



# Our Service Guarantee

IWNL CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE



## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

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CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section one:

## Introduction

- Who are we?
- Our water services
- Our sewerage services



## 1. Introduction

Our Customer Code of Practice explains the level of service we will provide to you. It is not a contract, but it does give you an overview of all the key information you may need, and references other more specific policy documents where you can find more details.

This is one of several Codes of Practice documents which set out all our standards of service. These have been produced after consultation with the CCW (the voice for water consumers) and Ofwat (the Water Services Regulation Authority).

Most included policies are also applicable to our non-domestic customers. However, please note one exception which is in **Section 3** - The WaterSure tariff is something which is only available to our domestic household customers.

The guarantees that we make in our "Promise to you" section (page 10) apply to our non-domestic customers, as well as detailing all our water and sewerage services.

If you're unsure of which services we provide to your property, please give our customer services team a call who will be happy to help. Alternatively, you can find these details on your bill.



**Our literature is available in other formats such as Braille or large print on request. Contact us for more information.**



## 1.1 Who are we?

Independent Water Networks (IWNL) is the water and/or sewerage company operating in your area, under a licence granted by the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (powers delegated to Ofwat in 2007).

### **OUR LICENCE TO SUPPLY - WHAT IS A NEW APPOINTMENT AND VARIATION (NAV)?**

Under this licence, following approval from Ofwat, we replace the current incumbent as the water and/or sewerage service provider within a specific area. This is known as a New Appointment and Variation (NAV). This licence means that we can provide your property with water and/or sewerage services. In some cases, we may provide just one of these services. To find out which services we supply to you, either check your bill or call us on 02920 028711.

We are owned by BUUK Infrastructure, a company that owns and operates gas, water, wastewater, electricity, fibre and heat networks across the UK.

There are many benefits of being connected to an independent water network – a modern network, an efficient wastewater service, and outstanding customer service.

As an IWNL customer, your charges will not be any higher with us than they would be if you were being supplied by the local incumbent water company.

In the event that you require a new connection, either for water or sewerage, please call our customer services team or alternatively you can email us with details of your plans.

## 1.2 Our water services

This section is only applicable if we provide water services to your property. You can confirm what services we provide by calling us or by checking your bill.

### **WATER QUANTITY**

Under the terms of our licence, we are required to provide you with adequate water for normal domestic purposes by managing our network and resources effectively.

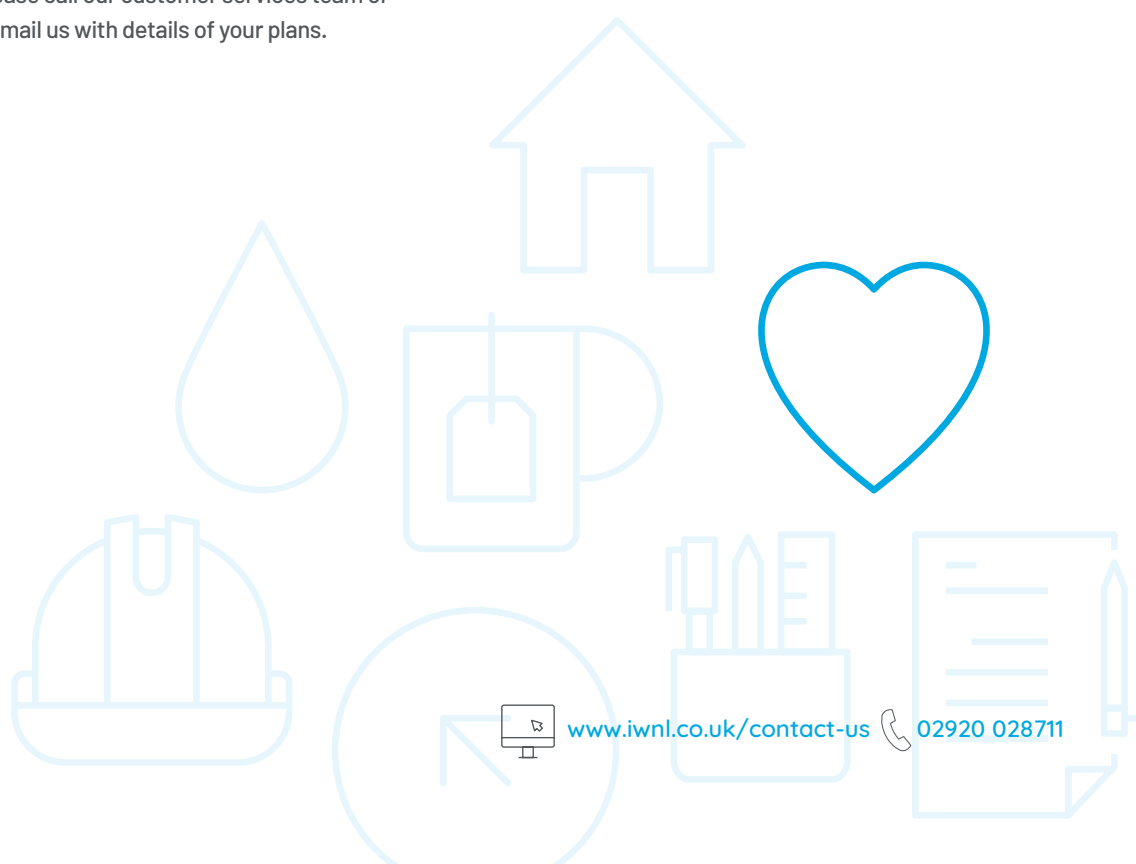
We will attempt to minimise restrictions to your supply, such as interruptions due to drought and hose-pipe/sprinkler bans. As our water is supplied from an existing water company, they may impose restrictions which we have to abide by.

### **WATER QUALITY**

Providing safe, clean drinking water is our top priority. The quality of your water supply is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) under the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 and all subsequent amendments.

Please refer to our website ([www.iwnl.co.uk](http://www.iwnl.co.uk)) for details of the strict standards we work to and how we are performing against them. Our website also offers hints and tips on how you can maintain the high quality of your drinking water within your own home or business.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT OUR WATER QUALITY TEAM ON 02920 028711 OR EMAIL [WATERQUALITY@IWNL.CO.UK](mailto:WATERQUALITY@IWNL.CO.UK)**



We are committed to ensuring that our customers receive the highest quality drinking water available. We carry out extensive sampling of our water on a regular basis to ensure it meets our standards.

We are very proud of the quality of our drinking water, and information about the quality of your water supply is published on our website at:

<https://portal.iwnl.co.uk/protecting-you-and-our-environment/>

If you prefer, please contact our Water quality team and we will send you a printed copy of this information, see **section 10** for contact details.

In the event you have a water quality issue, please call our customer services team immediately so we can investigate this. If you report a water quality problem which we consider could have an impact on the safety of your water supply, we will arrange for a company representative to visit your property on the same day.

For other water quality complaints, if required, we will make an appointment for a visit. If necessary, we will arrange an alternative water supply. If we take water samples, we will normally let you know the initial results within 48 hours and provide full written details within 10 working days, or contact you by another agreed method when they become available.

If at any time we become aware that your water supply is unfit to drink, we will advise you not to use the water, or to boil it before you use it for drinking or cooking. This will be done as quickly as possible via the most appropriate method available. We will make specific arrangements for our customers registered under our Priority Services Scheme.

### **PROTECTING WATER SUPPLIES AGAINST CONTAMINATION**

When carrying out plumbing alterations, please be aware that these must comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, which are aimed at preventing misuse, waste, undue consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, preventing contamination of drinking water.

IWNL has a duty to enforce these regulations and has statutory rights of entry, which we can use to inspect premises for regulatory breaches. In an emergency, entry can be made without notice, but in all other cases, reasonable notice would be given in advance.

**FOR FURTHER INDEPENDENT ADVICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE WATER REGULATIONS ADVISORY SERVICE (WRAS) - [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk)**

### **WATER PRESSURE**

Water pressure at your property depends on the demand for water placed upon our network and the difference in height between the supply source and your property. The flow of water is the rate at which it comes out of the tap. We normally maintain a water flow of at least nine litres per minute if the supply serves a single property. This is measured at the boundary of the street in which the main is laid.

