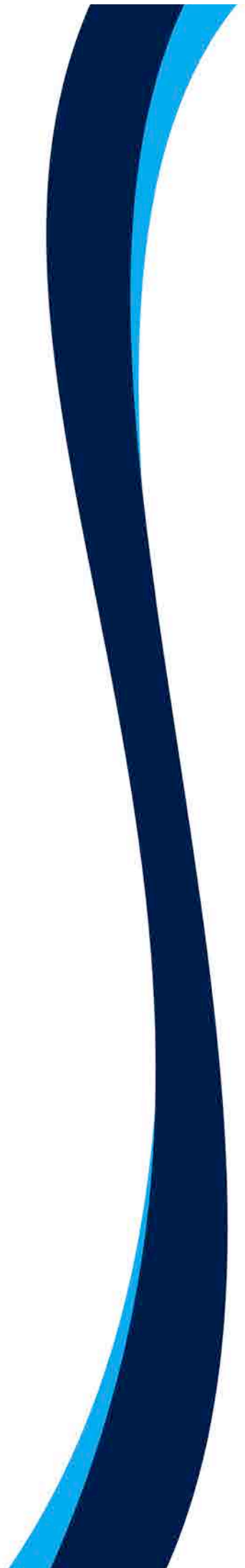




South Staffs Water

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

2015 – 2016



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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 provides clean drinking water to a population of 1.29 million customers through a network of 6,000 km of mains. Almost half of our water is sourced from boreholes in the ground and the remainder from two major treatment works, one of which takes water from the River Severn. We currently have excellent service standards, have very efficient operations and our bills to customers are amongst the lowest in the country. Our area of supply incorporates the Black Country conurbation and stretches to Burton and Uttoxeter. We do not supply sewerage services; our customers receive these from Severn Trent Water Ltd. However, we bill for these on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd.

Our Vision as a company is to provide the best possible 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 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015, unless otherwise stated. Please visit our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) for information on the following areas

- Your charges explained
- What you should do if you have moved into a property within our supply area
- Arrangements to pay your water services bill

Alternatively you can call 0845 60 70 456 or write to:

South Staffs Water PLC  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

### 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.

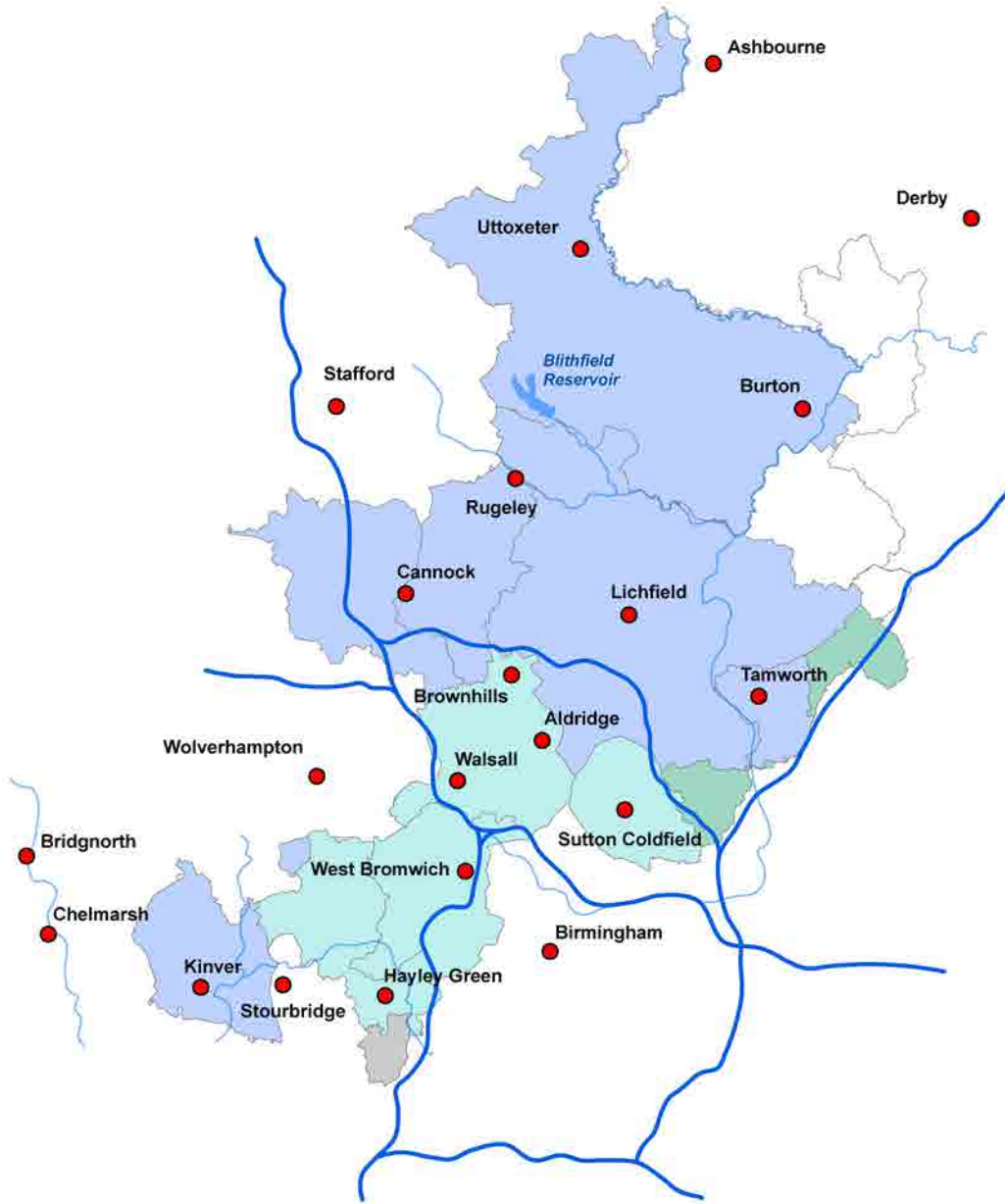
This Charges Scheme is made by South Staffs Water PLC under Section 143 of the 1991 Act, until amended by subsequent resolution of the company.

