer network. It's normally collected when you apply for the new water supply. More details on this are in the section below.

Once you've received approval you should give us five days' notice of the day when you or your builder proposes to do the work.

### **3.12 Sewer connections requiring a new public sewer**

We may not have a suitable existing sewer for you to connect your property to, or it may require access across private land. In these circumstances, you and your neighbours, or the district council, can ask us to provide a suitable sewer for you to connect to and, where practicable, we'll do so. If a new sewer is needed, we aim to install it within six months (or a longer period may be agreed) after an agreement is reached to pay any difference between the income we receive from sewerage charges in respect of these properties and our reasonable costs in providing the sewer. Payment can either be as a lump sum contribution towards the cost of the work or staged payments over a

period of up to 12 years. Both these payment options are based upon a statutory formula. We'll also want some security from you before doing the work.

If we fail to meet this deadline and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us. Any dispute may be referred to Ofwat. Further information on this can be obtained from our Developer Services Team (**0800 707 6600**). or email us at [new.connections@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:new.connections@severntrent.co.uk).

### **3.13 Provision of a public sewer where there are environmental or amenity problems**

Since 1 April 1996, sewerage authorities have had a duty to provide a suitable public sewer for domestic purposes to properties, which are not currently connected directly or indirectly to public sewers. This duty applies where:

- The existing private drainage is causing or is likely to cause environmental or amenity problems; and
- Provision of a public sewer is a more appropriate cost beneficial solution compared to provision of a private option

Such applications will be assessed using the criteria set out in the guidance notes issued by Defra. Where our investigations show that the qualifying criteria are not met, we'll explain the reasons why we've rejected your application. Where the criteria are met, the cost of providing a suitable public sewerage system connected to your property will be funded by us as part of our investment programme.

If we fail to meet this deadline and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us. Any dispute may be referred to Ofwat. Further information on this can be obtained from our Developer Services Team (**0800 707 6600**). or email us at [new.connections@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:new.connections@severntrent.co.uk).

### **3.14 Infrastructure Charges**

When a property is connected to our water mains or sewerage system for the first time, we must make sure that we can deliver the same high standard of service as a result of the extra demand. For all new connections you must pay an infrastructure charge which is a fixed contribution towards additional investment in our local distribution system. The charge is in addition to the actual cost of making a connection. Infrastructure charges are intended to make sure that the costs of the investment are met from a one-off charge to new properties as and when they are connected rather than from higher charges to existing properties.

If the infrastructure charges, or part of them, are not paid within 14 days of connection, or if an agreement to pay the charges is terminated incorrectly, then we have the right to recover the charges. If part of the infrastructure charges has already been paid, then this amount will be treated as a credit and subtracted from the total charge. The infrastructure charge for a domestic supply is agreed annually and agreed with Ofwat. Details on our charges can be found at <https://www.stwater.co.uk/building-and-developing/regulations-and-forms/application-forms-and-guidance/>

### 3.15 Sewage treatment

The sewers bring domestic and industrial effluents to sewage works for treatment and safe disposal to rivers. The treated sewage effluent discharged from our treatment works must comply with statutory conditions set by the Environment Agency (EA). The EA checks to make sure that we meet these conditions and enters the results of its samples into a public register. You can find out more about the EA in section 9.

All sewage sludge, the by-product of sewage treatment, must be disposed of in accordance with statutory requirements and Government licences. We operate our works in accordance with good practice but sewage can smell. We try to limit the smell as much as possible but cannot guarantee to eliminate it altogether.

If we're causing you a nuisance, please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre (**0800 783 4444**).

## 4. Your water bill

### 4.1. Bills for unmetered customers

We send out your bill in February or March and this can be paid in two instalments. The first instalment is payable by 1 April and the second by 1 October. You can also choose to pay in eight monthly instalments between April and November, or we can agree a longer period if necessary. If you do this you can choose which day of the month to pay. Call our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre (**03457 500 500**) for more information or to set up your payments.

As an unmetered customer your bill is calculated based on the Rateable Value (RV) of your property. Your local council valuation office calculated your RV based on location, floor space and number of rooms but they aren't required to hold the records of your original RV or to consider any appeals. We only have details of the final RV figure and this varies from property to property so your RV could be different to your neighbours'. However, if your property has had a change of use, the RV might not be appropriate anymore and so we may need to make a change to your basis of charge. We'll normally calculate the annual charges as follows:

- For water supply, by multiplying the RV of the premises by a rate per pound of RV, subject to a minimum charge.
- For sewerage services, by multiplying the RV of the premises by a rate in the pound based on the services that the property receives or benefits from (surface water drainage, highways drainage and foul sewage).

For more details, see our Charges Scheme available at [stwater.co.uk/charges](http://stwater.co.uk/charges). If you don't use much water, opting for a free water meter could mean cheaper bills as you'll only pay for the water you use (clean and used), surface water drainage and a small standing charge. You may also benefit if your household or property only has a few occupiers, a high RV or uses water saving methods and appliances.

Call our free meter team (**03457 090 646**) for more details. You have the right to go back to an unmetered charge if you tell us that you want to. You must do this within 12 months.

### 4.2. Bills for metered customers

We send your bills every six months and they need to be paid when you receive them. You can also choose to pay monthly. To arrange this, call our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre (**03457 500 500**).

Metered charges are made up of three elements: water supply, used water and surface water drainage. Water supply and used water charges are based on the volume of water used. This is measured in cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>); 1[m]<sup>3</sup> is equal to 220 gallons or 1000 litres of water. The amount used is calculated as the difference between two meter readings.

Surface water drainage charges are levied for the removal and treatment of surface water or rainwater from the property. Charges are based either on the RV of the property or on property type – flat/terrace, semi-detached or detached. If your charges are currently based on rateable value you can opt to be billed according to property type. If you don't think that surface or rainwater drains into

our systems from your property, you should call us on (**03457 500 500**) to arrange a visit to assess our charges.

### 4.3 Bills for assessed volume customers

Assessed volume charges apply in the following circumstances:

- Where there is no longer an appropriate rateable value for the property (for example where it has been substantially altered).
- Where you or a previous occupier has requested a meter but we couldn't install one because it wasn't practicable or it would have involved unreasonable expense, and either you or the previous occupier opted to pay assessed volume charges instead of unmeasured charges.
- Where following several visits and written requests we have still been unable to gain access to install, read or maintain our meter.

For household properties, these charges are based either on property type (detached, semi-detached or other) or based on an assessment of the water used by a single occupier and is a set charge for the year. For non-household properties, the charge is based on our assessment of the volume of water used.

The billing cycle is the same as metered customers and you are billed in arrears we send out your bill in April and this can be paid in two instalments or twelve monthly instalments between April and November.

### 4.4 Current charges

Details of our current charges can be found in our Charges Scheme, available to download at [stwater.co.uk/charges](http://stwater.co.uk/charges).

### 4.5 How can I pay my bill?

As well as our payment plans that can help you if you are having difficulty paying, we offer a number of ways for you to pay your bill:

- Direct Debit from your bank or building society account. It's safe, convenient and easy to arrange and it offers you a choice of payment dates.
- You can also pay by debit or credit card by
  - Visiting our secure website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk)
  - Calling our Customer Contact Centre on **03457 500 500** and selecting the "make a payment" option which will take you to our automated payment line.
- There's no charge for paying by debit card. For credit cards, a transaction fee of 1.5% is levied by your credit card provider and we reserve the right to pass this fee on to you but we would notify you of this before charging your credit card.
- Take your Watercard or payment slip and cash payment to one of the approximately 1,200 PayPoint outlets in our region. You can find PayPoint outlets in newsagents, supermarkets, garages, off licenses and corner shops and the service is free of charge.
- Direct from your benefits – see section 5 for more information.
- Send your cheque payment by post to:
  - Severn Trent Water Ltd
  - Providence Row
  - Durham
  - DH1 1RR

- Please write your Severn Trent Water account number on the back of the cheque and make sure the cheque is dated correctly and signed.
- Pay at any bank or building society. The service is free if you pay by cheque at any branch of Barclays. It may be free if you use your own bank or building society but some charge for this service. You can also pay at the Post Office where a counter fee will be charged.
- Use your home or telephone banking. Please quote sort code 20 00 00 and bank account number 23285790 and your Severn Trent Water account number.
- Using the Pingit App on your smartphone, you can scan the QR code on your bill to pay electronically.

If you are a business customer, you may wish to make a single payment to a single water charges account via BACS. To ensure we allocate your payments promptly and correctly, please ensure you quote your 10 digit account reference number.

Did you know you that we have a dedicated email in-box for remittances? The email address is [payment.allocations@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:payment.allocations@severntrent.co.uk). We are happy to receive your remittances electronically.

You can find more details at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) or by requesting our Charges Scheme, which is available to download on the website or by calling our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre (**03457 500 500**). If you have individual needs and find it hard to use our payment methods, please let us know and we'll try to find an arrangement that works for both of us.

#### **4.6 I'm moving house, what do I do?**

If you're moving house, you can let us know up to 28 days in advance by contacting us either via our website ([stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk)) or by calling our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre (**03457 500 500**).

If you're a metered customer and you would like us to take a final meter reading then you need to let us know up to five working days in advance of your move date so this can be arranged. Alternatively, you can provide the final meter reading on the date of your move. If we can't visit or you don't provide a final meter reading, we will estimate your usage based on your average usage.

You can find more information at [stwater.co.uk/moving-home](http://stwater.co.uk/moving-home)

#### **4.7 What if I have a dispute about my bill?**

If the bill is for someone who lived in your property before you did, or if someone else was responsible for paying the bill for some of the time the bill covers, contact us as soon as you get the bill. If your bill is addressed to 'the occupier' please let us know so that we can update the details and sort out any issues. We might ask for proof of the date you moved in to the property so that we can update our records. We'll look into any issue, complaint or dispute you have and we'll follow the process detailed within our Complaints Procedure (section 10). Whilst we're investigating your dispute, we won't take any further action.

#### **4.8 WaterSure – are any bill reductions available for vulnerable customers?**

If you use a lot of water because you have a large family or someone in your household has a medical condition, and you are on a low income, our WaterSure scheme (formerly the vulnerable

household scheme) could help. It's a statutory scheme that offers you a capped charge for metered water services.

You can qualify for a reduced rate if you pay for your water based on a meter reading and someone in your house is receiving any of these benefits:

- [Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Income Support](#)
- [Income based Jobseeker's Allowance](#)
- [Housing Benefit](#)
- [Council Tax Benefit](#)
- [Child Tax Credit \(except in receipt of the family element only\)](#)
- [Pension Credit](#)
- [Working Tax Credit.](#)
- [Universal Credit](#)

From 1 April 2015, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will also fit the qualifying benefit criteria.

You must also have either:

- [three or more dependent children under the age of 19 years living at the property,](#)
- Or
- [you or someone else living at the property must have a medical condition requiring high water usage.](#)

For more information and an application form visit [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) or call us on **03457 500 500**. You can also email [customercare@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:customercare@severntrent.co.uk). If your application is successful, we'll apply the new WaterSure tariff to your account from the day after your last bill was issued. WaterSure applications must be renewed every 12 months; we'll remind you by letter when it is time to renew.