The communication pipe connects your supply pipe to our water main. The size and condition of the communication and supply pipe to your property and the number of water appliances you use at the same time may also affect water pressure and flow. The minimum standard for water pressure is equivalent to being able to fill a 15 litre bucket in 100 seconds. For further details on the minimum standards for water pressure please visit:

[www.discoverwater.co.uk/water-pressure](http://www.discoverwater.co.uk/water-pressure)

If you believe your water pressure is too low please contact us. If deemed necessary, we will arrange to carry out any work needed on our pipe work for free. If you are still unhappy with the flow, we will offer advice about any work needed on your supply pipe. You (or your landlord) and the owners of any other properties served by the pipe will be responsible for repairing or replacing it. Please note that if low pressure is due to system maintenance or drought, the above will not be applicable.

### **WATER HARDNESS**

The hardness of your water is dependent upon your geographical location. To find out yours, please visit – <https://portal.iwnl.co.uk/protecting-you-and-our-environment/>



### WATER DISCOLOURATION

Brown, orange or yellow water is not harmful to health and could be caused by sediment in the pipe work becoming disturbed due to a change in flow, a burst main or other activity on the network.

Discolouration can be resolved by running your kitchen tap for up to 20 minutes. However, if this does not work or if you are concerned that there is a serious problem, please contact our Water Quality Team on 02920 028711 or email [waterquality@iwnl.co.uk](mailto:waterquality@iwnl.co.uk)

Occasionally you may experience what is known as white water. This is when excessive air has entered the system. This is harmless and you can test this by filling a glass with the white water and leaving it to stand. After about 2 minutes, the water should be clear again.

For further advice, contact our customer services team.

### WATER EFFICIENCY

As part of our water resource plan we implement initiatives to conserve water and we encourage and help our customers to do the same. In fact, we have a legal responsibility to promote water efficiency to our customers.

#### For example, we:

- Improve efficiency by reducing leakage; you can help by calling us on 02920 028711 if you notice a water leak
- Offer free supply pipe repairs for all customers, subject to certain terms and conditions
- Promote the use of water-efficient appliances, facilities and practices in the home and garden, whilst increasing water recycling and minimising waste

More information is available on our website.

### WATER INTERRUPTIONS

We aim to deliver a constant supply of water, however sometimes we must carry out work on our system which may affect your supply. Other circumstances where a supply interruption may occur include events such as a severe drought.

- We will give you at least 48 hours' written notice of any planned network improvements which may interrupt your water supply for more than four hours'
- We will give you at least 12 hours' written notice of any planned network improvements which may interrupt your water supply for one to four hours
- If we plan to undertake major works in your area, we aim to give you several weeks' notice. We may not be able to give you advance notice if we need to interrupt your supply because of an unforeseen incident such as a burst water main
- If the interruption lasts longer than twelve hours, we will provide an alternative supply of water, usually in bottles or tankers in the street, and take reasonable steps to inform you of their location

### RIGHTS OF ACCESS

We have the right to lay pipes on private land under section 159 of the 1991 Water Industry Act when exercising our powers to carry out works on, or under land. A copy of our Code of Practice for Statutory Pipelaying is available to view on our website - [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/). The Code does not prejudice other rights or powers available to us or those of owners or occupiers of land. We will comply with the Code whenever it is reasonable or practicable to do so.



## 1.3 Our sewerage services

This section is only applicable if we provide sewerage services to your property. You can confirm this by calling us or checking your bill.

Our sewerage system collects and carries rainwater and wastewater from your property before connecting into the incumbent main network. It is designed to protect against sewer flooding.

### **There are two basic types of systems:**

- Combined systems take both rainwater and used wastewater from sinks and baths, and waste from toilets
- Separate systems put rainwater through a surface water system, sometimes leading to a stream, river or soakaway, and used water through a separate foul system connected to the incumbent water company's network

### **There are two main types of drainage pipes:**

- Drains serving just one property and public sewers serving more than one property

All types could be laid in private land, footpaths, public roads, gardens or public open spaces. All drains and sewers can be designed for combined or separate systems.

**We own and maintain public sewers, usually located in public roads. IWNL offers several Sewer Services across its sites, including:**

**Foul Water** – Our sewerage system takes wastewater from your toilets and sinks for treatment.

**Surface Water** – We will provide a network that manages surface water from houses and highway drains to either the incumbents' networks, local watercourses, rivers or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where the local area conditions allow. Where applicable this is done with the agreement of the Environment Agency and planning authorities.

**Highway Drainage** – Water pipes that serve highway drains only are the responsibility of the highway authority. We will provide a discharge point via our surface-water network for highway drains if this is the best engineering solution. However, we encourage highway authorities to discharge direct to watercourses with the agreement of the Environment Agency.

If you notice or experience a problem relating to our sewerage system, or odours from the sewage treatment, please call us immediately on 02920 028711.

On page 21 you will find a diagram which shows where your responsibilities for pipe work start and end. If you require maps of a sewer you can obtain this by contacting the customer services team.

In the case of private drains and sewers, the owners of the drain or sewer, or the occupiers of any property served by the drain or sewer, are responsible. If you experience a problem with a private drain or sewer and require help, you should contact a plumber or drainage contractor.





## SEWER FLOODING

**There can be a number of reasons why a sewer floods.**

**For example:**

- An overloaded sewer
- A blocked or collapsed sewer
- A pumping station failure
- Severe weather conditions

One of the most common causes of operational problems and sewer flooding is a 'blockage'. These blockages are caused by, for example, nappies being flushed down the toilet and cooking fat being poured down the drain. Please avoid putting anything down your sink, toilet or drains unless you're absolutely sure that it's safe to do so. You should only flush pee, poo or paper. No wet wipes, cotton buds, cosmetic cotton pads, sanitary products, condoms, etc.

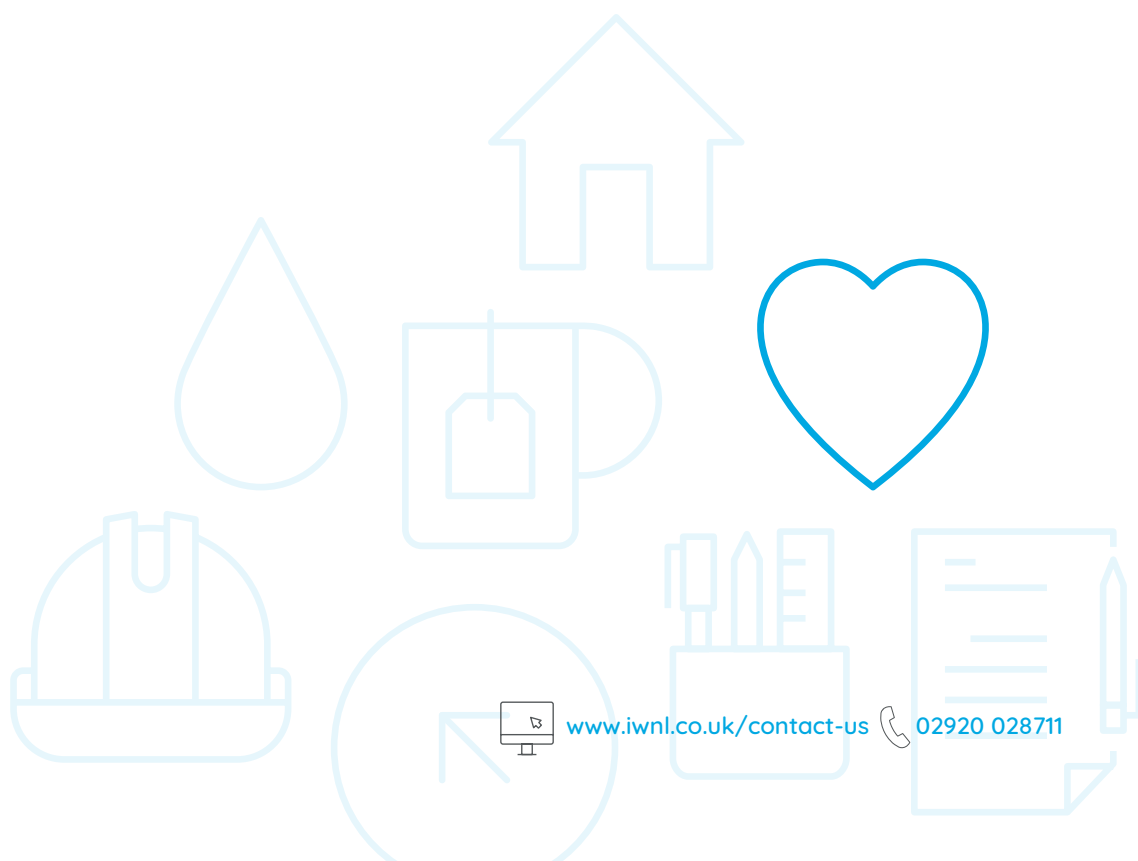
**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT THE DOCUMENTS SECTION ON OUR WEBSITE:  
[www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/)**

In extreme weather conditions such as major storms we cannot guarantee to prevent sewer flooding, even if we respond quickly. Where an incident occurs, which could result in a property being flooded, we will send a representative to assess the problem within four hours of notification. If sewage has entered your property, we will treat this as a priority. We understand sewer flooding is very unpleasant and distressing. If this happens to you please telephone us on 02920 028711 as quickly as possible, so that we can provide help and advice.