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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and remain in force until revoked, amended or modified by us. Consequently, our 2014-2015 charges scheme is hereby revoked with effect from the above charges scheme coming into operation.

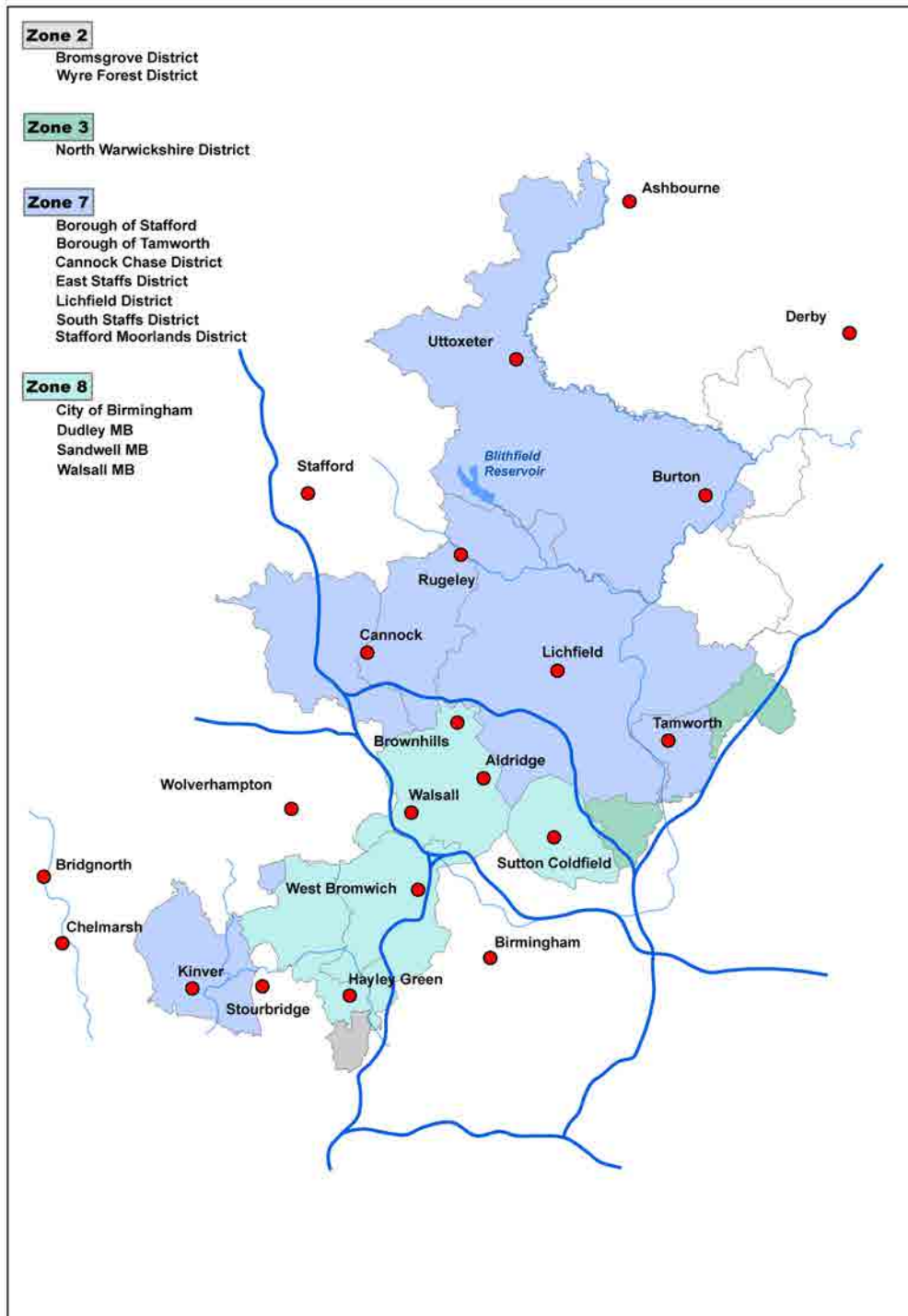
## South Staffs Water Plc Area of Supply



