



South Staffs Water

# **Statement of Water Charges & Customer Charges Scheme**

2011 – 2012



# CONTENTS

South Staffs Water Plc.....	4
1. Introduction .....	4
Our Charging Policy .....	4
South Staffs Water Plc Area of Supply .....	6
Severn Trent Water Plc Area of Supply .....	7
General.....	8
Legislation .....	8
Refund or Recovery of Charges.....	9
Our Commitment to You.....	10
Sewerage Services .....	11
Customer Information.....	12
How to Contact Us .....	13
How to Contact Us .....	13
Household Charges.....	14
Change of Occupier .....	14
Discontinuation of Supplies .....	14
2. Unmetered Charges .....	15
Surface Water Drainage.....	15
Vacant Properties.....	16
Void Properties.....	16
Supply Pipe Repair Policy.....	16
3. Metered Charges .....	17
Multiple Meter Standing Charge.....	18
Vacant Properties.....	18
Void Properties.....	18
Supply Pipe Repair Policy.....	19
Notice of Vacation of Property .....	19
4. Assessed Charges .....	20
5. Special Tariff for Vulnerable Customers (WaterSure).....	21
6. Billing and Payment Frequencies .....	23
Unmetered Bills .....	23
Metered Bills.....	23
7. Payment Options and Locations.....	25
8. Difficulty in Paying Your Bill?.....	28
Customers in receipt of Income Support or Job Seeker's Allowance .....	28
Charitable Trust.....	28
Debt Relief Orders.....	28
Unpaid Bills Collections Procedure .....	29

9.	Non-household Charges.....	30
	Change of Occupier .....	30
	Security Deposits for New Commercial Customers .....	30
	Discontinuation of Supplies .....	31
	Unmetered Charges .....	32
	Metered Charges.....	33
	Multi-site tariff .....	33
	Notice of Vacation of Property .....	33
	Multiple meter standing charge .....	34
	Standard Tariff (up to 50 MI/annum) .....	35
	Medium User Tariff (more than 50 MI annum) .....	36
	Large User Reservation Charge Tariff (more than 100 MI/annum).....	38
	Surface Water Drainage Charges for Metered non-household Customers .....	40
	Billing and Payment Frequencies.....	41
	Unmetered Bills .....	41
	Metered Bills.....	41
	Payment Options and Locations .....	43
	Unpaid Bill and Collections Procedure.....	45
10.	Metering Policy .....	46
	New Water Supplies.....	46
	Existing Water Supplies .....	46
	Household Meter Option .....	46
	Reasonable Expense/Choice of Location .....	46
	Meters for flats/multi-occupied properties .....	47
	Flats with shared heating systems .....	47
	Flats with shared hot water systems .....	47
	Installation programmes and times .....	48
	Payment Conditions .....	48
	Assessed Charges .....	48
	Information to customers.....	48
	Reversion to Unmetered Supply Charges.....	48
	Selective Metering.....	49
	Change of Occupier Metering .....	49
	New Properties.....	49
	The Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999.....	49
	Change of use .....	50

Please note that our miscellaneous charges and developer services charges can be found in a separate document entitled 'Miscellaneous Water Charges and Developer Services Charges': <http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/publications.asp>

## South Staffs Water Plc

South Staffs Water is one of the largest water-only supply companies in England and Wales and has been a private company since 1853. Our network of underground mains, pumping stations and treatment works is controlled from our Head Office in Walsall. Within our 1,500 sq.km area we supply 1.29 million people. We are a water-only company and act as an agent for Severn Trent Water Limited for the collection of sewerage charges.

Our vision as a company is to provide the best service and value for money of any water supplier in the UK.

### 1. Introduction

This charges scheme sets out our charges and also those we collect on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. All charges are effective from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, unless otherwise stated.

For information on the following areas please call 0845 60 70 456:

- Our charges.
- Arrangements to pay your water services bill.
- What you should do if you have moved into a property within our supply area.
- Confirmation on how you are charged.

Alternatively you can write to:

Customer Relations,  
South Staffs Water PLC,  
Green Lane,  
Walsall,  
WS2 7PD.

Or, you can visit our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) for information.

### Our Charging Policy

Our powers to charge for water supplies are contained in the relevant parts of the Water Industry Act (WIA) 1991, as amended by WIA 1999 and the Water Act 2003. We operate under an Instrument of Appointment issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment in August 1989.

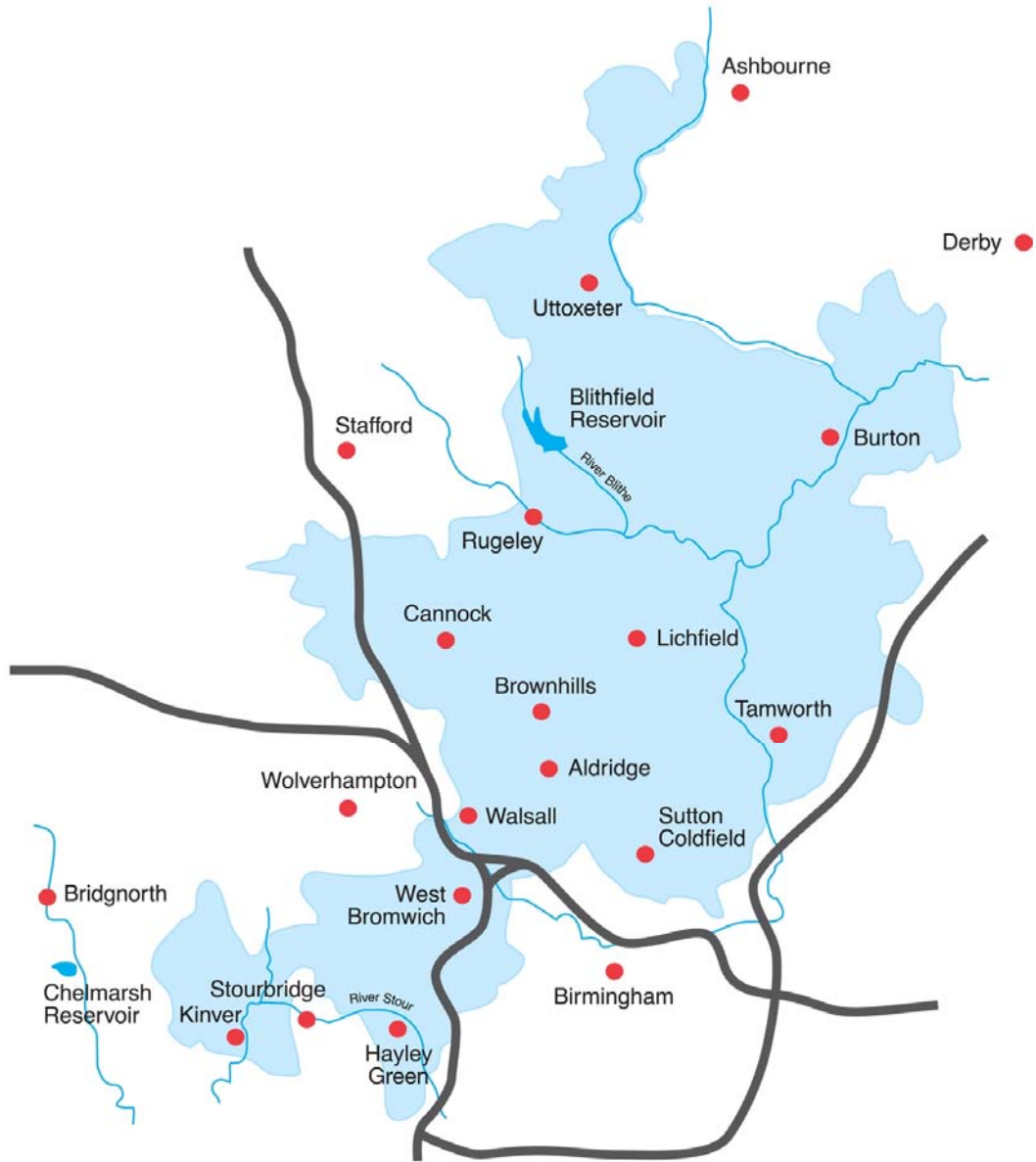
This Charges Scheme is made by South Staffs Water PLC under Section 143 of the 1991 Act, until amended by subsequent resolution of the company.

The charges contained within this Charges Scheme have been approved by Ofwat, the industry regulator, where this is applicable.

This Charges Scheme provides for charges in respect of the services performed, facilities provided and rights made available by us, in exercise of our water supply functions under Section 37 of the Water Industry Act 1991 other than the supply of water in bulk. In accordance with Section 143(5) of the 1991 Act, nothing in this scheme shall affect our power to enter into an agreement with any non-household customer in any particular case as determines the charges to be made for the services provided.

This scheme shall come into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 and remain in force until revoked, amended or modified by us. Consequently, our 2010-2011 charges scheme is hereby revoked with effect from the above charges scheme coming into operation.