#### **4.9 How can I reduce my bill?**

We can provide a guide full of easy water-saving tips which show that you do not need to make big changes to save a lot of water. Visit [stwater.co.uk/savewater](http://stwater.co.uk/savewater) to download our guide or call us on **03457 500 500**.

#### **4.10 As a tenant, when am I responsible for paying the bill?**

If you live in rented accommodation, it's not always easy to understand who is legally responsible for the bill. Our water charges are usually payable by the person who lives in the property and uses the water, unless you have a specific agreement with your landlord which you can provide proof of. Unless your landlord has entered into an agreement with us accepting responsibility for our charges, this means that you have to pay the bill. If you have any problems or if your bill is for a previous tenant, please call us straight away – we can only help you if we know.

#### **4.11 As a landlord, when am I responsible for paying the bill?**

You're responsible for paying water charges if you don't have a tenant or if you have agreed with us and your tenant that you will pay the bill.

As a landlord you can quickly and efficiently let us know when a tenant moves in or out of your property by using the Landlord Tenant Address Portal (LTAP). Register now at [Landlordtap.com](http://Landlordtap.com)

#### **4.12 Will you share my data?**

We share information with Credit Reference Agencies to help us manage our customer accounts as efficiently as possible and keep our records up to date. This will help with fraud prevention and may improve your credit rating. We may also register a default against you with the Credit Reference Agencies for non-payment, this means your data will be shared with the Credit Reference Agencies (see Sep2 of 5.5 What will happen if I don't pay).

## 5. Help paying your bill

Water and sewerage bills must be paid but if you're struggling, we can help to make it easier for you. Our advisers can give you advice on the payment options available and to help find an arrangement that works for you and us. Help us to help you by telling us as soon as you have a problem – we can only help you if we know about it. Call us on **03456 022 777**. Our opening hours are 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm on Saturday.

### 5.1. I'm having difficulty paying my bill, what should I do?

If you're having trouble paying your bill, get in touch so we can help. There are lots of ways we can make things easier for you, for example by spreading the bill over a number of instalments – monthly, fortnightly or weekly – If you need us to.

Call us on **03456 022 777** for help and advice or write to us at the address shown at the end of this guide.

Please remember, if you don't keep to a payment arrangement that we agree with you, you'll have to pay the full amount that you owe us immediately.

### 5.2. Can you take payments directly from my benefits?

If you have arrears and you receive Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Pension Credit, the JobCentre Plus (previously known as the Benefits Agency) may be able to arrange for your bill to be paid out of your benefits directly to us. Contact us on **03456 022 777** and explain your circumstances to our team. They'll take your details over the phone and make an application for Water Direct (previously known as direct payments) on your behalf, or you can make an application on our website at [stwater.co.uk/waterdirect](http://stwater.co.uk/waterdirect). The application will only take a few minutes to complete – just have your National Insurance number ready.

Paying this way means:

- You won't have to remember to make payments.
- You pay in a convenient way for no extra cost.
- We won't take further recovery action.

We also won't take further recovery action whilst your application is being processed. If you've already contacted the JobCentre Plus offices for help, please let us know. JobCentre Plus will contact you directly to confirm if you've been accepted on to the scheme.

### 5.3 I'm still struggling to pay - What further help can you provide?

We are working in partnership with Coventry Citizen's Advice Bureau and from 1 April 2015 have introduced a new scheme to help those customers who struggle to pay, called "The Big Difference Scheme". The aim with this scheme is to assist households who are struggling to pay their water and/or sewerage charges where our other schemes have not been able to help. The scheme makes available a range of reduced tariffs that can be applied for via any Citizens Advice Bureau within our region.

Citizen's Advice will provide holistic debt management advice and complete a means assessment for the entire income of those living at your household premises and confirm to us whether you are eligible for The Big Difference Scheme and if so, which tariff band applies.

#### 5.4. Who else can I contact for help and advice?

##### Citizens Advice

You can contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) which is an independent charity that gives free confidential, independent and impartial advice on a wide range of problems. Expert advisers can help you to sort out your debts. If you have other problems, such as illness, redundancy or divorce, the adviser may also be able to help you or they may tell you where you can get help. The CAB can check if you are entitled to any extra income and can also help you work out and negotiate repayment plans with the people you owe money to.

The repayment plans will be based on what you can realistically afford to pay after your essential living costs have been met. On your first visit, please take all the relevant details of your income and how much you spend. The CAB will contact us by a dedicated helpline to discuss a suitable payment arrangement on your behalf. To find your nearest CAB, look in your local phone book, enquire at your local library or visit [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk).



StepChange Debt Charity is a registered charity, dedicated to providing confidential, free counselling and money management assistance to financially distressed families and individuals.

They offer a wide range of services, including welfare benefit checks, mortgage counselling, self-employed assistance and bankruptcy services. They offer free, confidential and impartial advice available over the phone (Freephone 8am-8pm) or through their website. They can help you prioritise your debts and set up structured repayment plans with the option of making one monthly payment. For free counselling and money assistance please contact StepChange on **0800 138 1111** or visit [stepchange.org](http://stepchange.org).

##### Severn Trent Charitable Trust Fund

If you're suffering exceptional hardship you can get in touch with the Severn Trent Charitable Trust Fund for help. The Trust is a fully independent registered charity. For more information about the Trust, contact your nearest CAB or Money Advice Centre. You can also find out more by writing to:

Severn Trent Trust Fund  
FREEPOST  
RLZE-EABT-SHSA  
Sutton Coldfield  
B72 1TJ  
Tel: **0121 355 7766**

If you tell us an application has been submitted to the Trust Fund and give us the reference number, we won't take any further action against you to collect money you owe until the outcome of your

application is known. If you're successful the Trust Fund will make a partial payment towards the amount you owe us and help you to make arrangements to pay the rest.



CCWater can offer you help and advice. Please contact them using the details given at the end of this guide.

### 5.5 What will happen if I don't pay?

If you don't pay your bill, or don't keep to a payment arrangement that we have agreed with you, we'll take the following steps to recover the debt:

#### Step 1

We'll send you a minimum of two written notices and attempt to call you to advise you of the debt. How quickly we do this will depend on whether you've kept up with payments in the past. We may also carry out a search with an external agency to obtain up to date information to help manage your account.

#### Step 2

If you still don't pay and you haven't contacted us to reach an agreement to pay, you may be sent a warning letter notifying you of our intention to file a default with the Credit Reference Agencies. If you don't pay the amount owed or contact us for assistance we may register a default against you.

Every person has a credit record that companies look at before deciding whether or not to provide credit services to them. If a default is registered against you it will remain on your credit file for six years **whether settled or outstanding** and may affect your ability to obtain credit.

For more information about credit and how to contact the credit reference agencies, you can visit the Information Commissioners' Office website [www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public/credit](http://www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public/credit)

#### Step 3

**If you still don't pay and you haven't contacted us to reach an agreement to pay**, we may ask the County Court to issue a claim against you for the debt. This means that legal costs (a minimum of £75) may be added to the amount you already owe us. We may seek to recover interest on this debt, through the County Court, at a rate of 8% from the date that the charges were originally due for payment up to the claim issue date.

#### Step 4

If you don't keep to the arrangement to pay as ordered by the court, we will take steps to recover the amount you owe. We may:

- Ask the court to order you to attend your local court to give information about your finances.
- Take a deduction from your income. The court will contact your employer to arrange deductions.
- Issue a warrant instructing a bailiff to enter your property and take your goods.

- Make a charge on your property if you own your home. This will mean we'll advise the mortgage lender of the debt and could force you to sell your property.

### **5.6 Do you use debt collection agencies?**

Yes, we may decide to use debt collection agencies at any stage in the debt recovery process. If we refer your account to a debt collection agency, working on our behalf, to determine your circumstances and/or collect the outstanding charges a fee of £39 may be added to your account at the point of receipt by the debt collection agency to compensate us for costs incurred in collecting outstanding charges. Any agents we use are subject to our standards of service and behaviour, as set out in section 9 - Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

Visit [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) or call our Customer Care team (**03457 500 500**) to request this. Our agents are regulated by Financial Conduct Authority Handbook and they operate a Code of Practice set by the Credit Services Association. If you have a complaint about our agents you should contact us directly.

Where we have exhausted all options available to us for collection of your debt and we have received no contact or payment from you, the arrears on your account may be sold to a debt collection agency/third party. After this time we will no longer be able to discuss the debt with you. You will be contacted by the debt collection agency to recover the amount you owe.

### **5.7 Bailiffs**

Bailiffs are employed by the County Court and keep to the County Court standards and procedures. If you have a complaint about the Bailiffs please contact your local County Court.

### **5.8 I'm still struggling to pay - What further help can you provide?**

Since 1 April 2015 we have introduced a new scheme to help those customers who struggle to pay, called "The Big Difference Scheme". We are working in partnership with Citizens Advice and Severn Trent Trust Fund. The aim with this scheme is to assist households who are struggling to pay their water and/or sewerage charges and our other schemes have not been able to help. The scheme makes available a range of reduced tariffs against the average household charge.

Citizen's Advice and Severn Trent Trust Fund will provide holistic debt management advice and complete a means assessment for the entire income of those living at your household premises and confirm to us whether you are eligible for The Big Difference Scheme. The scheme lasts for 12 months with the option to reapply.

## 6. Metering your water supply

### 6.1. What are the benefits of having a water meter installed?

A lot of customers benefit by having their bills based on the actual volume of water they use. For instance, if you live in a house with a high Rateable Value (RV), your unmetered charges will be relatively high. If only a couple of you live there or if you use less than the average amount of water you could reduce your water bills. (Please note that you'll be charged for billing and reading the meter through the standing charge.) We can offer you advice to help you decide if a meter is the best option for you.

If you want a meter, we'll supply and fit one for free, provided that it is reasonable, practical and not unreasonably expensive. Simply contact our customer contact centre on **03457 500 500** for more information.

We'll carry out a survey and fit a meter, wherever practicable, with 90 days of the application. We'll start charging you using your meter as soon as we've fitted it. If you've been paying unmetered charges in the meantime then we'll adjust your charges, taking it off your metered charge if you've paid too much.

### 6.2. Do I have the right to go back to an unmetered charge?

You're entitled to go back to an unmetered charge if you tell us that you want to. You must do this within 24 months of your meter being installed. At least one of your bills within a year will be based on an actual meter reading so that you can work out how much water you've used and whether the meter has benefitted you or not. If you are unsure we will be happy to help you, just call us on **03457 500 500**

### 6.3 Who has to have a meter?

If you use a garden sprinkler or other automatic garden watering devices, you must have a meter fitted. This is because these devices can use more water in an hour than a family of four does in two days. Plus, if you use a sprinkler during hot, dry weather, demand can soar and affect supplies to other customers. This also applies if you have a swimming pool or a pond with over 10,000 litres capacity.