## 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.

Their charging zones are detailed in the map below. 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.



## 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
- Codes of Practice for Household Customers
- Code of Practice for Debt (Household Customers)
- Code of Practice for Debt (Non-Household Customers)

Copies of these codes are available on our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

Alternatively, please contact us on 0845 60 70 456.

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

Whilst the company strives to ensure that all bills for charges are correct, in the case of an error, the company reserves the right to make retrospective adjustments. This will always happen if the adjustment is in the customers favour. The company will make retrospective adjustments:

- If there is clear evidence of a failure or error by the company; or
- The company could have reasonably been aware of the error at an earlier date.

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.



## 2. Household Charges

Household customers are charged by one of the following three methods:

- Unmetered – based on the rateable value (RV) of the property;
- Metered – based on the metered standing charges and the volumetric consumption charge, registered through a water meter;
- 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.

### 2.1. Unmetered Charges

The unmetered charges are for:

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

#### Water Supply Charges

The charge is calculated by multiplying the rate in poundage by the RV of the property as fixed on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1990, this is not the same as the council tax band, and cannot be changed. The RV of your property is detailed on your bill.

South Staffs Water Supply £0.7349 per £/RV
--

Water charges of £0.7349 per £/RV are subject to a minimum charge of £70.92 per annum. There is no standing charge for unmetered charges.

Miscellaneous Unmetered Water Charges	
Taps at allotments, lock-up garages, canal towpaths, etc	£70.92 per annum
Household swimming pools - less than 10,000 litres capacity	£80.54 per annum
Cattle troughs	£101.27 per annum
Places of worship	£70.92 per annum

#### Sewerage Charges

Severn Trent Water			
Charging zones (refer to page 6 for details)	Sewerage and surface water charges (£/RV)	Surface water only charge (£/RV)	Sewerage only charge (£/RV)
2	0.8367	0.3103	0.5533
3	0.8814	0.3293	0.5803
6	1.0802	0.4023	0.7126
7	1.0526	0.3918	0.6945
8	0.8755	0.3293	0.5742

## Surface Water Drainage

For most customers, the rain that falls onto the roof, yard and other parts of their property drains into the public sewers. However, there are some properties where water does not drain to the public sewer, for example if it drains into a septic tank or soak-away, and so you may be able to get a reduction in your charges. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy visit our website at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or contact 0845 60 70 456.

Separate additional charges will be payable for supplies of water to taps at allotments, lock-up garages and household swimming pools with a capacity of less than 10,000 litres. For unmetered household 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.

## 2.2 Metered Charges

All houses built since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1990 have a water meter. Some customers have opted to have a water meter fitted and meters may have been fitted in some circumstances, as detailed in our Metering Policy. If you have a meter, your charge is based on the water registered through the meter. Sewerage charges are also based on the water registered 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	1.0806	31.25	0.8808	13.89
20	1.0806	96.29	0.8808	20.35
25	1.0806	148.45	0.8808	27.34
35	1.0806	207.63	0.8808	38.42
40	1.0806	257.79	0.8808	38.42
50	1.0806	314.96	0.8808	52.71
80	1.0806	446.36	0.8808	81.82
100	1.0806	616.85	0.8808	138.23
150	1.0806	792.37	0.8808	318.24
200	1.0806	1046.13	0.8808	401.20
300	1.0806	1922.75	0.8808	527.55

- 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.