## South Staffs Water Plc Area of Supply



## Severn Trent Water Plc Area of Supply

We act as an agent on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd and are responsible for the collection of sewerage charges within the area of South Staffs Water PLC.

The charging zones detailed in the table below correspond to the equivalent charging zones in the map of our supply area on page 6.

For full details of sewerage charges, see the Statement of Water Charges publications by Severn Trent Water Ltd. Sewerage charges are collected in accordance with their charges scheme.

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Local authority area</b>
2	Bromsgrove District
	Wyre Forest District
3	North Warwickshire District
7	Borough of Stafford
	Borough of Tamworth
	Cannock Chase District
	East Staffs District
	Lichfield District
	South Staffs District
8	Stafford Moorlands District
	City of Birmingham
	Dudley MB
	Sandwell MB
Walsall MB	

## General

### Interpretation

In this Charges Scheme:

“The Company”, “we”, “us” and “our” means South Staffs Water PLC.

“Ofwat” means the Water Services Regulation Authority – the industry regulator.

“CCWater” means the Consumer Council for Water, an independent consumer organisation.

“The 1991 Act” and “WIA91” means the Water Industry Act 1991.

“The 1999 Act” and “WIA99” means the Water Industry Act 1999.

“The 2003 Act” means the Water Act 2003.

“The Licence” means the Company’s Instrument of the Appointment as a water undertaker for the area described.

“Unmetered Water Supply” means a supply of water that is not a metered supply of water.

“Metered Water Supply” means a supply of water on which a meter has been installed.

“Meter” means a meter owned and supplied by the Company.

“Rateable Value” (RV) means the value applicable to the property as at March 31<sup>st</sup> 1990, after any subsequent amendments in the Valuation List provided by the District Valuer of the Inland Revenue.

“Household Premises” means properties that are used as domestic dwellings receiving water for domestic purposes that are not factories, offices or commercial premises.

“Non-Household Premises” means any properties receiving water, which may include water for domestic purposes but which are not occupied as domestic premises.

“Domestic Purposes” means drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitary purposes for which water may be supplied. See Section 218 of the 1991 Act.

“Common billing agreement” means an agreement between the Company and any other person under which that person has undertaken to pay water and sewerage charges in respect of two or more properties which have a common supply pipe.

### Legislation

The application, assessment and recovery of charges under this Scheme are subject to the provisions of relevant Acts of Parliament, regulations and directions made thereunder. Attention is drawn to various Codes of Practice under which we operate, especially:

- Code of Practice for Leakage
- Code of Practice for Domestic Customers
- Code of Practice for Debt (Domestic Customers)
- Code of Practice for Debt (Commercial Customers)

Copies of these codes are available upon request. Please contact us using the billing enquiries telephone number of 0845 60 70 456. Alternatively, you can access the codes on our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

If in this scheme of charges where there are any inconsistencies or variances with the powers and duties of Ofwat, or any omissions of Ofwat's powers and duties then Ofwat's powers and duties shall be deemed to be incorporated herein as though they were set out in full and shall prevail over the Scheme of Charges in so far as they are inconsistent.

### **Refund or Recovery of Charges**

When we become aware of accounts that have been incorrectly charged, refunds to you or collection of unpaid charges from you will be backdated for a maximum of six years, not including the current charging year. This period of six years is consistent with The Limitations Act, 1980. We will only make interest payments to you when it is considered appropriate. Similarly, we may only seek to recover interest charges in cases where this is considered appropriate. Where we are acting as an agent for Severn Trent Water in relation to the recovery or refund of monies due to them their current charges scheme shall apply.

## Our Commitment to You

### Water Services

We recognise that despite our best efforts, things can go wrong. When they do, we have an easy to use complaints procedure which all Company employees follow to ensure any complaint is handled quickly and fairly.

A leaflet explaining our complaints procedure is available to all customers upon request. It details how to make a complaint and who to contact. Customers can obtain a copy by calling 0845 60 70 456, or by writing to us at the following address:

Customer Relations  
South Staffs Water PLC  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

Fax: 01922 616239

Alternatively, a copy of the complaints procedure is available on our website:

[www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

Customers can complain either in writing at the address above or by telephone: 0845 60 70 456.

All complaints are dealt with fully, providing a full investigation into the facts and any action that we intend to take or the customer can take to prevent repetition.

Should a customer express dissatisfaction with our initial reply to a complaint, the matter will be referred to our Customer Services Manager.

If a customer is still dissatisfied they can refer the matter to the Consumer Council for Water Central to investigate any dispute. Its address is:

Consumer Council for Water Central  
1<sup>st</sup> floor Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ

Telephone: 0121 345 1017  
Lo-call: 08457 023 953  
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 16.30

Fax: 0121 345 1010  
Web: [www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk)

The Office of Water Services (Ofwat) is the Government department responsible for ensuring that the water industry in England and Wales provides customers with a good quality product and efficient service at a fair price. Ofwat is independent of the water industry.

Some disputes can be referred to Ofwat for determination:

Ofwat  
Centre City Tower  
7 Hill Street  
Birmingham  
B5 4UA

Telephone: 0121 644 7500  
Fax: 0121 624 1400

Ofwat can also be contacted by email: [enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk)

Customers may also take legal action in some instances. Should the customer still remain dissatisfied about any of the services we provide, the matter can be referred to arbitration. If the appointment of an arbitrator cannot be agreed, either Ofwat or the Secretary of State can appoint one.

### **Sewerage Services**

Complaints about sewerage services should be directed to Severn Trent Water Ltd, who we bill on behalf of. Its address is:

Severn Trent Water Ltd  
Customer Relations  
Sherbourne House  
St Martin's Road  
Finham  
Coventry  
CV3 6SD

Tel: 0800 783 4444

## Customer Information

Customer information is available upon request by either calling us on 0845 60 70 456 or writing to us at:

South Staffs Water PLC  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

This information includes:

- Our Code of Practice for Leakage
- Our Code of Practice for Domestic Customers
- Our Code of Practice for Domestic Customer Debt
- Our Code of Practice for Commercial Customer Debt
- Surface Water Drainage
- About our Customer Complaints Procedure
- WaterSure leaflet
- Extra Help If You Need It
- Water Use in Your Home
- Water Use in Your Business
- Your Guide to Household Water Meters

All of the leaflets listed above are available to download from our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/publications.asp](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/publications.asp)

## How to Contact Us

Opening hours for general account enquiries:

7am – 8pm Mon-Fri

8am - 1pm Saturday

Opening hours for supply problems: 7 days a week.

## Billing and General Account Enquiries

Bill enquiries: 0845 60 70 456

Difficulty paying: 0800 09 30 610

To set up a Direct Debit: 0845 60 70 456

Household meter option: 0845 45 67 063

Provide a meter reading: 0845 60 70 456

If you receive an estimated bill but prefer an actual bill you can call us and update your account.

Some general enquires can also be answered using a 'Q & A' function on the home page of our website:

<http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/>

## Water Issues

If you have any problems regarding the quality of your water pressure, taste, odour or supply please use the supply line.

Supply problems and emergencies: 0800 389 10 11

If you see a leak within South Staffs Water's area, please contact us.

Report a leak: 0800 389 10 11

## Other useful numbers

Minicom Textphone (for the deaf and hard of hearing): 01922 61 80 25

Genuine caller: 0800 389 10 11

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

Sewer and drainage issues (Severn Trent Water): 0800 783 44 44

South Staffs Water Fax Number: 01922 61 62 39

## Postal address

South Staffs Water

Green Lane

Walsall

WS2 7PD

## Household Charges

Household customers can be charged by one of the following ways:

- Unmetered – based on the rateable value (RV) of the property;
- Metered – based on the metered standing charge and the volumetric consumption charge;
- Assessed charge – based on an average usage for certain property types.

We also collect sewerage and surface water drainage charges on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. These will also be based on the method on which you are charged for your water supply, i.e. metered or unmetered.

## Change of Occupier

If you are vacating your property and a new occupier is moving in, you should notify us of the date on which you are intending to move. Accordingly, the new customer should notify us of the date on which they are intending to move in.

If there has been a complete change in occupation of a household property and no unmetered charges have been demanded from the new occupier, we may install a meter and charge that property by reference to volume. We shall provide full details of charges, the location of the meter and of the Watersure vulnerable groups tariff, if this is applicable.

## Discontinuation of Supplies

If you want your water supply to be disconnected when you vacate your property, you must advise us. Under certain circumstances, you may be liable for charges if you fail to inform us of the change. See page the separate document 'Miscellaneous Water and Developer Services Charges' for details of the miscellaneous charges which may be applied.

## 2. Unmetered Charges

The unmetered charges are for:

- Water supply;
- Sewage disposal service; and
- Surface water drainage service.

to a household premises are all based on an amount in the pound, as published by us for the year, multiplied by the RV of the property at the year ended March 31<sup>st</sup> 1990. This is subject to an annual minimum charge.

### Water Supply

Details of the RV of your property are provided on your water services bill.

South Staffs Water Supply £0.6587 per £/RV
--

Water charges of £0.6587 per £/RV are subject to a minimum charge of £63.50 per annum. There is no standing charge for unmetered charges.

