

# 1 Our Customer Charter



We guarantee to provide a high standard of service. This is formalised in the Terms and Conditions of our Customer Charter Standards of Service which are outlined here. They conform with the Water Supply & Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) (Amendment) Regulations 1989, 1996 and 2008. To make things clearer, each Standard begins with a brief summary which explains exactly what it means to you.

The Charter covers the following Standards of Service:

- 1 Appointments to visit you
- 2 Account queries
- 3 Requests about payment arrangements
- 4 Complaints about water services
- 5 Notice of planned interruption of supply
- 6 Notice of emergency interruption of supply
- 7 Where the supply is not duly restored
- 8 If there is a problem with water pressure
- 9 If there is a problem with your sewerage and wastewater service
- 10 Credit in place of payment and time for payment and credit
- 11 Payments not to affect other legal liabilities
- 12 References of disputes to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

## 1 Appointments to visit you

### Summary

- We will make appointments to visit either before or after 1pm. If you request a more specific appointment, we will offer one within a two-hour time band.
- If for any reason we are unable to keep the appointment, we will let you know 24 hours in advance.
- If we fail to meet this standard we will automatically pay you £30.

**1.1** Whenever we decide to visit your premises in connection with your water supply and require access or your presence, we will consult you either orally or in writing regarding arrangements. We will notify you, either orally or in writing, of the date of the appointment. Unless a period of two hours during which the visit will be made has been specified at your request, we will tell you, whether it will be not later than 1pm or after 1pm on the appointed day.

**1.2** If we do not arrange the visit consistent with the above procedure, or fail to make it within the period specified, then unless any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 1.3 below apply, we will pay you £30.

**1.3** The circumstances where we are excused payment of the £30 referred to in paragraph 1.2 above are where:

- you cancelled the appointment
- we cancelled it by giving you not less than 24 hours notice, either orally or in writing
- severe weather conditions, industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party made the visit impractical and, because they cannot reasonably be foreseen, prevented us from giving you not less than 24 hours notice of cancellation or making suitable alternative arrangements.

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## 2 Account queries

### Summary

- If you write to query the accuracy of your bill, we will reply within 10 working days
- If we fail to meet this standard we will automatically pay you £30.

**2.1** Whenever you write to query the accuracy of your account for the water supply to your premises, we will send you a full response within 10 working days from receipt of your written communication.

**2.2** If we fail to respond to your query in accordance with the above procedure we will pay you £30 – but not if any of the circumstances referred to in 2.3 below applies.

**2.3** The circumstances where we are excused payment of the £30 referred to in paragraph 2.2 above are where:

- you have told us you do not wish to pursue the query
- severe weather conditions make it impractical to make a visit which, in our opinion, is reasonably required for the purpose of replying
- industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party make it impossible to despatch such a reply within the relevant period
- your query was not sent to an address notified in writing by us to you as the appropriate address to send such queries
- your query is frivolous or vexatious.

## 3 Requests about payment arrangements

### Summary

- If you write asking us to change the way you pay your bill, but we are unable to, we will tell you within five working days. If we fail to meet this standard we will automatically pay you £30.

**3.1** If you write to us asking to change your payment arrangement e.g. if you apply to pay by instalments, and we cannot meet your request, we will send an explanation within five working days from receipt of your written communication.

**3.2** If we fail to deal with your request as set out above, we will pay you £30 – but not if any of the circumstances referred to in 3.3 below apply.

**3.3** The circumstances where we are excused payment of the £30 referred to in paragraph 3.2 above are where:

- you have told us you do not wish to pursue the request
- industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party make it impossible to reply within the relevant period
- your query was not sent to an address notified in writing by us to you as the appropriate address to send such queries.

## 4 Complaints about water services

### Summary

- We will respond to written complaints about your water services within 10 working days.
- If we fail to meet this standard we will automatically pay you £30.

**4.1** We will respond to all written complaints in connection with the supply of water to your premises, within 10 working days of receipt of your written communication.

**4.2** If we fail to respond to your complaint in this time we will pay you £30 – but not if any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 4.3 below apply.

