

FACT SHEET

Our Customer Charter



This fact sheet sets out the Terms and Conditions of our Customer Charter Standards of Service – your Service Guarantee. The Charter is made in conformance with the Water & Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 1989 (as amended), and is therefore written in formal language. So, to make things clearer, each Standard starts with a brief summary that explains exactly what it means to you.

The Charter covers the following Standards of Service:

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

1 Appointments to visit you

In brief...

- We'll make appointments to visit either before or after 1:00pm. If you request a more specific appointment, we'll offer one within a two-hour time band.
- If for any reason we're unable to keep the appointment, we'll 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 to your premises or your presence on the premises, we will consult you either orally or in writing regarding the arrangements for the visit. Thereafter we will notify you, either orally or in writing, of the date of the appointment. Unless a period of 2 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 1:00pm or after 1:00pm on the appointed day.

1.2 If we do not arrange the visit in accordance 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 automatically pay you the sum of £30.

Our Customer Charter (continued)

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

- you have cancelled the appointment;
- we have 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 make the visit impractical and, because they cannot reasonably be foreseen, prevent us from giving you not less than 24 hours notice of cancellation or of making suitable alternative arrangements.

2 Account queries

In brief...

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

2.1 Whenever you write to us to query the correctness 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 letter.

2.2 If we fail to respond to your query in accordance with the above procedure, then unless any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 2.3 below applies, we will automatically pay you the sum of £30.

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

- you have informed us that 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;
- the query was not sent to an address notified in writing by us to you as the appropriate address for such queries to be sent;
- the query is frivolous or vexatious.

3 Requests about payment arrangements

In brief...

- If you write asking us to change the way you pay your bill, but we're unable to do this, we'll tell you within 5 working days of receiving your letter.
- 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 you a full explanation within 5 working days from receipt of your letter.

3.2 If we fail to deal with your request in accordance with the above procedure, then unless any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 3.3 below apply, we will automatically pay you the sum of £30.

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

Our Customer Charter (continued)

- you have informed us that 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 despatch such a reply within the relevant period;
- the query was not sent to an address notified in writing by us to you as the appropriate address for such queries to be sent.

4 Complaints about water services

In brief...

- We will respond to written complaints about your water services within 10 working days of receiving your letter.
- 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 letter.

4.2 If we fail to respond to your complaint in accordance with the above procedure, then unless any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 4.3 below apply, we will automatically pay you the sum of £30.

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

- you have informed us that 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 despatch a reply within the relevant period;
- the complaint was not sent to an address notified in writing by us to you as the appropriate address for such queries to be sent;
- the complaint is frivolous or vexatious.

5 Notice of planned interruption of supply

In brief...

- If your water is going to be off for more than 4 hours because of planned work on the water mains, we'll give you written notice at least 48 hours in advance;
- We'll restore your water supply within the time we have told you in the written notice.
- If we fail to meet this standard, we'll 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 4 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 advise you of the time by which the supply will be restored.

5.2 If we fail to notify you of our intention to cut off your water supply in accordance with the above procedure then unless any of the circumstances referred to in paragraph 5.3 below apply, we will automatically pay you the sum of £30 in the case of a supply to a domestic premises and £60 in any other case, if it is practical for us to identify you as being affected by the proposed cut-off. In the event that it is not practical for us to identify you as affected by the proposed cut-off, we will only be liable to pay you if you make a claim for the payment, whether orally or in writing, within 3 months following the date on which the supply was cut-off.

Our Customer Charter (continued)

5.3 The circumstances where we are excused payment of the sum referred to in paragraph 5.2 above are where:

- industrial action by our employees or any act or default by a third party make it impracticable to give the notice at least 48 hours before the supply is cut-off.

6 Notice of emergency interruption of supply

In brief...

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

6.1 If the water supply to your premises has been interrupted or cut off to carry out necessary works in an emergency and we have not served reasonable notice on you of the proposal to carry out the works, as soon as is reasonably practicable we will take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers of:

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

7 Where the supply is not duly restored

In brief...