<b>Severn Trent Water</b>	
Category	Surface water (full) £/pa
1. Flat / terrace	33.08
2. Semi-detached	56.99
3. Detached	80.70

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	0.3103
3	0.3293
6	0.4023
7	0.3918
8	0.3293

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.

### **Surface Water Drainage**

For most customers, the rain that falls onto the roof, yard and other parts of their property drains into the public sewers. However, there are some properties where water does not drain to the public sewer, for example if it drains into a septic tank or soak-away, and so you may be able to get a reduction in your charges. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy visit our website at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or contact 0845 60 70 456.

Separate additional charges will be payable for supplies of water to taps at allotments, lock-up garages and household swimming pools with a capacity of less than 10,000 litres. For unmetered household 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.

## 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.

### 2.3. Assessed Charges

An assessed charge can be applied in two situations

- 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 the 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	133.71	100.77	33.08
Semi-detached	186.84	108.07	56.99
Detached	236.54	129.81	80.70
Single person	106.18	52.16	Applicable property type charge as detailed above

An assessed charge will not be offered in cases where a meter can be fitted at reasonable cost. If the customer requests an alternative meter location but will not pay the additional costs associated with fitting in the alternative location, 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.

### 3. A Tariff for Vulnerable Customers (WaterSure)

WaterSure is a scheme intended to help household customers with a water meter that have low incomes and use higher than average amounts of water due to a large family or medical conditions.

You can apply, on an annual basis, for the WaterSure scheme if you or any other person living with you in the premises (“the qualifying person”) satisfies the criteria and conditions of eligibility set out below.

Our scheme allows eligible household customers charges to be capped. Your bills will be prorated to the actual number of days in the billing period

The WaterSure tariff - is equivalent to the average household water and sewerage bills in 2015-16.

	South Staffs Water	Severn Trent Water
Tariff type	Water charge (£/pa)	Sewerage charge (£/pa)
WaterSure tariff rate	142.04	155.00

If you are eligible your entitlement will begin at the start of the billing period in which you successfully apply, metered charges will apply up to that date. Where you are no longer eligible, your period of entitlement ends at the end of the billing period in which this occurs.

The Water Industry (Charges) (Vulnerable Groups) Regulations 1999 (as amended) defines the eligibility criteria as follows:

(a) The qualifying person receives any of the following benefits or tax credits:

- housing benefit;
- income support;
- income-based job seeker’s allowance;
- working tax credit;
- child tax credit (you must be receiving more than the family element);
- pension credit;
- income related employment and support allowance
- universal credit – the impact of introduction of Universal Credit: When appropriate, this document will be amended to reflect the impact of Universal Credit on the eligibility criteria for the WaterSure tariff.

and either

(b) the qualifying person receives child benefit for three or more children under the age of 19 who live in the premises; or

(c) the qualifying person is diagnosed as suffering from any of the following medical conditions:

- desquamation (flaky skin loss);
- weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration);incontinence;
- abdominal stoma;
- renal failure requiring dialysis at home (customers with renal failure requiring dialysis at home who already receive financial assistance towards water charges from the health authority are not eligible for the WaterSure scheme);
- crohn’s disease;
- ulcerative colitis;

- or any other medical condition for which a qualified medical practitioner has provided a certificate or written evidence confirming the requirement for additional water use and as a result of that condition uses a significant additional amount of water.

In addition you must also satisfy the following conditions:

- (i) the qualifying person occupies the whole or part of the premises as their only main house;
- (ii) in the case of a premises which are not used solely as a person's house, the other use is not the main use of the premises;
- (iii) water supplied to the premises is not used for:
  - watering a garden (other than by hand) by means of any apparatus; or
  - automatically replenishing a pond or swimming pool with a capacity of greater than 10,000 litres; and
- (iv) the qualifying person has applied for assistance and established their eligibility to it.

If you answer yes to **all** three of these questions it may be worthwhile you completing the application form:

1. Are you on a water meter?
2. Are you receiving benefit or tax credits as listed above\*?
3. Either:

Does anyone in your household have any of the medical conditions listed above\* that means they have to use extra water?

Or

Do you receive child benefit for 3 or more children under the age of 19?

To apply for the scheme, you must use our application form and provide evidence of eligibility. 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)

Applications may be declined if documentation to support your application is not supplied to us.

If your application claims:

- You have three or more children under the age of 19, we will need to see:
  - latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credit; and
  - a copy of a recent bank statement (which must be less than 3 months old) which shows your current entitlement to child benefit and the payment you receive.
- You have a listed medical condition, we will need to see:
  - 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.
- *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; and
- latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credit.