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**4.3** The circumstances where we are excused payment of the £30 referred to in paragraph 4.2 above are where:

- you have told us you do not wish to pursue the complaint
- severe weather conditions make it impractical to make a visit which, in our opinion, is reasonably required for the purpose of replying
- industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party make it impossible to reply within the relevant period
- your complaint was not sent to an address notified in writing by us to you as the appropriate address to send such queries
- your complaint is frivolous or vexatious.

## 5 Notice of planned interruption of supply

### Summary

- If your water supply is going to be off for more than four hours because of planned work on the water mains, we will give you written notice at least 48 hours in advance.
- We will restore your supply within the time we have told you in the written notice.
- If we fail to meet this standard we will pay you £30 if you are a domestic customer and £60 in any other case.

**5.1** If we plan to cut off the water supply to your premises for more than four hours in order to carry out necessary works, we will notify you in writing of the proposal at least 48 hours before the supply is cut off and tell you the time by which the supply will be restored.

**5.2** If we fail to tell you we plan to cut off your water supply in accordance with the above procedure we will automatically pay you £30 if you are in domestic premises and £60 in any other case. But we will not do this if any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 5.3 below apply, and we must be able to identify you as

being affected by the proposed cut-off. If we can't we will be liable to pay you only if you make a claim, whether orally or in writing, within three months following the date on which your supply was cut-off.

**5.3** The circumstance where we are excused payment of the sum referred to in paragraph 5.2 above is where industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party make it impracticable to give you notice at least 48 hours before the supply is cut-off.

## 6 Notice of emergency interruption of supply

### Summary

- If we need to cut off your supply in an emergency we will tell you as soon as possible about any alternative supply; when your water will be back on, and where you can get further information.

**6.1** If your supply has been interrupted or cut off to carry out necessary works in an emergency and we have not served notice of our plans to do so, as soon as is practicable we will take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers of:

- the interruption or cut-off
- where an alternative supply may be obtained
- the proposed time of restoration of the supply
- the telephone number from which further information can be obtained.

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## 7 Where the supply is not duly restored

### Summary

- In the case of a burst main or other emergency, we aim to restore your supply within 12 hours.
- For planned work, we aim to restore supplies by the time we have given in the notice you receive from us.
- Repairs to our major trunk mains may take longer. In these cases we aim to restore your supply within 48 hours.
- If we fail to meet this standard we will pay you £30 if you're a domestic customer and £60 in any other case. We will also pay you £20 or £35 respectively for each additional 24-hour period you are without water.

**7.1** Where we notify you of our intention to cut off the supply to your premises for more than four hours in order to carry out necessary works, we will restore it by the time specified.

**7.2** Where the supply to your premises is interrupted or cut off due to an emergency involving a leak or burst in a strategic main, we will restore it within 48 hours from the time we first became aware of the interruption or the supply was cut off.

**7.3** Where the supply is interrupted or cut off due to an emergency not involving a leak or burst in a strategic main, we will restore the supply within 12 hours from the time we first became aware of the interruption or the supply was cut off.

**7.4** If we do not restore the supply to your premises by any of the times specified in paragraphs 7.1, 7.2 or 7.3 above, then unless this failure is due to any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 7.6 below, and it is practicable for us to identify you as affected by the interruption or cut-off, we will pay you £30

in the case of a domestic supply or £60 in any other case. We will pay a further £20 if you have a domestic supply or £35 in any other case, for each further complete period of 24 hours during which your water remains un-restored.

**7.5** If you are a customer who it is impossible for us to identify as affected by the interruption or cut-off, we will pay you £30 for an interruption or cut-off to a supply to a domestic premises or £60 in any other case. But we must receive your claim for payment, orally or in writing, within three months of the interruption or cut-off.

**7.6** The circumstances where we are excused payment of the £30 referred to in paragraph 7.4 above are where:

- severe weather conditions or industrial action by our employees, or any act or default by a third party, preclude the restoration of the supply within the relevant period;
- in the case of interruptions or cut-offs due to emergencies, circumstances are so exceptional that it would be unreasonable to have expected the supply to be restored within the relevant period
- the regulation does not apply where supply is interrupted or cut off due to a drought.

## 8 If there is a problem with your water pressure

### Summary

- If your water pressure drops below seven metres static head twice within four weeks (each time for longer than one hour), you can claim £35.
- This does not apply if the drop is because of a burst, planned work we are doing on the water mains, or because of problems with your own pipework.