Miscellaneous Unmetered Water Charges	
Taps at allotments, lock-up garages, canal towpaths, etc	£ 63.50 per annum
Domestic swimming pools - less than 10,000 litres capacity	£72.47 per annum
Cattle troughs	£88.25 per annum
Places of worship	£63.50 per annum

### Sewerage Charges

Severn Trent Water			
Charging zones (refer to page 5 for details)	Sewerage and surface water charges (p/£RV)	Surface water only charge (p/£RV)	Sewerage only charge (p/£RV)
2	0.7733	0.2815	0.4918
3	0.8148	0.2988	0.5160
6	0.9983	0.3649	0.6334
7	0.9728	0.3554	0.6174
8	0.8092	0.2987	0.5105

### Surface Water Drainage

For most customers, the rain that falls onto roofs, yards and other parts of the property, then drains as surface water to the public sewers. However, if you can show that none of your property's surface water drains to the public sewer you could have this charge reduced. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy contact 0845 60 70 456 or visit our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

Separate additional charges will be payable for supplies of water to taps at allotments, lock-up garages and domestic swimming pools with a capacity of less than 10,000 litres. For unmetered domestic swimming pools or ponds with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres, the charge only applies up to the date at which the premises are selectively metered.

These charges will be raised annually and will only be apportioned on change or commencement of use.

### **Vacant Properties**

If an unmetered property is vacant – i.e. furnished but unoccupied - the full unmetered charge will be due unless the customer asks for the property to be disconnected. There is no charge for the property to be disconnected, but there will be a charge for re-connection. This charge will be **£55**.

### **Void Properties**

If an unmetered property is void – i.e. unfurnished and unoccupied - water charges may be waived. Where a property remains void, to prevent leakage and water damage to the property, we may choose to seal or shut the supply off. Where there is evidence that customers have tampered with a seal, we reserve the right to charge for this and any damage caused.

In special circumstances, i.e. hospitalisation, consideration will be given to waive the water charges provided that proof is provided by you or your representative. This shall apply equally to vacant and to void properties.

### **Supply Pipe Repair Policy**

The repair for any leaking supply pipe on your property is your responsibility. If you are the homeowner, your property may be eligible to have the leak repaired by us free of charge or may qualify for a £300 contribution towards the replacement of the pipework under certain conditions. This service is available for the first leak only for private, domestic properties that have not benefited from a previous free repair service or contribution based scheme since 1997. For any subsequent leaks, or where the supply pipe is in poor condition and has to be replaced, you must meet the costs. For more details on this, please refer to our Leakage Code of Practice.

### 3. Metered Charges

If you have a meter, your charge is based on the water used through the meter. Sewerage charges are also based on the water used through the meter. For most customers, it is assumed that 'water in' equals 'water out'.

The charges for a metered water and sewerage service to any premises are comprised of:

- A standing charge that varies with the size of your supply pipe and covers the extra costs not incurred with an unmetered water supply. These costs include reading, maintaining and replacing defective meters.
- A consumption charge calculated by multiplying the volume of water supplied by the rate per cubic metre.

South Staffs Water			Severn Trent Water	
Size of meter (mm)	Water supply £ per cubic metre (m <sup>3</sup> )	Water standing charge (£/pa)	Sewerage volumetric charge £ per cubic metre (m <sup>3</sup> ) up to 50,000 m <sup>3</sup>	Sewerage standing charge (£/pa)
15	0.9238	30.05	0.8860	12.24
20	0.9238	84.00	0.8860	17.94
25	0.9238	130.00	0.8860	24.09
35	0.9238	180.00	0.8860	33.86
40	0.9238	223.00	0.8860	33.86
50	0.9238	274.00	0.8860	46.47
80	0.9238	389.00	0.8860	72.15
100	0.9238	537.00	0.8860	121.92
150	0.9238	688.00	0.8860	280.70
200	0.9238	909.00	0.8860	353.85
300	0.9238	1670.00	0.8860	465.30

- A surface water drainage charge. The vast majority of metered customers pay for surface water drainage based on the type of property they occupy. These are shown in the table below.

Severn Trent Water	
Category	Surface water (full) £/pa
1. Flat / terrace	27.99
2. Semi-detached	56.09
3. Detached	84.07

However, some metered customers pay for their surface water drainage based on the RV of their property, where one exists. The charges for this are shown in the table below:

<b>Severn Trent Water</b>	
Charging zones (refer to page 5 for details)	Surface water (full) £/pa
2	28.15
3	29.88
6	36.49
7	35.54
8	29.87

It is possible to change this to the property-type charge shown above. Please contact 0845 60 70 456 for details.

If you elect to change, the charge will be applied from the date of request and will be included in your normal metered water bill. You will then receive bills in accordance with metered water.

For most customers the rain that falls onto roofs, yards and other parts of the property, drains as surface water to the public sewers. However, if you can show that none of your property's surface water drains to the public sewer you could have this charge reduced. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy contact 0845 60 70 456 or visit our website at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

### **Multiple Meter Standing Charge**

Where customers have more than one meter that is actively supplying water to their premises, we reserve the right to charge a standing charge for each meter. If, however the surplus meters are no longer required, the customer can request to have these meters disconnected free of charge.

### **Vacant Properties**

If a metered property is vacant – i.e. furnished but unoccupied - the full metered standing charge plus any metered consumption recorded on the meter will be due unless the customer asks for the property to be disconnected. There is no charge for the property to be disconnected, but there will be a charge for re-connection. This charge will be **£55**.

### **Void Properties**

If a metered property is void – i.e. unfurnished and unoccupied - standing charges will be withdrawn if there is no consumption. Where consumption has been metered, the property owner will be billed the full charges. Where a property remains void, to prevent leakage and water damage to the property, we may choose to seal or shut the supply off. Where there is evidence that customers have tampered with a seal, we reserve the right to charge for this and any damage caused.

## Supply Pipe Repair Policy

The repair for any leaking supply pipe on your property is your responsibility. If you are the homeowner, your property may be eligible to have the leak repaired by us free of charge or you may qualify for a £300 contribution towards the replacement of the pipework under certain conditions. This service is available for the first leak only for private, domestic properties that have not benefited from a previous free repair service or contribution based scheme since 1997. For any subsequent leaks, or where the supply pipe is in poor condition and has to be replaced, you must meet the costs.

To qualify for a burst allowance, you must undertake a repair on your pipe within 30 days of being notified of the burst's existence by the Company. If you fail to do so, no burst allowance will be granted.

## Notice of Vacation of Property

Where charges are fixed in relation to any premises by reference to volume of water supplied, the person made chargeable in relation to those premises as occupier may be liable to pay such charges after they have ceased to be the occupier of the premises. This applies where the customer fails to notify the Company of the ending of the occupation of the premises at least two working days before they cease to occupy them, in accordance with Section 144 of the 1991 Act.

The charges for which the customer will be liable will be those for the period ending in terms of whichever of the following first occurs after they cease to occupy the premises:

- (a) Where the customer informs the Company of the ending of the occupation of the premises less than two working days before, or at any time after the customer ceases to occupy them, the twenty-eighth day after the Company has been informed;
- (b) Any day on which any meter would normally have been read in order for the amount of the charges to be determined;
- (c) Any day on which any other person informs the Company that they have become the new occupier of the premises.

References to two working days are references to the period of forty-eight hours, calculated after disregarding any time falling on a Saturday or Sunday or on any day which is a Bank Holiday.

Where the person chargeable is not the occupier of the metered premises, the customer may be held liable until the expiry of twenty-eight days' notice in writing that he no longer resides at the property and does not require a supply.

The twenty-eight days commence from the date the notice is received at the Company's head office in Walsall. This provision will apply when the occupier vacates the premises, but remains the owner of the premises without giving the Company notice of vacation.

## 4. Assessed Charges

An assessed charge can be applied in two ways:

- For unmetered household premises that do not have a rateable value at March 31<sup>st</sup> 1990.
- For unmetered household premises where the occupier requests a meter, but cannot be metered – for example because it is too costly or technically difficult to fit a meter.

Subject only to the representations made by CCWater and any determination made by Ofwat.

In both cases, the assessed charge will be based on an estimated average use for the type of property the occupier lives in – for example, detached, semi-detached, flat/terrace. If a person is the sole occupier of a property, they may be entitled to a single person assessed charge. Proof of single occupancy, for example a council tax bill showing single person discount, will be required before a customer can be considered eligible for the tariff. We will require an annual renewal notice showing single occupier status for this discount to continue. If there is a change of occupancy at the property, the customer will be required to let us know in advance. Upon notification, the property will then revert to its original property-type based charge until either the circumstances change or a new occupier makes a successful application for single person status. Fraudulent claims will also result in the property reverting to the original property-type based charge.

In instances where a customer requests a meter but cannot have one fitted, the assessed charge will apply from the date of the meter installation survey.

