



South Staffs Water



# South Staffs Water

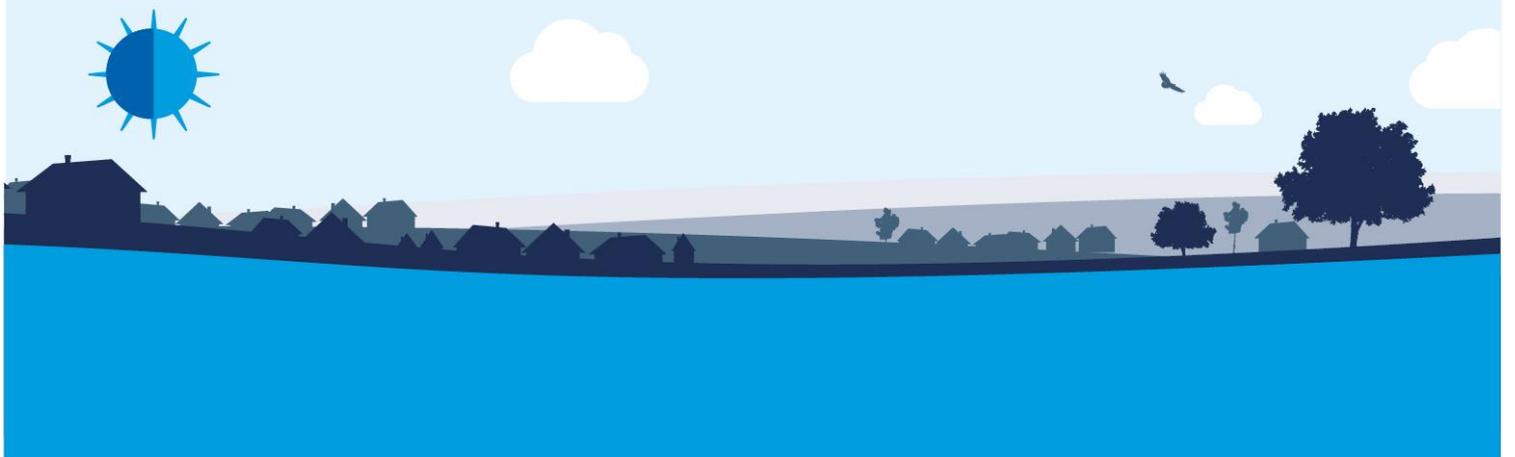
Customer Charges Scheme  
2018/19

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

# Section 1: Introduction



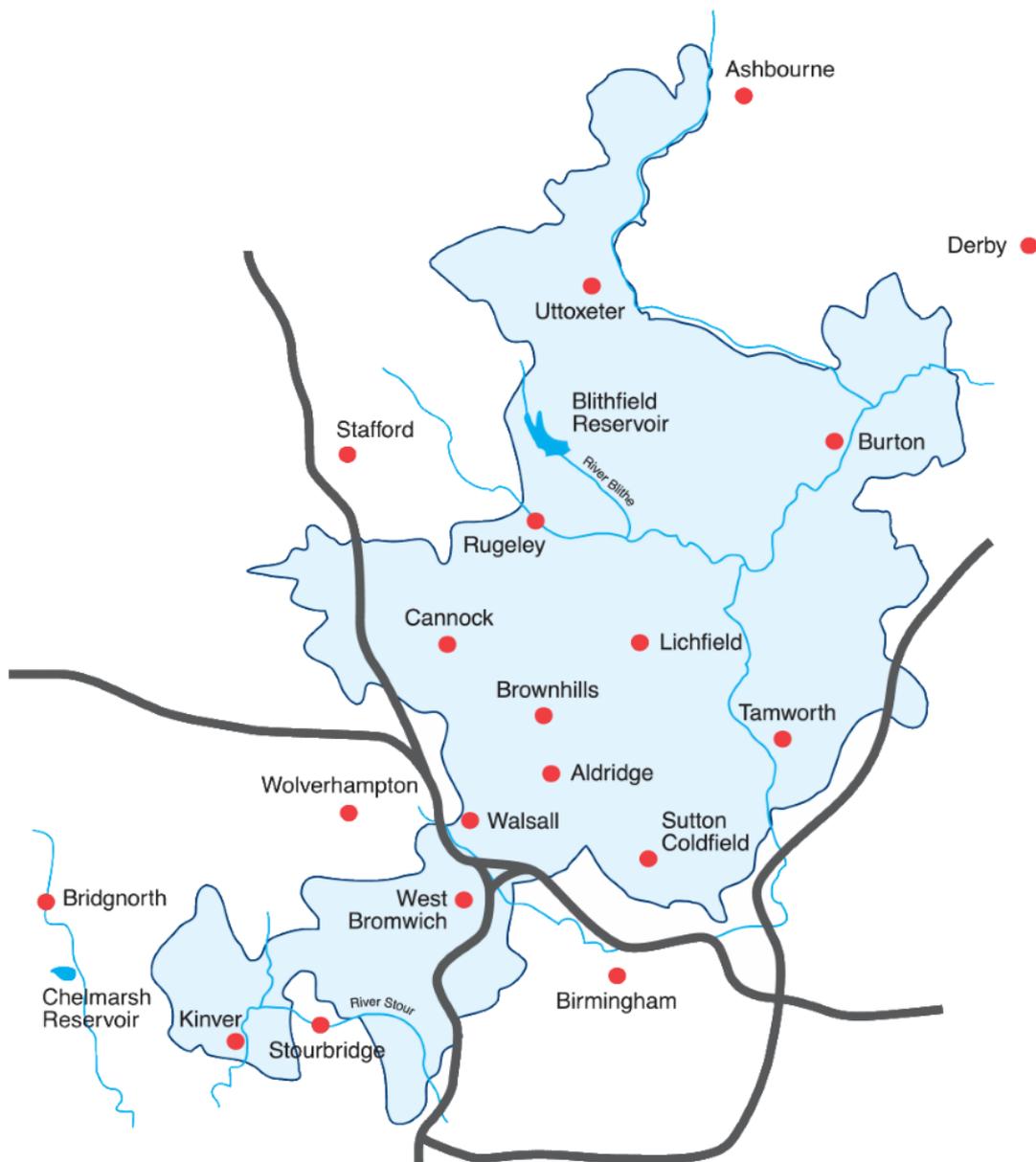
# Section1: Introduction

## South Staffs Water area of supply

South Staffs Water provides a secure and reliable supply of high quality drinking water, supported by first-rate customer experience, to approximately 1.3 million people in its area of supply.

South Staffs Water does not provide wastewater services, but does collect these charges from customers in our water supply area on behalf of Severn Trent Water. The wastewater charges shown in this document have been set by Severn Trent Water in their charges scheme.

This charges scheme is applicable to the South Staffs supply region, as defined on the map below which also shows Severn Trent Water’s wastewater charging zones.



## About South Staffs Water

South Staffs Water provides clean drinking water to a population of 1.3 million customers through a network of 6000km of water 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 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 up to Burton and Uttoxeter. We do not provide wastewater services but we do collect these charges from customers in our water supply area on behalf of Severn Trent Water.

We have a strong set of values that recognise our influence on the environment and on the daily lives of everyone in the community from customers to our employees. Our Vision is to consistently deliver high quality water at great value with excellent service to our customers, communities, employees and wider stakeholders.

How we perform as a business is important not only to our customers, but also our regulators, our owners and our external stakeholders. Since 2015, we have measured our performance against 15 different outcome delivery incentives (ODIs).

The ODIs cover all aspects of our operations and have been split into five main outcomes:



Further details of the measures that sit underneath these outcomes can be found on our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

## Our charging policy

This Charges Scheme sets out our charges for water services and also those we collect on behalf of Severn Trent Water for wastewater services. This Scheme shall come into effect on 1 April 2018 and remain in force until revoked, amended or modified by us. Consequently, our 2017/2018 Charges Scheme is hereby revoked with effect from this Charges Scheme coming into operation.

Please visit our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) for more 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 us on

03456070456

or write to:

South Staffs Water  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

If you are a non-household customer and eligible to choose your water and wastewater retail service provider this Charges Scheme is not applicable to you. To learn more, speak to us or visit [www.open-water.org.uk](http://www.open-water.org.uk)

## Legislation

Our powers to charge for water supplies are contained in the relevant parts of the Water Industry Act (WIA) 1991, as amended by the WIA 1999, the Water Act 2003 and the Water Act 2014. 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 WIA 1991, until amended by subsequent resolution of the Company.

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 WIA 1991 other than the supply of water in bulk. 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 for household customers
- Codes of Practice for Household Customers
- Code of Practice for household customer Debt (Household Customers)

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

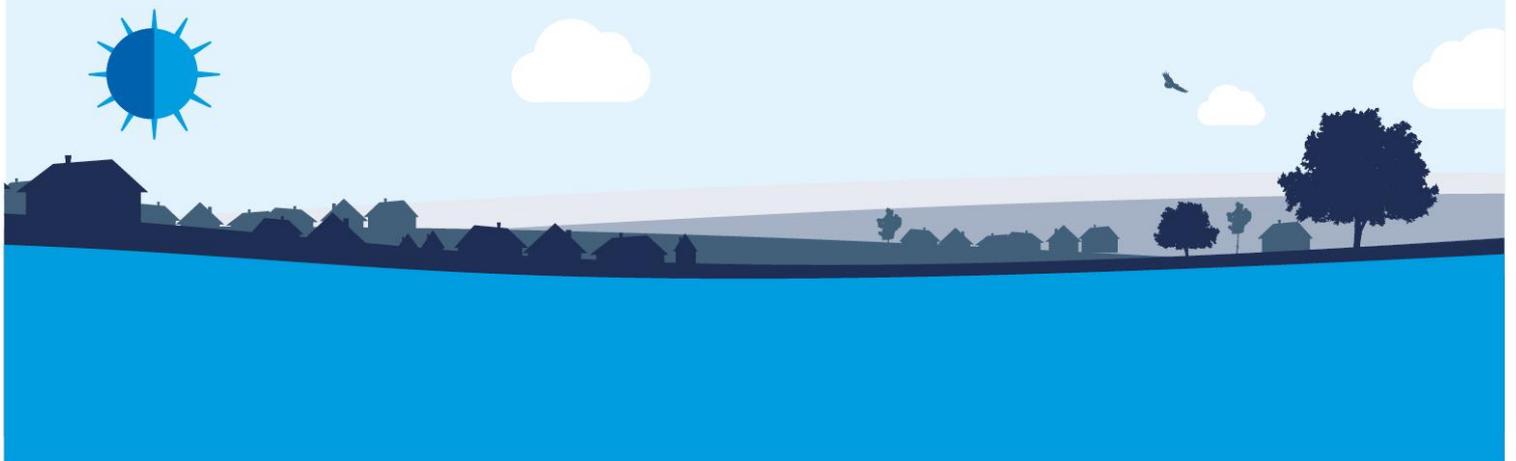
We expect our charging scheme takes into account the powers and duties of our regulator Ofwat. If there is anything missing, we will incorporate it in our charges scheme.