If any of this applies to you (or if you aren't sure) and you don't have a meter, please contact us on our meter helpline **03457 500 500**. In nearly all circumstances we'll fit the meter for free.

### 6.4 Who does the meter belong to?

In legal terms the water meter is our property and you mustn't remove it or instruct anyone to remove it for you (e.g. a plumber) under any circumstances. This is because it's a contravention of the Water Act (as stated in section 175 of the Water Industry Act 1991) and can be a criminal offence to interfere with, wilfully damage or remove the meter. If you're convicted of doing any of these things you could face a large fine. If you do remove the meter and refuse to have it refitted, we can fit an external meter at your property. If we have to do this, you would be liable for the cost.

The meter shouldn't be obstructed or boxed in as this may prevent us being able to take a reading or carry out any maintenance work. If this happens, we may have to remove or cut away the boxing so that a meter reading can be taken.

### **6.5 Where will the meter be?**

When we arrive, we'll tell you where the meter will be fitted. If you want it to be in a different place, you may have to pay the extra costs. If there are any costs associated with this we'll always confirm them with you before doing the work. If the meter location is a matter of concern, we'll discuss its location at the survey stage. You can request that the meter is installed at a different location to where we propose although there may be a charge for this.

If your property is more than 50 metres from our main, we must install the meter at the start of your supply pipe (usually at the highway boundary).

### **6.6 What happens if I want to move the water meter at a later date?**

If you want to have your meter moved please contact us and we'll arrange for someone to visit you and carry out a survey.

If you decide to go ahead with having the meter moved you'll be charged for the cost of moving it unless you have specific special needs or need special assistance. We'll confirm any costs associated with moving the meter before we do the work.

### **6.7 How can I be sure that the meter is accurate?**

Your meter is approved for accuracy by the National Weights and Measures Laboratory, as well as the manufacturer before it leaves the factory. We'll show you how to read the meter when we install it. You can ask us to test your meter if you think it might be inaccurate. The meter will be sent away for testing on calibrated equipment independently of Severn Trent Water. If it's confirmed to be inaccurate, we won't charge you for the test. If it has over-recorded we'll refund you the amount we estimate has been overcharged on your latest bill. If it has under-recorded we won't claim anything back from you.

Test records in recent years show that no meters have failed for being inaccurate by over-recording. They have been within accuracy limits or have failed for under-recording.

If the meter is accurate you will have to pay for the test.

Very occasionally we may decide to test your meter if we think it might be necessary. We'll pay for this and will increase or reduce your latest bill if we find a problem. Any adjustment would be based on how much water you normally use.

### **6.8 How will I pay if the property is metered?**

You'll pay for your water and sewerage services based on how much water passes through the meter, as well as standing charges for billing and reading the meter and a charge for surface water drainage. You'll receive a bill every six months. We're required by our regulator Ofwat to base at least one of the two bills that you receive in a year on an actual reading. The other may use an estimate based on how much water you've used previously.

Please refer to section 4, Your Water Bill (page 17) for more information on how to pay your bill.

### 6.9 How can I update an estimated reading?

If you receive a bill based on an estimated reading, you can take a meter reading yourself and tell us what the actual reading is. You can do this by reading the black digits (whole cubic metres) from left to right. Whichever meter you have, only the black digits correspond to the reading on your bill. This is because these are the only digits which record the whole cubic meters (m<sup>3</sup>) used. A cubic meter is 1,000 litres (around 220 gallons). You can then tell us what the meter reading is by calling the customer contact centre on **03457 500 500** or through our website at **stwater.co.uk**. We'll then send you a new bill.

By doing this you can help stop future estimated readings from being too high or too low, which will make sure you don't get a surprise when you receive a bill based on an actual meter reading. The picture shows you what the meter readings might look like.



It is important to ensure that you replace the meter cover correctly to avoid any trips or falls by either yourself or others. Faulty covers should be reported, please call **0800 783 4444** to let us know.

### 6.10 Will you check for leaks when you have a meter fitted?

If we find a leak we'll tell you about it and support you in getting your pipe work repaired. If you don't repair the leak then we can charge you for the extra water that is being used and you won't be eligible for any leakage allowances.

We strongly recommend that you read your meter regularly to make sure you don't have any leaks. If you get a leak anywhere in the pipes on your side of the meter (within the property boundary) this can mean that you use more water and therefore get a higher bill. Please see section 7 – working to reduce leakage for more information.

### 6.11 Handy tips to reduce your water usage

It's easy to reduce water use in the home and garden, just use the following tips:

- Remember to turn off the tap while you brush your teeth for two minutes.
- Spend two minutes less in the shower.
- Fit a save-a-flush device to your toilet cistern.
- Wait until you have a full load before using the washing machine.
- Keep a jug of water in the fridge, so you don't have to run the tap to get a cold drink.
- Wash your vegetables in a bowl rather than under a running tap.
- Always remember to fix any dripping taps.

- Get a water butt for the garden.
- Water plants early morning or late evening to prevent evaporation when it's warm.
- Use a watering can instead of a sprinkler - it's more accurate.
- Use a bucket and sponge to wash the car - rather than a hosepipe.
- Check for leaks on the supply to your home on a regular basis.
- Think about fitting water efficient products in your home to save water.

For more information see our website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk)

## **6.12 What if I am a commercial customer**

On 1st April 2017 the retail market opened for commercial customers in the UK.

Severn Trent Water no longer provide billing services to commercial customers and you should contact your retailer directly if you have a meter query, even if your query relates to previous contact you've had with Severn Trent Water. We will be contacted directly by your retailer if they require any assistance from us.

If you do not know who your retailer is, you can visit the Open Water website where you'll be able to find all the information about the retail market - <http://www.open-water.org.uk>.

## 7. Working to reduce leakage

We have a duty and responsibility to reduce leakage and promote the efficient use of water. We do this by keeping our 46,000 kilometre network of water mains and pipes in good condition.

You can help us by reporting any leaks that you see so that we can fix them quickly. You also have a responsibility to fix leaks on your pipework and we can help.

### 7.1 Our responsibilities

It is our duty under law to prevent the loss of water from the water supply network.

We do this by monitoring our network to find and fix leaks, and replace water mains and service pipes in poor condition. We fix over 40,000 leaks and replace more than 200km of water mains each year. We've reduced leakage by 11% between 2010 and 2014 and plan to reduce it by another 6% by 2020.

The faster we can find and repair leaks the better so if you spot a leak in the road or another public place please let us know. We can't fix a leak if we don't know about it. Call our Customer Operations Service Centre on **0800 783 4444** or visit [stwater.co.uk/reportaleak](http://stwater.co.uk/reportaleak).

A leak is a waste of a precious resource and it is in everyone's interest to get it fixed quickly. It's your responsibility to fix leaks that are on the pipe that runs under your garden or driveway to the boundary of your property. If it's left running it may cause damage to your property and, if your water supply is metered, it will cost you more money.

The bill payer at the property must repair the leak and we may start legal proceedings under section 75 of the Water Industry Act 1991 if the repair is not made in reasonable time.

### 7.2. Frequently asked questions

Who do I contact if I am a non-household customer?

If you are NHH customer and find a leak on your private pipework you should initially make contact with your retailer who will be able to offer advice regarding the appropriate course of action.

Who is responsible for the pipes?

If you own the property, you're responsible by law for looking after the underground water service pipe that runs from the boundary of your property in to your home, subject to some exceptions. If our controlling stop tap is within your property boundary we may be responsible for some of the pipe that is on your land. If there's a leak on a part of the service pipe that supplies your property you are responsible for making any repairs. If you rent the property either the landlord or the property owner are responsible for the service pipe within your property boundary. Generally we own and look after the water mains and services in the street and footpath up to the boundary of your property.

There are some exceptions:

- If the controlling stop tap is inside your property boundary you are responsible for the part of the service pipe between the house and the stop tap and we are responsible for the remainder.
- In some circumstances your responsibility might extend beyond the property boundary including, for example, if the water main that serves the property is in a different street from your property or if the service pipe runs through one of your neighbours' properties.
- In cases where your controlling stop tap or meter are some distance from your property boundary your responsibility may extend beyond that boundary.

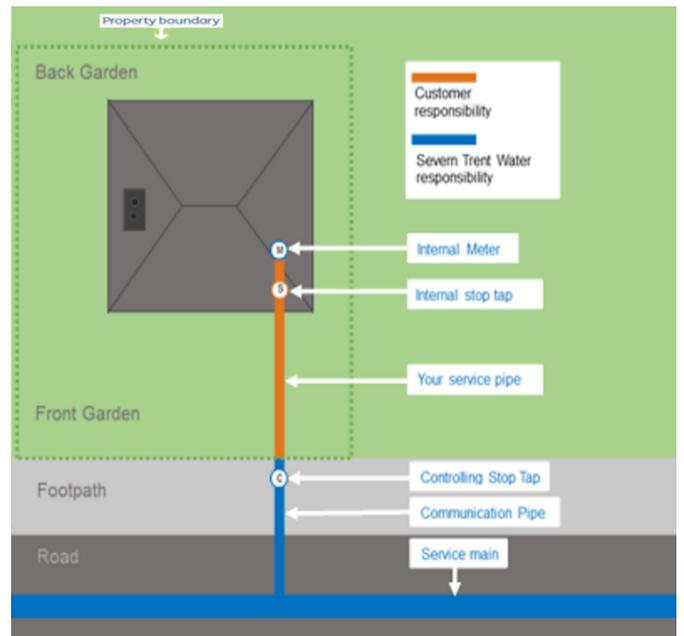


Fig. 1

\*Some of our properties have an external meter (this is our preferred location). This diagram is an example and the exact location of features may differ.

I share my service pipe with a neighbour, how does this affect me?

Normally, if you share a service pipe you're jointly responsible for maintaining it. If there's a leak on the pipe, all those downstream of the leak are responsible for repairing it. In the diagram below, a leak at X is the responsibility of A, B and C. A leak at Y requires A and B to take some action (see Figure 2).

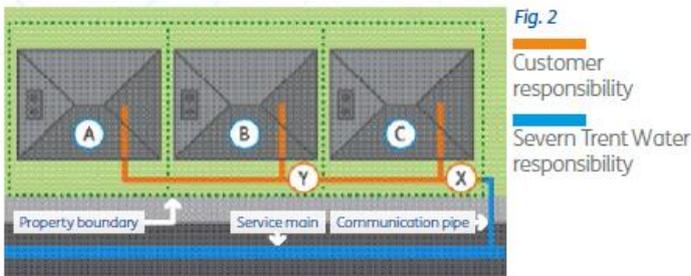


Fig. 2

If a leak on your service pipe is on your neighbour's land, as at point Z in Figure 3 below, then we will not be able to offer you a free repair.