**Free Cleaning Service** – Where the blockage or sewer flooding was caused by IWNL, we offer a free service to help reduce the effects of sewer flooding by giving help as quickly as possible in cleaning up and disinfecting the affected area. Please see the 'Our promises to you' section (page 10) of this document for more information.

**Damage Liability** – We don't accept liability for damage caused by flooding from a public sewer unless we've been negligent in some way, so you should notify your household insurer immediately in the event of a flood. Please see **Section 2** for further information on our standards regarding sewer flooding.

If we are not the sewerage provider in your area you will need to contact the other provider with any questions or problems about their service. If you do not know who this is, please contact our customer services team.



[www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us)



02920 028711

## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section two: Our promises to you

- Customer contacts
- Interruptions to supply
- Other standards
- Exceptions
- Priority service register
- Doorstep password scheme



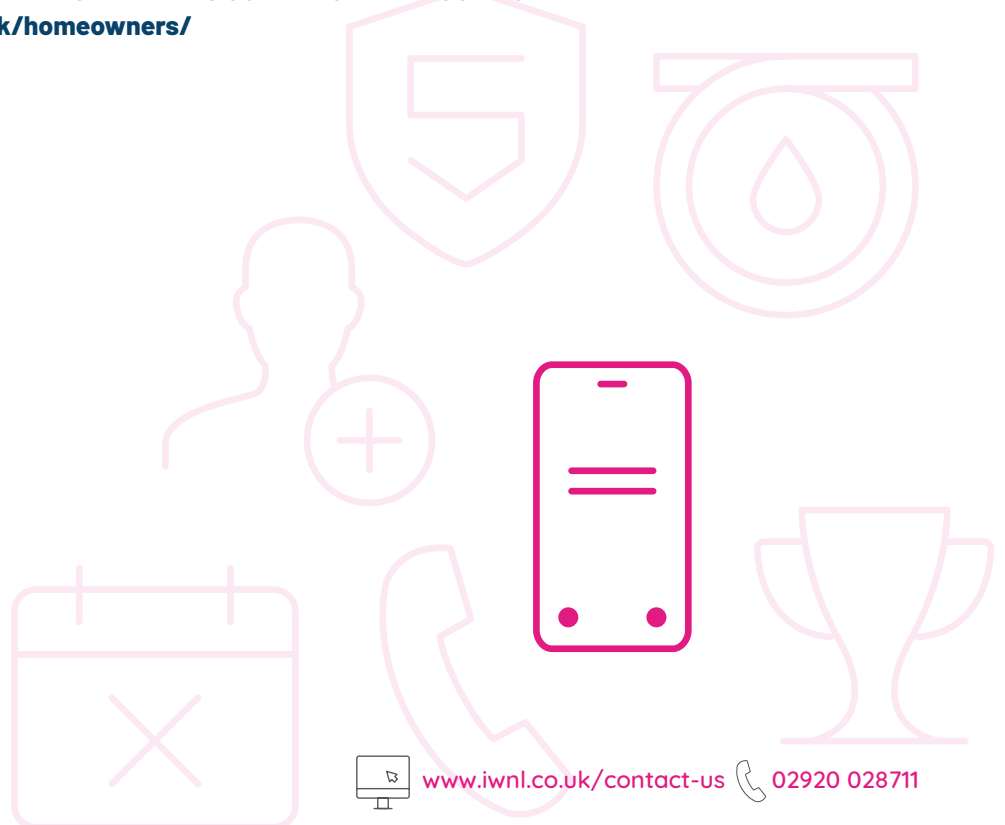
## 2. Our promises to you

As a water and sewerage company we guarantee you minimum standards of service, known as the Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS). It gives you information about our promises to you, both as required by the regulator (Ofwat) as well as those standards that we have set ourselves.

**This Scheme covers all the following aspects of our service to you:**

- Customer contacts
- We set out how and when we will contact you
- How we handle queries and complaints
- What communications we will send you and when you can expect them
- Interruptions to supply. How we will respond to both planned and unplanned interruptions
- Flooding
- Direct Debits and standing orders
- Court claims
- Discoloured water
- Water quality
- Drought orders

**FULL DETAILS OF OUR GUARANTEED STANDARDS SCHEME CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE - [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/)**



## 2.1 Priority service register

We understand that customers have individual needs, which is why we have developed a range of free services:

- Dialysis register
- Braille bills/documents
- Large-print bills/documents
- TextDirect - translated bills
- Nominee service
- Password scheme
- Payment terms for those customers who have specific needs

If you would like to find out more about these services, please contact the customer services team or fill out the individual needs form on our website at:

<https://portal.iwnl.co.uk/property-occupation-form/>

## 2.2 Doorstep password scheme

Unfortunately, there are criminals who may pretend to work for utility companies in order to gain entry to your home. These are known as "bogus callers".

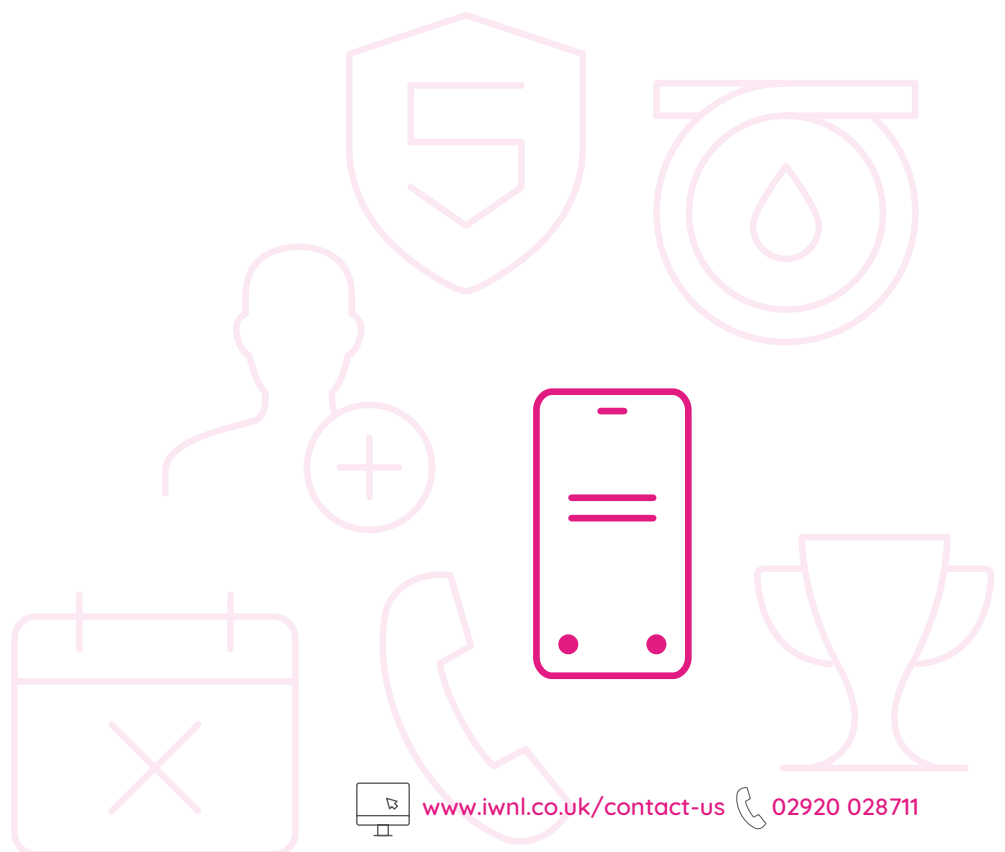
Please bear in mind that it is very rare for us to visit your home without making an appointment, but when we do, all employees and service providers working on our behalf carry ID cards with their picture on it, and would be happy if you were to ask to see their proof of identity.