## Use of customer data

Any personal information you provide to us will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 for the purposes for which it was provided or as permitted by law. In particular, we may:

- Where customers have phoned us, provide their contact details to a customer survey company employed by Ofwat for the purpose of assessing our level of customer service (as measured by the Water Industry Service Incentive Mechanism),
- Disclose your personal information to other companies in the South Staffordshire Plc group, its affiliated partners, sub-contractors and selected third parties detailed in this document, where required to provide a product or service you have requested, or
- Share your personal information with Credit Reference Agencies and Fraud Prevention Agencies (CRAs and FPAs) in order to verify your identity for the purposes of fraud prevention and to assist us in managing your account and providing services to you.
- For more information on the way in which your personal information will be shared with CRAs and FPAs, please refer to our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

# Section 2: Liability of charges



## Section 2: Liability of charges

Water charges are payable by the occupier of the premises to which South Staffs Water supplies water or such other person as may be made liable under the WIA or any other Act of Parliament.

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 standing 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. Where tenant information is provided after the date of first occupation, by omission of the tenant or landlord, the owner shall remain liable for the charges incurred up to the date of notification. Billing and payment times will vary dependent upon whether the customer is a metered or an unmetered household customer.

A property is regarded as being vacant in the following circumstances:

- Premises which are left unoccupied but are left with bedding, a desk or other furniture, so that they may be used as a dwelling, office or commercial premises
- Premises used for multiple occupation with shared facilities
- Premises used as holiday, student, hostel or other accommodation
- Premises used for short-term occupation or letting where the occupation or term of the tenancy is for less than six months
- Premises in respect of which renovation of building work is being undertaken
- Premises which are not normally regarded as being occupied such as cattle troughs, car parks etc

In the case of vacant premises:

- In metered properties - Non-occupation is proven by zero consumption on the meter and no volume charges will be made. The standing charge will still be payable
- In unmetered properties - The full rateable value charge is applicable, together with the standing charge. Customers who leave properties unoccupied are advised to opt for metered charges

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.

## Short-lets

Where a property is let for periods of less than six months, we may regard the landlord as the occupier. This will only occur when we have:

- Not been informed of occupier changes
- The occupiers' forwarding addresses have not been provided

## Use of unmetered water

The occupier or owner of any premises, which are not supplied with water, who habitually obtains for use in those premises unmetered water supplied by us, shall be liable to pay charges as if those premises were supplied with water.

We reserve the right to install a meter and to charge on this basis. We also reserve the right to charge for the installation of the meter.

Customers who wish to use water for non-domestic purposes must have a water meter installed. This rule includes the use of automated watering devices and sprinklers. A standpipe licence for third party operators is available for individuals or organisations that frequently need to use quantities of water in the course of their work (e.g. landscape gardeners, construction companies). See section on standpipes.

## Two or more premises served by a single meter

Where the water is supplied to two or more premises in separate occupation, is measured by a bulk meter and there is no written agreement with South Staffs Water the charges payable in respect of these premises are to be paid by a particular person, the liability of the occupiers shall be joint and several.

## Multiple supplies to premises

Unless otherwise agreed with us, where premises have two or more separate supplies, the water supply charges will be calculated separately and a separate standing charge will be payable for each supply.

## Backdating of unbilled charges

Where we discover the customer has not been billed for all, or part, of their water supply, it is our policy to levy backdated charges, unless there is clear evidence of failure or error by the company.

In all cases where charges have not previously been levied in full, charges for household customers will be levied in accordance with the Limitation Act 1980 (i.e. charges will be levied back up to six years from the date of discovery of the error), unless a shorter period of time is agreed by us.

For metered household customers, back billing will include a volume charge as well as standing charges. Where no meter was in place or no readings for billing purposes were obtained, a bill will be calculated using the average daily consumption figure, unless the customer provides evidence substantiating a different figure.

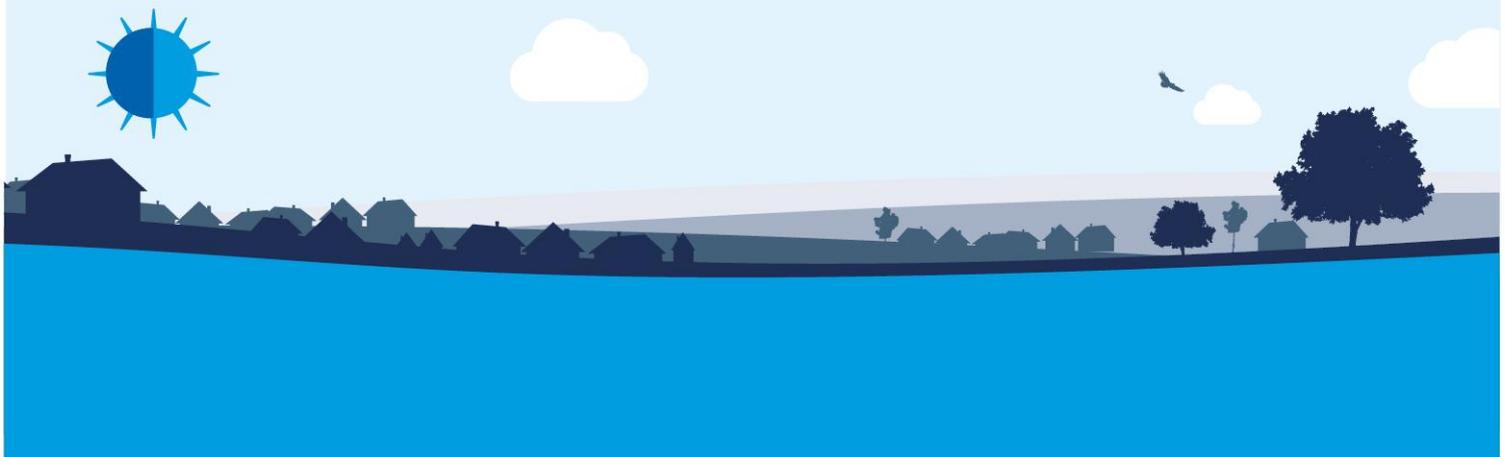
For unmetered household customers, back billing will include the rateable value charge as well as standing charges.

If, as a result of a meter registering outside of the prescribed limits of accuracy, the customer has not been billed or has been under-billed, we will levy charges in accordance with The Water (Meters) Regulations 1988.

### **Refund of charges**

Where there is clear evidence of a failure or error by us in the customer's favour, an adjustment will be made to the customer account. Should any refund be due, this will be limited to a maximum of six years, not including the current charging year. This period of six years is consistent with The Limitations Act, 1980.

# Section 3: Household charges



## Section 3: 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. These will be based on the method on which you are charged for your water supply, i.e. metered or unmetered.

### Water supply charges

The charge is calculated by multiplying the rate in poundage by the RV of the property as fixed on 31 March 1990. This is not the same as the council tax band and cannot be changed. The RV of a customer's property is detailed on their bill.

South Staffs Water Supply £0.7676 per £/RV

Water charges of £0.7676 per £/RV are subject to a minimum charge of £74.58 per annum (pa). There is no standing charge for unmetered charges.

### Unmetered charges

The occupier or owner has the right to be charged on an unmetered basis for the supply of water for domestic purposes, provided the water supply was connected to the water main before 1 October 1989, except where a meter has already been fitted.

- Unmetered bills consist of a standing charge and a charge based on the rateable value of the property
- Standing charge - The standing charge is a fixed charge for maintaining the water supply to the property. Standing charges are payable whether or not water is supplied to the premises
- Rateable value charge - Water bills are calculated by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the rate the company charges for water

### What is a rateable value?

All properties built before 1 April 1990 were given a rateable value by the Inland Revenue, based on their size and value. This means every unmetered property with the same rateable value receives the same water bill, regardless of how many people live there.

- So a single person pays the same amount as a family of six. It is no longer possible to appeal against the rateable value of a property and because of this many customers choose to have a water meter installed.

Unmetered customers can find out the rateable value of their property by looking on their bills

Additional Unmetered Water Charges	
Household swimming pools - less than 10,000 litres capacity	£84.29 pa

## Metered charges

All houses built since 1 April 1990 have a water meter. Prior to this date 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, see page 27.

- **Standing charge** - The standing charge is a fixed charge for maintaining the water supply to the property. The basic standing charge is for a 15mm meter and the level of this charge increases in proportion to the maximum continuous flow rate of the meter to meet the necessary customer's needs.

Where two or more metered supplies feed the same premises occupied by the same customer, a separate standing charge is levied to each supply. Standing charges are payable whether or not water is supplied to the premises. All metered tariffs are subject to a standing charge unless otherwise specified.