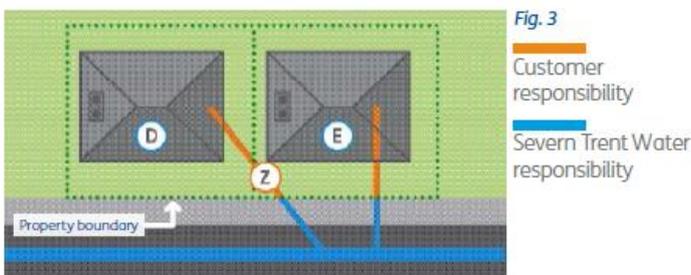


Fig. 3

Visit our website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) where you can webchat, tweet, email us, find us on Facebook or contact our Customer Operations Service Centre on **0800 783 4444** if you're not sure whether a leak is your responsibility.

I think I have a leak on my service pipe, what should I do?

We all want the leak repaired quickly and as part of our effort to reduce leakage we'll support you as much as possible through the process of repairing your supply pipe. Please remember that if there's a leak on your pipe then legally it is your responsibility to repair it.

Contact our Customer Leakage Support team on **0345 2660036** and they will be able to talk you through the options available to you. Often, homeowners will have insurance cover which they can use to cover the cost of a repair. If not, we will be able to provide you with a list of approved plumbers that should be able to assist you in completing the repair. You must take steps to stop the waste within a 28 day period. Please contact us on the above number if you are having difficulty getting your leak fixed.

### What if I don't repair a leak?

If you don't take steps to repair a leak that you are responsible for within a reasonable period of time we'll send a notice to you and any other customers who are supplied by the same pipe telling you that the work has to be done at your own cost. If you still haven't repaired the leak after the time limit we have given we'll take steps to obtain a warrant from a magistrate's court to allow us access to your property to stop the leak by making a repair. If this happens we'll charge you for the full cost of the repairs, or a proportion if the supply is shared. (Refer to section 7.2 - fig 2) You'll also have to pay for all of the water which has passed through the meter since the leak was identified. If, in extreme cases, the leak endangers people or property or threatens to contaminate the public water supply, we'll cut off the supply.

### What if I can't afford to pay to get my leak fixed?

If you are a member of one of our social tariff Schemes or an essential water user, please contact our Customer Leakage Support team on **0345 2660036**. We are here to help and support you.

### What work do you do to repair leaks and improve the pipe network?

We work hard to increase our water efficiency by investing millions of pounds in finding and fixing leaks, improving our pipe network, fitting meters for free and providing advice to businesses and households about actions and products that will allow them to save water. Our leakage and detection staff work around the clock to find and fix as many leaking pipes as quickly as possible. Fewer than half of the leaks we repair can be seen above ground. This means that we have to do a great deal of detection work to locate them and to invest a lot in high-tech equipment. For more information about the work and investments we are making in your local area visit [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk).

### Will my charges be adjusted if I have a leak?

If you have the leak repaired within a reasonable period of time of it being identified, we may be able to offer you an allowance on your charges so long as you meet our criteria. If a leak occurs on our equipment and it affects your bill we'll make an adjustment to remove the extra charges. We'll adjust the charges based on your consumption history. Where there's no record of past consumption, the adjustment will be based on the typical usage for a property of a similar type to yours. If you live in an area where your water is supplied by another company we'll adjust your sewerage charges in the same way as explained above. An allowance to your water charges is

made on a once-only basis. A credit will be applied to your account and we'll refund any excess charges that we have made.

We won't make an adjustment if:

- The leak is on internal pipe work or fittings.
- You have been negligent in identifying the leak and seeking its repair (if you should have known about it and repaired it sooner).
- The leak was caused by a third party.
- You have previously received a leakage allowance on the same supply. Our policy is to offer one leakage allowance per customer per property.

If you need to contact us about an adjustment/allowance please call our Customer Contact Centre on **0345 7 500 500**. Alternatively you can fill in a leakage claim form which is available from our website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk).

**My bill seems higher than usual; does this mean I have a leak?**

A bill which is higher than normal might have been simply caused by higher consumption. For example if you used a garden sprinkler during the bill period. However if you don't think that you have used extra water it may be that there is a leak on your pipe. You can check this yourself in a few simple steps:

- Turn off all the taps in the house and make sure that there is no water being used.
- Read the meter and take a note of the reading. Your meter may be internal or external in a boundary box. You should read all of the digits on the meter from left to right, making a note of where the decimal place is.
- Take a second reading after a few hours, making sure no water is used in the meantime.
- If the second reading is higher, there may be a leak.
- For more information on leakage you may find our website useful, please visit [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk)
- You can also check for other signs of a leak such as areas of lush vegetation during dry periods and other obvious damp patches or a constant noise coming from the pipes in your home that sounds like water being used.

**Will you check for leaks when I have a meter fitted?**

If we're installing a meter we'll check for any leaks on the service pipe. If we find a leak we'll tell you about it and support you in getting your pipe work repaired. If you don't repair the leak then we can charge you for the extra water that is being used and you won't be eligible for any leakage allowances.

## 8. Pipe-laying in private land

This section sets out our obligations and duties when we carry out works on private land. It also explains what you (the landowner and/or occupier) are entitled to expect. It has been prepared under section 182 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (the Act) and has the approval of the Secretary of State. The Act allows, and in some cases requires, us to do these works. It also sets out some rules for us to follow when we lay, alter or maintain pipes and their associated accessories.

### 8.1 Pipe-laying in private land

We may need to carry out essential maintenance, improve our existing network or install new infrastructure in private land, in order to meet our customer and statutory commitments. Works may be required in order for us to:

- Reduce water mains leakage.
- Stop or reduce the number of flooding properties.
- Renew or replace mains pipes at the end of their working life.
- Enable first time sewer connections in a specific community.
- Upsize or increase the capacity of the network as towns and cities grow.
- Ensure that we have security of supply for customers' water supplies.

This section will guide you through the steps taken by us when progressing this required work, explaining our commitments and what you can expect from us.

There may be times where we're unable to or it's not in customers' interests to comply with the Code in a particular set of circumstances. These include:

- Where compliance would have a greater negative impact on services for customers.
- In extreme weather conditions.
- Ongoing emergency situations.
- Where the landowner affected requests this.
- Where legislation overrides the Code.

In these circumstances, we'll always explain why and what we intend to do to address any outstanding matters.

The rest of this Code is set out in three sections describing what happens:

- A. Before the work occurs
- B. During the work
- C. After the work has been completed

### A. Before the work occurs

#### 8.2. Planning a route

Before we lay a pipe we need to plan a route. We take various factors into consideration:

- The directness of possible routes.

- The disruptive effect of the work (to traffic, businesses and individuals).
- Engineering considerations including access for construction work.
- The cost (both of laying and of maintaining the pipe) including the level of reasonable compensation.
- Existing underground and overhead equipment.
- The desirability of achieving gravity flow.
- The avoidance of sites of environmental and archaeological importance.

At this stage, we'll also aim to confirm ownership and occupation of any land that may be affected by any proposed works. Where this is the case, we'll consult with you and seek to minimise the impact on you.

### 8.3 Consultation and notice of work

We're required to give you formal notice of our intention to carry out work on your land. The notice has to be in writing and will normally be accompanied by a plan. These documents will give you information about the location of the proposed works, the approximate extent of the working area and when we intend to do the work. It's a good idea to store the notice safely with your records so that future buyers of the property are aware of the pipe and apparatus. We'll also give you notice of our point of entry. We always try to contact you before we issue the notice and, unless it's in response to a requisition (see glossary), we'll give you at least three months' notice.

If the work involves alterations to an existing pipe then, unless it's an emergency, we'll give you at least 42 days' notice. In other circumstances, e.g. if we wish to inspect, carry out routine maintenance (including cleanse), repair or adjust, we'll give reasonable notice which will normally be at least seven days (unless you agree to a shorter period).

#### Consultation

We'll always try to consult you before the notice is served, but, if for any reason we haven't been able to, we'll discuss with you what we propose to do during the notice period.

During the consultation, we'll be asking you and other specialist organisations for information about:

- Ownership (and occupancy, if different) of the land. It would be helpful if you would tell us if there is a change of occupier or owner.
- Any proposals you have for developing the land, such as proposals for building any permanent structures or existing planning consents.
- Known pipes, cables, equipment or structures below the ground.
- Anything which you believe might affect the timing of our work including whether the land is subject to flooding.
- The location of springs, wells, cesspools or septic tanks.
- Details of any known land drains and in particular any deep land drainage system.
- Any harmful materials, liquids or vegetation in the area in which we'll be working, any contaminated land and if the land has been subject to any notifiable plant or animal diseases.
- Any areas with special needs, e.g. SSSIs (sites of special scientific interest), protected flora and fauna, archaeological considerations, public rights of way, trees subject to preservation orders or conservation areas.
- Planned cropping and stocking.

- Any other factor which you believe is relevant or will affect our work and for which we may have to compensate you.

We'll take account of all the matters mentioned above, as well as considering any suggestions that you (and/or adjacent landowners who are affected by the scheme) have about the route of the pipe, the position of any ancillary equipment (see glossary), the timing of the work, the reinstatement of land and land drains, and discuss them with you. By the time we make the final decision about the route we'll have taken into account both engineering and operational needs and the long and short term costs of the work, as well as any comments or suggestions you or your agent have made. If at this stage we're unable to meet any of your suggestions or objections we'll explain the final decision to you.

The period of notice allows time for further consultation and any concerns to be addressed before we start work. At the end of that time we trust that matters between us will have been agreed. However, if you refuse us access to your land in accordance with the notice we gave you, we can apply to a Magistrate for a warrant to gain access.

Once work starts, we'll keep as closely as possible to the notified route. If we find we're unable to do so, we'll consult with you. If we find that we need to make significant changes (such as a significant re-routing of the pipe), and you're unable to agree them with us, we'll serve a fresh notice.

If for any reason the work doesn't start on or shortly after the proposed date, we'll advise you of the amended timing. Once the proposed starting date is determined we should be able to give you a reasonable idea of how long the work and any reinstatement will take. Once a statutory notice has been served, you shouldn't do anything on the land in question that might hinder or prevent us from undertaking the proposed works, but you should continue your normal agricultural operations up to the actual time of entry. It's not necessary to arrange your agricultural operations around our proposed work because it is possible that the timing could vary. If you're in doubt, please get in touch with us for advice and clarification.

### Timing of the work

Within engineering, operational and other constraints, we'll do the work at the time which will cause least damage to land.

### Agents

We'll always try to act in a fair and open manner with any private landowner affected by our works and you may decide to manage the work without the services of an agent. However, you may want to appoint an agent, such as a surveyor experienced in this type of work, to act on your behalf in advising you on the work, protecting your interests and assessing and agreeing your claim for compensation. Where the work involves laying pipes we accept that you should appoint an agent and we'll reimburse the reasonable and proportionate cost of the agent's fee, after any compensation claim has been settled. You should only instruct the agent to undertake work that's reasonably required and if work is undertaken by the agent that we don't consider was reasonably required, then that element of the fees may not be reimbursed. If you want further information about this you should check with your Severn Trent Water representative.