**IF YOU ARE UNSURE THEN DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL US ON 02920 028711 AND WE CAN THEN CONFIRM THEIR IDENTITY. DO NOT PHONE ANY OTHER NUMBER THAT THE VISITOR MAY GIVE YOU.**

We also offer a password service, which will help us to identify ourselves. This service is FREE and available to all our customers.

**REMEMBER IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT, DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR.**

**If you would like to register for the password scheme, or simply learn more, please visit our website or contact our customer services team on 02920 028711.**



CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section three:

## How we charge you

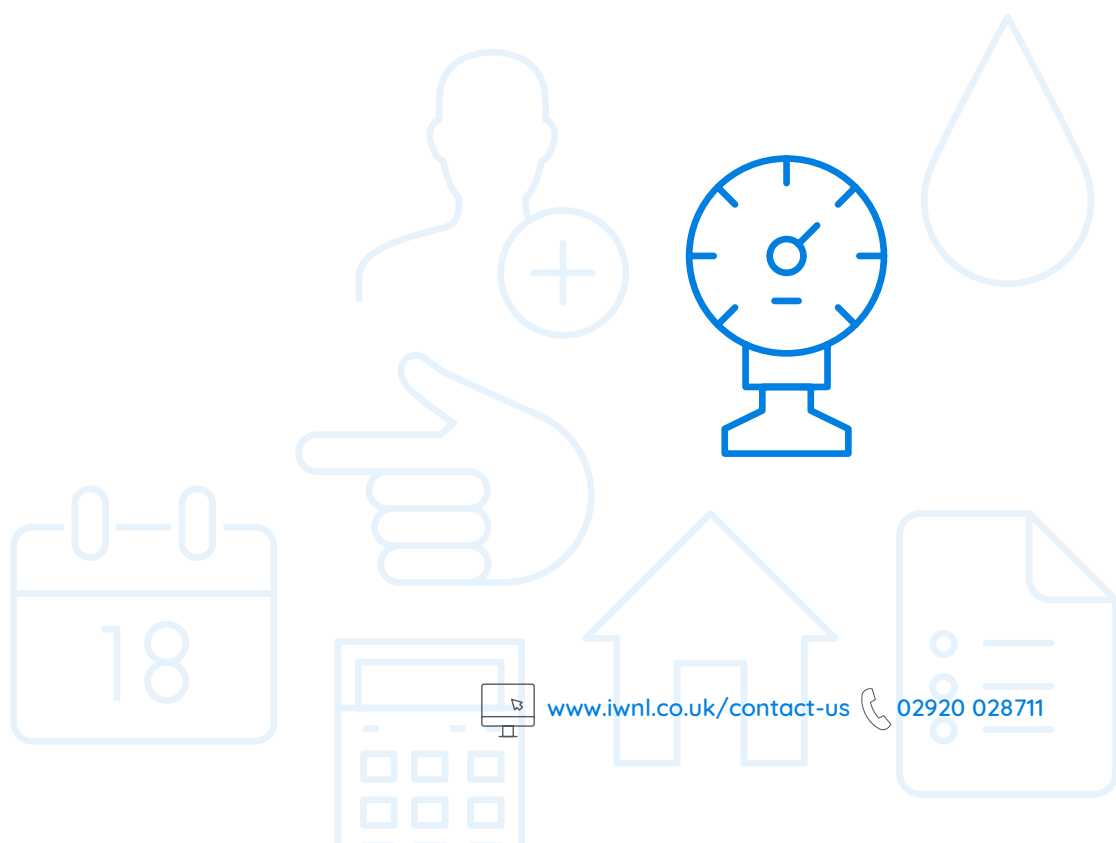
- Who is responsible for paying the charges
- WaterSure scheme
- Your payment options
- Your water meter



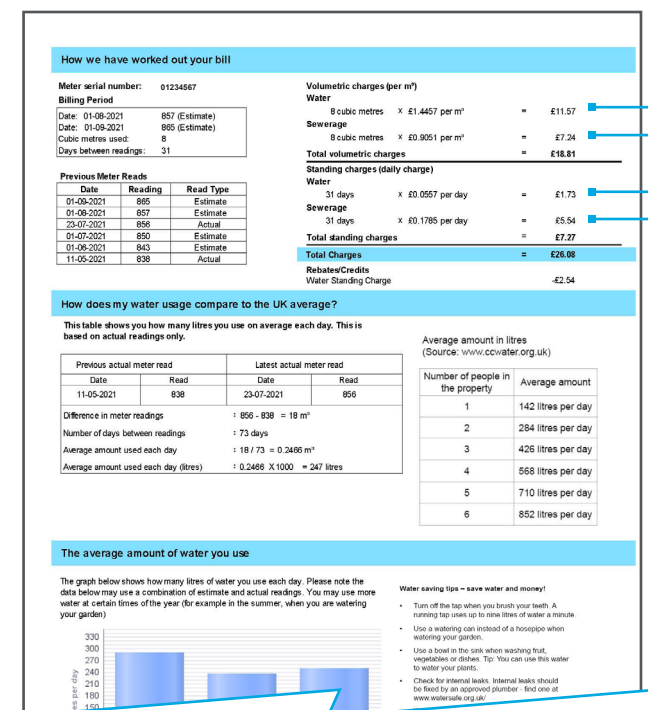
### 3. How we charge you

We charge the same as your local water company and in some cases we may be cheaper. To compare our charges against other suppliers in your local area please use the postcode checker on our website ([www.iwnl.co.uk](http://www.iwnl.co.uk)).

Please visit [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/) for more information on tariffs available in your supply area and how we calculate charges.



## You will find four elements to your bill, these are:



### 1. WATER USED

This is the amount of water that has registered through your water meter.

### 2. SEWERAGE USED

This is calculated based on the amount of water registered through the water meter, but taking into account that not all of your water used will return to the sewer.

### 3. WATER STANDING CHARGES

This covers the cost of reading and maintaining your meter.

### 4. SEWERAGE AND SURFACE WATER STANDING CHARGES

This is the cost of maintaining the drainage system, as well as disposing of any rain-water that falls onto your property (known as surface water drainage).

## WATER METERS

Every property we serve is supplied by a water meter, which means we charge you on the amount of water you use, plus the standing charge. If we supply wastewater services to your property this part of the bill will also be based on the water recorded by the meter. We will only charge you for service water drainage if your property is connected for this service. If you believe you are being incorrectly charged, then please contact the customer services team.

Before 1990, properties were given a rateable value by the local council in order to calculate council charges. This rateable value is usually used by water companies to calculate water charges on properties without a meter. Since the way council charges are calculated has changed, councils no longer provide rateable values for new properties. This means that you will not be able to move to an unmeasured charging scheme.

If a property is unoccupied, only the standing charges will be applicable as the meter will record that no water is being used. Charges will accrue regardless of whether the property is occupied or not unless a request is made to turn off the supply.

If your meter reading is higher than usual and you feel this is incorrect you may have a leak. We are responsible if the leak is on the meter itself. Legally you are responsible for repairing leaks on the supply pipe. If you think you have a leak on your supply pipe, contact us for advice and help on how to repair the leak.

**FURTHER DETAILS CAN BE FOUND IN OUR CODE OF PRACTICE ON LEAKAGE, WHICH IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE UNDER THE USEFUL DOCUMENTS SECTION - [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/)**



## 3.1 Who is responsible for paying the charges?

Charges should always be paid by the occupier of the property unless we agree otherwise. For example, you may have an agreement with a landlord that they are responsible for the water charges. In this situation we require written confirmation from the landlord.

If your property is empty, unfurnished and not undergoing renovations you would need to let us know by sending us an empty-property disclaimer form, or you will still be liable for our charges.

Charges are applicable when a supply of water is made available for your property, regardless of whether you use the supply.