- **Volume charge** - The volume charge for water is calculated by multiplying the number of cubic metres used at the property (one cubic metre is equal to 1000 litres or 220 gallons) by the charge per cubic metre for water.

All metered tariffs are subject to a volume charge unless otherwise specified. In the case where there is no meter reading, the volume charge will be based on an estimated reading. As soon as an actual reading is obtained, the estimated reading may be amended.

A Consumption charge calculated by multiplying the volume of water supplied by the rate per cubic metre:

Size of meter (mm)	South Staffs Water		Severn Trent Water	
	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	1.0450	42.49	0.9609	17.43
20	1.0450	42.49	0.9609	17.43
25	1.0450	42.49	0.9609	17.43
35	1.0450	42.49	0.9609	17.43
40	1.0450	117.63	0.9609	17.43
50	1.0450	122.77	0.9609	17.43
80	1.0450	127.91	0.9609	17.43

If you are a non-household customer but are not eligible to choose your water and wastewater retail provider, the 15mm standing charge is £35.00.

### A surface water drainage charge

The vast majority of metered customers pay for surface water drainage based on the type of property they occupy. For most customers, the rain that falls onto the roof, yard and other parts of their property drains into the sewers. However, there are some properties where water does not drain to the sewer. For example if it drains into a septic tank or soakaway 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 0345 60 70 456.

These are shown in the table below:

Severn Trent Water	
Category	Surface Water (full) £/pa
1. Flat / terrace	34.10
2. Semi-detached	56.50
3. Detached	78.67

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:

Severn Trent Water	
Charging zones (refer to page 6 for details)	Surface water only charge (£/RV)
2	0.3167
3	0.3345
6	0.4022
7	0.3925
8	0.3345

- It is possible to change this to the property-type charge shown above
- Please contact 0345 60 70 456 for details
- If you elect to change, the charge will be applied from the date of the request and will be included in your normal metered water bill. You will then receive bills in accordance with metered water

## 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	0.9707	0.3167	0.6882
3	1.0221	0.3345	0.7237
6	1.2498	0.4022	0.8919
7	1.2182	0.3925	0.8688
8	1.0153	0.3345	0.7167

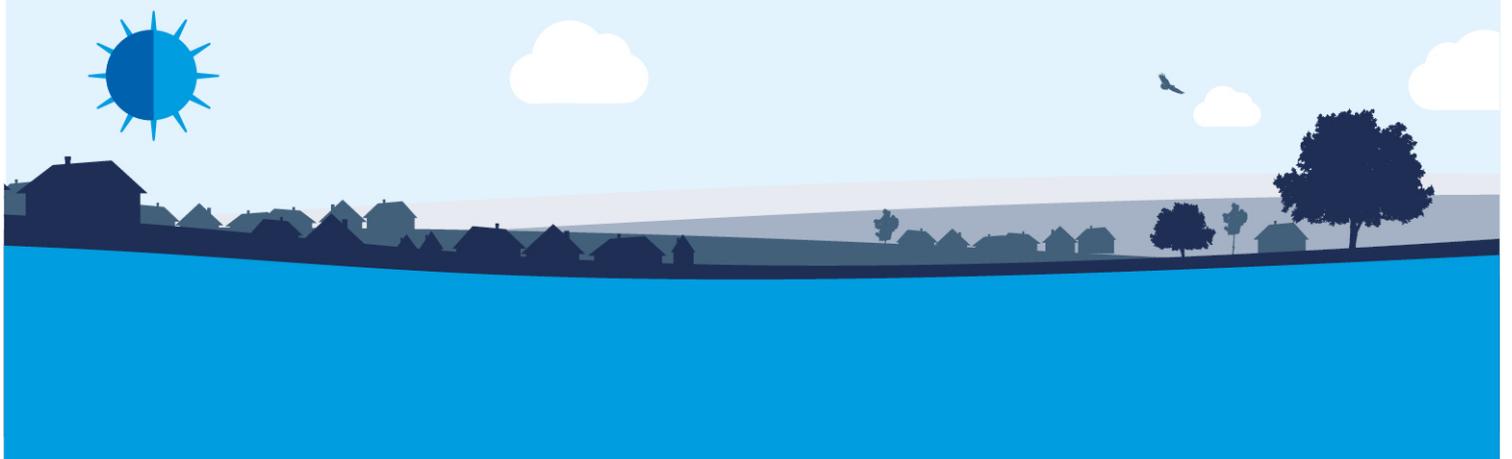
## Assessed charges

An assessed charge can be applied in two situations:

- For unmetered household premises that do not have a rateable value at 31 March 1990 and where a meter cannot be installed
- 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

	South Staffs Water	Severn Trent Water	
Category	Assessed charge water (£/pa)	Assessed charge sewerage (£/pa)	Assessed charge surface water drainage (£/pa)
Flat / terrace	139.93	117.96	34.10
Semi-detached	195.54	125.46	56.50
Detached	247.56	148.52	78.67
Single person	91.02	62.11	Applicable property type charge as detailed above

# Section 4: Billing and payment frequencies



## Section 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 standing 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. Where tenant information is provided after the date of first occupation, by omission of the tenant or landlord, the owner shall remain liable for the charges incurred up to the date of notification. Billing and payment times will vary dependent upon whether the customer is a metered or an unmetered household customer.

### Unmetered bills

Bills for unmetered water charges will be sent annually during February to March. Payment is due in advance for the whole year on 1st April or in instalments. 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 by logging into your online account- MyAccount. If you have not registered for 'MyAccount' you can do so by visiting [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

All you will need is your customer reference number, which can be found at the top of any email or letter we have sent you, and then create a password of your choice.

All customers have the opportunity to pay their annual bill in the following ways:

- In full by 1 April
- In two instalments by 1 April and 1 October
- In eight monthly instalments from 1 April to 1 November inclusive
- In more frequent instalments, such as weekly or fortnightly by prior arrangement

If you pay by Direct Debit, cash or cheque and prefer to spread your bills over the year, you can pay by instalments, where flexible payment dates can be offered. For further information and to set up an instalment plan, please contact us on 0345 60 70 456. All references to payment by Direct Debit should be read in conjunction with the Direct Debit Guarantee, which we subscribe to. A copy can be obtained from any bank.

### Metered bills

Customers will normally receive two metered bills a year. This will be for the previous period and will be based on the amount of water consumed or an estimated read where an actual read was not available.

All customers have the opportunity to pay their bill in the following ways:

- Within 14 days of receipt
- In monthly instalments
- In more frequent instalments by prior arrangements

Estimated bills are calculated by averaging the daily consumption between two 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 which you can add using 'My Account' or by calling us on 0345 60 70 456. We will then provide you with an amended bill based on your actual readings. In 2018/19 water and sewerage charges will be applied from the first bill after 1 April 2018.

Where this bill covers a billing period up to and after 1 April 2018 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 April 2018 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 March 2018 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:

- 12 monthly payments
- Fortnightly or weekly instalments

## Instalment plans

If a customer pays by Direct Debit, cash or cheque and prefers to spread their bill over the year, they can pay by instalments. For further information and to set up an instalment plan, please contact us on 0345 60 70 456.

Instalment plans are designed to spread the cost of the water bill. They aim to build up credit on the customer's account so that when a bill is issued, sufficient funds are available to meet the payment. It is not necessary to have a bank or building society account in order to set up an instalment plan.

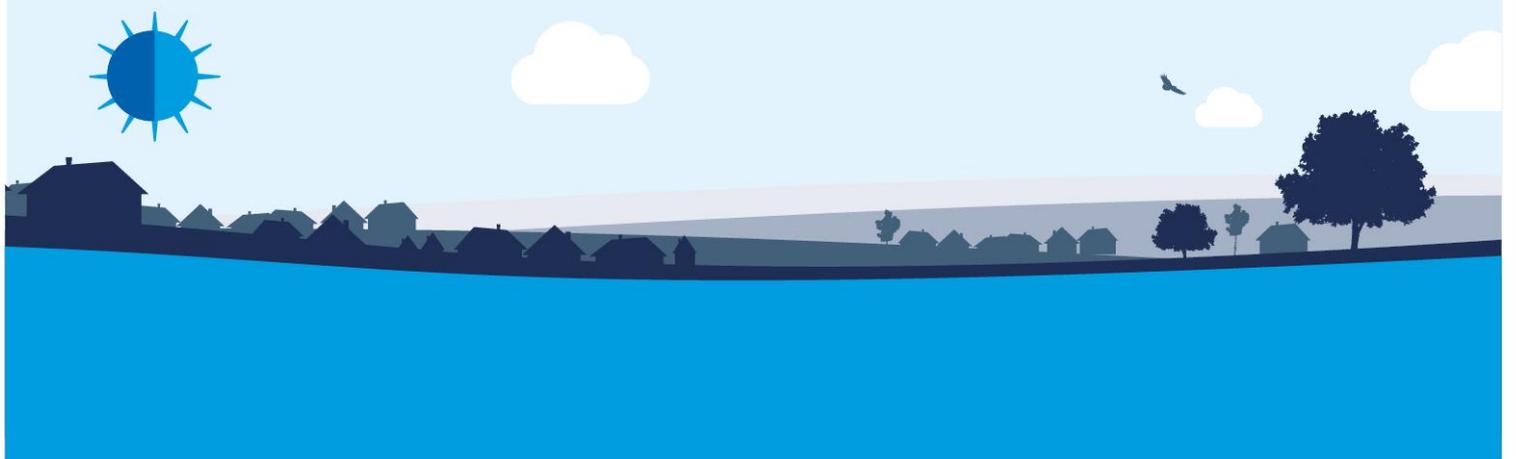
If an instalment or Direct Debit collection due date falls on a bank holiday or during a weekend, we will take payment on the next working day. If you pay by instalments, we will notify you in advance of the amount you need to pay. As with all payment arrangements offered, if payments are not made on 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.

If a customer defaults on an instalment plan, 100% of the full bill amount will become immediately due. Customers who would like further information should call 0345 60 70 456.