We don't usually pay solicitors' fees unless we ask you for a formal easement document (see glossary) that requires additional work and this has been agreed with us in advance.

### Record of condition of land

We'll make a full schedule of condition of the working area, including any buildings in close proximity, any accesses and any compound in respect of the proposed scheme.

This may consist of (any or all of) written notes, photographs, or a video recording with verbal commentary. A copy will be sent to your agent before the scheme starts. If you don't have an agent, we'll send it to you. If we've missed anything at that stage please let us know. The purpose of the record is to help both you and us check that we have restored the land to a condition as near as possible to that which existed before we started work (unless you have asked us to consider alternative proposals) and that any buildings remain in the same condition.

### Land Drainage

If you have any records of existing land drains, these should be made available to us as soon as possible. We'll then discuss with you the reinstatement work to any land drainage system affected by the work as in some circumstances this may need to include preliminary work before pipe-laying operations start. If we are made aware of an extensive land drainage system, then prior to the work we may engage a land drainage consultant to draw up a remedial scheme.

### Contacts

Before the work starts we'll give you the name, workplace address and telephone number of the person responsible for supervising the work, who may be from one of our nominated contractors. Normally they will be available during working hours. We'll also give you an emergency telephone number for use outside normal working hours or if your normal contact isn't available.

### Location of pipes and equipment

Normally all our pipes and ancillary equipment are laid below ground. We'd normally lay them with 900mm minimum cover to the crown of the pipe as this protects them from frost and also from interfering with any agricultural operations. Sometimes there are engineering problems or obstacles, such as rock outcrops, which prevent this. If this happens we'll let you know the final position and depth. We may, unless otherwise agreed with you, place permanent marker posts at field boundaries to show the location of the pipe and chambers. There are occasional instances where other locations may be unavoidable. If you have deep land drainage you should let us know before we start work.

Where we need to install a manhole or other accessory that will be raised or at ground level we'll try to place it in a position to minimise interference with future agricultural operations. For engineering reasons, we need to install manholes where a sewer changes direction or depth, and at regular intervals. On water mains we may also need to install air valves at high points, and washout valves at low points. Where we need to install an accessory at or above ground level we'll always discuss this with you first. If it's necessary to have a manhole in your garden, we'll always discuss its location with you, and if possible give you a choice of its final position within your garden.

## B. During the work

### 8.3 Laying the Pipes

#### Supervision

We'll make sure that anyone working for us on your land is properly supervised. If you have told your contact about anything that requires special attention, they'll make sure that it's brought to the attention of our workers who will need to take it into account.

#### Working times

Except in an emergency, if we're working close to residential properties and need to work on bank holidays, weekends, or between the hours of 7:30pm and 7:30am, we'll tell you in advance.

#### Access for owners and occupiers

For safety reasons you won't be able to access the working area. However, if necessary we'll make sure that you have access across the working area and we realise the importance to you of maintaining access to your property. Within reason, we'll let you have access to stock or vehicles across the working area. If the location of the working area cuts off access to part of your property we'll discuss this with you before we start work. If appropriate, we'll provide temporary foot crossings, gates, steps or stiles and discuss their location with you.

We'll try to keep the existing means of access to areas cut off by the work open unless it would be more appropriate to provide an alternative. Where a common access is to be used both by you and us, we'll aim to keep that access as clear as possible from mud and dust from our work. We'll make sure that there's minimum interference with any existing means of access for emergency vehicles.

#### Access for ourselves

Normally we'll gain access to our work within the working area. However, if access is required by any other route we'll discuss this with you and include any additional access in the notice.

We won't construct any permanent gates, steps or stiles at the boundary between your land and a highway or public path without your consent, or between your land and neighbouring land without the consent of both landowners. We'll maintain public access rights.

#### Security of your property and of the working strip

Before we start work we'll talk to you about the type of fencing needed to maintain a safe and secure working area. If the working area is next to land where livestock will remain, we'll erect a suitable stock-proof fence. In these circumstances we'll make sure the stock-proof fence is maintained during the course of the work and, where required, during reinstatement.

Where livestock stray via the working area through our proven acts or omissions, we'll give consideration to claims for loss or damage.

Where possible, during the work and reinstatement, we'll seek to make sure that the existing level of security of your property is not reduced.

#### Topsoil

We'll seek to preserve the structure of the soil. When topsoil is stripped from the land we'll store it separately from other excavated materials. We won't compress it with machinery. When the work is finished adequate subsoil preparation will be undertaken prior to replacing topsoil. The excavated material will be restored, as far as possible, to the condition it was prior to the work. In particular, topsoil will be replaced to the same depth it was originally and no large stones excavated during the work will be left on the surface. If, for any reason, we're unable to return the same topsoil that was removed from your land it will, unless otherwise agreed with you, be replaced by soil of a similar nature, structure and quality.

### Trees and hedgerows

Wherever possible we'll try to avoid felling or lopping any mature trees but if it's unavoidable, we'll consult you first. If the trees are subject to a preservation order or in a conservation area we'll also consult the appropriate authority and abide by its conditions. If we have felled any mature trees, they'll remain your property. If you wish, we'll dispose of them with your prior consent. Work required to hedgerows will also be discussed with you. Any formal approvals will be requested from the local authority.

### Land drainage

If we disturb any existing land drainage system we'll do our best to reinstate or replace it to the same standard as existed prior to the work. Where practicable, we'll lay our pipe under the land drainage system. We'll tell you when we're going to carry out remedial work and will give you the opportunity to inspect the site.

We'll make a record (which may include photographs) of any land drains disturbed and the replacement/reconnection work carried out and give you a copy if you request it. If we install any new land drains in locations where they did not previously exist we'll discuss this with you, give you an opportunity to inspect the site and provide you with a record of the work on completion.

### Watercourses

Where our pipe crosses beneath a watercourse, it'll be laid in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards. In the absence of such requirements, the top of the pipe will be at least 300mm below the original cleared bottom of the watercourse and will be covered by concrete. If our work affects any watercourse we'll discuss our proposals with you and take precautions to make sure the watercourse isn't adversely affected during and after the construction work.

### Water supplies and other services

If we interrupt or accidentally damage any water supplies or other services in our working area, we'll repair the damage, or provide an adequate alternative as soon as possible. We'll also take all reasonable steps to make sure that our work doesn't pollute any water supplies or watercourses. If there appears to be any possibility of interference with private water supplies, such as wells or springs, we'll arrange sampling and bear the cost of samples being analysed to determine water quality, and for levels in wells and flows from springs to be recorded and agreed before and after the work, provided you have drawn this need to our attention in adequate time. Troughs, standpipes or field supplies located within the working area will be moved to a temporary or agreed permanent location.

### Area affected by disease

If you advise us that the area we have to work in is infected by a disease notifiable under the Animal Health Act 1981 (e.g. foot and mouth) we'll follow the requirements of Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). If we have to make an emergency entry, we'll take all necessary precautions. If Defra has imposed requirements to avoid spreading soil-borne pests and diseases we'll comply with them.

### Fishing and sporting rights

Our staff and our agents won't be allowed to carry firearms on the working area. We'll not bring animals onto the site (with the possible exception of guard dogs, subject to the Guard Dogs Act 1975).

If there are fishing or sporting rights adjacent to the working area, we'll use reasonable endeavours to make sure that our work minimises any interference with the enjoyment of them.

### Facilities for our workers

If we bring any huts or caravans on to the working area on your land, unless there is a security risk, they won't be used for overnight accommodation without your permission. We'll provide sanitary equipment and all required welfare facilities for our workers.

### Private agreements

If you make any agreements directly with our contractors you should note that we won't be responsible for any consequences nor intervene in any such agreement made between you and the contractor.

### Explosives

In the unlikely circumstances that we have to store or use explosives we'll give you notice and tell you the periods when the explosions may be expected. We won't use explosives on weekends, bank holidays or between the hours of 7:30pm and 7:30am unless it is essential and is unlikely to cause you any significant disturbance.

### Cathodic protection

If we provide cathodic protection for any part of our equipment, where appropriate, we'll safeguard buildings and structures near our work.

### Temporary support

If, as a result of our work any of your buildings, structures or equipment may need temporary underpinning or support, we'll consult you. We'll then provide the necessary protection and support.

### Fossils and articles discovered

If we discover any coins, fossils or other articles during our work we'll inform you and the appropriate archaeological body. We won't retain them or lay any claim to them. We have a legal obligation to have regard to the protection and conserving of objects of archaeological interest. We may employ or involve an archaeologist to examine the work as it progresses, but this will be discussed with you first.

## C. After the work

### 8.5 Completion of works

#### Reinstatement

In doing our work we'll try to do as little damage as possible. Temporary damage, such as topsoil stripping, may take place in order to allow good working practice and reinstatement. When the work is complete, we'll restore the area where we have worked to the same condition that it was in before we started. On the occasions that this is not reasonably possible, we'll pay compensation to reflect the depreciation in the value of the land. We'll remove all tools and equipment and any contaminants brought to the site, and take away any surplus excavated material unless you ask us not to and we are legally able to comply with such a request. The site will be left clean and tidy. Before we hand the working area back to you we'll arrange a joint inspection to ensure satisfaction. If we've damaged or removed any fence, bank or wall, we'll repair or replace it as necessary. If we have damaged a hedge we'll replant it with an appropriate species and erect a secure, protective fence to allow the hedge to become established. Alternatively we'll pay reasonable compensation.

If the work has been in a garden we'll do our best to make sure that the reinstated garden matches the unaffected garden. If necessary, we'll employ an accredited garden landscaper for the reinstatement work. Where this isn't practical, or if you prefer, compensation will be agreed for you to carry out the work yourself.

In the event that a land drainage system is not adequately reinstated we may seek the advice of an independent land drainage specialist. Alternatively, reasonable compensation may be paid.

#### Information

We'll inform you in writing of the position and depth of the pipe (if less than 900mm) and the extent of the land (the protected width (see glossary)) which needs protection. These details should be kept safely with your property records. The protected width will be kept to the minimum possible and will be sufficient for us to gain access and work on the pipe if required. In order to avoid damage to the pipe and to allow us access, we'll give you information on any activities which shouldn't be carried out without our express permission in that area. This will include planting of certain types of trees or erecting buildings but won't prevent normal agricultural operations.

#### Compensation

If we cause any permanent loss in the value of your land as a result of the presence of our pipes, or if you'll have any temporary losses or disturbance caused by the work (including any intrusive survey investigation works), you may be entitled to claim compensation from us.

Also, if you've suffered damage to your property that we haven't been able to put right, you may be entitled to compensation. You should note that disturbance compensation will only be paid for items that are directly and unavoidably incurred as a result of our work. If you experience significant disturbance you should, at the time of the disturbance, keep your contact informed and let them know if you are likely to incur additional costs. It's in your own interest to keep a diary of events.

It's important to note that while we'll pay reasonable compensation in respect of proven disturbance, you're required to act reasonably in order to mitigate your loss wherever possible. This means that

where losses are reasonably foreseeable you should seek to minimise these in the same way as you would if you were not expecting to receive compensation.