The latest notice of entitlement in the case of:

- (a) benefit must be dated no more than 12 months before the date of the application; or
- (b) tax credit must be dated no more than 6 months before the date of the application.

We may check the validity of your claim with third parties.

You are responsible for advising us of any change in circumstances that may affect your eligibility.

If you wish to remain in the Watersure scheme you must apply to renew your claim. We will remind you of the need to re-apply at the due time.

If you are no longer eligible, or fail to renew your application by the end of the following billing period, your charges will revert to our standard measured tariff.

## 4. Billing and Payment Frequencies

Charges are normally payable by the occupier of the property receiving the supply or any other persons the supply is available to.

Except where:

- The owner of the property who is not the occupier is liable by or under any statutory enactment
- By agreement of any person who has agreed to pay the charges
- By agreement with us

Where a 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 dependent 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 web self serve 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 – usually 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- Eight instalments over a year – usually 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> November.
- Fortnightly or weekly instalments- usually 1<sup>st</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> February.

If an instalment or Direct Debit collection due date falls on 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 instalments in the future.

### Metered Bills

We will send our metered household customers a bill at least twice per year.

At least one bill each financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March) 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. When you receive an estimated bill from us you can provide us with an actual reading by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or by calling 0845 60 70 456. An amended bill will be issued.

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 maybe adjusted, at your request, if the actual volume of water supplied is different from the estimate.



2015/16 water and sewerage charges will be applied from the first bill after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. Where this bill covers a billing period up to and after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 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> 2015 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> 2015 and applying the new water and sewerage charges.

Payment is due on the date shown on the bill.

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

- Twelve monthly payments
- Fortnightly or weekly instalments

Customers who select to pay by twelve monthly instalments may only receive one bill a year, showing their estimated charges for the following year.

If an instalment or Direct Debit collection due date falls on 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 instalments in the future.

## 5. Payment Options and Locations

We offer a wide range of payment options to suit our customers. 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)		✓		✓		
South Staffs Water (online & telephone)					✓	
South Staffs Water (postal)		✓	✓			
Water Direct via DWP						✓
Moneyway (there may be a charge for this service)	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Please note that there will be an administrative charge of 0.955% applied for Visa credit cards and 0.985% applied for Mastercard credit cards. Debit cards will be processed free of charge.

### 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 This service is free of charge. However, should a Direct Debit be dishonoured, we will charge you £5 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 is due. If there is a change to the amount, date or frequency of the payment we will send notification 10 working days before we take 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

If you are paying in cash, PayPoint is the most convenient way to pay your water bill. 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 and payment card with your cash to the assistant who will process your payment. You will receive a printed receipt as proof of payment, which should detail your customer reference number. This service is free of charge. The minimum PayPoint payment is £2 and must be made in cash.

### Debit and Credit Card Payments

We can accept debit and credit card payments over the telephone by calling us on 0845 60 70 456. All you need to do is quote your card details and we will do the rest. Debit card payments will be processed free of charge. However, for credit card payments an administrative charge of 0.955% is applied for Visa and 0.985% for Mastercard credit cards.

## Pay Online

We offer a free and convenient way to manage your account and pay your bills online. Please visit our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) for more details.

## 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. You should receive a printed receipt as proof of payment, which should detail your customer reference number.

## 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 where 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
- Universal Credit

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. 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

## Moneyway

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.

## 6. Difficulty in Paying Your Bill?

We understand that sometimes you may have difficulty in paying your bill. Please tell us straightaway if you can't pay your bill. Ring us 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, Jobseeker's allowance or Universal Credit) 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.

### South Staffordshire Water Charitable Trust

If you are experiencing extreme financial difficulties and water is amongst several outstanding debts then you can make an application to the South Staffordshire Charitable Trust. For an application form, please contact us by telephoning 0800 09 30 610 or visiting [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk). Alternatively you can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Welfare Rights Services, Stepchange or other free debt advice agencies. It is recommended you contact one of these organisations to receive impartial free debt advice.

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. As part of the application process, we will go through your financial circumstances with you or the debt advice service may do this and then 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 other agencies listed above, 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.

Further information can also be found by visiting [www.sswct.org](http://www.sswct.org)

### Insolvency Procedure

If you enter into a formal insolvency procedure, we will apportion all rate based charges on a daily basis up to the day immediately preceding the effective date of the relevant insolvency procedure ("the insolvency date"). Any apportioned charges after the insolvency date will not be affected by the insolvency procedure

### 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 will 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 may 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 Attachment of Earnings order whereby your employer will be instructed to make deductions from your wages.