	South Staffs Water	Severn Trent Water	
Category	Assessed charge water (£/pa)	Assessed charge sewerage (£/pa)	Assessed charge surface water drainage (£/pa)
Flat / terrace	117.39	106.15	27.99
Semi-detached	163.48	121.10	56.09
Detached	207.14	137.87	84.07
Single person	103.58	66.45	Applicable property type charge as detailed above

An assessed charge will not be given in cases where a meter can be fitted at reasonable cost, but where the customer refuses to pay any additional costs for an installation in an alternative location. In such cases, the customer will remain on an unmetered charge.

Where the RV charge is less than the assessed charge, the RV charge will continue to be applied. Where a customer moves into a property and the previous occupier was charged the assessed charge, the new occupier's water charges will continue to be based on the assessed charge. The new occupier cannot choose to have their charges based upon RV.

## 5. Special Tariff for Vulnerable Customers (WaterSure)

Customers identified as belonging to a vulnerable group who receive their water through a metered supply will be eligible to be billed on whichever is the lower of their actual consumption in a billing period or the annual charges detailed below, which shall be prorated in line with the billing period.

The vulnerable group tariff – Watersure - is equivalent to the average domestic water and sewerage bills in 2011-12.

	South Staffs Water	Severn Trent Water
Tariff type	Water charge (£/pa)	Sewerage charge (£/pa)
WaterSure tariff rate	130.14	147.00

If you apply during a billing period and are eligible for Watersure, the bill will be adjusted to allow the Watersure charge to commence from the beginning of your billing period. Metered charges will apply up to that date.

Eligibility for Watersure is defined by the Regulations set by the Secretary of State as a customer or any other person residing at the household property who is entitled to receive any of the benefits or tax credits listed below:

- Council tax benefit.
- Housing benefit.
- Income support.
- Income-related employment and support allowance.
- Income-based job-seeker's allowance.
- The new Working Tax Credit.
- The Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only).
- Pension Credit.

And either:

(a) Is entitled to receive child benefit for 3 or more children under the age of 19 who are in full-time education and reside at the premises; or

(b) Any person residing with them is diagnosed as suffering from a medical condition which causes them to use greater than normal quantities of water. Examples of such medical conditions are:

- Desquamation.
- Weeping skin disease.
- Incontinence.
- Abdominal stoma.
- Crohn's disease.
- Ulcerative colitis.
- Renal failure requiring dialysis at home.

Customers with renal failure requiring dialysis at home who already receive financial assistance towards water charges from their NHS Health Authority are not eligible for the WaterSure vulnerable group tariff.

This list is not exhaustive. If a customer is suffering from a condition which they believe requires them to use a significant additional amount of water, they should speak to their

medical practitioner. They will need to confirm, in writing, if the customer's condition requires them to use a greater than normal quantity of water.

Application forms are available from us by calling 0845 60 70 456 or by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk). It is your responsibility to apply for this tariff and to prove the validity of your claim. Details of the nature of proof we require are as follows:

For customers with a listed medical condition

- Details of the listed medical condition and how it requires the patient to use a significant quantity of water
- The name and address of the medical practitioner
- Latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credit

For customers with a non-listed medical condition

- A certificate provided by a registered general medical practitioner containing the following information:
  - Confirmation of the condition and how it requires the patient to use a significant quantity of water
  - The patient's name and address
  - The date the certificate is given
  - The name and address of the medical practitioner
- Latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credit

For customers with three or more children

- Latest notice of entitlement to child benefit or child benefit order book
- Latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credit

You must give us your written consent on the application form for us to write to JobCentre Plus or your medical practitioner, to ensure the details of your claim are correct. We will advise Severn Trent Water Ltd of successful applicants. Applications must be renewed annually to confirm that eligibility for WaterSure remains valid. We will inform you when your application is due for renewal. You also have a duty to inform us when you cease to become eligible for WaterSure, and the tariff will be discontinued at the end of the billing period in which eligibility ceased. WaterSure will not apply if you use water for non-essential purposes such as filling a swimming pool with a capacity of greater than 10,000 litres, or using an unattended garden watering device.

## 6. Billing and Payment Frequencies

The charges shall be payable by the occupier of the premises receiving the supply or any persons to whom the supply is made available, except where the owner of the premises who is not the occupier thereof is liable by or under any statutory enactment, or by agreement with us, or by any person who has agreed to pay the charges. Where the tenancy is for a period less than 12 months the owner may be liable to pay the water service charges. Where we are unaware of any tenants, we shall continue to bill the owner as occupier until such time as details of the tenancy are evidenced to us. In any event, the owner shall remain liable for the charges to such date.

Billing and payment times will vary and depend upon whether you are a metered or an unmetered household customer.

### Unmetered Bills

Bills for unmetered water charges will be sent annually during February or March. Payment is due in advance for the whole year on April 1<sup>st</sup>. If your bill is sent out later than March, payment will be due on the date shown on your bill. You can view your bill electronically as part of our e-billing service. Visit our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) to register. All references to payment by Direct Debit should be read in conjunction with the Direct Debit Guarantee Scheme, which we subscribe to. A copy can be obtained from any bank.

If you pay by Direct Debit, cash or cheque and prefer to spread your bills over the year, you can pay by instalments. For further information and to set up an instalment plan, please contact us on 0845 60 70 456.

For unmetered household customers, we currently offer the following instalment options:

- Two half-yearly instalments - normally April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Eight instalments over a year – usually April 1<sup>st</sup> - November 1<sup>st</sup>.

In addition to this, if you are in financial difficulty or find it difficult to budget, we can also arrange fortnightly or weekly instalments.

If an instalment or Direct Debit date is a bank holiday or during a weekend, we will take payment on the next working day. If you pay by instalments, we will notify you in advance of the amount you need to pay. As with all payment arrangements offered, if payments are not made on or by the due dates, the arrangement may be cancelled and any outstanding charges will then be due in full. We may also withdraw the option to pay by instalment in the future.

### Metered Bills

We will send our metered household customers a bill at least four times a year.

Where for any reason the quantity of water supplied for any period has not been ascertained, we may demand payment in respect of that period on the basis of an estimate of the quantity of water supplied. Any estimated charges will be adjusted, at your request, if the actual volume of water supplied is different from the estimate.

At least one bill each financial year (April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>) will be based on an actual meter reading. Where we do not have an actual reading, bills will be based on an estimate. The estimated bills are calculated by averaging the daily consumption between two Company readings, then multiplying this by the number of days in the billing period. In the absence of any Company readings the consumption from the previous billing period will normally be used as the basis for the estimated usage. Where you receive an estimated bill from us you can

provide us with an actual reading by calling 0845 60 70 456 or by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk). An amended bill will be issued.

New water and sewerage charges will be applied from the first bill after April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. Where this bill covers a billing period prior to and after April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 we will calculate charges by:

- Averaging the daily consumption and applying this figure to the number of days in the billing period prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 and applying the old water and sewerage charges.
- Averaging the daily consumption and applying this figure to the number of days in the billing period after March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 and applying the new water and sewerage charges.

Payment is due on the date shown on the bill – usually four times a year. However, if you pay by Direct Debit, cash or cheque and prefer to spread your bills over the year, you can pay by instalment. For further information and to set up an instalment plan, please contact us on 0845 60 70 456.

For metered household customers, we currently offer the following instalment options:

- Twelve monthly instalments.

In addition to this, if you are in financial difficulty or find it difficult to budget, we can also arrange fortnightly or weekly instalments.

If an instalment or Direct Debit date is a bank holiday or during a weekend, we will take payment on the next working day. If you pay by instalments, we will notify you in advance of the amount you need to pay. As with all payment arrangements offered, if payments are not made on or by the due dates, the arrangement may be cancelled and any outstanding charges will then be due in full. We may also withdraw the option to pay by instalment in the future.

## 7. Payment Options and Locations

Once you have received your bill, there are several easy ways to pay it. These are summarised in the table below. Please be aware that some payment methods may take longer than others to process and clear.

Locations for payments (free of charge unless stated)	Payment options					
	Direct debit	Cheque	Postal order	Cash	Debit / credit card	DWP Direct payments
Customers' own bank or some building societies	✓	✓		✓		
At any other bank (there may be a charge for this service)		✓		✓		
PayPoint				✓		
Post Office (a counter fee will be charged)		✓		✓		
To South Staffs Water directly		✓	✓		✓	
Water Direct via DWP						✓
Moneyway (previously Secure Homes) (there may be a charge for this service)	✓	✓		✓	✓	

### Direct Debit

You can pay your water bill by Direct Debit if you hold a bank account or certain building society accounts. A Direct Debit can be set up by calling 0845 60 70 456 or by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk). This service is free of charge. However, should a Direct Debit be dishonoured, we will make a **£5** charge to cover our administration charges. If you receive a refund that you are not entitled to you must pay it back when we request it.

Payments can be taken when your bill falls due. We will send notification 10 working days before we take the payment. The notification will include the amount and date when we are taking the payment. If one of these dates is a bank holiday, or falls over a weekend, we will take payment on the next working day. We are also able to offer various payment dates to suit you – choose from 1<sup>st</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> of the month.