If you have appointed an agent they'll prepare and negotiate your claim for you. Your claim will be treated confidentially.

If we haven't already made an advance payment of compensation following entry to the land, you or your agent can request in writing that we pay an advance of 90% of our assessment of your loss within three months of receipt of your quantified claim and evidence of your entitlement. Interest may be payable on your claim. Your agent will be able to advise you about this.

We're committed to trying to reach mutual negotiated agreement over the level of reasonable compensation applicable and if this cannot be agreed we would normally be willing to participate in some other form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Alternatively the matter can be referred to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber – see glossary), who will then decide the correct level of compensation payable. However, we won't pay your agent's fees to prepare your case. It's up to the Lands Chamber to decide if, and how, costs should be awarded.

If in the future you wish to develop the land the Act makes provision for you to ask us to alter or remove the pipe at your expense. If the request is not unreasonable, we have a duty to comply.

## Complaints

When we are working on your land we aim to cause minimum disruption and inconvenience. We expect our workers and contractors working for us to be polite, considerate and helpful. If you have a problem in the first place please get in touch with your named contact. If you are unable to resolve the matter to your satisfaction, please refer to our complaints procedure (section 9: What to do if you're unhappy with our service).

If you have been through our complaints procedure and still remain unhappy, Ofwat is the independent water industry economic regulator and has as one of its objectives the safeguarding of the interests of customers of the water and sewerage companies. Ofwat has a duty to investigate complaints about the manner in which we have undertaken pipe-laying on private land and, if appropriate, make an award of up to £5,000. However, disputes can't be investigated regarding the amount of compensation payable, which should be referred to the Upper Tribunal. Information on the role of Ofwat in dealing with such complaints is available on request. Complaints to Ofwat should normally be made within 12 months of the event to which the complaint refers. Ofwat's address is:

Ofwat  
City Centre Tower  
7 Hill Street  
Birmingham  
B5 4UA  
Tel: **0121 644 7500**

## 8.6. Exceptions

Emergency works

Note that in respect of emergency works (see glossary) the Water Industry Act 1991 doesn't require water companies to serve notice upon owners and occupiers, unless there is sufficient time to serve a 'notice'. Although no notice is necessary in an emergency, verbal contact should be made with owners and occupiers beforehand, if reasonably practicable.

Accordingly, it's unlikely that we would have sufficient time available to fully consult over the proposed works and follow some of the guidance detailed in this Code.

### Developer works and requisitions

Certain provisions of this Code are not applicable to the laying of pipes within developers' sites. In particular, paragraphs relating to the timing of the work, record of condition of land and topsoil, and those relating to reinstatement do not apply.

If we have to lay a pipe in response to a requisition (see glossary) we'll give you as much notice as possible but this will normally be a minimum of 21 days (compared to 3 months for the laying of new pipes in other circumstances).

## 8.7. Glossary of terms

**Ancillary equipment** – this refers to other apparatus, in addition to the pipe, required by Severn Trent Water in order to maintain and operate our network. This includes any manholes, ventilating shafts, inspection chambers, settling tanks, wash-out pipes, pumps, ferrules, or stopcocks for the pipe or any machinery or other apparatus which is designed or adapted for use in connection with the use of the mains pipe or another accessory for it. This may also include electronic communications apparatus subject to certain provisions being met.

**Easement document** (sometimes known as a deed of easement) – this is a legal document that provides one individual or organisation with legal rights over another's land. For example Severn Trent Water occasionally require a deed of easement to allow legal access for regular and routine maintenance across the land of a private landowner. The deed of easement providing this access could be taken without Severn Trent Water having to issue a Statutory Notice for access on each occasion.

**Protected width** – after our new pipe is laid you'll be provided with a plan that details a protected width each side of the pipe in order to (a) protect the pipe from damage, and (b) enable us to access the pipe in the future for essential maintenance and repairs. If the landowner or occupier is seeking to undertake any land uses within or in close proximity to the protected width that may damage the pipe or interfere with the future access requirements, they must contact us to seek consent for this new development. In some instances, development will be allowed in the protected width subject to certain conditions being met but consent must be gained before any works are commenced.

**Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber)** – this is part of the Upper Tribunal with power to determine a range of disputes and appeals concerning land in England and Wales. It replaced its predecessor, the Lands Tribunal, in 2009 and is part of the HM Courts and Tribunal Service. In particular the Lands Chamber will deal with any disputes relating to the appropriate level of compensation payable due to our works on private land.

**Emergency works** – we may have to undertake works in response to an emergency, such as:

- Any danger to property;
- An immediate risk of serious pollution;
- An immediate risk of harm to human health or circumstances that may endanger life or health, and;
- To avoid any interruption of water or sewerage services to any premises.

**Requisition** – The law covering the requisition of a water main or sewer is set out in the Water Industry Act 1991. When a developer applies for a requisition mains (to provide water or sewerage services to a new development), we have statutory obligations (and timescales) to install this mains.

## 9. Our Guaranteed Standards Scheme

We're committed to taking responsibility and making things right when we get them wrong. We work hard to make sure that we deliver an excellent service to you. We back this up with service guarantees and payments to you if we fail to meet the required standard. Some of our guarantees set by law are known as Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS). However, we also have our own guarantees to make sure that we focus on services you've told us that you value the most.

### 9.1 What are your guaranteed standards to me?

We work hard to make sure that we deliver an excellent service to you. We back this up with service guarantees and payments to you if we fail to meet the required standard. You can find the amount that we'll pay you and the number of working days within which you can expect to receive a payment by looking at the information below and the tables at the end of this section (Section 9.8 explains how we will pay our Non-Household customers) We also publish an outline of the standards and associated payments on the back of our bills. Some of our guarantees are set by law but we also have our own guarantees to make sure that we focus on services which you have told us you value most. All of our guarantees are listed below.

We guarantee the following specific standards of service:

#### Making and keeping written/telephone appointments

If you need an appointment with us, we promise to:

1. Offer you an am or pm appointment or an appointment within a two-hour time-slot if you request it.
2. Give you 24 hours' notice if we need to cancel an appointment that we have made with you.
3. Keep all non-cancelled appointments that we make with you.
4. If we don't meet these promises you'll be entitled to a payment.

#### Account queries

If you write to us to query the accuracy of your bill we'll give you a response within ten working days of receiving your letter. However, should we take longer than this, you may qualify for a payment.

#### Payment arrangements

If you ask us to change your payment method and we can't meet your request, we'll let you know why within five working days of receiving your letter. If we don't, you may qualify for a payment.

#### Complaints

If you make a written complaint about our water or sewerage services we'll respond within 10 working days of receiving your letter. However, should we take longer than 10 working days, you'll qualify for a payment.

#### Interruption of your water supply for planned works

If we plan to do maintenance or repairs to our water mains we may have to turn off your water supply. If we know this will take longer than four hours, we'll give you at least 48 hours' advance notice in writing, advising you when the supply will be interrupted and restored. If we fail to give you 48 hours' notice before a planned interruption, you may qualify for a payment. We don't have to

provide advance notice if we have to do emergency repairs and need to turn your water supply off, for example when we have a burst water main.

### Restoration of your water supply for planned works

If we have interrupted your supply we'll restore it by the time promised on the warning card or letter that we've delivered to you. If we don't, you may be entitled to a payment. For each further complete 24 hours you are without water you'll be entitled to an additional payment.

### Interruptions in an emergency

Sometimes, there are instances where we can't notify you beforehand in case of an unplanned interruption, for example due to a burst main. We aim to restore the supply within 12 hours or if the leak or burst is on a strategic water main we'll aim to restore the supply within 48 hours. If we don't meet these targets you may be entitled to a payment. For each further complete 24 hours you are without water you'll be entitled to an additional payment.

### Flooding from sewers

In rare circumstances some properties will suffer from flooding from a public sewer. We always aim to provide an initial response to any instances of sewer flooding within the following timescales:

- two hours of a first report of internal flooding
- six hours of a first report of external flooding.

Additionally, we will offer to help you clean up any sewerage within 12 hours if your property is flooded internally and 24 hours if externally. This service is free of charge. Please note that in order to help you clean up we will need you to provide clear access to your property.

If you're affected by internal flooding you may be entitled to a payment that is equal to your annual sewerage charges (with a minimum of £150 and maximum of £1,000). If you're affected by external flooding you may be entitled to a payment that is equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charges (minimum of £75 and maximum of £500). Please note, any GSS payments made through this scheme doesn't form an admission of our liability to other claims and are entirely separate to any other claims. In some circumstances exclusions may apply - see section 9.3.

You can request our guide to sewer flooding leaflet by calling our Customer Contact Centre or by going to [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk). The leaflet gives more details about these circumstances.

### Poor water pressure

Very occasionally you may experience a fall in your water pressure, if this occurs under normal operating conditions; you'll be entitled to a payment. If the pressure in our service pipe falls below seven metres per head of water, for longer than an hour, twice in 28 consecutive days, you'll qualify for an automatic payment. Only one claim per year (1 April to 31 March) can be made for this event.

However, if the low water pressure is a result of necessary routine or emergency maintenance work on our systems, you won't be entitled to a payment.

### Emergency water restrictions

If we have to interrupt or cut off essential supplies because of a drought we'll pay you for each day or part of a day that you are affected. The maximum payment will be the cost of your household water bill in the previous year. If you are a business customer we'll pay you up to a maximum of

your previous annual water bill or £500 if no water charges were paid, or a third party is responsible for the water charges. We won't pay if, in the opinion of Ofwat, the circumstances are so exceptional that the interruption or cut-off could not reasonably have been avoided.

#### **Boil Water, Do Not Drink and Do Not Use notices**

In the unlikely event that the water we supply doesn't reach its usual high standard, we may issue a 'boil water' or 'don't drink' notice in writing. If this happens we'll make a payment. However, if the problem occurs on your private supply pipe you won't be entitled to a payment. We won't pay if the circumstances are exceptional (see section 9.3).

#### **Discolouration**

Every now and again you may experience discoloured water as a result of us performing mains cleaning in your area. While this can be worrying and unsightly, it has been caused by ageing iron mains and poses no risks to you or your health. If we ask you run your tap for 20 minutes in order to clear this (and you are on a water meter) please contact us and we'll refund you 1m3 for the run off. If you continue to be affected please contact us.

### **9.2 How and when will you pay me if you don't meet a standard?**

If we're aware that we have caused a problem, we'll make service guarantee payments to you automatically within 10 or 20 working days depending on the service failure. If we fail to do this we'll make an additional penalty payment in line with the values and timescales described in the tables at the end of this section. We'll pay automatically if we know that there has been a problem.

If we've been unable to identify a customer, you can claim yourself. The claim must be made within three months of the event, although we'll review all claims that we receive. If you think that you should have received a payment please contact us by calling our Customer Contact Centre because we may be unaware that you were affected at the time.