## 3.2 WaterSure scheme

We operate a special scheme known as WaterSure that is designed to reduce the impact of a metered water supply on vulnerable customers who use large amounts of water.

After you have qualified for WaterSure, you will either pay your metered bill based on the amount of water you have consumed as normal, or by an annual charge which reflects the average household bill for water and/or sewerage service in your area, whichever is lower. The water supply should not be used to water gardens (other than by hand) or replenish a pond or swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.

**TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THE WATERSURE SCHEME PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT OUR CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM.**

## 3.3 Your payment options

We may send you bills on a monthly, or bi-annual basis where the full balance is due within 10 working days of receipt. You can arrange to pay your bills in monthly, fortnightly or weekly instalments. To arrange billing, payment dates and methods, please call our customer services team where we can discuss your circumstances to agree a suitable schedule.

If you are a non-domestic customer, payment is due within 28 working days of receipt. All payment options are available except WaterDirect.

We understand that sometimes it is difficult to manage your financial outgoings, so if you're having problems paying your bills please contact us as soon as possible to discuss alternative payment options. We are here to help.

We will send reminders where debts are outstanding or where payments are missed, and we also reserve the right to use debt-collection agencies or legal action where appropriate to recover outstanding debts in accordance with our Code of Practice for Help with Paying Your Bills. All costs incurred as a result of court-related activity will be charged to the customer.

For non-domestic customers, we may, as a last resort, disconnect your supply if your bill remains unpaid.

**There are many ways to pay your bill. These include:**

- Direct Debit
- By speaking to our Customer Services team
- Using your credit/debit card - pay 24/7 using our automated telephone system
- Online banking
- By setting up a bank transfer from your bank
- Paying over the counter at any Barclays Bank
- Payzone
- WaterDirect
- By post with a cheque

**FURTHER DETAILS OF THESE CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE - [www.iwnl.co.uk/help-and-advice/paying-your-bill/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/help-and-advice/paying-your-bill/)**





## 3.4 Your water meter

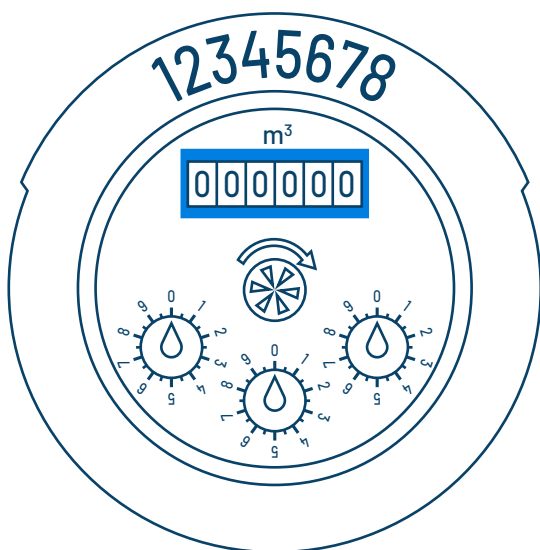
We aim to read the water meter to your property at least once a year. When we have not been able to read the meter, we will send you an estimated bill based on your average consumption. If it is safe to do so, you can also read your own meter and submit a meter reading online. **Just log onto your online account and click on the "Submit meter reading" button.** For Priority Services Registered Customers (see **Section 2**), we also offer a free meter-reading service.

Please note the meter is the property of Independent Water Networks regardless of its location and it is a criminal offence to tamper with or remove it.

### 3.4.1 Where to find your meter

**In accordance with government regulations there are three possible locations for a meter:**

- External at our stopcock just outside the boundary of your property
- External inside the boundary of your property, either in your garden or on the outside wall of your property
- Inside your property



#### HOW TO READ YOUR METER

Most meter dials will be in the format as shown above. When providing us with a reading, we only require the numbers in the light blue area.

If you cannot find the meter, please contact us and we will be able to advise you of its location.

### 3.4.2 Can the meter be moved?

If you want to move the water meter you will need to contact us detailing the reasons for the relocation. If we agree, we will provide you with the details of how much the work will cost, and if we do not agree we will provide you with a reason. Customers with individual needs who need the meter to be relocated to enable them to read it will not be charged.

The position of the meter has no bearing on the ownership of the pipe; you are responsible for the service pipe running to the property boundary regardless of where the meter is located. If the meter is located at or near our stopcock, it will record any leaks that occur from your property boundary, which means that you may be charged for water wasted as a result of leakage on your supply pipe.

If your meter is in a meter pit box, there may be water in the box when you open it. Rainwater can collect in the box, so this does not necessarily mean the meter is faulty.

### 3.4.3 What if my meter is faulty?

If you suspect that the meter is faulty, you can contact us and request that we test it. The meter will be tested and, if necessary, be removed and replaced. There will not be a charge for the test if the meter is found to be faulty. If you disagree with the results of the initial test, then you can request for the meter to be removed and sent off for independent testing.

If the meter is found to be over-recording, charges will be adjusted to reflect the correct level of consumption either from the date that the meter became faulty, or if this is not known, then from six months prior to the date of the last reading taken by ourselves. If the meter is found to be under-recording, then the charges will not be backdated. We will provide you with a copy of the meter test report as soon as it becomes available.

### 3.4.4 About my charges

Your charges will be fixed according to the incumbent's water company, whose charges are in turn set by Ofwat according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) +/- K. The formulae  $CPI \pm K$  is the amount by which a company can increase (or must decrease) its charges based on inflation, in order to finance the provision of services to consumers. CPI is expressed as the percentage increase in the Retail Price Index in the year to the November before the charging year.



## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section four:

## Help with paying your bills

- Responsibility for water charges
- How can we help you?
- Our debt-recovery process



## 4. Help with paying your bills

### 4.1 Responsibility for water charges

**You are liable for water and/or drainage and sewerage charges if any of the following are true:**

- You are the occupier of the property
- You own or maintain the property, furnished or otherwise, ready for occupation, letting, sale or commercial use

Charges are applicable when a supply of water is made available for your property, regardless of whether you use the supply.

Charges should always be paid by the occupier of the property unless we agree otherwise. We require written agreement from the landlord if they are responsible for the water charges. In the case of property occupied by a number of people, any occupant can be held liable for the bill.

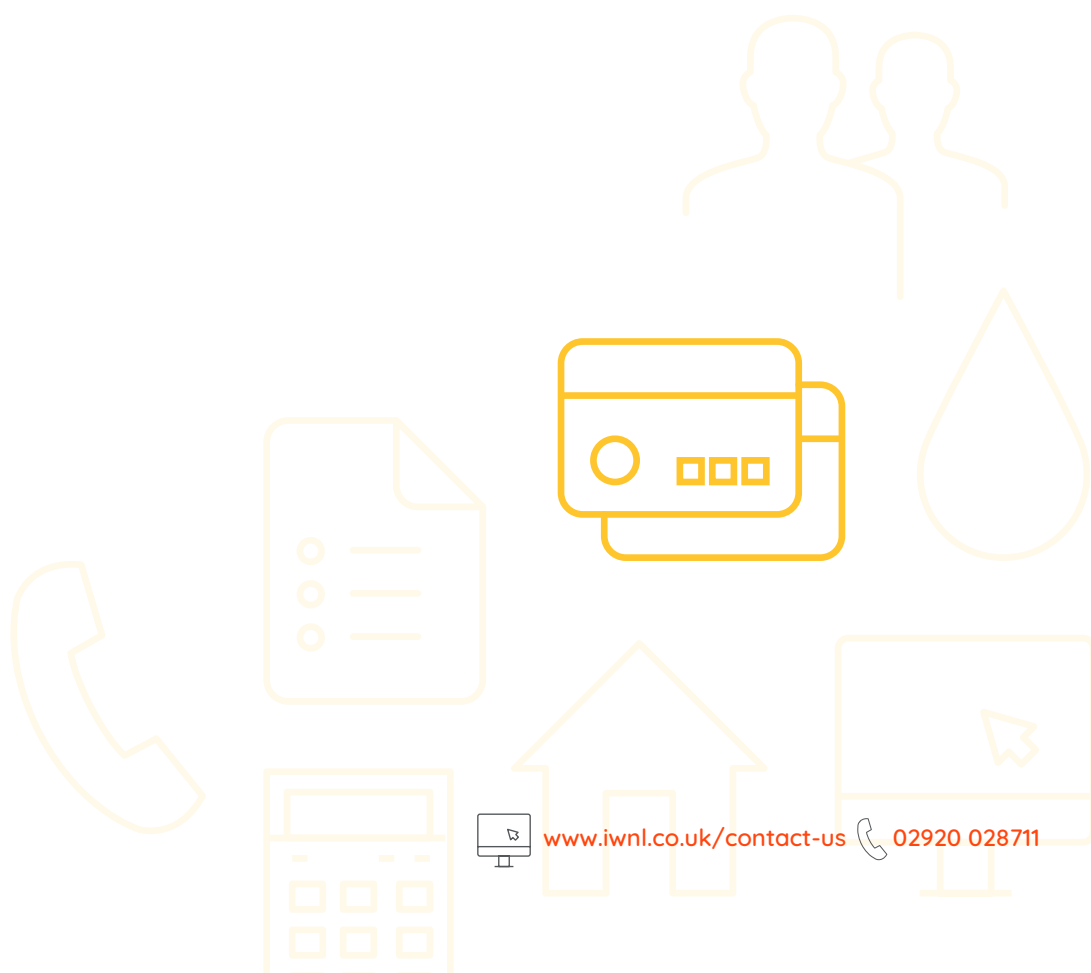
If you think that your bill may be wrong or that you may not be responsible for it, please call our customer services team to ask us to investigate.