### At any PayPoint outlet

PayPoint is the most convenient way to pay your water charges in cash. Look out for the distinctive purple and yellow signs located in newsagents, convenience stores, supermarkets, garage forecourts and off licences across the UK. Hand your bill, payment card or instalment booklet with your cash to the assistant who will process your payment. You will receive a printed receipt as proof of payment. This service is free of charge. The minimum PayPoint payment is **£2** and must be made in cash.

## Debit and Credit Card Payments

We are able to accept debit card payments over the telephone. All you need to do is quote your card details and we will do the rest. Debit cards will be processed free of charge.

We will accept credit card payments for which there will be an administrative charge of 1.6%. You will be told how this will be calculated before you pay.

Customers who wish to pay by direct debit or credit card can do so by telephoning 0845 60 70 456.

## At any Post Office

Sign and date the payment slip, and take the whole bill with your payment. You can pay by either cash or cheque. Make cheques payable to Post Office Counters Ltd.

The Post Office will charge you for this service.

## By Post

Send your cheque or postal order with the completed payment slip (no receipt will be issued). The address to send your payment to is:

South Staffs Water PLC  
P.O. Box 63  
Walsall  
WS2 7PJ

Make cheques payable to South Staffs Water PLC and write your name, address and customer reference number on the back of the cheque. Please do not send post-dated cheques. Please do not send cash through the post - we do not accept any responsibility for cash sent by post. This service is free of charge. However, should a cheque be dishonoured, we will make a charge of **£5** to cover bank administration charges.

## At Banks and Building Societies

Using the payment slip at the bottom of your bill you can pay at any bank and most building societies. Cheques are to be made payable to South Staffs Water PLC. This service is free at your own bank or building society. If you do not hold a bank account at the bank that you make a payment you may be charged by the bank.

## Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

If you are in receipt of any of the following benefits, you may be able to apply to have payment made directly to us from your benefit by the DWP via the Water Direct payment method.

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit

The DWP will only do this if you are in arrears with your water charges, have failed to budget for the charges and it being in the interests of you or your family that direct payments are made. To arrange this you must contact your DWP office directly with details of your outstanding arrears. Alternatively, contact us on 0845 60 70 456 and advise us of your

National Insurance number and we will contact the DWP on your behalf. This service is free of charge.

### **Internet or phone banking**

Please quote sort code 40-11-18, our bank account number 40770132 and your customer reference number, which can be found on your bill. Payments can take up to 5 working days to reach us. The bank may charge you for this service

### **Pay Online**

A secure and convenient method of paying your bill by debit card using the Santander Billpay facility –visit our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) for more details.

### **Moneyway (previously Secure Homes)**

You can spread the payment of your water bill over 12 months or 52 weeks through Moneyway. For more information about this, call 08000 92 99 81. You may incur an administration charge for paying by this method.

## 8. Difficulty in Paying Your Bill?

We know that sometimes finding the money to pay your bill can be difficult. If you are having difficulties in paying your bill, it is very important that you contact us as soon as possible. We are here to help but we can only help if you tell us. Call us straightaway on 0800 09 30 610.

### Customers in receipt of Income Support or Job Seeker's Allowance

If you are in financial difficulty and in receipt of certain benefits (income support, pension credit, income-related employment and support allowance or Jobseeker's allowance) you can apply to have payments made directly to us from your benefit by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This scheme is called Water Direct. The DWP will deduct an agreed amount from your benefit on a weekly basis and pay it directly to us until the outstanding bill is paid or your circumstances change. The DWP will only do this if you are more than 6 weeks in arrears with your water charges, have failed to budget for the charges and it is in your interest, or that of your family, that direct payments are made.

To arrange this, you must contact your DWP office directly with details of your outstanding arrears, or provide us with details of your National Insurance number and we can liaise with them on your behalf. It is important that you let us know if you are facing severe financial difficulty or hardship.

### Charitable Trust

We have a Charitable Trust Fund, which has been set up to help you: [www.sswct.org](http://www.sswct.org).

If you are experiencing extreme financial difficulties and water is amongst several outstanding debts then you can make an application to the Charitable Trust either direct to the Company by telephoning 0845 60 70 456 or through the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

By agreeing to, and maintaining, a low-value payment arrangement the Charitable Trust may be able to make a grant towards your water charges arrears. The CAB will go through your financial circumstances and contact us on your behalf if they feel that you will meet our Charitable Trust criteria.

If you are unsure how to contact the CAB, or you have any worries about your financial circumstances and your ability to pay your water charges then please telephone us on 0800 09 30 610.

### Debt Relief Orders

If you are in receipt of a Debt Relief Order (DRO), you may be entitled to a proportion of your outstanding water charges to be waived for the period of the DRO.

## Unpaid Bills Collections Procedure

We will send a reminder 14 days after the bill was due. We may also call you. If your account still remains unpaid after we have sent the reminder, we may seek to recover the outstanding charges.

We may:

- Employ the services of a carefully selected debt collection agency who will have details of the money owed and who will contact you regarding payment. They may also pass on your details to one of their local collectors who may call at your home to collect the debt. **For accounts passed onto a debt collection agency we will charge an amount equivalent to 10% of the outstanding arrears to cover our costs.** We will inform you when we intend to pass your account details onto a debt collection agency.
- Seek to recover the charges through the County Court. If we choose to do this, we will notify you at least 10 days before a claim is issued of our intention to do so and will also tell you the minimum amount of costs you would incur. If we use the County Court to pursue the claim, we may issue a warrant that could result in a bailiff seizing goods from your property. We may also use the services of a bailiff or other court enforcement procedures such as an Attachment of Earnings order whereby your employer will be instructed to make deductions from your wages.

## 9. Non-household Charges

Non-household customers can be charged by either of the following ways:

- Unmetered – based on the RV of the property.
- Metered – based on the metered standing charge and the volumetric consumption charge. The majority of non-households are charged for their water on a metered basis, in line with standard industry practice.

We also collect sewerage and surface water drainage charges on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. These will also be based on the method in which you pay for your water supply.

Value added tax (VAT) is payable by some non-household customers. From 1<sup>st</sup> July 1990, VAT was added to water charges for payers who fall into categories 1 – 5 of the 1980 edition of Standard Industrial Classifications. The following table demonstrates these divisions:

Division	Title
1	Energy and water supply industries
2	Extraction of minerals and ores other than fuels, manufacture of metal, mineral products and chemicals
3	Metal goods, engineering and vehicle industries
4	Other manufacturing industries
5	Construction

Although VAT is generally applied in the manner outlined above it is not straightforward as its application can vary.

We will send any new commercial customer a VAT declaration form, asking them to confirm their VAT status. It is the customer's responsibility to declare their correct status. There are HM Revenue and Customs penalties for making false declarations and for fraudulent evasion of VAT.

### Change of Occupier

If you are vacating your property and a new occupier is moving in, you should notify us of the date on which you are intending to move. Accordingly, the new customer should notify us of the date on which they are intending to move in.

### Security Deposits for New Commercial Customers

A security deposit to the equivalent of 90 days consumption may be requested from customers with a poor credit rating or a customer that we know to have been made previously bankrupt. The calculation for daily consumption will be based upon the historical consumption details for the property that is to be occupied by the business. If consumption history is not available, or the expected consumption of the business is expected to be significantly different to previous occupiers, the daily consumption will be derived from the average consumption of the same industry sector that the business relates to. The minimum security deposit that will be requested is £150. The deposit is returned after 12 months where a suitable payment record is maintained by the customer.

### **Discontinuation of Supplies**

If you want your water supply to be disconnected when you vacate your property, you must advise us. Under certain circumstances, you may be liable for charges if you fail to inform us of the change. Where a property is disconnected and there is evidence that customers have tampered with a seal, we reserve the right to charge for this and any damage caused. We also reserve the right to meter such properties.

## Unmetered Charges

The charges for an unmetered:

- Water supply;
- Sewage disposal service; and
- Surface water drainage service.

to a non-household premises are all based on an amount in the pound, as published by us for the year, multiplied by the RV of the property at the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1990. This is subject to an annual minimum charge.

## Water Supply

Details of the RV of your property are provided on your water services bill.

Those non-household customers still being charged on an unmetered basis may be contacted and notified that where practicable, a water meter will be fitted and their water charges will be based on the volume of water recorded by the meter. There will be no meter installation costs to customers where meters are fitted compulsorily.

South Staffs Water Supply £0.6587 per £/RV
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Notes: Water charges of £0.6587 per £ RV are subject to a minimum charge of £63.50 per annum. There is no standing charge for unmetered charges.