## 7. Change of Occupier

### Unmetered Properties

If you are moving out of 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.

### Metered Properties

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.

### 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 the separate document 'Miscellaneous Water and Developer Services Charges' for details of the miscellaneous charges which may be applied.

### Vacant Properties

#### Unmeasured

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 £63.

No charges will be levied in respect of furnished but unoccupied premises where the non-occupation is due to exceptional circumstances such as death or long-term hospitalisation of the customer.

#### Measured

If a metered property is vacant – i.e. furnished but unoccupied – any water usage registered on the meter, along with the full metered standing charges 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 £63.

## **Void Properties**

### **Unmeasured**

The Company will not levy a charge on premises which are unfurnished and unoccupied. Premises that are undergoing refurbishment or being used for storage will be considered occupied for the purposes of this scheme by the owners of the premises, with charges payable. Where premises are temporarily unoccupied the water supply and sewerage charges are still payable.

### **Measured**

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 recorded, 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.

South Staffs Water will disclose your details and/or the property address to third parties who will carry out searches, including credit and electoral role searches, to confirm who has been, is, or may be resident at the property. South Staffs Water will use the information provided by third parties to manage your account, or the account for the property address, for identity verification, billing, debt collection, credit checking and keeping your details or the property details up to date. For further details of how we use your information please read our privacy policy which can be found at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

## 8. Supply Pipe Repair Policy

It is the property owner's responsibility to repair or replace any leaking supply pipe on their property, even if the supply pipe crosses third-party land. In the case of a leak on a shared supply pipe, all of the properties that receive water from the leaking supply pipe are responsible for the repair or replacement. The Company offers leak repair assistance to eligible homeowners, details of which can be found at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk).

For measured customers to qualify for a leakage allowance, you must carry out a repair on your supply pipe within 14 days of being notified of the leak. If you fail to do so, a leakage allowance will not be granted. This allowance is for household customers only and is a "once only" offer per customer for external leakage. Non-household customers are not entitled to a leakage allowance for lost water. However Severn Trent Water may grant an allowance against sewerage charges, if the water has not returned to the public sewer.

## 9. Non-household Charges

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

- Unmetered – based on the RV of the property; or
- Metered – based on the metered standing charges 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 non-household 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.

### 9.1. Unmetered Charges

The unmetered charges are for:

- 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

The RV of your property is detailed on your 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 £ 0.7349 per £/RV
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Notes: Water charges of £0.7349 per £ RV are subject to a minimum charge of £70.92 per annum. There is no standing charge for unmetered charges.

Miscellaneous Unmetered Water Charges	
Taps at allotments, lock-up garages, canal towpaths, etc	£70.92 per annum
Cattle troughs	£101.27 per annum
Places of worship	£70.92 per annum

### Sewerage and Surface Water Drainage Charges

Severn Trent Water			
Charging zones (refer to page 5 for details)	Sewerage and surface water charges (£/RV)	Surface water only charge (£/RV)	Sewerage only charge (£/RV)
2	0.8537	0.3291*	0.5766
3	0.8994	0.3495*	0.6048
6	1.1022	0.4269*	0.7432
7	1.0737	0.4157*	0.7238
8	0.8933	0.3493*	0.5985

\* Maximum charge is £123,341.63

For most customers, the rain that falls onto the roof, yard and other parts of their property drains into the public sewers. However there are some properties where water does not drain to the public sewer, for example if it drains into a septic tank or soak-away, and so you may be able to get a reduction in your charges. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy visit our website at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or contact 0845 60 70 456 The above charges may be subject to VAT.

### 9.2. Metered Charges

If you have a meter, your charge is based on the water registered through the meter. We also collect sewerage charges on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd. Sewerage charges are also based on the water registered through the meter. For most customers, it is assumed that 'water in' equals 'water out'. We also collect Surface Water Drainage Charges on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd, for more information please see page 30.

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.

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

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

- Water and Sewerage standing charges. These are fixed charges that vary with the size of your supply pipe and cover 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 (as shown in the table below)
- A surface water drainage charge is a fixed charge, which varies based on the drainable site area of your property.

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	1.0297	31.25	0.8835	19.11
20	1.0297	86.36	0.8835	24.15
25	1.0297	133.15	0.8835	29.20
35	1.0297	186.22	0.8835	43.79
40	1.0297	231.21	0.8835	43.79
50	1.0297	282.48	0.8835	51.37
80	1.0297	400.34	0.8835	78.86
100	1.0297	553.27	0.8835	132.13
150	1.0297	710.71	0.8835	302.10
200	1.0297	938.32	0.8835	380.44
300	1.0297	1724.60	0.8835	499.76

The above charges may be subject to VAT. Please refer to the start of section 9, page 24 for further details.