### 4.2 How can we help you?

We understand that it can sometimes be difficult to find the money to pay for your financial outgoings, including your water and/or drainage and sewerage services. If you are finding it difficult to pay your bill, please call our customer services team as soon as possible and we will do all we can to help you - we will not be able to help you unless you notify us.

If you have a problem getting payment to us because of illness or disability, please contact us to allow us to make arrangements that are more convenient for you.

If you do not get in contact with us and you have not been paying your bills, we may start our debt-recovery process as set out in our Help with Paying Your Bills Code of Practice. Details of this can be found on the useful documents section of our website. [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/)



## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section five: Water leakage

- Leakage from our pipes
- Leakage from your pipes
- Repairing a leak
- How to spot a leak



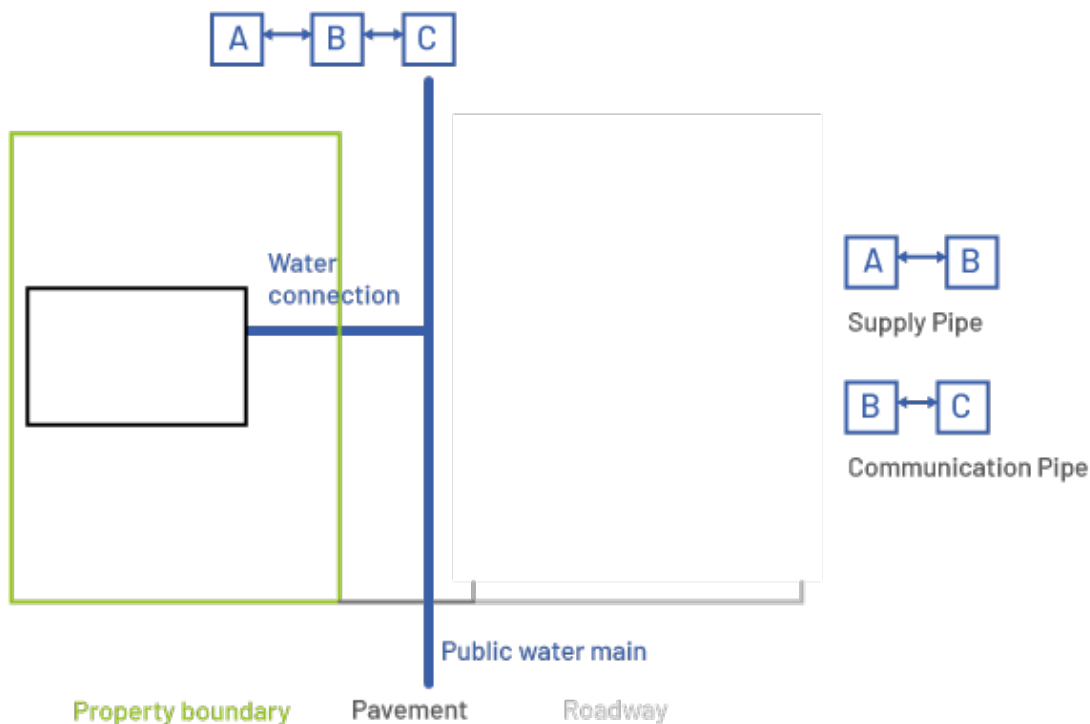
## 5. Leakage

We will do all we can to help you find and repair leaks on your supply pipe. They must be accessible and not under any structure, up to the boundary wall of your property. We will detect and repair, or replace free of charge, a leaking supply pipe to an individual property.

Full details can be found in our Water Leakage Code of Practice, which is available in the Useful Documents section of our website: [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/)

Our Water Leakage Code of Practice gives all the information you need about who is responsible for the pipe that is leaking; what to do if you discover a leak.

### Boundary diagram



## 5.1 Leakage from our pipes

Targeting leakage on our system helps us conserve water, minimise our impact on the environment, reduce our costs and keep your water charges down. It is our duty under law to prevent water wastage caused by leaks on our system and make sure that our networks are as efficient as possible.

Our networks are comparatively new and designed to prevent leaks occurring, however it is still possible for them to develop. If you do see a leak, please call our customer services team as soon as possible on 02920 028711.

## 5.2 Leakage from your pipes

You are responsible for maintaining all of your internal pipe work and your supply pipe up to the boundary of your property; we are responsible for maintaining any communication pipe outside the boundary of your property, the water meter and our stopcock. The diagram on page 21 details a typical water network system. If you wish to clarify responsibilities at your property, please contact us.

## 5.3 Repairing a leak

If you find a leak on your property it is important to get in touch with us as soon as possible. If the leak occurs within twelve months of the date that the water supply was first installed to the property by the builder, you may be covered by their guarantee and any defects should be repaired at their cost. You might also be entitled to a leakage allowance to help cover the cost of the water wasted by a leaking service pipe.

For further information on repairing a leak and advice on preventing burst pipes, please see our Water Leakage Code of Practice.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A BURST PIPE:

- Shut off the water at the main stop valve
- Turn off your central heating to prevent damage
- Open all taps to drain water from the pipes
- Contact a plumber



## 5.4 How to spot a leak

### Signs of a leak include:

- Higher than usual meter readings.
- Damp patches around your property.
- Areas in your garden where plants or grass continue to grow through a dry spell.
- Loss of water pressure.
- The sound of running water in your property when none is being used.

If you suspect that you may have a leak, make sure that all taps are turned off and no water is being used by any other appliances or heating systems.

Watch the dials on your meter to see if they move or take a meter reading and check again after an hour. If the second reading is higher and no water has been consumed in the meantime, you may have a leak.



CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section six: Moving property



## 6. Moving property

When you inform us that you are moving, you can either agree to provide us with a meter reading or allow us to use an estimated meter reading to calculate the final bill. Please remember that if your sewerage services are provided by another company, you will also need to inform them. You can contact us if you need their details.

You need to give us at least two working days' notice if you would like us to read your meter on the day of your move. **If you do not give us two working days' notice, you will be liable for charges until whichever of the following occurs first:**

- The new occupier contacts us and informs us that they are now responsible for the charges
- The twenty-eighth day after we are informed
- The date on which the meter would normally have been read in order to calculate the final bill

In the event you require a supply to be disconnected, you must give us 14 working days' notice.





## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section seven:

## Developer services

- New water connection
- New sewer connection
- Requirement for new main and/or sewer
- Self-lay connection
- Procedure for obtaining a new water/sewage connection, main and/or sewer
- Building work near public sewers
- Business customers competition



## 7. New connections

### 7.1 New water connection

We must connect all new premises to our water mains, if you ask us to do so, and the supply is required for domestic purposes. All new connections will be metered and charged according to our metered tariffs.