Miscellaneous Unmetered Water Charges	
Taps at allotments, lock-up garages, canal towpaths, etc	£63.50 per annum
Cattle troughs	£88.25 per annum
Places of worship	£63.50 per annum

## Sewerage and Surface Water Drainage Charges

Severn Trent Water			
Charging zones (refer to page 5 for details)	Sewerage and surface water charges (p/£RV)	Surface water only charge (p/£RV)	Sewerage only charge (p/£RV)
2	0.7733	0.2815	0.4918
3	0.8148	0.2988	0.5160
6	0.9983	0.3649	0.6334
7	0.9728	0.3554	0.6174
8	0.8092	0.2987	0.5105

For most customers the rain that falls onto roofs, yards and other parts of the property drains as surface water to the public sewers. However, if you can show that none of your property's surface water drains to the public sewer you could have this charge reduced. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy contact 0845 60 70 456 or visit our website at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

The above charges may be subject to VAT.

## Metered Charges

If you have a meter, your charge is based on the water used through the meter. We also collect sewerage charges on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd, which are also based on the water used through the meter. For most customers, it is assumed that 'water in' equals 'water out'.

We currently offer three metered non-household tariffs:

- Standard tariff – for customers who use up to 50 MI (50,000 cubic metres) of water per annum.
- Medium User tariff – for customers who use more than 50 MI (50,000 cubic metres) of water per annum.
- Large User Reservation Charge tariff – for customers who use more than 100 MI (100,000 cubic metres) of water per annum.

## Multi-site tariff

Non-household metered customers that have more than one chargeable property within our supply area may receive a **£5** discount on their water account, for each additional property that is within our supply area. The discount will take the form of a reduction in the meter related standing charge. The following conditions each apply:

- You agree to receive one account and hence one bill for all properties concerned.
- You agree to opt for Direct Debit as the means of payment.
- All properties are for commercial use.

There is no consumption threshold to qualify for this discount. Should any of the above conditions be breached then, with immediate effect, this agreement will cease and you will once again need to pay at the standard rate for each property.

Please apply to Customer Services clearly stating that you wish to apply for this multi-site discount, stating the properties to be included.

## Notice of Vacation of Property

Where charges are fixed in relation to any premises by reference to volume, the person made chargeable in relation to those premises as occupier may be liable to pay such charges after the customer has ceased to be the occupier of the premises. This applies where the customer fails to notify the Company of the ending of the occupation of the premises at least two working days before they cease to occupy them in accordance with Section 144 of the 1991 Act.

The charges for which the customer will be liable will be those for the period ending in terms of whichever of the following first occurs after they cease to occupy the premises:

- (a) Where the customer informs the Company of the ending of the occupation of the premises less than two working days before, or at any time after the customer ceases to occupy them, the twenty-eighth day after the Company has been informed;
- (b) Any day on which any meter would normally have been read in order for the amount of the charges to be determined;
- (c) Any day on which any other person informs the Company that they have become the new occupier of the premises.

References to two working days are references to the period of forty-eight hours, calculated after disregarding any time falling on a Saturday or Sunday or on any day which is a bank holiday.

Where the person chargeable is not the occupier of the metered premises, the customer may be held liable until the expiry of twenty-eight days' notice in writing that he no longer resides at the property and does not require a supply.

The twenty-eight days commence from the date the notice is received at the Company's head office in Walsall. This provision will apply when the occupier vacates the premises, but remains the owner of the premises without giving the Company notice of vacation.

### **Multiple meter standing charge**

Where customers have more than one meter that is actively supplying water to their premises, we reserve the right to charge a standing charge for each meter. If, however, the surplus meters are no longer required, the customer can request to have these meters disconnected free of charge.

### Standard Tariff (up to 50 MI/annum)

The charges for a standard metered supply to any premises shall comprise:

- A standing charge. This is a fixed charge that varies with the size of your supply pipe and covers the extra costs not incurred with an unmetered supply. These costs include reading, maintaining and replacing defective meters.
- A consumption charge calculated by multiplying the volume of water supplied and sewerage treated by the rate per cubic metre.

South Staffs Water			Severn Trent Water	
Size of meter (mm)	Water supply £ per cubic metre (m <sup>3</sup> )	Water standing charge (£/pa)	Sewerage volumetric charge £ per cubic metre up to 50,000 m <sup>3</sup>	Sewerage standing charge (£/pa)
15	0.9238	30.05	0.8860	12.24
20	0.9238	84.00	0.8860	17.94
25	0.9238	130.00	0.8860	24.09
35	0.9238	180.00	0.8860	33.86
40	0.9238	223.00	0.8860	33.86
50	0.9238	274.00	0.8860	46.47
80	0.9238	389.00	0.8860	72.15
100	0.9238	537.00	0.8860	121.92
150	0.9238	688.00	0.8860	280.70
200	0.9238	909.00	0.8860	353.85
300	0.9238	1670.00	0.8860	465.30

A surface water drainage charge is a fixed charge, which varies based on the drainable site area of your property.

### Medium User Tariff (more than 50 MI annum)

Non-household customers using more than 50 MI/annum (50,000 cubic metres) can opt for the Medium User tariff. Eligibility for this discounted tariff is based on the following criteria:

- You must agree to pay your account by Direct Debit in twelve monthly instalments;
- You must agree to receive a single water statement for all supplies to your premises or site;
- Consumption cannot be aggregated to reach the 50 MI/annum threshold from premises/sites in different geographic localities; and
- Peak month consumption in a year is no more than 40% above the annual average consumption level.

For water, this tariff is comprised of the following elements:

- One flat rate water standing charge. This replaces the standard metered standing charges, irrespective of the number and size of meters; and
- A discounted water volumetric rate

South Staffs Water		
Tariff	Water fixed charge (£/pa)	Water volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
Medium user	£1,989	0.8981

Sewerage is comprised of the following elements:

- A sewerage standing charge based on the size and number of meters.
- A sewerage volumetric rate, which varies depending on the customer's consumption.

Severn Trent Water	
Size of meter (mm)	Sewerage standing charge (£/pa)
15	12.24
20	17.94
25	24.09
35	33.86
40	33.86
50	46.47
80	72.15
100	121.92
150	280.70
200	353.85
300	465.30

Severn Trent Water	
Consumption (m <sup>3</sup> )	Sewerage volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
50,000 - 249,999 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8592
250,000 - 349,999 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8161
350,000 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8161

The above charges may be subject to VAT. Please refer to the start of section 9, page 31 for further details.

In addition to the water and sewerage charges detailed above, a surface water drainage charge is also payable. This is a fixed charge, which varies based on the drainable site area of your property.

Some Medium User tariff customers pay trade effluent charges instead of sewerage charges. These charges are paid direct to Severn Trent Water – we do not bill for them. For information on trade effluent charges, contact Severn Trent Water Ltd on 08457 500 500.

Non-household customers using more than 100 Ml a year are advised to opt for the Large User reservation charge described in the following page.

## Large User Reservation Charge Tariff (more than 100 MI/annum)

If you occupy a single site that consumes more than 100 MI/annum through one or multiple meters, you can opt for the Large User Reservation Charge tariff. This tariff allows you to 'reserve' the peak demand quantity of water (in MI/day) you think you will use in one of the summer months (April-September) and one of the winter months (October-March).

It is subject to the following conditions:

- It is agreed in advance with us;
- We reserve the right to restrict the size of your supply to ensure maximum flow is the same as the volume reserved for the year;
- Once applied, the optional volume tariff will remain in force unless written notice is given by April 1<sup>st</sup> of each future year; and
- All bills must be settled by Direct Debit.

For water, this tariff comprises:

- An annual reservation charge recovered in instalments on each monthly bill throughout the 12 month period.

South Staffs Water		
Peak monthly demand (MI)	Summer reservation charge (April - September) (£)	Winter reservation charge (October - March) (£)
0.3	29,685	19,790
0.4	31,912	21,275
0.5	34,139	22,759
0.6	36,364	24,244
0.7	38,592	25,727
0.8	40,818	27,211
0.9	43,044	28,696
1.0	46,865	31,244
Each additional 0.1	3,906	2,603

- A volumetric charge paid monthly in arrears. The volumetric rate applies to all consumption up to the total reserved quantity. Any consumption in excess of the reserved quantity will be billed at a premium rate. Customers using over 350MI/annum receive a 5% discount on the standard volumetric rate.

South Staffs Water		
Volumetric rate	Standard (£/m <sup>3</sup> )	Premium (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
Up to 350 MI	0.4440	1.2468
Over 350 MI	0.4218	1.2468

In a worked example, a customer reserving 0.3 MI/d in both the summer and winter periods will over the year pay reservation charges of £49,475. In the summer months they will pay a monthly charge of £4,948, and in the winter months they will pay a monthly charge of £3,298.

For sewerage, it is comprised of the following elements:

- A sewerage standing charge based on the size and number of meters, and

- A sewerage volumetric rate, which varies depending on the customer's consumption.

Severn Trent Water	
Size of meter (mm)	Sewerage standing charge (£/pa)
15	12.24
20	17.94
25	24.09
35	33.86
40	33.86
50	46.47
80	72.15
100	121.92
150	280.70
200	353.85
300	465.30

Severn Trent Water	
Consumption (m <sup>3</sup> )	Sewerage volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
50,000 - 249,999 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8592
250,000 - 349,999 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8161
350,000 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8161

The above charges may be subject to VAT. Please refer to the start of section 9, page 31 for further details.