## **Apportionment of charges**

All prices are set from 1st April each year. If the previous bill was received before 1st April, the next bill will be apportioned so that the customer pays one rate to 31 March and the new rate from 1st April.

# Section 5: Unmetered supplies



## Section 5: Unmetered supplies

### Types of properties and unmetered charges applied

#### Household premises

The variable charge for household premises is based on the 1973 Rateable Value of the property supplied.

#### Business premises

From 1 April 1990 the variable charge for business premises is based on the 2005 Business Rateable Value for the property supplied.

#### Business premises that include accommodation

From 1 April 1990, the variable charge for mixed premises is based on the 2005 Business Rateable Value for the property supplied. The standing charge is increased to reflect the fact that the living accommodation is not included in this rateable value.

#### Multiple dwellings with single rateable value

Where a single assessment includes two or more separate dwellings, the properties will be compulsorily metered.

#### Premises with only one tap

The rateable value of these properties is inappropriate as a proxy for consumption. Instead a higher standing charge is payable, but with no variable element.

#### Student accommodation

Where student accommodation is included in the assessment of college premises, rateable value is inappropriate as a proxy for consumption. Instead a fixed element per student is charged equal to the average consumption charge per student of metered college accommodation.

#### Premises with no rateable value

The charge for unmetered water supplied to a property not liable to be rated (e.g. places of worship), and with minimal water use, is a fixed charge.

#### Bill apportionment

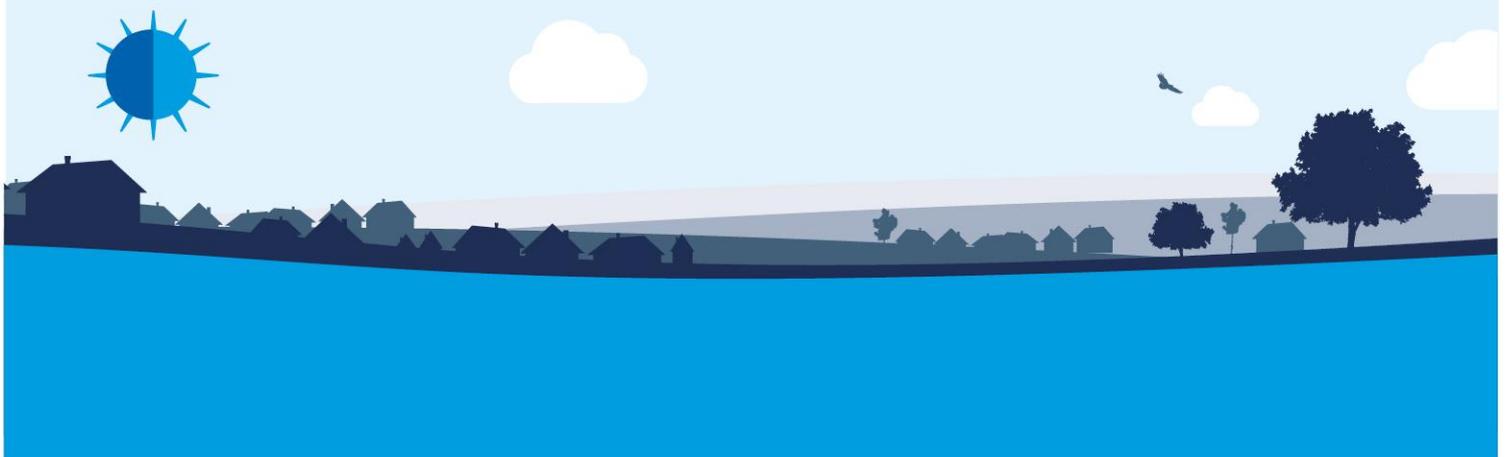
Where a period of occupation of premises is less than the full year, charges will be apportioned on a daily basis.

#### Mixed use properties

We have the right to separate the supplies of mixed-use properties and non-household properties with a schedule 4a element under Section 64 of the 1999 Act. 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.

# Section 6: Payment options



## Section 6: Payment options

We offer a range of flexible ways for customers to pay their water bill. Please be aware that some payment methods may take longer than others to process and clear, and some may include an additional charge. These are summarised in the table below:

Locations for payments (free of charge unless stated)	Payment Options					
	Direct Debit	Cheque	Postal Order	Cash	Debit / Credit Card	DWP Direct Payments
My Account (online service)					•	
Customer's 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						•

### My Account

My Account is our secure online system where you can:

- Make a payment
- Set up a Direct Debit
- View your bills
- View your payment history
- View or set up a new payment plan
- Amend your details

If you're not registered for 'My Account', you can do so by going onto our website using the link: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/my-account/user/register](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/my-account/user/register)

You will need your customer reference number to log in. This can be found at the top of any email or letter we've sent you. For further information on My Account please visit our website.

### Debit and credit card payments

We can accept debit and credit card payments over the telephone by all us on 0345 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. Please note we do not accept American Express.

## Direct Debit

You can pay your water bill by Direct Debit if you hold a bank account or certain building society accounts. A range of payment dates are available to suit you. A Direct Debit can be set up online through MyAccount or by calling us on 0345 60 70 456. This service is free of charge. 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.

## Internet or phone banking

You can pay your bill by bank transfer using your internet or phone banking, payable to South Staffs Water.

Our bank details are:

Company: South Staffs Water  
Customer reference name: XXXXXXXX  
Account number: 40770132  
Sort code: 40-11-18

Your customer reference number can be found on the front of your bill. Please note the payment can take up to 5 working days to clear. Your bank may charge you for this.

## At any Post Office

You will need to 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  
P.O. Box 7040  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS1 9QG

Make cheques payable to South Staffs Water 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.

## **At banks and building societies**

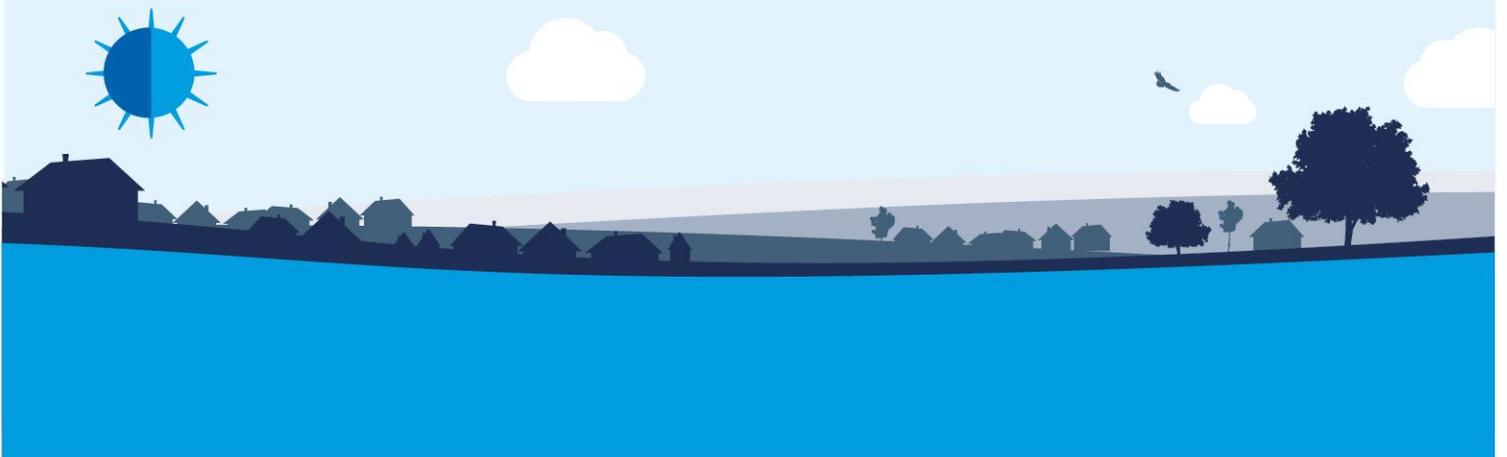
Using the payment slip at the bottom of your bill you can pay at any bank and most building societies. Cheques are to be made payable to South Staffs Water. This service is free at your own bank or building society. If you do not hold a bank account at the bank where you make a payment, you may be charged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

## **At any PayPoint outlet**

Some payment mechanisms may support payment via PayPoint 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.

Please see our website for further information: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/household/my-bills-and-payments/paying-my-bill/paypoint](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/household/my-bills-and-payments/paying-my-bill/paypoint)

Section 7:  
Difficulty in paying  
your bill?



## Section 7: Difficulty in paying your bill?

We understand that sometimes you may find it difficult to pay your bill. So that we can help, please tell us straightaway if you can't pay your bill. We advise you to ring us on 0800 09 30 610 or email: [info@south-staffs-water.co.uk](mailto:info@south-staffs-water.co.uk)

### Failure to make payments

Customers who don't keep to agreed payment arrangements, without discussing this with us first, will be required to pay the whole of their debt. Failure to make further payments may result in some or all of the following:

#### Letter

We'll write to the customer to notify them of the outstanding amount. If the customer contacts us we will try to resolve any queries and possibly set up a payment arrangement.

#### Personal contact

If the customer doesn't make contact, we may telephone or visit the customer at their home. The object of this is to:

- Find out why the payment has not been made Collect all money, some money, or agree a repayment plan
- Discuss options for independent advice e.g. Citizens' Advice Bureau and provide contact details
- Collect relevant information which may enable us to arrange for payments to be deducted from any benefits the customer is entitled to
- Find out if the customer is eligible for special tariffs, or arrange to have a meter installed to ensure the customer only pays for the water they consume

### Collection agencies

If, after writing and attempting to contact a customer, the bill has still not been paid we may use the services of a reputable debt collection agency. We will only use agencies that are members of the Credit Services Association, and as a condition of their membership, have signed up to their code of practice. Any complaints about agents' behaviour should be addressed to South Staffs Water in the first instance.

