

Water savings?
Lower bills?
Tailored services?
Simpler billing?
Your water
Your choice

How to get a better water
deal for your small business



From April 2017, more than 1.2 million small to medium-sized businesses in England will be able to choose their water and wastewater retailer.

So whether you're a hairdresser, a farmer, a charity or a public sector body, if your premises are in England and you pay your own water bill, you should be eligible to negotiate a new deal with your current supplier or choose a new water retailer.

use the eligibility checker at open-water.org.uk to see whether your business could tap into a whole host of benefits





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any help I can get
to grow more with
less water is good
for the business

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visit
open-water.org.uk
for details of
the new water
and wastewater
retailers

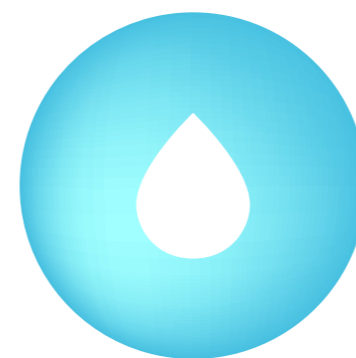
Switching to a new water retailer or getting a better deal from your current supplier is completely free and straightforward. And if your business is eligible you could benefit from:



reduced bills and better value for money from retailers competing to attract and retain your business



better customer service and more engagement from your water retailer



more innovative tailored services, such as single billing for multiple sites, or bundled utility packages



help to become more water-efficient, recycle water and cut waste, which could reduce your carbon footprint.



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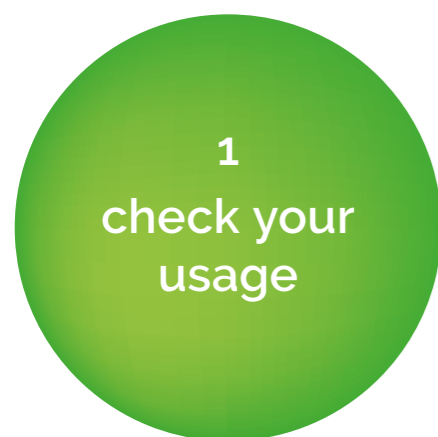
a supplier that
can save us a few
bob on water
costs would be
great news

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visit
open-water.org.uk
to learn more
about the benefits
and how to
get started

Eligible businesses and charities are free to negotiate a new water and wastewater deal with a current or new retailer, using just five simple steps:



Your latest water bill will show you how much water you use, and how much you pay for water supply and wastewater treatment.



Ask your current water supplier if they will improve your current contract. Explain that you're thinking about choosing a new retailer.



Ring or visit the websites of other water retailers (you can find a list at open-water.org.uk), or (from April) use price comparison sites or a utility broker to check the deals.



Contact your preferred retailers and ask for their best deal. This might include their proposed water charges, standards of service, support for water efficiency measures and availability of tailored packages etc. You might also want to check whether your current retailer is prepared to match the contract.



If you elect to choose a new retailer, they will handle the switch for you and let you know when it's done. You can still cancel within 7 days, and it should take no more than one month to complete.

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having water services tailored to my business would be a big help

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visit
open-water.org.uk
to learn more
about the simple
steps to getting
a better deal

Open Water is the government-backed programme that's been created to deliver this new market.

Open Water is jointly managed by:



Putting in place the regulatory framework for the new market.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Government department responsible for policy and legislation.



MARKET OPERATOR SERVICES LTD

Market Operator Services Limited manages the switching process.

Water retailers go through a robust set of checks from Ofwat and have to be granted a licence before they can supply water to customers. All the licence holders are listed on the Open Water website.

Ofwat has also developed Codes of Practice (ofwat.gov.uk) to provide a comprehensive range of customer protections, including safeguarding your supply during and after switching.

The changes to the water market are also backed by the Consumer Council for Water, the independent voice for water customers in England and Wales.

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admin's a pain,
so I'd love a single
water bill for the
whole chain

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visit
open-water.org.uk
to learn more
about customer
protection in the
new market

frequently asked questions

Q. When can I switch?

A. Eligible customers can start shopping around for retailers or renegotiating with their existing supplier now. But you cannot switch until April 2017.

Q. Do I have to switch?

A. No. You can choose to do nothing and remain with your current supplier and explore your options whenever you choose. The services you receive won't change without prior notification from your supplier.

Q. Will I have lower bills?

A. Lower bills, reduced charges or cheaper prices could be a benefit of the open water market for some customers. It will depend on the deal you negotiate with your existing supplier or new retailer.

Q. Will my retailer offer bundled services?

A. Bundled services, tailored packages and consolidated bills are just some of the offers retailers can put together in the retail water market.

Q. Will I get help to manage my water usage?

A. Helping business customers use water more efficiently and sustainably is one of the expected benefits of the open water market. Ask your water retailer for information and advice on how to save water.

Q. How do I find out who my current supplier is?

A. Check your most recent water bill. If you can't find a bill, or have recently moved to new business premises, contact your regional water company. You can find details of the regional suppliers on the Ofwat website (ofwat.gov.uk).

Q. Where can I get updates about the market?

A. To keep up to date with news about the retail water market you can visit open-water.org.uk, where you can sign up to our update email. You can also follow us on Twitter @OpenWater.

Q. Where can I get advice on the retail water market?

A. Customers can get help and advice about the retail water market from a number of places, including the Consumer Council for Water (ccwater.org.uk), as well as organisations that represent your industry or sector, and regional Chambers of Commerce. Third party intermediaries and brokers may also be able to help but these may charge you or the retailers for the service they provide.

Q. Do I have to use a broker to get a better deal?

A. No. While you can use a broker or other third party intermediary (TPI), such as a comparison website, to help you shop around, some retailers may only offer their best deals to customers directly. TPIs may also charge for providing their service to retailers or customers.

Q. If I have business premises in England and in Wales can I switch supplier for the whole business?

A. It will depend on where your business premises are and who currently supplies your water and/or wastewater services. Check the eligibility guide on the Open Water website for more help.

You can find more questions and answers on the Open Water website at open-water.org.uk, where you can also submit your own questions.

From April 2017, your small business might be one of the 1.2 million with the freedom to choose a water and wastewater retailer.

Get started by visiting the Open Water website for free, impartial advice you can trust and to see how you might benefit.