In addition to the water and sewerage charges detailed above, a surface water drainage charge is also payable. This is a fixed charge, which varies based on the drainable site area of your property.

Some Large User Reservation tariff customers pay trade effluent charges instead of sewerage charges. These charges are paid direct to Severn Trent Water – we do not bill for them. For information on trade effluent charges, contact Severn Trent Water Ltd on 08457 500 500.

## Surface Water Drainage Charges for Metered non-household Customers

In addition to the metered water and sewerage charges detailed above, all metered non-household customers pay a fixed, surface water drainage charge based on the drainable site area of their property. The table below shows the charges for this.

Severn Trent Water		
Area m <sup>2</sup>	Band	Surface Water (full) (£/pa)
0 - 20	1	9.30
21 - 99	2	49.49
100 - 199	3	98.95
200 - 299	4	155.05
300 - 499	5	247.81
500 - 749	6	392.58
750 - 999	7	550.33
1,000 - 1,499	8	770.67
1,500 - 1,999	9	1,033.19
2,000 - 3,999	10	1,761.90
4,000 - 7,499	11	3,386.86
7,500 - 9,999	12	5,162.23
10,000 - 14,999	13	7,364.90
15,000 - 19,999	14	10,324.46
20,000 - 24,999	15	13,283.05
25,000 - 29,999	16	16,243.87
30,000 - 34,999	17	19,176.18
35,000 - 39,999	18	22,298.66
40,000 - 44,999	19	25,397.65
45,000 - 49,999	20	28,497.67
50,000 - 99,999	21	44,541.48
100,000 plus	22	105,259.43

For most customers the rain that falls onto roofs, yards and other parts of the property, drains as surface water to the public sewers. However, if you can show that none of your property's surface water drains to the public sewer you could have this charge reduced. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy contact 0845 60 70 456 or visit our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

## Billing and Payment Frequencies

The charges shall be payable by the occupier of the premises receiving the supply or any persons to whom the supply is made available, except where the owner of the premises who is not the occupier thereof is liable by or under any statutory enactment, or by agreement with us, or by any person who has agreed to pay the charges. Where the tenancy is for a period of less than 12 months the owner may be liable to pay the water service charges.

Billing and payment times will vary and depend upon whether you are an unmetered or a metered non-household customer.

### Unmetered Bills

Bills for unmetered water charges will be sent annually during March. Payment is due in advance for the whole year on April 1<sup>st</sup>. If your bill is sent out later than March, payment will be due on the date shown on your bill. Alternatively, your bill may be paid in two half-yearly instalments. This will normally be April 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Metered Bills

If you are a metered non-household customer on the standard commercial tariff, you will normally receive a bill either:

- Every three months, or
- Every month.

We will determine the frequency of your bill. At least one bill each financial year (April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>) will be based on an actual meter reading. Where we do not have an actual reading, bills will be based on an estimate. The estimated bills are calculated by averaging the daily consumption between two Company readings, then multiplying this by the number of days in the billing period. In the absence of any Company readings the consumption from the previous billing period will normally be used as the basis for the estimated usage. Where you receive an estimated bill from us you can provide us with an actual reading by calling 0845 60 70 456 or by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk). An amended bill will be issued.

If you are a metered non-household customer either on the

- Medium User tariff
- Large User Reservation Charge tariff

We will read your meter every month and you will receive a monthly bill accordingly, which must be settled by Direct Debit.

If an instalment date is a bank holiday, or during a weekend, we will take payment on the next working day. We will notify you in advance of the amount you need to pay.

As with all payment arrangements offered, if payments are not made on or by the due dates, the arrangement may be cancelled and any outstanding charges will then be due in full. We may also withdraw the option to pay by instalments in the future.

Where for any reason the quantity of water supplied for any period has not been ascertained, we may demand payment in respect of that period on the basis of an estimate of the quantity of water supplied. Any estimated charges will be adjusted, at your request, if the actual volume of water supplied is different from the estimate.

New water and sewerage charges will be applied from the first bill after April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. Where this bill covers a billing period prior to and after April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 we will calculate charges by:

- Averaging the daily consumption and applying this figure to the number of days in the billing period prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 and applying the old water and sewerage charges.
- Averaging the daily consumption and applying this figure to the number of days in the billing period after March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 and applying the new water and sewerage charges.

## Payment Options and Locations

Once you have received your bill, there are several, easy ways to pay it. These are summarised in the table below. Please be aware that some payment methods may take longer than others to process and clear.

Locations for payments (free of charge unless stated)	Payment options			
	Direct debit	Cheque	Cash	Debit / credit card
Customers' own bank or some building societies	✓	✓	✓	
At any other bank (there may be a charge for this service)		✓	✓	
PayPoint			✓	
Post Office (A counter fee will be charged)		✓	✓	
To South Staffs Water directly		✓		✓

### Direct Debit

You can pay your water bill by Direct Debit if you hold a bank account or certain building society accounts. A Direct Debit can be set up by calling 0845 60 70 456 or by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk). This service is free of charge. However, should a Direct Debit be dishonoured, we will make a **£5** charge to cover our administration charges. If you receive a refund that you are not entitled to you must pay it back when we request it.

Payments can be taken when your bill falls due. We will send notification 10 working days before we take the payment. The notification will include the amount and date when we are taking the payment. If one of these dates is a bank holiday, or falls over a weekend, we will take payment on the next working day. We are also able to offer various payment dates to suit you – choose from 1<sup>st</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> of the month.

### At any PayPoint outlet

PayPoint is the most convenient way to pay your water charges in cash. Look out for the distinctive purple and yellow signs located in newsagents, convenience stores, supermarkets, garage forecourts and off licences across the UK. Hand your bill with your cash to the assistant who will process your payment. You will receive a printed receipt as proof of payment. This service is free of charge.

The minimum PayPoint payment is **£2** and must be made in cash.

### Debit and Credit Card Payments

We are able to accept debit card payments over the telephone. All you need to do is quote your card details and we will do the rest. Debit cards will be processed free of charge.

We will accept credit card payments for which there will be an administrative charge of 1.6%. You will be told how this will be calculated before you pay.

We offer an automated payment line for customers paying by debit and credit cards. The number for this is 0845 60 70 456.

### **At any Post Office**

Sign and date the payment slip, and take the whole bill with your payment. You can pay by either cash or cheque. Make cheques payable to Post Office Counters Ltd.

The Post Office will charge you for this service.

### **By Post**

Send your cheque or postal order with the completed payment slip (no receipt will be issued). The address to send your payment to is:

South Staffs Water PLC  
P.O. Box 63  
Walsall  
WS2 7PJ

Make cheques payable to South Staffs Water PLC and write your name, address and customer reference number on the back of the cheque. Please do not send post-dated cheques. Please do not send cash through the post - we do not accept any responsibility for cash sent by post. This service is free of charge. However, should a cheque be dishonoured, we will make a charge of £5 to cover bank administration charges.

### **At Banks and Building Societies**

Using the payment slip at the bottom of your bill you can pay at any bank and most building societies. Cheques are to be made payable to South Staffs Water PLC. This service is free at your own bank or building society. If you do not hold a bank account at the bank that you make a payment you may be charged by the bank.

### **Internet or phone banking**

Please quote sort code 40-11-18, our bank account number 40770132 and your customer reference number which can be found on your bill. Payments can take up to 5 working days to reach us. The bank may charge you for this service.

## Unpaid Bill and Collections Procedure

We will send a reminder 14 days after your bill is due. If your account still remains unpaid 14 days after this date, we will send notification of our intention to disconnect your supply at least seven days before the supply is due to be disconnected. This notice details the additional costs you will incur if your supply is disconnected and subsequently reconnected.

The following types of property will not be subject to disconnection procedures:

- Residential care homes;
- Nursing homes;
- Residential care homes for the elderly and mentally ill;
- Children's homes and day care centres;
- Hospitals, doctors' and dentists' surgeries;
- Schools and other educational establishments;
- Prisons and detention centres and police, fire and ambulance stations.

This is not an exhaustive list. For full details see the Water Industry Act 1999, schedule 4a.

We have the right to separate the supplies of mixed-use properties and non-household properties with a schedule 4a element under S64 of the 1999 Act. If it is possible to separate the supply, we will, where possible, install a water meter on the non-household element of the property upon separation. Also, if payments are overdue on the non-domestic element, we reserve the right to subsequently disconnect its water supply. We may apply for a Warrant of Entry to enable us to do this. Re-connection charges are liable in such circumstances. A mixed-use property is defined as a single supply to a property that is only partly used as a dwelling and the larger part of the property is non-domestic.

If we have disconnected a non-household customer for non-payment of their bill, we reserve the right to request a security deposit equivalent to 90 days' consumption before re-connection.

Where we choose not to disconnect a non-household or mixed-use property for non-payment, we may seek to recover the outstanding charges through the County Court or other litigation processes.