### **9.3 Are there circumstances when you won't make a payment?**

In some rare and exceptional circumstances we may not be able to meet our standards because of events that are beyond our control. If this happens our service guarantees don't apply and payments may not be due. Examples include:

- Severe weather
- Industrial action
- Third party action
- Actions by the customer or equipment for which you are responsible.

There are some other circumstances where GSS payments are not payable:

- Where the incident is not classed as flooding as you suffered a blockage, sewage does not escape from the sewerage system, the flooding was caused by your own actions or you were not "materially affected" which means the escape of sewage has not seriously affected you.
- Flooding from privately owned sewerage pipes (i.e. the part of the sewer or drain that you're responsible for).
- If you are affected by both internal and external sewage flooding in the same incident, we'll only pay you for the internal sewage flooding incident. You won't receive an additional payment for the external sewage flooding.

If you're unsure about whether you should be paid please contact our Customer Operations Service Centre. There are some other circumstances which are specific to each standard. These can be found by looking at the tables later in this document. Payments under GSS don't affect your legal rights and they don't mean that we admit liability.

#### 9.4 Do you review your service standards?

Yes; we ask a sample of customers what they think of our service each year and we also invite feedback from anyone who is not in the sample. We use the information we gather to make more improvements in our service to you. As well as the service guarantees, we've set other standards to make sure that our service is as good as you expect it to be. We continuously review these standards and compare them against other companies who provide services to you.

#### 9.5 What happens if I have a dispute?

We understand that if something goes wrong you want us to resolve it quickly. If you make a complaint we'll listen to you and treat you with respect. We have a complaints procedure which we follow and can be viewed in our complaints leaflet which you can request from one of our contact centres or by visiting [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk).

CCWater will review all issues that affect your interests as a water customer, liaising with us and making representations on your behalf. CCWater staff can give you free, independent advice on issues that affect you as a water customer and they will investigate any complaints that you can't resolve directly with us through our complaints procedures. They'll also advise you if the matter you have raised is a dispute that can be settled by our regulator, Ofwat. You can contact CCWater at:

Consumer Council for Water  
1st Floor Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ  
Tel: **0300 034 2222**  
Web: [ccwater.org.uk](http://ccwater.org.uk)

There are certain types of dispute where Ofwat can decide the outcome and certain types where an independent arbitrator can be appointed. Ofwat can settle:

- Any dispute about whether or not you are entitled to a payment under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme.
- Any dispute about the cost of, security for payment for, or the terms of certain conditions of, connection to a water main.
- Any dispute arising from us telling you that you're required to have a separate supply to your existing one (by serving you a Section 64 notice). This will depend on which part of the Section 64 notice we have used to serve on you.
- Any dispute about maintaining pressure and supply or the effectiveness and capacity of your water tank.
- Disputes regarding water meters. For example, whether it is practical or unreasonably expensive to install a meter.
- The terms and conditions for a non-domestic supply.

- Disputes regarding requisitioning of water mains or public sewers (including public lateral drains). For example:
  - Any dispute about the amount we ask you to pay or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give.
  - Any dispute about our proposal to extend to more than three months the period which we are given to provide a water main after you ask for it, or about the point where a service pipe will connect with the main.
  - Any dispute about our proposal to extend to more than six months the period which we are given to provide a public sewer after you ask for it, or about the places where private drains and sewers will connect with the public sewer.
  - Any appeals about the adoption of sewers or sewage works and certain other sewerage disputes. These can include disputes about your right to make a physical connection to such sewers, our request for alterations to a proposed drainage system or our decision to close or place restrictions on the use of a public sewer.
- The terms and conditions for the adoption of a self-laid main.
- The charges or disconnection costs that must be paid to a company before a business customer's supply is reconnected.
- A refusal to allow private sewers and drains to be connected to public sewers, or a requirement to inspect the drain or sewer before allowing a connection.
- The costs and security a company asks for when it connects premises to a sewer.
- The charges and conditions for providing a sewer (requisition).
- A proposal or refusal to adopt sewers or sewage disposal works, or about the conditions in an adoption agreement.
- The position or suitability of a drain or sewer to replace an existing private drainage system which the company considers to be unsuitable.
- The effectiveness of an alternative sewer that has been provided to replace an existing one that is due to be closed.
- A requirement that a proposed drain or sewer is built so it can become part of a general sewerage system.
- Appeals from occupiers of trade premises who are not happy with a refusal to discharge their trade effluent or the conditions set by sewerage companies about putting their trade effluent into the public sewer.

In the case of street works, if there's a dispute about compensation after we have done work in the street and we can't agree on an arbitrator, Ofwat can decide upon one. Other disputes which can be referred to arbitration include:

- The location of the meter installation.
- The costs of installing the meter if the company asks the customer to pay.

## 9.6 Who regulates the service that you provide?

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Defra lays down the standards of quality of drinking water which include the European Commission's requirements. It also makes sure that we comply with these standards.

Ofwat

Ofwat is the economic regulator of the industry whose statutory duties include protecting customers' interests. Ofwat has the power to restrict the increases we can make in our water and sewerage charges, set the levels of service we must provide and stipulate the information we must give to you.

You can contact Ofwat at:

Centre City Tower

7 Hill Street

Birmingham

B5 4UA

Tel: **0121 644 7500**

### The Environment Agency (EA)

The EA is responsible for controlling the pollution of rivers, draining land, controlling floods and issuing fishing licences. The EA regulates how much water we may take from the rivers and other inland and underground sources for water supply and our return of the water to rivers after it has been used and treated. Contact the EA at:

The Environment Agency

Sapphire House East

550 Streetsbrook Road

Solihull

B91 1QT

Tel: **0370 850 6506**

### The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

The DWI acts as a technical assessor for the Government on the monitoring, recording and reporting of drinking water quality. It carries out technical audits of companies, investigates incidents, initiates actions to achieve compliance with legal requirements and provides expert advice to the Government on drinking water policy. It also oversees improvement schemes that companies like us are legally committed to implement. You can contact the DWI at:

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Area 4a

Ergon House

Horseferry Road

London

SW1P 2AL

Tel: **030 0068 6400**

Fax: **030 0068 6401**

Email: **[dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk)**

## 9.7 Payment types

Guaranteed Standards Scheme or Company Standard	How much will you pay me if you do not meet the guaranteed standard?	How quickly will you make the automatic payment to me?	How much will you pay me if you do not pay me in the time you stated?	Are there any times when you won't pay?
Making appointments	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	When it is not in connection with the supply of water or sewerage services.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).
Keeping appointments	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	If you cancel the appointment.  If we cancel with more than 24 hours' notice.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).
Responding to written account queries	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	If you do not want to continue with the enquiry.  If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.  If the query is frivolous.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).
Responding to written requests to change your payment method	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 5 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	If you do not want to continue with the enquiry.  If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.  If the query is frivolous.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).
Responding to written complaints	£20 (Household) £20 (Business)	Within 10 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	If you do not want to continue with the complaint.  If the enquiry is sent to the wrong company address.  If the query is frivolous.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).

Giving you notice of Planned interruptions to your water supply	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	If it is impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.  In exceptional circumstances (industrial action or the action of a third party).
Restoring your supply when we say we will after a planned interruption	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)  And for each extra complete 24 hours you are without water:  £10 (Household) £25 (Business)	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	If it is impractical for us to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).
Restoring your supply after an emergency supply interruption	£30 (Household) £50 (Business)  And for each extra complete 24 hours you are without water:  £10 (Household) £25 (Business)	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather, industrial action or the action of a third party).
Repeat interruptions to supply, 3 or more incidents >15 hours	£30 (Household) £50 (Business)	Within 20 working days of receiving your claim	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	You must make a claim for the payment within 3 months of the incident.
Dealing with sewer flooding (inside your property)	A payment that is equal to your annual sewerage charges up to a maximum of £1,000 (minimum £150) for each flooding incident	Within 20 working days	£20 (Household) £50 (Business)	If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.  If your actions have caused the problem.  If your private drains or sewers are inadequate.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action).
Dealing with sewer flooding (outside your property)	A payment that is equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charges up to a maximum of £500 (minimum £75) for each flooding incident	Within 20 working days	£10 (Household) £10 (Business)	If your actions have caused the problem.  If your private drains or sewers are inadequate.  In exceptional circumstances (severe weather or industrial action).

				<p>If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.</p> <p>If you are not materially affected.</p> <p>If we have already made a payment for internal flooding for the same incident.</p>
Providing you with adequate water pressure	<p>£25 (Household)</p> <p>£25 (Business)</p>			<p>If we have already made a payment with in the financial year.</p> <p>If the low pressure is because of necessary works.</p> <p>If it is impractical to identify you as being affected and you don't claim within three months of the incident.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances (industrial action or the action of a third party).</p> <p>If we don't know about the problem.</p>
Making emergency restrictions on water use	<p>£10 per day/part day (Household) up to the amount of your water bill for the last financial year</p> <p>£50 per day/part day (Business) up to the amount of your water bill for the last financial year or £500</p>			<p>If, in Ofwat's opinion, the circumstances are so exceptional that the interruption or restriction could not have been reasonably avoided.</p>
Issuing a boil water notice or do not drink notice	<p>£25 (Household)</p> <p>£50 (Business)</p>			<p>If the problem is because of something on your private supply pipe.</p> <p>In circumstances beyond our control.</p>
Issuing a do not use notice	<p>£30 (Household)</p> <p>£50 (Business)</p> <p>And after if notice period last longer than 24 hours for each extra complete 24 hours the notice is in place</p> <p>£10 (Household)</p> <p>£25 (Business)</p>			<p>If the problem is because of something on your private supply pipe.</p> <p>In circumstances beyond our control.</p>

9.8 Retail Market - If you are a Non Household customer, you are still protected by the GSS regulations, however, in the new retail market, all payments will be sent to you through your retailer. If the failure was wholesale related, we will still write to you to confirm that a GSS payment request has been sent to your retailer.

The table below sets out the responsibilities for both wholesalers and retailers. If you believe you are entitled to a retail related GSS payment, please contact your retailer directly.

GSS Regulations	Party Potentially Liable		Timescale in GSS Regulations for payment	Timescale Allocation for WRC	
	Wholesale	Retail		Contracting Wholesaler	Contracting Retailer
Making appointments – GSS Regulation 6	✓	✓	10 business days	5 business days	5 business days
Keeping appointments – GSS Regulation 6	✓	✓	10 business days	5 business days	5 business days
Low pressure – GSS Regulation 10	✓		n/a	n/a	n/a
Notice of interruption to supply – GSS Regulation 8	✓	✓	20 business days	15 business days	5 business days
Supply not restored* – GSS Regulation 9	✓		20 business days	15 business days	5 business days
Account queries and requests to change payment arrangements – GSS Regulation 7		✓	10 business days	n/a	n/a
Complaints – GSS Regulation 7	✓	✓	10 business days	8 business days	2 business days
Flooding from sewers (internal flooding) – GSS Regulation 11	✓		20 business days	15 business days	5 business days
Flooding from sewers (external flooding) – GSS Regulation 12	✓		20 business days	15 business days	5 business days

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the retail market opened for commercial customers in the UK.