If your account is in arrears, a default notice may be placed against your credit file.

This may affect your credit rating and the decisions that are made by financial services organisations.

There are a range of free advice services you can contact. Please visit our website for further information: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

## County court claim

If the customer still refuses to make an arrangement to pay, we may ask the county court to order payment. This means the customer will get a county court claim against them and will also have to pay legal costs.

We will write to the customer after it has issued a claim to explain what a county court judgement means.

## County court judgement

If we receive a judgement from the court, and the customer still does not pay, we may take further legal action. A county court judgement will affect a customer's credit rating. We will write to the customer after they have received the judgement to explain what further legal action we will take if the customer does not pay the full amount due. These options are listed below:

- **Warrant of execution** - The bailiff of the court is instructed to levy on goods belonging to the customer in order to satisfy the judgement. This means the bailiff may be able to remove possessions from customer's property and sell them in order to satisfy the debt
- **Attachment of earnings order** – We may apply to the court for an order to be made which enables the customer's employers to deduct an amount each week/month to eventually settle the debt
- **Third party debt order** - An application is made to the court for an order to be made to have funds deducted from the customer's bank account or similar source. This involves a hearing before the district judge

All costs, for example, solicitors' costs, court fees, enforcement and warrant costs, incurred by us or our agents in the collection of outstanding charges will be recharged directly to the customer.

## Special Tariffs

### Assure (Social Tariff)

The Assure tariff can help household customers on a low income or who are struggling to pay their water charges; it aims to reduce water poverty and make our bills more affordable. Customers with a household income of less than £16,105 (excluding income from Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance), may qualify for a discount of up to 60% on their water charge.

The social tariff will not be available where:

- The premises for which water and/or sewerage charges are payable is not the only or principal home of the occupier and any other qualifying person; or
- The premises are not used solely as a household premises and the other use is the principal use of the premises; or Water supplied to the premises is used or passed through a sprinkler, automatic garden watering device or a hosepipe not held in the hand (with the exception of trickle flow devices); or
- There is a swimming pool at the premises with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres, unless the occupier of the premises can satisfy us that no water we supply is at any time used to automatically fill the pool or automatically maintain or increase the level of water in it.

Full details of the tariff, eligibility criteria, application process and terms can be found on our website: [www.south-stffas-water.co.uk](http://www.south-stffas-water.co.uk) or call us on 0800 093 0570.

### WaterSure

The WaterSure tariff is for household customers who are on a low income, use a lot of water and have a water meter fitted within their home. It works by putting a cap on the customer's charges for water based on the average household charge.

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

The tariff is equivalent to the average household water and sewerage bills in 2018/19.

	South Staffs Water	Severn Trent Water
Tariff type	Water charge (£/pa)	Sewerage charge (£/pa)
WaterSure tariff rate	145.40	168.70

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.

In order to see if you're eligible, you will have a water meter in your home and fall under the criteria and conditions set out below:

### Are in receipt of qualifying benefits or tax credits

In both of the above cases, the person to whom the criteria above apply must be in receipt of one of the following income-related benefits or tax credits:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (excluding families in receipt of the family element only)
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income-related employment and support allowance

### And have either:

#### 1) Individuals with medical conditions:

The person in receipt of income-related benefits or tax credits or any other member of the household including their children must have been diagnosed as suffering from one of the following medical conditions and that condition causes them to use significantly more water:

- Desquamation (flaky skin loss)

- Kidney failure requiring home dialysis (where the health authority does not contribute to payment of the water bill)
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Abdominal stomas
- Weeping skin diseases (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
- Incontinence
- 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

Evidence of the condition may be proven by a doctor's certificate, letter from a medical practitioner or a copy of hospital referral notice. Other proof of a medical condition may also be considered. We will also require some proof of why the condition increases water consumption.

We will also consider requests for assistance from customers in receipt of the specified benefits who have other medical conditions which involve significant use of water where they are supported by a doctor's letter.

This letter should include information on:

- The name of the patient
- The diagnosis of the patient
- The date on which the certificate was given, and
- The name and address of the medical practitioner

## 2) Large families

An occupier in receipt of one of the listed qualifying income-related benefits who is responsible for THREE or more children under the age of 19; AND those children are all residing at the same property as the applicant and in receipt of child benefit may also be entitled to WaterSure.

To establish whether a large family is entitled to WaterSure the applicant must:

- Complete a form and produce a copy of the latest notice of entitlement showing that child benefit was payable to a resident of the property in respect of three or more children under the age of 19 who are also resident at the property; and
- A copy of the latest notice of entitlement for the benefit or tax credit

### Application form

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

Application forms are available from us by calling 0345 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 of more children under the age of 19, we will need to see:**

- Latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credit
- A copy of a recent bank statement (which must be less than three 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
- Your latest notice of entitlement to qualifying benefit or tax credits

**A non-listed medical condition:**

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

**The latest notice of entitlement in the case of:**

- Benefit must be dated no more than 12 months before the date of the application; or Tax Credit must be dated no more than six months before the date of the application

We may check the validity of your claim with relevant third parties in relation to the benefit or tax credit you receive.

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 metered tariff.

### **Charitable Trust**

Customers experiencing extreme financial difficulties and water is among several outstanding debts then an application can be made to the Charitable Trust either direct to the company by telephoning 0800 09 30 610, or visiting [www.sswtc.org](http://www.sswtc.org)

Alternatively customers can contact the trust through the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), Welfare Rights Services, StepChange or other free debt advice agencies. It is recommended customer contact one of these organisations to receive impartial free money management services.

The CAB will go through the customer's financial circumstances and contact South Staffs Water on their behalf if it feels a customer meets the Charitable Trust criteria.

By agreeing to, and maintaining, a low-value payment arrangement the Charitable Trust may be able to help make a grant towards a customer's outstanding water charges. Further information can also be found by visiting [www.sswct.org](http://www.sswct.org)

## Customers entering into a formal insolvency procedure

Where a customer enters into any formal insolvency procedure, we will apportion any charges on a daily basis up to the date immediately before the date the relevant insolvency procedure becomes effective ('the insolvency date').

Any apportioned charges after the insolvency date will be payable by the occupier of the property in question and fall due on the next day of occupation after the insolvency date and will not fall within the insolvency procedure. The charges will be payable by the person responsible for the payment of water for the property in question on the same payment terms as would apply if the property had been newly connected on that day.

## Water Direct (Third Party Deductions)

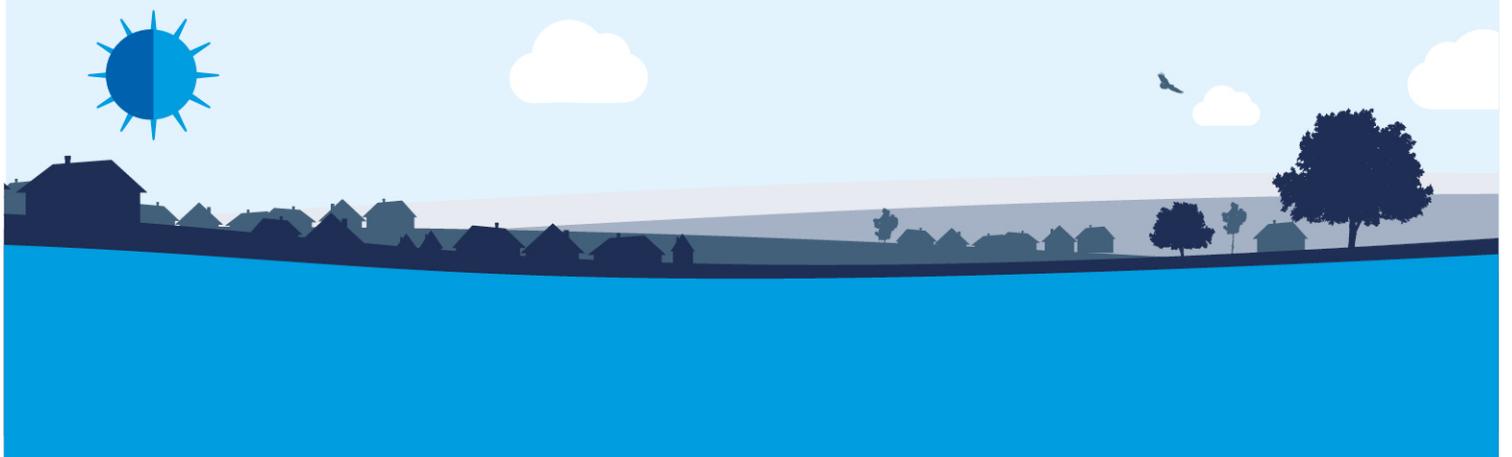
If you are in financial difficulty and in receipt of certain benefits such as:

- 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 six 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

Section 8:

# New occupiers and moving house



## Section 8: New occupiers and moving house

Please give us a minimum of two days' notice when you are moving out of a premise. It is possible to do this by completing the moving house form on our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk), by writing to us or by calling on 0345 60 70 456.

If the customer fails to do so they could be liable to pay charges until whichever is the earliest of:

- The next scheduled meter reading date
- The date the company is informed by a new occupier
- 28 days from the date the customer informed the company

Where a customer who is liable to pay metered charges vacates the property without notifying the company, and a new occupier takes up residence without notifying the company, South Staffs Water will take a meter reading as soon as it becomes aware of the new occupier to establish average daily use. The average daily use will then be used to calculate charges due from the new occupier between the date they occupied the property and the date of the first meter reading taken by us.

Customers moving out of the South Staffs area may be eligible for a refund on their water bill. South Staffs Water will send this if a forwarding address is supplied.

If a customer has an outstanding debt, and fails to notify us when moving house, we will attempt to locate you at your new address to discuss repayment. We do not charge additionally for this activity.

### Prospective occupiers

Prospective occupiers may contact us by phone, email or letter to request information on the existing charging basis for the property in question.