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**8.1** If during any period of 28 days, the water pressure in the pipe that supplies your premises falls below seven metres static head on two occasions, each lasting not less than one hour, we shall, except in the circumstances referred to in paragraph 8.2 below, pay you £35.

**8.2** The circumstances where we are excused payment of the sum referred to in paragraph 8.1 above are where:

- a payment for the same problem has already been made to you in the same year
- industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party has made it impracticable for us to maintain the minimum pressure referred to
- the reason for the pressure falling below the minimum referred to is due to the company carrying out necessary works or because of drought
- you are a customer whom it has been impracticable for us to identify as affected and have not made a claim, whether orally or in writing, for payment within the three months from the date of the second occasion on which the pressure fell below the minimum.

## 9 If there is a problem with your sewerage and wastewater service

### Summary

- Sewerage and wastewater services are the responsibility of either Thames Water Utilities or Southern Water Services, depending on where you live.

**9.1** Your sewerage and wastewater services are the responsibility of a sewerage company.

**9.2** Most sewerage and wastewater services in our supply area are provided by, or on behalf of, Thames Water. We collect sewerage and wastewater service charges in some parts of our area on their behalf.

**9.3** Thames Water has its own Customer Code of Practice and operates a Customer Guarantee Scheme offering rights and guarantees broadly similar to ours.

**9.4** If you live within Thames Water's region and wish to claim in connection with your sewerage or wastewater services, or if you would like details about their Customer Guarantee Scheme, write to:

Customer Centre  
Thames Water Utilities  
PO Box 475  
Swindon  
Wiltshire SN38 6TV

**9.5** If you live within Southern Water's region and wish to claim in connection with your sewerage and wastewater services, or if you would like details about its customer service guarantees, please refer to your bill from Southern Water for whom to contact.

## 10 Credit in place of payment and time for payment and credit

### Summary

- We may credit your account with any of the payments due under these Standards
- If you owe money to us, the credit will not be more than the amount you owe
- Where the payment is automatic, and we fail to make it, we will pay you an additional £30 if you make a claim within three months.

**10.1** We may credit your account with any payment due to you under these Standards, in place of making a payment to you. You can request a direct payment if you would prefer. Any credit we make to your account will not exceed the amount of any debt you owe us, if it has been outstanding for more than 6 weeks. You can request any balance as a direct payment.



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**10.2** Where we are required to make a payment to you, in any of the circumstances referred to in paragraphs 1.2, 2.2, 3.2 or 4.2 above, we will do so within 10 working days of the sum becoming payable. If we fail to do so, we will make another payment of £30 if you claim in writing within three months of it becoming payable.

**10.3** Where we are required to make a payment in any of the circumstances referred to in paragraphs 5.2 and 7.4 above, we will do so within 20 working days from the date the supply is cut-off in the case of paragraph 5.2, or interrupted in the case of paragraph 7.4. If we fail to do so, we will make another payment of £30 to a domestic premises and £60 in any other case.

## 11 Payments not to affect other legal liabilities

### Summary

- If we make a payment to you, it does not mean we admit any liability.
- If you accept a payment, it does not affect our liability to you.

**11.1** Any payment made to you under this Charter following a claim or potential claim does not constitute an admission by us of any liability, other than an obligation to comply with the regulations on which it is based.

**11.2** Your acceptance of a payment or credit under this Charter doesn't affect any liability we have to you, other than our liability under the Regulations on which it is based.

## 12 Reference to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

### Summary

- If we disagree about your right to a payment, either of us can refer to Ofwat
- If we do not comply with Ofwat's decision, you can deduct any money they say is due to you from money you may owe to us.

**12.1** Any dispute regarding your entitlement to a payment or credit may be referred to Ofwat by you or us. We must provide Ofwat with the evidence or information they reasonably require.

**12.2** If Ofwat rule in your favour and we fail to comply, you may offset any sum they determine is due to you against any liability you have to us. Ofwat's address is:

Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)  
Centre City Tower  
7 Hill Street  
Birmingham  
B5 4UA

Office Opening Hours:  
Monday – Friday : 8am to 6pm