**You will have to pay the cost of any new connection to the main. These costs include:**

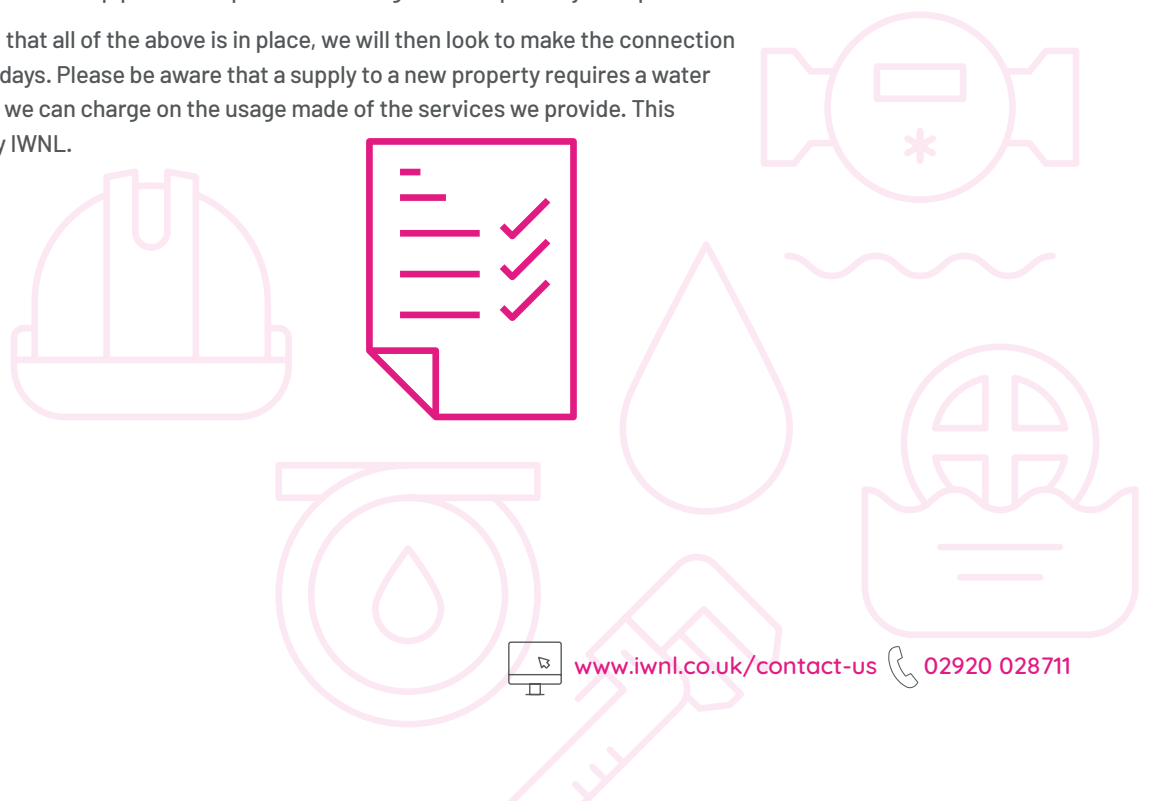
- Making the connection and any necessary inspections
- Laying our part of the service pipe and installing the stop valve and meter
- A fixed payment towards our overall costs of making sure that our water supply system can cope with the extra load of making more water supplies available. This is called the Infrastructure Charge

Once you have completed an application form on our website - [www.iwnl.co.uk](http://www.iwnl.co.uk) - we will inspect the site as soon as possible and send you a quotation. The quotation will also include useful information telling you what you need to do before we will make the connection.

**This will normally include:**

- Ensuring that the necessary permissions are in place from landowners
- Making sure your supply and plumbing comply with the Water Supply and Fittings Regulations 1999
- Ensuring that laying your part of the service pipe meets our specification
- Providing a separate service pipe to each part of a building that is separately occupied

Once we have agreed that all of the above is in place, we will then look to make the connection to our main within 14 days. Please be aware that a supply to a new property requires a water meter to be fitted, so we can charge on the usage made of the services we provide. This meter will be fitted by IWNL.



## 7.2 New sewer connection

You can connect your drain or sewer to our sewers, as long as it is practical to do so, and you pay all the associated costs. IWNL's sewer network does not serve all properties so please contact us if you are unsure if we provide sewer services in your area.

You will need to give us details of the drain or sewer to be connected and how the connection will be made. We can refuse permission to connect if we think the new connection will interfere with existing sewers. For example, we will not allow a foul drain connection to a surface water sewer. If you do not agree with all of our requirements, the CCW has powers to provide support on dispute resolution. You can either ask us to undertake the work and we will supply you with a quote, or you can make your own arrangements. If you or your contractor makes the connection, you will need permission from your local Highway Authority for any work that needs to be carried out in the street.

### **The charges payable to IWNL for the new connection would be:**

- A charge for our inspection of the work if you or your contractor makes the connection, or the quoted amount if we make the connection for you
- A fixed payment towards the costs of making sure the overall wastewater treatment system can cope with the extra load. This is called the Infrastructure Charge

If we agree to your connection, and once you have paid the charges, you must give us 14 days' prior notice of the day you or your builder will do the work. Then we can arrange to inspect the connection to make sure it meets our standards.

## 7.3 Requirement for new main and sewer

If you ask for a new main we'll provide it, but you and any other applicants must pay the difference between the income we receive for charges for water supplied for domestic purposes from the main and our reasonable costs in providing the main. You can choose to pay these costs over a 12-year period or in one lump sum. Both these payment options are based upon a statutory formula. We may also require some security from you before starting the work.

For our part, we must provide the main within three months of you signing the agreement containing the terms on which we do so.

We may not have a suitable existing sewer for you to connect your property to, or there may be a requirement for access across private land. In these circumstances you can ask us to provide a suitable sewer for you to connect to and, where practical, we'll do so. If a new sewer is needed, we aim to install it within six months (or a longer period may be agreed) after an agreement is reached to pay any difference between the income we receive from sewerage charges in respect of those properties and our reasonable costs in providing the sewer. We may also require some security from you before starting the work.



## 7.4 Self-lay connection

In accordance with section 51A of the Water Industry Act 1991, IWNL allows developers to self-lay water mains and services, subject to the work being undertaken to a comparable standard as work undertaken by IWNL or its contractors.

The work must be carried out by a company that is accredited with the Water Industry Registration Scheme (WIRS) which is administered by Lloyds Register. You can also look at the list of WIRS-accredited companies on the Lloyds Register website at: [www.lr.org/en-gb](http://www.lr.org/en-gb)

The specification for the laying of self-lay water mains and services is defined in the UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) Code of Practice for Self Laying of Water Mains and Services, 2nd Edition, for England and Wales.

Ofwat guidance on how new water mains contributions and self-lay asset payments are calculated, can be found at: [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)

**FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE PROVIDED BY CALLING OUR CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM OR VISITING OUR WEBSITE.**

## 7.5 Procedure for obtaining a new water/sewage connection, main and/or sewer

Please contact us on 02920 028711 to discuss your requirements and for an application form.

## 7.6 Building work near public sewers

If you are building over or close to our sewer pipes, we will need to know so that we can help to protect them. Building close to or over a public sewer without getting our formal approval is illegal and it may also jeopardise the future sale of your property.

We're responsible for public sewers within our area and many public sewers which cross private land. We must make sure that development is not carried out that could damage a public sewer, cause risk of flooding or restrict our access for maintenance.

Wherever possible we prefer to avoid the need to build over or close to a sewer by repositioning the proposed development or diverting the sewer. "Close to" is normally defined as being within three metres of the sewer.

However, there are some cases where the risk to the public sewer is small and where diversion is not possible, that we can allow building over or close to a sewer.

Please contact us on 02920 028711 if you are considering any building work in order that we can check whether the proposed work affects the public sewer.

## 7.7 Business customers competition

April 2017 saw the biggest change in the water sector for almost 30 years. That's because the retail water market was opened, allowing an estimated 1.2 million businesses, charities and public sector organisations the freedom to choose their water and wastewater retailer.

The creation of this new market allows businesses to switch from their local incumbent water company to another water supplier for retail ("account management") activities.

All businesses in England (including charity, public sector and not-for-profit organisations) have been able to switch their water supplier and their sewerage or trade effluent supplier, much like you can in the energy and telecom sector.