### Change of occupier metering

When a property without a meter either changes ownership or tenanted occupancy of six months or more, 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 although we cannot elect to charge a new occupier by metered charges if one of the original occupiers still resides there.

Full details of our Metering policy can be found in our Metering Codes of Practice or on our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

### Change of occupier/Notice of vacation

#### Unmetered

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

## Metered

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 us 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 for will be the period ending in terms of whichever of the following first occurs after they cease to occupy the premises:

- (a) Where the customer informs us they are ending occupation of the premises less than two working days before, or at any time after the customer ceases to occupy them, the 28th day after we have 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 us that they have become the new occupier of the premises

References to two working days, 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 28 days' notice in writing that he no longer resides at the property and does not require a supply.

The 28 days commence from the date the notice is received at our head office in Walsall. This provision will apply when the occupier vacates the premises, but remains the owner of the premises without giving us notice of vacation.

## Discontinuation of supplies

If a customer wants their water supply to be disconnected when they vacate a property, they must advise us. Under certain circumstances, they may be liable for charges if they 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.

## Discontinuation of supplies: Vacant properties

### Unmetered

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 or where the customer is temporarily residing elsewhere due to disability issues.

### **Metered**

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.

### **Discontinuation of supplies: Void properties**

#### **Unmetered**

We 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.

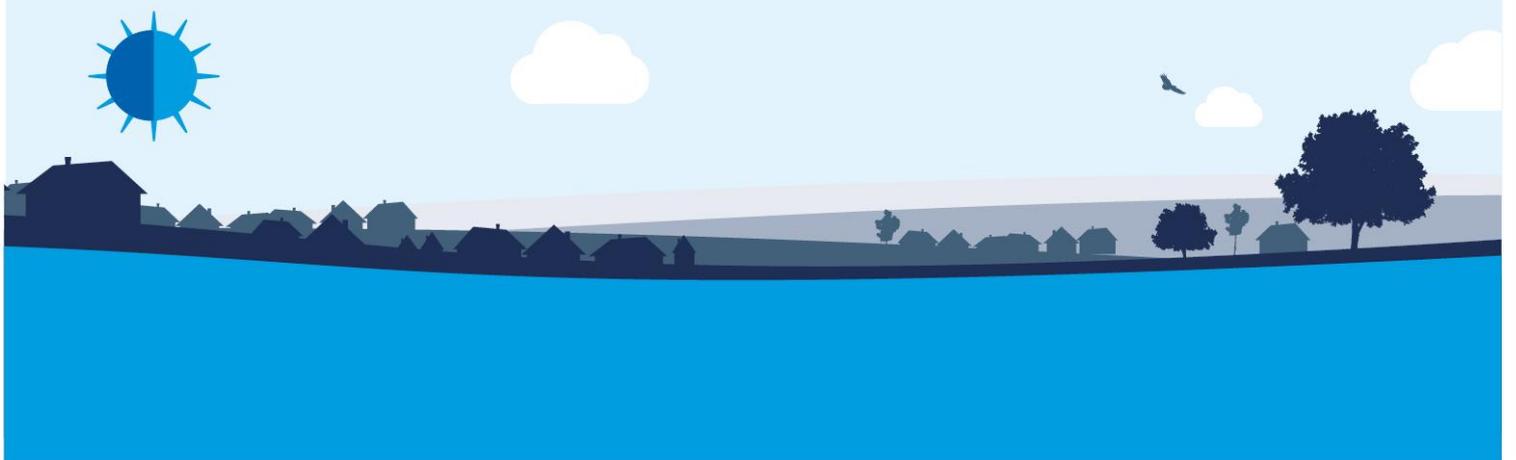
#### **Metered**

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.

We 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. We will use the information provided by third parties to manage your account, or the account for the property address, for identity verification, billing, and 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)

Section 9:

# Customer's responsibility to repair leaks on their supply pipe



## Section 9: Customer's responsibility to repair leaks on their supply pipe

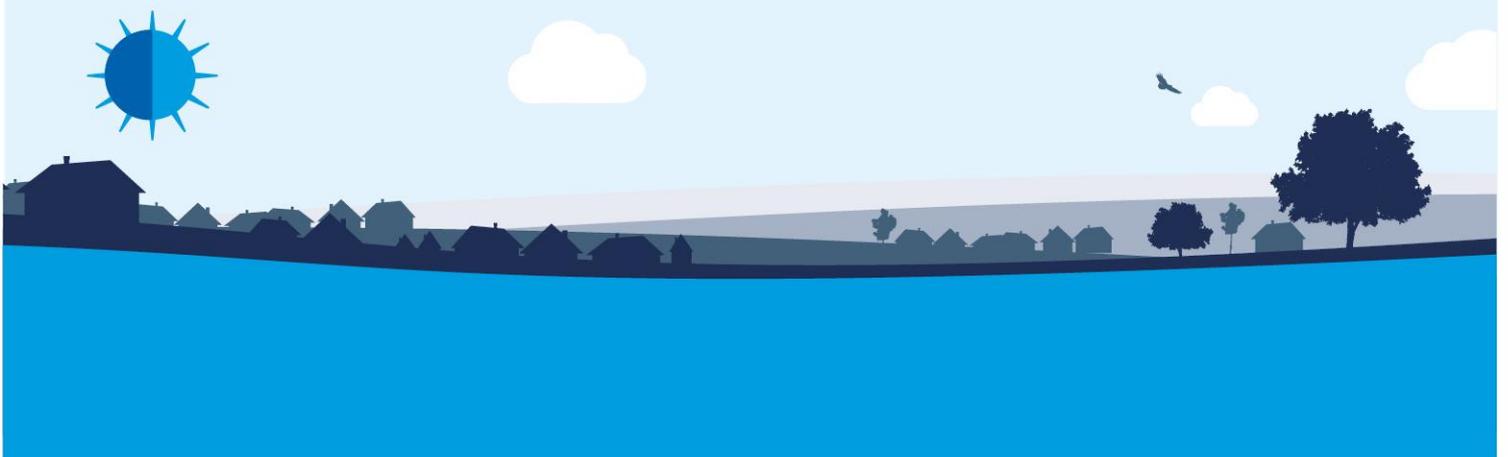
It is the property owner's responsibility to repair or replace any leaking supply pipe on their property, even if the supply pipe crosses third-party land. In the case of a leak on a shared supply pipe, all of the properties that receive water from the leaking supply pipe are responsible for the repair or replacement. We may offer 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 metered customers to qualify for a leakage allowance, you must carry out a repair on their supply pipe within 28 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.

### Further details

For further details regarding leaks, please refer to our Code of Practice for Leakage (Household customers) or visit our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

# Section 10: Metering policy



## Section 10: Metering policy

### New water supplies

All new household water supply connections made on or after 1990 are metered where the preferred meter location is outside at the boundary of the property. This is normally where our existing main stop tap is located either on the footpath or just within the boundary of the property.

### Existing water supplies/household meter option

#### Switching to a meter

All household customers have the right to request the installation of a meter free of charge. A request for metered charges may be made in writing, by email, by telephone or via the website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

Having a free water meter could help you save money on your bill. Many customers have already switched to a meter and find their bills are significantly reduced. To work out if you would be better off, visit our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk) and search “switching to a meter”. You will find a link to an independent calculator run by the consumer watchdog, the Consumer Council for Water.

You simply need to type in:

- How much your annual bill is now
- How many people live in your property
- How often you have baths, showers or use the washing machine.

The calculator will then tell you what you could expect to save on your water and sewerage bill.

To access the calculator click here: <https://www.ccwater.org.uk/watermetercalculator/>

#### Switchback Guarantee

At any time in this two year period if you decide that you would prefer to switch back to RV charges we promise to switch you back for free. As we install meters for free of charge, if you decide to switch back, we require that the meter remains in place at the property for the next occupier.

### Getting a Meter Fitted

Getting a meter fitted is easy:

1. Contact us on 0345 45 67 063 or search “switching to a meter” on our website [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)
2. We’ll arrange a convenient date and time to carry out a survey at your property
3. In many cases we’ll be able to fit a free meter there and then

The survey will confirm where the meter may be installed. Occasionally substantial alterations to plumbing are required but if this is the case we will explain what is required at the survey. If substantial alterations are required the customer is expected to complete these at their own expense.

We will usually contact you to arrange a meter survey within five days of us receiving your request and most of our meters are fitted within 40-60 days. At our busiest periods this time may extend up to 90 days.

Occasionally we find that due to the plumbing arrangement some customers cannot have their property metered. If this is the case you may be eligible to pay an assessed charge and we will explain this to you.

## **Rights of tenants to have a meter**

Where a tenancy applies for six months or more, a tenant has the right under section 209a of the Water Industry Act 1991 to ask the Company to install a water meter. While landlords may not legally prevent an application or the installation of a meter, we recommend they be informed of a tenant's intention to apply for a meter.

## **Payment conditions**

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

## **Guaranteed installation times for meters**

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 90 days to fit the meter, we will start metered water charges from the date of the meter installation and will stop charges based on rateable value (RV) at the end of the three month period.

## **Multi-occupied property**

In instances where you request a meter for a flat/multi occupied property we will determine if there is a shared hot water and/or heating system which may affect whether a meter can be installed. We will confirm the available options following the meter survey.

## **Multiple Meters**

If your property is on a shared water service and there are more than two points of entry you will need to arrange plumbing alterations as we will install a maximum of two meters at a single domestic property. If we determine that two meters are to be installed we will confirm this at the survey. You will only be required to pay one standing charge for water services and one standing charge for sewerage services.

We will consider fitting a single meter for a multi-occupied property (e.g. block of flats) where one person or organisation will accept responsibility for the bill.

## Removal of a meter by a third party without consent

Under the WIA 1991, it is a criminal offence to remove, wilfully damage or tamper with a water meter. If charged with doing so, you could face going to court and being fined. In addition you shall be charged the cost to replace the meter and associated works to replace the meter.