### 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 comprises 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	£2127.05	0.9724

Sewerage comprises 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	19.11
20	24.15
25	29.20
35	43.79
40	43.79
50	51.37
80	78.86
100	132.13
150	302.10
200	380.44
300	499.76

Severn Trent Water	
Consumption (m <sup>3</sup> )	Sewerage volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
50,000 - 249,999 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8497
250,000 and above	0.8137

The above charges may be subject to VAT. Please refer to the start of section 9, page 24 for further details.

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, please contact Severn Trent Water Ltd on 08457 500 500.

Non-household customers using more than 100 MI a year are advised to opt for the Large User reservation charge described on 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 payable 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	31,729	21,152
0.4	34,109	22,740
0.5	36,490	24,326
0.6	38,867	25,913
0.7	41,249	27,498
0.8	43,629	29,084
0.9	46,008	30,673
1.0	50,092	33,395
Each additional 0.1	4,175	2,783

- 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	0.4820	1.3537
Over 350 MI	0.4638	1.3705

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 £52,881. In the summer months they will pay a monthly charge of £5,288 and in the winter months they will pay a monthly charge of £3,525.

For sewerage, it comprises 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	19.11
20	24.15
25	29.20
35	43.79
40	43.79
50	51.37
80	78.86
100	132.13
150	302.10
200	380.44
300	499.76

Severn Trent Water	
Consumption (m <sup>3</sup> )	Sewerage volumetric charge (£/m <sup>3</sup> )
50,000 - 249,999 m <sup>3</sup>	0.8497
250,000 and above	0.8137

The above charges may be subject to VAT. Please refer to the start of section 9, page 24 for further details.

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.

You may be contacted by our dedicated Key Account team. The team is able to provide you with a range of specialist billing, technical, account management and engineering services to assist organisation in many different sectors to optimise water use and recycling. If you would like to talk to us about this Key Account service please contact us on 0845 60 70 456 or email [water@south-staffs-water.co.uk](mailto:water@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.

### 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 non-household 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.

To apply please call us on 0845 60 70 456

### 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	14.75
21 - 99	2	61.62
100 - 199	3	119.21
200 - 299	4	184.24
300 - 499	5	290.38
500 - 749	6	460.09
750 - 999	7	645.18
1,000 - 1,499	8	903.25
1,500 - 1,999	9	1,210.89
2,000 - 3,999	10	2,063.94
4,000 - 7,499	11	3,967.70
7,500 - 9,999	12	6,050.87
10,000 - 14,999	13	8,627.84
15,000 - 19,999	14	12,099.35
20,000 - 24,999	15	15,560.40
25,000 - 29,999	16	19,030.20
30,000 - 34,999	17	22,471.10
35,000 - 39,999	18	26,137.44
40,000 - 44,999	19	29,775.11
45,000 - 49,999	20	33,409.98
50,000 - 99,999	21	52,222.58
100,000 plus	22	123,341.63

For most customers, the rain that falls onto the roof, yard and other parts of their property drains into the public sewers. However there are some properties where water does not drain to the public sewer, for example if it drains into a septic tank or soak-away, and so you may be able to get a reduction in your charges. More information is available in the leaflet 'Surface Water Drainage'. To obtain a copy visit our website at: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or contact 0845 60 70 456. The above charges may be subject to VAT.

## 10. Billing and Payment Frequencies

Charges are normally payable by the occupier of the property receiving the supply or any other persons the supply is available to.

Except where:

- The owner of the property who is not the occupier is liable by or under any statutory enactment
- By agreement of any person who has agreed to pay the charges
- By agreement with us

Where a 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 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 1<sup>st</sup> April. 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 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### Metered Bills

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

- At least every six months or
- Every month.

We will determine the frequency of your bill. At least one bill each financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March) 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. When you receive an estimated bill from us you can provide us with an actual reading by visiting our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) or calling 0845 60 70 456. 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 falls on 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 may 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 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015. Where this bill covers a billing period prior to and after 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015 we will calculate charges by:

- Averaging the daily consumption and applying this figure to the number of days in the billing period prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015 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 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2015 and applying the new water and sewerage charges.

### **Insolvency Procedure**

If you enter into a formal insolvency procedure, we will apportion all rate based charges on a daily basis up to the day immediately preceding the effective date of the relevant insolvency procedure ("the insolvency date"). Any apportioned charges after the insolvency date will not be affected by the insolvency procedure.