Severn Trent Water no longer provide billing services to commercial customers and you should contact your retailer directly if you have a billing query, even if your query relates to previous contact you've had with Severn Trent Water. We will be contacted directly by your retailer if they require any assistance from us.

If you have an emergency water or waste issue, you can call our emergency contact centre on 0800 783 4444. However, if you have an ongoing water or waste issue and wish to write in about this, you should contact your retailer directly – again, we'll be contacted directly by your retailer if they require any assistance from us.

If you do not know who your retailer is, you can visit the Open Water website where you'll be able to find all the information about the retail market - <http://www.open-water.org.uk>.

# 10. What to do if you're unhappy with our service

## Let us know if we could do better

We aim to provide brilliant customer service and we're committed to getting things right – first time, every time. If this doesn't happen, let us know so we can put things right.

## We're here to help

Our customer care teams can answer most questions and comments, and will work with you to put things right.

If you'd like to talk to us about anything to do with your bill, call **03457 500 500** (local rate call) between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 1pm on Saturday.

For any questions about your water supply or sewerage service, our team is here to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **0800 783 4444** (free from most landlines and some mobiles).

If our team can't put things right straight away, you can ask to talk to one of our duty managers or if you prefer they can call you back.

For customers who have a Textphone, we're available all day, every day on **0800 328 1155**.

You can also get in touch with us through our website at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk) where you can get up to date information from any mobile device. You can manage your account online, report a leak, find out about any work in your area and much more.

## I want to make a complaint, what should I do?

**Step 1:** You can contact us through our website, email us ([customercare@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:customercare@severntrent.co.uk)) or if you prefer, write to us at the following address:

Severn Trent Water  
Customer Care Team  
PO Box 5309  
Coventry  
CV3 9FH

Please include your phone number so we can get back to you as quickly as possible. If you write us a letter, we'll reply within 10 working days. If we don't, you could be entitled to payment under our Guaranteed Standards Scheme. You can find more information in section 9 of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

## I'm still not happy, can I have my case reviewed?

**Step 2:** If we still haven't been able to resolve your problem, we'll be happy to review your case. Just let us know and we'll take another look at it. Once you contact us, our customer care team will carry out a full review and get back to you within 10 working days.

If you feel it would be better to deal with the issue face to face then we're happy to visit you anywhere within our region, or you can make an appointment to visit us.

## The Consumer Council for Water

**Step 3:** If we've reviewed your case but you still think we could have done more, you can contact the Consumer Council for Water by writing to them at:

Consumer Council for Water  
1st Floor, Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ

Alternatively, go to [ccwater.org.uk](http://ccwater.org.uk) or call them on 0300 034 2222, weekdays only.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

**Step 4:** If your complaint remains unresolved after it has gone through all the stages of our complaints procedure and has been reviewed by CCWater, you may be eligible to take your concerns to WATRS, the Water Industry Redress Scheme who can provide an independent binding decision.

WATRS is a voluntary alternative dispute resolution scheme to help address the very small number of customer complaints that remain unresolved. WATRS is designed to provide an independent, impartial and easy to use alternative to going to court or a tribunal.

You can make an application, free of charge at WATR's website [www.watrs.org](http://www.watrs.org) or you can ask for an application form to be sent to you [info@watrs.org](mailto:info@watrs.org). Guidance notes are also available on their website or you can ask for a copy to be sent to you by telephoning **0207 520 3801**. You can write to WATRS at:

WATRS  
International Dispute Resolution Centre  
70 Fleet Street  
London  
EC4Y 1EU

We've signed up to the scheme's commitments which are set out below. A full copy of the Scheme Rules can be found here [www.watrs.org/commitments](http://www.watrs.org/commitments).

- Commitment to provide WATRS free of charge to customers;
- Commitment to support the principles set out in the ADR Specification;
- Commitment to respect the independence of WATRS

- Commitment to be bound by decision of the WATRS' adjudicator if accepted by customer and to implement decision as required by Scheme Rules;
- Commitment to co-operate with and have due regard to the recommendations of the ADR Panel

This publication is available in alternative formats, including large print and Braille.

For further information:

Call **0345 750 0500**

Textphone **0800 328 1155**

**[customercare@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:customercare@severntrent.co.uk)**

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from UK landlines. Calls to 0345 numbers are charged at a local rate and when phoning from a mobile, may be included in your free minutes package.

**Severn Trent Water Ltd**

PO Box 5309

Coventry

CV3 9FH

[www.stwater.co.uk](http://www.stwater.co.uk)

# 11. How to contact us

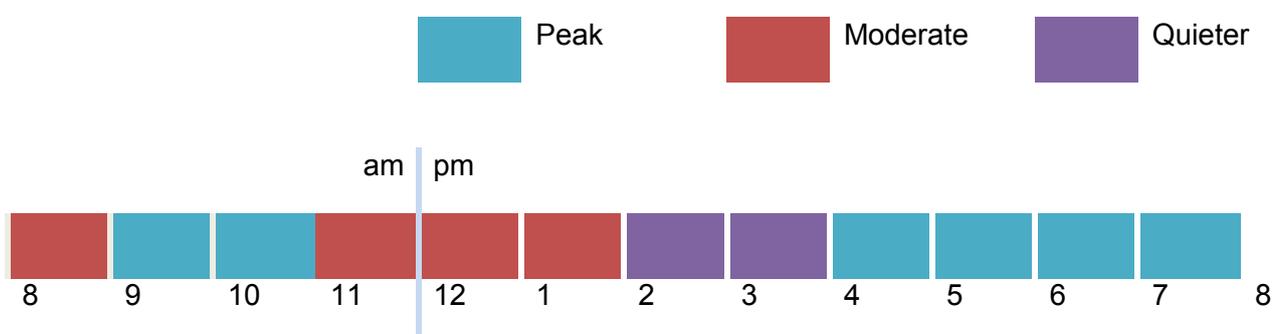
## 11.1 Contact details

Our website can give you advice on a range of topics and answer many queries you may have. You can also pay your bill, apply for a meter, update your meter reading, check your water quality, change your address or report a leak. Visit us at [stwater.co.uk](http://stwater.co.uk)

Type of Enquiry	Details	Opening Hours
Help with water or waste emergencies	0800 783 4444 <a href="mailto:customer care@severntrent.co.uk">customer care@severntrent.co.uk</a>	24/7
Help with your bill	03457 500 500 <a href="mailto:customer care@severntrent.co.uk">customer care@severntrent.co.uk</a>	8:00 – 21:00 Mon-Fri 8:30 – 17:30 Sat
Help if you're struggling to pay	0345 602 2777 <a href="mailto:customer care@severntrent.co.uk">customer care@severntrent.co.uk</a>	8:00 – 20:00 Mon-Fri 8:00 – 13:00 Sat
Apply for a free meter installation	03457 090 646 <a href="mailto:customer care@severntrent.co.uk">customer care@severntrent.co.uk</a>	8:00 – 20:00 Mon-Fri 8:00 – 13:00 Sat
Apply for new water or waste supply	0800 707 6600 <a href="mailto:new.connections@severntrent.co.uk">new.connections@severntrent.co.uk</a>	8.30 – 17.00 Mon-Thurs 8:30 – 16:30 Fri
Visitor Staff Identification Bogus Callers (for verification)	03456 041 655 <a href="mailto:customer care@severntrent.co.uk">customer care@severntrent.co.uk</a>	24/7
Textphone Users	0800 328 1115 <a href="mailto:customer care@severntrent.co.uk">customer care@severntrent.co.uk</a>	24/7

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from UK landlines. Calls to 0345 numbers are charged at a local rate and when phoning from a mobile, may be included in your free minute's package. Calls made from mobile phones will be charged at your operator's rates.

### Contact centre peak times



Our postal address is:  
Severn Trent Water Ltd  
Customer Relations,  
PO Box 5310,  
Coventry  
CV3 9FJ

Our headquarters are located at:  
Severn Trent Centre  
2 St. John's Street,  
Coventry  
CV1 2LZ

You may have an enquiry about a bill that's been issued by South Staffs Water, or if you only receive sewerage services from Severn Trent Water, your water may be supplied by South Staffs Water Plc.

In this case you should contact us if you have a query about your sewerage service and South Staffs Water if you have a query or complaint about your water supply or bills.

South Staffs Water Plc  
Green Lane,  
Walsall,  
West Midlands  
WS2 7PD

Or call: **0845 607 0456** (billing enquiries)  
**0800 09 30 610** (difficulty in paying)  
**0800 389 1011** (water and mains leak)

## 11.2 Bogus callers

Bogus callers are people who impersonate staff from companies such as utilities to gain entry to your home. Our staff will always show you a valid identity card which includes our logo and a photograph, additionally you can call the bogus caller hotline (**0345 604 1655**) to verify the identity of any Severn Trent Water staff. Additionally, we offer a free password protection scheme that can help protect you from bogus callers. For more advice call our Customer Care Billing Contact Centre (**03457 500 500**) or download our 'bogus caller advice leaflet' from our website.

## 11.3 Individual needs

We'd like to tailor our services to your needs, but we can only do this if you let us know. Get in touch and we'll sign you up our Access register, where we can provide the following services:

- Correspondence in large print, Braille, electronic or audio formats
- Bill reading service
- Text phone service
- Confidential password to help identify our staff who may call at your door
- Special meter reading arrangements

- [Special water supply arrangements if you are a home dialysis patient](#)
- [Help with the provision of free bottled water during a supply interruption.](#)

For more information or if you wish to be added to our Access register, please contact us our Customer Care Billing Contact centre (**03457 500 500**). We'll take your details and arrange for our Access team to contact you or send an Access information pack.

If your first language isn't English and you need help, please call and ask for our Language Line service.

#### **11.4 Consumer Council for Water**

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) is there to review all issues that affect your interests as a water customer, liaise with us and make representations on your behalf. CCWater staff can give you free, independent advice on issues that affect you as a water customer and they will investigate any complaints that you can't resolve directly with us through our own complaints procedures. They will also advise you if the matter you have raised is a dispute that can be settled by our regulator, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).

You can contact CCWater at:  
Consumer Council for Water  
1st Floor Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square,  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ  
Tel: **0121 345 1017**  
Web: [ccwater.org.uk](http://ccwater.org.uk)

#### **11.5 Privacy notice**

We'll use the information we hold about you to manage your account. We may also use the information we have to contact you about other water-related goods and services, if you don't want to be contacted please let us know. Additionally, we may share with and obtain information about you from other utilities, local authorities, government departments, credit reference agencies and other companies for use in any credit decisions, fraud prevention and to pursue debtors.

If you give us personal data, you have consented to us handling it for the purposes mentioned. We may transfer your personal data to other organisations in any country only for any of the purposes mentioned. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you have the right to make a subject access request. All requests must be made in writing to:

Data Protection  
Customer Relations  
Severn Trent Centre  
PO Box 5309  
Coventry  
CV3 9FH

There is a small charge for this service of £10.