## Refusing a request

If the initial survey shows that a meter cannot be fitted either inside or outside your property at a reasonable cost, we will offer you an alternative to pay an assessed charge for your water and sewerage services. Assessed charges are based on your property type and not its RV. If the RV is lower than the assessed charge, then you would continue to be charged on the basis of RV.

## Referring a dispute

Ofwat will determine a dispute concerning the company's refusal to install a meter free of charge.

## Reversion to unmetered charges

The customer may revert to unmetered charges as long as:

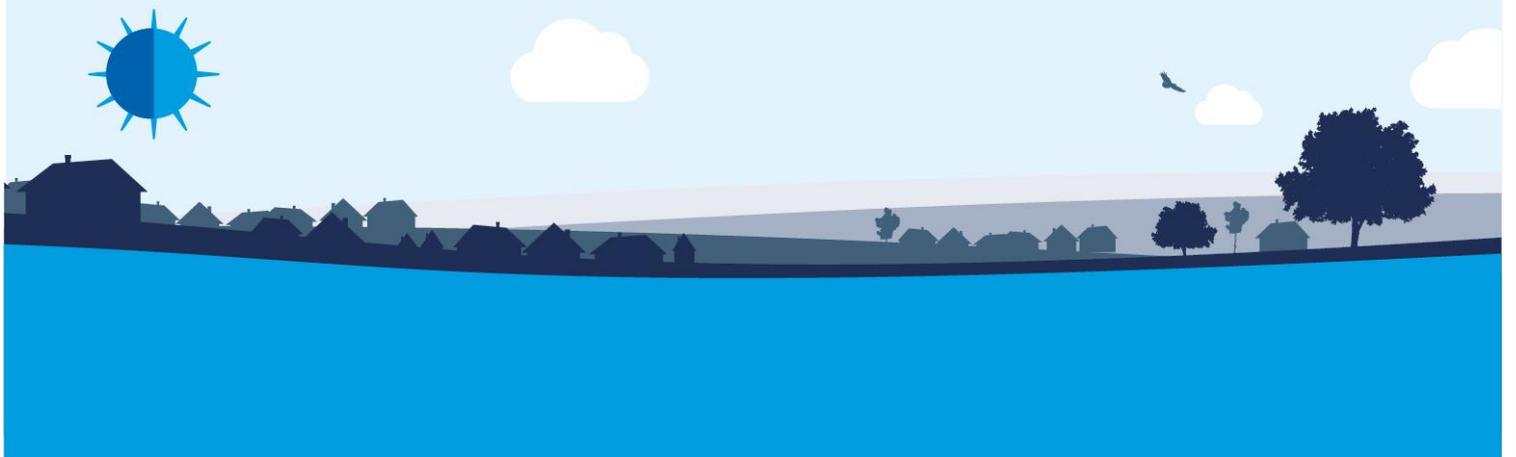
The occupier opted to have the meter installed. Reversion is not available for properties that have been compulsorily metered.

The occupier gives notice to us within:

- 24 months of the first day of charging by meter (having previously been charged at that property on an unmetered basis); or
- 30 days of receiving your statement of water use in the first 24 month period
- This is the first time that the occupier has asked to change back to unmetered charges at that property; and:
- One of the consumers who occupied the premises at the time of the change to meter charges, still occupies the premises at the time of notice of reversion (i.e. a new occupier cannot demand reversion to unmetered charges); and
- Reversion to unmetered charges takes effect from the day that the request to revert is received by us. We will need to take a final meter reading to be able to complete reversion
- You can either contact us on 0345 60 70 456, or write to South Staffs Water, Green Lane, Walsall WS2 7PD.

If an occupier elects to revert to unmetered charges, we will not physically remove the meter from the property.

# Section 11: General conditions



## Section 11: General conditions

### Cost of reinstatement

If it is necessary to excavate your driveway, footpath or patio we will confirm this at the survey and will ensure that the area is made safe after fitting the meter. The permanent reinstatement of any disturbed area is at the customer's expense.

### Ownership of the meter

Irrespective of who installs the meter, it remains, or becomes, the property of the Company.

### 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. We will survey the property to determine where the meter will be installed and will confirm any costs applicable.

Customers whose water use changes to non-household use are eligible to choose their water supplier. For more information visit us at <https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/help-and-advice/read/can-i-change-my-water-supplier-20010000002939>

Or visit [www.open-water.org.uk](http://www.open-water.org.uk)

If a meter cannot be fitted at the outside stop tap or internally 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

### Mixed use properties

We have the right to separate the supplies of mixed-use properties and non-household properties with a schedule 4a element under Section 64 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.

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.

### Access

The customer is to provide reasonable access to our meter reading equipment for routine reading,

ad hoc reading and repairs. If continued access to the equipment is denied, we may suspend the charging based on metered usage and an alternative charging method will apply. As previously noted, under the WIA 1991, it is a criminal offence to restrict access to our meter.

If an alternative charging method cannot be determined, we reserve the right to install an additional accessible meter for our convenience. All charges related to this installation will be borne by the customer.

### Reading water meters

We will normally install meters with remote reading devices so that we can read the meter without requiring entry to the property.

### Stopped/inaccessible meters

In the event of the meter stopping or being temporarily inaccessible, consumption will be estimated by us using the most reliable data available until such time we are able to install a new meter.

### Accuracy of meter readings

The register of the meter shall be evidence of the volume of water supplied unless it can be shown that the meter does not meet the standard of accuracy required by the Measuring Equipment Regulations 1988.

The procedure for the testing of meters is set out in government regulations.

### High consumption queries or concerns that the meter is not accurate

We have a three-stage policy for dealing with queries relating to the accuracy of meter readings:

- **Stage 1** - If the customer is concerned the meter is showing more water than they believe they have actually used, we will review the consumption history and current usage with the customer to help resolve the query
- **Stage 2** - If there is no explanation for the increased consumption for household customers we can carry out a detailed on-site inspection where we will check for evidence of any leaks, for example on toilets, ball valves and taps. This inspection is free for household customers
- **Stage 3** - If the customer still believes that the meter is not recording consumption accurately it is possible to change the meter and have it tested by a meter test specialist. However, if the test does not show the meter to be outside the accuracy limits required, the customer will be liable for the cost of the test at £70.00 plus VAT

### Adjustment of charges

If a meter is proven to register incorrectly, charges will be adjusted to reflect normal consumption from either the date the meter became faulty or for the six months prior to the last reading, whichever is the earlier.

### Meter logging

Where we fit a data logger to assist in the determination of any consumption or bill queries for

household customers the costs will not be passed to the customer.

### **Estimates on unread meters**

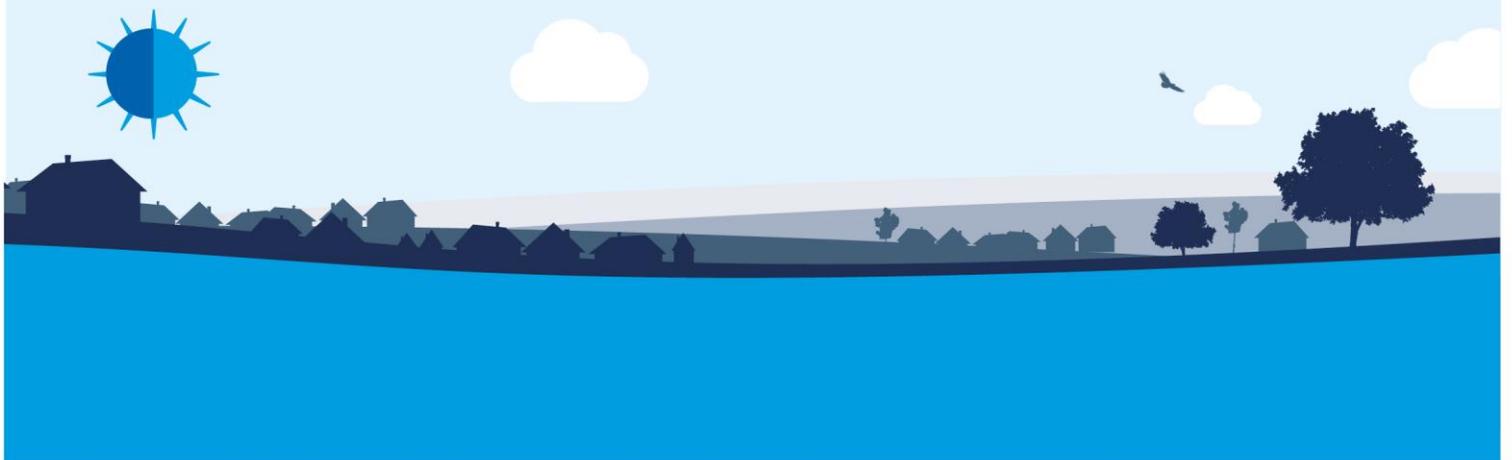
If we are unable to establish how much water has actually been supplied to the property, we may make an estimate and use this as the basis for charges.

The estimate is made by reference to a previous like period, calculated to derive an average daily consumption.

If no previous like period exists, the estimate will be based on average usage for a single occupant, a couple or a family. This charge can be adjusted later if necessary.