## 10. Metering Policy

### New Water Supplies

All new water supply connections on or after April 1<sup>st</sup> 1990 are now made through a meter or by assessed volume where this is not possible.

Temporary or short-term supplies of water for certain purposes (for example, building water) may, at our discretion, be permitted without a water meter. These will be charged for by agreement between us.

### Existing Water Supplies

#### Household Meter Option

Where you reside in a property which is not metered, water service charges will continue to be based on the property's rateable value. You must complete an application form if you wish to have a meter fitted, which in most cases is fitted free of charge. The meter will, however, remain our property. There are circumstances where installation in a preferred location is unreasonably expensive or impracticable and in such instances, alternatives will be offered. The plumbing installation must comply with the Water Supply Regulations.

To help you decide if a water meter is likely to save you money, our 'Guide to Household Water Metering' leaflet, which includes an application form, is available by calling 0845 45 67 063. Included within the leaflet are steps you can follow to establish whether a meter would be beneficial.

Factors to consider are:

- How many people live in your property?
- How often is the washing machine or dishwasher used?
- Are more baths than showers taken?
- How frequently are any motor vehicles washed?
- How often is the garden watered?

Alternatively, you can assess your consumption and any potential benefits of metering online at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or obtain independent advice.

#### Reasonable Expense/Choice of Location

Our preferred meter location is externally at the boundary of the property. This is normally where our existing main stop tap (MST) is located either on the footpath or just within the boundary of the property.

If this is not possible, usually due to shared supplies, then it may be necessary to install an internal meter at the point of entry of the supply to the property, provided this is prior to any pipework branches or external taps. Internal meters will be connected to an external touch pad to ensure that we are able to take a reading without the need to enter the property. The touch pad will be fitted on an externally accessible point and is a necessary part of the internal meter installation.

Where it is not possible to install a single meter as above, then we may offer to install more than one meter (subject to the exception of flats described later).

We will install meters as above, free of charge, provided that it is not impracticable or unreasonably expensive. The criteria for unreasonable costs are where one of the following are involved:

- Separation of supplies;
- Installation of the meter in an alternative location at the specific request of the customer.

Where you choose an alternative location, as above, we reserve the right to charge you for any additional costs incurred. You will have seven days to decide if you wish to proceed with the installation where additional costs are involved.

If a second meter is to be fitted at the property, the customer will be liable to a charge of **£105 + VAT** which shall include the cost of and fitting of the device. If this is not possible, customers will be offered the alternative of the relevant assessed charge.

If it is necessary to replace your internal stop tap to allow an internal meter installation, the charge to you will be **£22 + VAT**. You will be made aware of this charge before work commences by our contractors. You have the option to arrange for the work to be done independently. However, you must ensure that the internal stop tap is working in time for the date of the meter installation.

Where it is necessary for us to reposition a meter for a customer with special needs (for example, elderly or disabled customers), we will waive any extra installation costs.

### **Meters for flats/multi-occupied properties**

In instances where you request a meter for a flat /multi occupied property, a survey will be undertaken in the usual manner. However, in these circumstances a number of options are applicable:

#### **Flats with shared heating systems**

A meter option will be offered only if:

- (i) An internal fit on the cold water supply is possible, then this will be free of charge; or
- (ii) An internal fit is not possible, but you are willing to pay the additional costs for the internal pipework alterations, then a meter will be installed on the cold water supply.

In these circumstances, you will be charged on the basis of a single metered supply.

#### **Flats with shared hot water systems**

A meter option will only be offered if:

- Internal fits are possible, in which case two meters will be installed free of charge - one on the cold water supply and one on the hot water supply; and
- The meters will be connected to two external touch pads, which will be installed to ensure that meter readings can take place without the need for gaining access to the property; or
- Where internal fits are not possible, but you are willing to pay the additional costs for the internal pipework alterations, then two meters and two touch pads will be installed.

Where two meters are installed you will be required to pay one standing charge for water services and one standing charge for sewerage services. Where there is a dispute concerning our refusal to install a water meter free of charge, you may approach Ofwat for a determination.

## Installation programmes and times

Where a household customer has requested a water meter, we aim to install the meter within three months of the metered charge notice being received. If we take longer than three months to fit the meter, we will commence metered water charges from the date of the meter installation and will cease charges based upon rateable value at the end of the three month period. Where additional charges have been paid by you, in connection with a meter installation then we will aim to fit the meter within 15 working days of receipt of payment. We reserve the right to install a smart meter. A smart meter is a meter which is capable of being programmed to record the volume of water that you use during particular months or at particular times of the day.

## Payment Conditions

Household customers applying for a free installation of a water meter must continue to pay their unmetered water charges until the meter is fitted. Normal debt recovery will continue if unmetered charges remain unpaid. Once the meter has been fitted, any credit or debit will be refunded or billed separately from your metered water charges.

## Assessed Charges

Assessed charges will be offered where it is not practicable to fit a meter and when it has been established that there is no possibility of a single meter for a shared property. Where a meter can be fitted at reasonable cost, and where you refuse to pay any additional costs for an installation in an alternative location, the assessed charge will not be offered and you will remain on an unmetered charge. The assessed charge for water and sewerage will be based on the property type, e.g. detached, semi-detached, flat/terrace or single occupancy and will apply from the date of the meter installation survey. Where the RV charge is less than the assessed charge, the RV charge will continue to be applied. Where a customer moves into a property and the previous occupier was charged the assessed charge, the new occupier's water charges will continue to be based on the assessed charge. The new occupier cannot choose to have their charges based upon RV.

## Information to customers

Information about the household meter option scheme will be made available to all customers on request, so they can make an informed decision on how they are charged for the water service they receive. Unmetered customers will be made aware of the availability of the free meter entitlement through a clear reference on or with their bill.

## Reversion to Unmetered Supply Charges

Household customers who opted for a meter are able to revert to paying their water charges on an unmetered basis provided that:

- a) They have not previously reverted to an unmetered basis for that property;
- b) They do not intend to use water for non-essential purposes, as described in the Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999;
- c) They or a member of the household who were living in the property when the original meter application form was issued, still live at the property. Therefore, a new occupier of the property cannot revert to an unmetered charge basis.

You may revert to paying water charges by an unmetered basis within the first twelve months following the meter installation. We will issue you with a statement detailing the consumption over the 12-month period since the meter was fitted. If you wish to revert to an unmetered

basis of charging, you should give written notification to us within one month of receiving your statement of water use in the first twelve month period.

Where you decide, and are able to revert to paying your water charges on an unmetered basis, this change will start up to twelve months after you were first charged on a metered basis, or as soon as possible thereafter. An existing customer can revert to metered charges by sending us a second meter application form. However, in these circumstances they may not revert again to unmetered charges.

The water meter must remain in place. Therefore, future occupiers will be charged on a metered basis.

The supply will remain metered, with the customer being unable to revert, where a water meter is fitted:

- On a new supply;
- As a meter option before April 1<sup>st</sup> 2000;
- On a new property; and
- Compulsorily in line with the Regulations.

If you are having difficulty paying, our debt management policies will make you aware that your future water charges may reduce if a water meter is installed as part of our free meter option scheme.

## **Selective Metering**

### **Change of Occupier Metering**

When a property without a meter either changes ownership or tenanted occupancy of more than 6 months, we may install a meter and charge that property according to water used. We will provide the new occupier with full details of charges, the location of the meter and a copy of the WaterSure vulnerable groups tariff, if this is applicable.

### **New Properties**

All new premises pay for water supply based on the volume of water recorded by a water meter. Household customers moving into a new property will receive information on the basis on which they will pay charges for that property.

### **The Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999**

The Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999 allows for the compulsory installation of a water meter where the conditions described in the Regulations exist. Specifically, this requires a meter to be fitted if water is used for a:

- Swimming pool or pond with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres;
- Sprinkler or unattended garden watering devices;
- Bath with a capacity greater than 230 litres;
- Certain types of shower; and
- Unit incorporating reverse osmosis.

If any of the conditions apply and a water meter is not fitted, you must contact us and we will make arrangements to fit a meter. However, if we are made aware that a sprinkler is in use or hose left running unattended, then details of the property will be recorded and investigated further. You will not be able to revert to an unmetered charge.

## Change of use

If water use changes to non-household use or there are substantial alterations or conversions to premises where there is a common supply pipe serving two or more premises in separate occupation, the supply to the original premises that has changed use will be metered. Where the meter can be installed internally, we will fit the meter free of charge. If this is impossible the meter will be fitted at the branch stop tap if available and is subject to the meter being freely accessible for meter reading. If a meter cannot be fitted internally or at the branch stop tap either:

- a) The person chargeable for the supply must provide for the common supply to be separated or a separate metered supply to be installed to the premises; or
- b) The occupier or owner of the premises seeks agreement with us to pay the water service charges for all the premises serviced by the common service pipe, provided that all the occupiers of the premises concerned agree. The nominated owner or occupier will also have to make their own arrangements to recover any amount due from the other owners or occupiers.

Once a water meter has been fitted, non-household customers cannot revert to having their water charges based on an unmetered basis.