IWNL Wholesale will remain the wholesaler for your development and will provide water and sewerage services to IWNL Retail. You can find a full list of retailers on the Open Water website: [www.open-water.org.uk](http://www.open-water.org.uk)

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS YOUR ACCOUNT, PLEASE CONTACT OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM.**



CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section eight: Making a complaint



## 8. Making a complaint

We are committed to putting you first and customer service is very important to us. If you have a problem or are unhappy with our service, then it is essential that your complaint is dealt with quickly, efficiently and to your satisfaction.

Our complaints procedure has been developed to ensure that all employees and contractors working on our behalf are able to handle customer complaints effectively, whether face to face, over the telephone or in writing.

We define a complaint as any communication by a customer or potential customer in which dissatisfaction is expressed with an aspect of service, a process, or an employee or contractor working on our behalf. If your complaint is billing related, then any debt-recovery action that has commenced on your account will be suspended until you have received a full response.

**We will investigate your complaint thoroughly and aim to respond with:**

- A sympathetic understanding of your circumstances
- An apology if the complaint is justified, together with an explanation of what went wrong
- An explanation of any relevant company policy that may have generated the complaint
- Details of any action taken by us to resolve the complaint, or reasons why we believe that no action is required
- Details of any action that we can take to resolve the problem or prevent recurrence
- An explanation of whether any Guaranteed Standards or compensation payment is due
- As full an answer as is possible
- An explanation of how to escalate the complaint if you remain dissatisfied. We will consider claims for payment for any loss or damage that results from our services

**FULL DETAILS OF OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE CAN BE FOUND UNDER THE USEFUL DOCUMENT SECTION ON OUR WEBSITE - [www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/) ALTERNATIVELY, PLEASE CALL US TO OBTAIN A PRINTED COPY.**

In some cases, a customer has a legal right to refer a problem either to arbitration, or to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) for determination, to the Courts; to the Drinking Water Inspectorate; or to the Environment Agency. More information on this can be found in **Section 9.**



## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section nine: Independent advice

- Ofwat
- Defra
- Drinking Water Inspectorate
- Environment Agency
- WATRS
- CCW (the voice for water consumers)
- Your local council



Environment  
Agency



## 9. Independent advice

### 9.1 Ofwat



Ofwat does not generally handle complaints from individual customers. These are handled in the first instance by your local water and sewerage company and then, if you are still dissatisfied, by the voice for water consumers (known as CCW). In instances where you remain unhappy with the outcome from CCW you can refer to WATRS.

A limited number of complaints are dealt with by Ofwat, rather than by the CCW. For these complaints, Ofwat would expect you to have approached your water and sewerage company first before submitting a complaint to them.

#### These complaints include:

- Those concerning water and sewerage companies' powers to lay pipes on private land
- Concerns that the water companies are allegedly breaking their licence conditions or their main water supply or sewerage duties
- Complaints about anti-competitive behaviour under the Competition Act 1998, for example colluding on pricing or bidding for contracts

Ofwat can also decide on certain disputes between a customer and their water company but you should still contact the CCW first, because they may be able to resolve your complaint quicker on a more informal basis. If they are not successful, then they will consider referring the complaint to Ofwat for formal resolution. Once Ofwat starts a formal investigation of the dispute, both you and our company must follow its decision.

#### These disputes include the following:

##### **GUARANTEED STANDARDS SCHEME**

- A customer's right to a payment or credit under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme
- The charges and conditions set by a company for making connections to water mains
- The terms and conditions for a non-domestic supply
- The need for a customer's property to have a separate service pipe
- The charges and conditions for providing a water main (requisition)
- The terms and conditions for the adoption of a self-laid main
- The charges or disconnection costs that must be paid to a company before a business customer's supply is reconnected
- A refusal to allow a customer to pay by measured charge because a meter is not practical or is unreasonably expensive to install

##### **SEWERAGE CONNECTIONS**

- Appeals on the transfer of private sewers and pumping stations – more information is available on Ofwat's website
- A refusal to allow private sewers and drains to be connected to public sewers, or a requirement to inspect the drain or sewer before allowing a connection
- The costs and security a company asks for when it connects premises to a sewer
- The charges and conditions for providing a sewer (requisition)
- A proposal or refusal to adopt sewers or sewage-disposal works, or about the conditions in an adoption agreement
- The position or suitability of a drain or sewer to replace an existing private drainage system which the company considers to be unsuitable
- The effectiveness of an alternative sewer that has been provided to replace an existing one that is due to be closed
- A requirement that a proposed drain or sewer is built so it can become part of a general sewerage system





Ofwat also decides appeals from occupiers of trade premises who are not happy with a refusal or the conditions set by sewerage companies about putting their trade effluent into the public sewer.

Written complaints about the above should be submitted to the Ofwat case management Office either by email at [casemanagementoffice@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:casemanagementoffice@ofwat.gov.uk)

#### OR BY POST TO:

Case Management Office  
Ofwat, Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street  
Birmingham, B5 4UA, United Kingdom

#### COMPLAINTS OFWAT CANNOT DEAL WITH

##### Ofwat does not deal with any complaint about the following:

- Non-regulated businesses. These are activities of the water companies that Ofwat does not regulate. These include plumbing services, waste management, engineering and consulting services, hotels, vehicle leasing, media interests, fish farming and all overseas activities
- Issues between an individual and the company which can be dealt with through the courts. These include questions of law and assessing damages. In certain cases, the law allows the customer to make a claim for loss or damage through the courts

## 9.2 Defra



### Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) is a Government Department in the UK. The overarching challenge for Defra is to secure a healthy environment in which future generations can prosper.

#### YOU CAN CONTACT DEFRA AT:

Defra  
Customer Contact Unit, Nobel House  
17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR

Telephone: 03459 33 55 77  
Website: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)  
Email: [defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk](mailto:defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk)

## 9.3 Drinking Water Inspectorate



The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) checks that the water we supply you with meets quality standards and is safe for you to drink:

#### YOU CAN CONTACT THE DWI AT:

Drinking Water Inspectorate  
Area 7e, 9 Millbank, c/o Nobel House  
17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR

Telephone: 0300 068 6400  
Website: [www.dwi.gov.uk](http://www.dwi.gov.uk)  
Email: [dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk](mailto:dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk)



## 9.4 Environment Agency



The Environment Agency is responsible for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales.

### Its duties cover:

- River and coastal water pollution
- Fisheries
- Recreation
- Navigation
- Water resource management
- River management

### YOU CAN CONTACT THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AT:

Environment Agency  
Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West  
Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4UD

General enquiries: 03708 506 506  
Floodline: 0345 988 1188  
Incident hotline: 0800 807 060

Website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## 9.5 WATRS

WATRS is a voluntary alternative dispute resolution scheme to help address the very small number of customer complaints that remain unresolved. WATRS is designed to provide an independent, impartial and easy-to-use alternative to going to court or a tribunal.

### YOU CAN CONTACT WATRS AT:

WATRS  
Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution  
International Dispute Resolution Centre  
70 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1EU

Telephone: 0800 008 6909  
Website: [www.watrs.org](http://www.watrs.org)  
Email: [applications@watrs.org](mailto:applications@watrs.org)

## 9.6 CCW the voice for water consumers



CCW is the independent industry watchdog that represents the interests for water and sewerage customers in England and Wales. CCW deals with customer complaints against water and sewerage companies and licensed suppliers.

You can contact CCW at any point, but they will usually ask that you contact us first to investigate a matter before they begin their own investigations.

### YOU CAN CONTACT CCW AT:

CCW  
c/o First floor, Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square, Birmingham, B2 4AJ

Telephone: 0300 034 2222  
Website: [www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk)

## 9.7 Your local council

In the event you remain dissatisfied with the quality of your drinking water, independent advice may be obtained from your local Environmental Health Department, which is normally part of your local council.

It is a general duty of Environmental Health Officers to keep themselves informed as to sufficiency of water supplied in the area for which they are responsible.



## CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

# Section ten: Contacting us

- Contacts
- Codes of Practice
- Our office hours
- Water or drainage emergencies



## 10. Contact Us

You can contact IWNL at:

Independent Water Networks  
Driscoll 2  
Ellen Street  
Cardiff  
CF10 4BP

Website: [www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us)  
Telephone: 02920 028711

### Our office hours

#### GENERAL QUERIES AND BILLING:

Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm

Saturday 9am – 1pm

#### WATER OR DRAINAGE EMERGENCIES:

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



[www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us) 02920 028711