Full details of our metering policy can be found in our Code of Practice or on our website at [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

# Section 12: Definitions



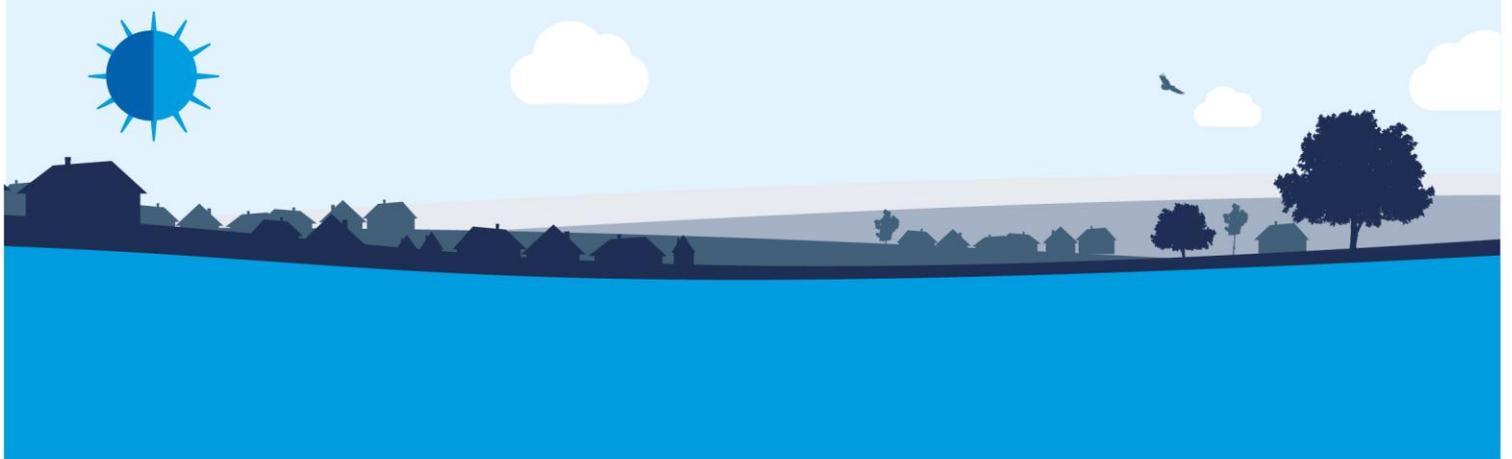
## Section 12: Definitions

<b>Assessed charge</b>	South Staffs Water applies assessed charges where it would be impractical or unreasonably expensive to fit a water meter.
<b>Business Rateable Value</b>	A rateable value in a list maintained under section 41 (local rating lists) or 52 (central rating lists) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
<b>Bulk meter</b>	A meter that serves more than one premises.
<b>Bulk meter agreement</b>	A written agreement with a person who has agreed to pay all the charges for a premises served by a bulk meter.
<b>Charging year</b>	The period from 1 April to 31 March.
<b>Code of Practice</b>	South Staffs Water Code of Practice which is available via our website
<b>Common Billing Agreement</b>	A deed of agreement signed by both South Staffs Water and the management company of the premise where there is one common supply pipe with a common meter serving multiple premises. The management company agree to pay the water charges for the whole property (i.e. if the property consists of flats then the management company agrees to divide the charge between the tenants and collect in with the rent).
<b>Communication pipe</b>	The pipe that runs between the water main and the boundary of the street/property. This pipe is the property of South Staffs Water.
<b>Company/Us/We</b>	South Staffordshire Water Plc.
<b>Consumer Council for Water</b>	CCWater is an independent and statutory consumer body representing the consumer's interest in matters relating to the provision of water and wastewater services in England and Wales.
<b>Cubic metre (m<sup>3</sup>)</b>	1,000 litres.
<b>Customer</b>	The person or entity liable to pay charges to the company for water supplied to any premises. This person will be the occupier unless the company has agreed with another person to accept payment from them.
<b>Domestic customer</b>	A customer in respect of water supplied to domestic premises.
<b>Domestic purposes</b>	Domestic purposes are defined by section 218 WIA 1991. Domestic purposes include water for drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitary purposes and uses outside a house connected with its occupation not involving the use of a garden sprinkler, hosepipe or similar apparatus.
<b>Household customer</b>	A customer occupying premises used or intended for use as a dwelling.
<b>Household premises</b>	Premises used or intended for use as a dwelling.

<b>Mega litre (Ml)</b>	1000m <sup>3</sup> or 1,000,000 litres.
<b>Meter</b>	A meter installed by South Staffs Water, or fitted in accordance with a specification which has been approved by the company for charging purposes.
<b>Metered charges</b>	Charges which include an element calculated by reference to the volume of water passing through a meter.
<b>Mixed-use property</b>	<p>A mixed-use property is defined as a property that has household and non-household use from the same supply.</p> <p>Where the primary usage of the mixed supply is for domestic purposes customers may be eligible for the relevant tariffs, leakage allowances and meter installation costs subject to the appropriate eligibility criteria stated within this Charges Scheme.</p> <p>Unless otherwise notified South Staffs Water will assume that mixed-use properties are primarily for business use.</p>
<b>Non-domestic premises</b>	Those premises which do not fall within the classification of domestic.
<b>Occupier</b>	The person who has sufficient control over premises to put them under a duty of care to lawful visitors. Where there is no such person (such as where a property is partially let, or let for periods of less than 12 months, or is in multiple occupation) the owner may be regarded as the occupier.
<b>Ofwat</b>	Water Services Regulation Authority.
<b>Premises</b>	Includes any land or structure which is connected either directly or indirectly to South Staffs Water's supply network or is being considered for connection.
<b>Rateable Value (RV)</b>	The value of premises shown in the official valuation list on 31 March 1990.
<b>Service pipe</b>	The pipe that runs between South Staffs Water's water main and a property. It comprises the communication pipe (owned by South Staffs Water) and the supply pipe (owned by the customer).
<b>SIC</b>	Standard Industry Classifications.
<b>Supply pipe</b>	The pipe that runs from the boundary of the street/property to the property. Whoever owns the premises is the legal owner of the supply pipe.
<b>Sewerage</b>	See Wastewater.
<b>Wastewater</b>	Where appropriate wastewater refers to sewerage, surface water and trade effluent.
<b>WIA 91 or WIA 99</b>	Water Industry Act 1991 or 1999.

Section 13:

# How to contact us



## Section 13: How to contact us

### Billing and General Account Enquiries

General information can be found on our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

Opening hours for general account enquiries: 7am – 8pm Monday-Friday  
8am - 1pm Saturday

Bill enquiries: **0345 60 70 456**  
Difficulty paying: **0800 09 30 610**  
To set up a Direct Debit: **0345 60 70 456**  
Household meter option: **0345 45 67 063**  
Provide a meter reading: **0345 60 70 456**

### Water Issues

General information can be found on our website: [www.south-staffs-water.co.uk](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk)

Opening hours for emergencies, leaks or water supply problems: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have any problems regarding the quality or pressure of your water please call us:

Supply enquiries and emergencies: **0800 389 10 11**

If you see a leak within South Staffs Water's area, please contact us on: **0800 389 10 11**

### Other useful numbers

To check a caller is genuine: **0800 389 10 11**

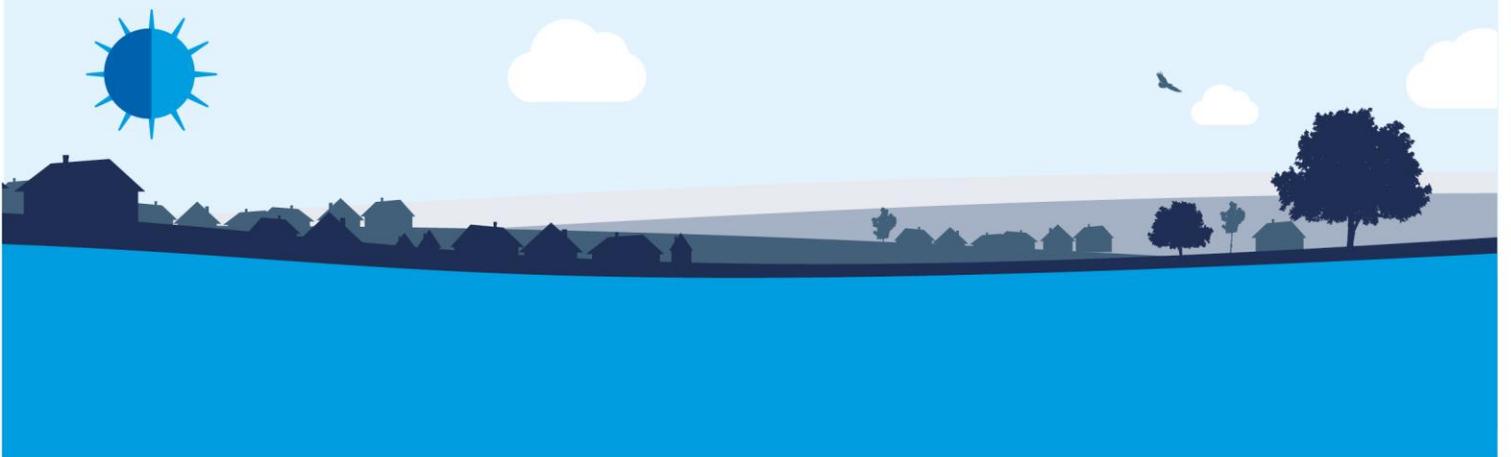
Crime Stoppers (an independent organisation): **0800 555 111**

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

Postal address:  
South Staffs  
Water  
Green Lane  
Walsall  
WS2 7PD

Section 14:

# Statutory Regulatory Bodies and other useful addresses



## Section 14: Statutory Regulatory Bodies and other useful addresses

### Consumer Council for Water

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ

**Telephone: 0300 034 2222**

**Email: [enquiries@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccwater.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk)**

### Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

Centre City Tower  
7 Hill Street  
Birmingham  
B5 4UA

**Telephone: 0121 644 7500**

**Email: [enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Website: [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)**

### Severn Trent Water

Customer Care Team,  
PO Box 5309,  
Coventry  
CV3 9FH

**Telephone: 0800 783 4444**

**Website: [www.stwater.co.uk](http://www.stwater.co.uk)**

### Drinking Water Inspectorate

Room M03  
55 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2EY

**Telephone: 030 0068 6400**

**Email: [dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Website: [www.dwi.gov.uk](http://www.dwi.gov.uk)**

### Environment Agency

National Customer Contact Centre  
PO Box 544  
Rotherham  
S60 1BY

**Telephone: 03708 506 506**

**Email: [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)**

**Website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)**