- 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 so in these cases we aim to restore your supply within 48 hours;
- If we fail to meet this standard, we'll pay you £30 if you are a domestic customer and £60 in any other case. We'll 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 water supply to your premises for more than 4 hours in order to carry out necessary works, we will restore the supply by the time specified in the notice of the proposed cut-off.

7.2 Where the water 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 your supply 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 you are a customer it is practicable for us to identify as affected by the interruption or cut-off, we will automatically pay you the sum of £30 in the case of a supply of water to domestic premises or £60 in any other case. We will also pay you for each further complete period of 24 hours during which the supply remains un-

Our Customer Charter (continued)

restored, a further sum of £20 in the case of a supply to a domestic premises or £35 in any other case.

7.5 If you are a customer whom it is impracticable for us to identify as affected by the interruption or cut-off, we will pay you the sum of £30 in the case of an interruption or cut-off to a supply of water to a domestic premises or £60 in any other case, if we receive a claim for payment from you, orally or in writing, within 3 months following the date of 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.

8 If there is a problem with water pressure

In brief...

- If your water pressure drops below 7 metres static head twice within 4 weeks (each time for longer than 1 hour) you can claim £35;
- This doesn't 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.

8.1 If during any period of 28 days, the water pressure in the Company's pipe that supplies your premises falls below seven metres static head on two occasions, each lasting not less than 1 hour, we shall, except in the circumstances referred to in paragraph 8.2 below, automatically pay you the sum of £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 the Company to maintain the minimum pressure referred to;
- the reason for the pressure falling below the minimum pressure referred to is in connection with the carrying out of any necessary works or because of drought;
- in the case of a customer whom it is impracticable for us to identify as affected by the problem, that customer has not made a claim, whether orally or in writing, for a payment to be made within the three months from the date of the second occasion on which the pressure has fallen below the minimum referred to.

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

In brief...

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

9.1 Where sewerage and wastewater services are provided to your premises, they are the responsibility of a sewerage company.

Our Customer Charter (continued)

9.2 In most of the Sutton and East Surrey Water plc area of supply, sewerage and wastewater services are provided by, or on behalf of, Thames Water Utilities Limited (“Thames Water”). We collect sewerage and wastewater service charges in some parts of our area on behalf of Thames Water.

9.3 Thames Water has its own Customer Code of Practice and operates a Customer Guarantee Scheme offering rights and guarantees broadly similar to those of Sutton and East Surrey Water plc.

9.4 If you live within the Thames Water region and wish to make a claim in connection with your sewerage or wastewater services, or if you would like further details about the Thames Water Customer Guarantee Scheme, you should write to:

Customer Centre
Thames Water Utilities Ltd.
PO Box 1850
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 4TW

9.5 If you live within the Southern Water Services Limited’s region and you wish to make a claim in connection with your sewerage and wastewater services, or if you would like further details about the customer service guarantees your sewerage and wastewater services supplier offers, please refer to your bill from Southern Water Services Limited. You will find full details about who to contact on the bill you receive from them.

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

In brief...

- We may credit your account with any of the payments due under these Standards;
- If you owe money to us, the credit won’t 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 3 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. If at the time the payment is due to be made, you owe money to us, and the debt has been outstanding for more than six weeks, such credit is not to exceed the amount of the debt.

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 a further payment of £10 to you if you make a claim for such payment in writing within three months of the payment becoming payable.

10.3 Where we are required to make a payment to you 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 a further payment to you of £30 in the case of a supply to a domestic premises and £60 in any other case.

Our Customer Charter (continued)

11 Payments not to affect other legal liabilities

In brief...

- If we make a payment to you, it doesn't mean we admit any liability;
- If you accept a payment we make to you, it doesn't affect our liability to you.

11.1 The making of any payment to you under this Charter in consequence of any claim or potential claim by you shall 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 The acceptance of a payment or credit by you under this Charter shall not affect any liability we have to you other than our liability under the Regulations on which it is based.

12 References of disputes to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

In brief...

- If we disagree about your right to a payment, either of us can refer to Ofwat;
- If we don't 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 under this Charter may be referred to Ofwat by you or by us and in any such case we are obliged to provide them with the evidence or information they reasonably require to determine it.

12.2 If we fail to give effect to a determination by Ofwat, you may set off 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