## 11. Payment Options and Locations

We offer a wide range of payment options to suit our customers. 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)		✓	✓	
South Staffs Water (online or telephone)				✓
South Staffs Water (postal)		✓		

Please note that there will be an administrative charge of 0.955% applied for Visa credit cards and 0.985% applied for Mastercard credit cards. Debit cards will be processed free of charge.

### 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. This service is free of charge. However, should a Direct Debit be dishonoured, we will charge you £5 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 if there is a change to the amount, date or frequency of 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

If you are paying in cash, PayPoint is the most convenient way to pay your water charges.. 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 can accept debit and credit card payments over the telephone by calling us on 0845 60 70 456. All you need to do is quote your card details and we will do the rest. Debit cards will be processed free of charge, however for credit card payments an administrative charge of 0.955% is applied for Visa and 0.985% for Mastercard credit cards.

### 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 where 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-household 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 household dwelling and the larger part of the property is non-household.

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.

### **Security Deposits for New Non-household 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 from 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.

## 12. Change of Occupier/Notice of Vacation

### Unmeasured

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.

### Measured

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.

### 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.

## 13. Metering Policy

### New Water Supplies

All new water supply connections on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April, 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 impractical 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.

### 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.

### Installation programmes and times

Where a household customer has requested a water meter, we aim to install the meter within three months of the application 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, 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.

## Reasonable Expense/Choice of Location

Our first choice of location for meters to be installed is always 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. Radio read internal meters will be installed 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). If a second meter is to be fitted at the property, the customer will be liable to a charge of £117 + 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

We will install meters as above, free of charge, provided that it is not impractical 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.

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 completed 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:

- An internal fit on the cold water supply is possible, then this will be free of charge; or
- 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.

## Assessed Charges

Assessed charges will be offered where it is not practical 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.

## 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:

- They have not previously reverted to an unmetered basis for that property;
- They do not intend to use water for non-essential purposes, as described in the Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999;
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 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 group's 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 technically difficult or not cost effective 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:

- 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
- 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.



## 14. Customer Information/How to contact us

General Information can be found on our website:

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

This information includes:

- Our Code of Practice for Leakage
- Our Codes of Practice for Household Customers
- Our Code of Practice for Household Customer Debt
- Our Code of Practice for Non-Household 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

### Billing and General Account Enquiries

General information can be found on our website:

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

Opening hours for general account enquiries:

7am – 8pm Monday-Friday  
8am - 1pm Saturday

Bill enquiries: [0845 60 70 456](tel:08456070456)  
Difficulty paying: [0800 09 30 610](tel:08000930610)  
To set up a Direct Debit: [0845 60 70 456](tel:08456070456)  
Household meter option: [0845 45 67 063](tel:08454567063)  
Provide a meter reading: [0845 60 70 456](tel:08456070456)

### Water Issues

General information can be found on our website:

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

Opening hours for supply problems: 7 days a week.

If you have any problems regarding the quality or pressure of your water please call us:  
Supply problems and emergencies: [0800 389 10 11](tel:08003891011)

If you see a leak within South Staffs Water's area, please contact us.  
Report a leak: [0800 389 10 11](tel:08003891011)

### Other useful numbers

Minicom Textphone (for the deaf and hard of hearing): [01922 61 80 25](tel:01922618025)  
To check a caller is genuine: [0800 389 10 11](tel:08003891011)  
Crimestoppers (an independent organisation): [0800 555 111](tel:0800555111)  
Sewer and drainage issues (Severn Trent Water): [0800 783 44 44](tel:08007834444)

South Staffs Water Fax Number: [01922 61 62 39](tel:01922616239)

## **Postal address**

South Staffs Water  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

## **Our Commitment to You**

### **Water Services**

We recognise that despite our best efforts, things can go wrong. When they do we want to know as soon as possible, and we'll do our best to put things right quickly. Please call us on one of the following numbers

Billing Complaints: 0845 60 70 456

Water Supply Complaints: 0800 389 10 11

### **Sewerage Services**

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

Severn Trent Water Ltd  
PO Box 5309  
Coventry  
CV3 9FH

Telephone: 0800 783 4444

If you are unable to call us, you can write to us:

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

Fax: 01922 616239

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.

If you have written to us and you are not satisfied with our response, you can write to the Customer Service Delivery Co-Ordinator, who will carry out an independent review. If you are still dissatisfied you can refer the matter to the Consumer Council for Water Central to investigate any dispute.

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

Telephone: 0121 345 1017  
Fax: 0121 345 1010

Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 16.30  
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.

