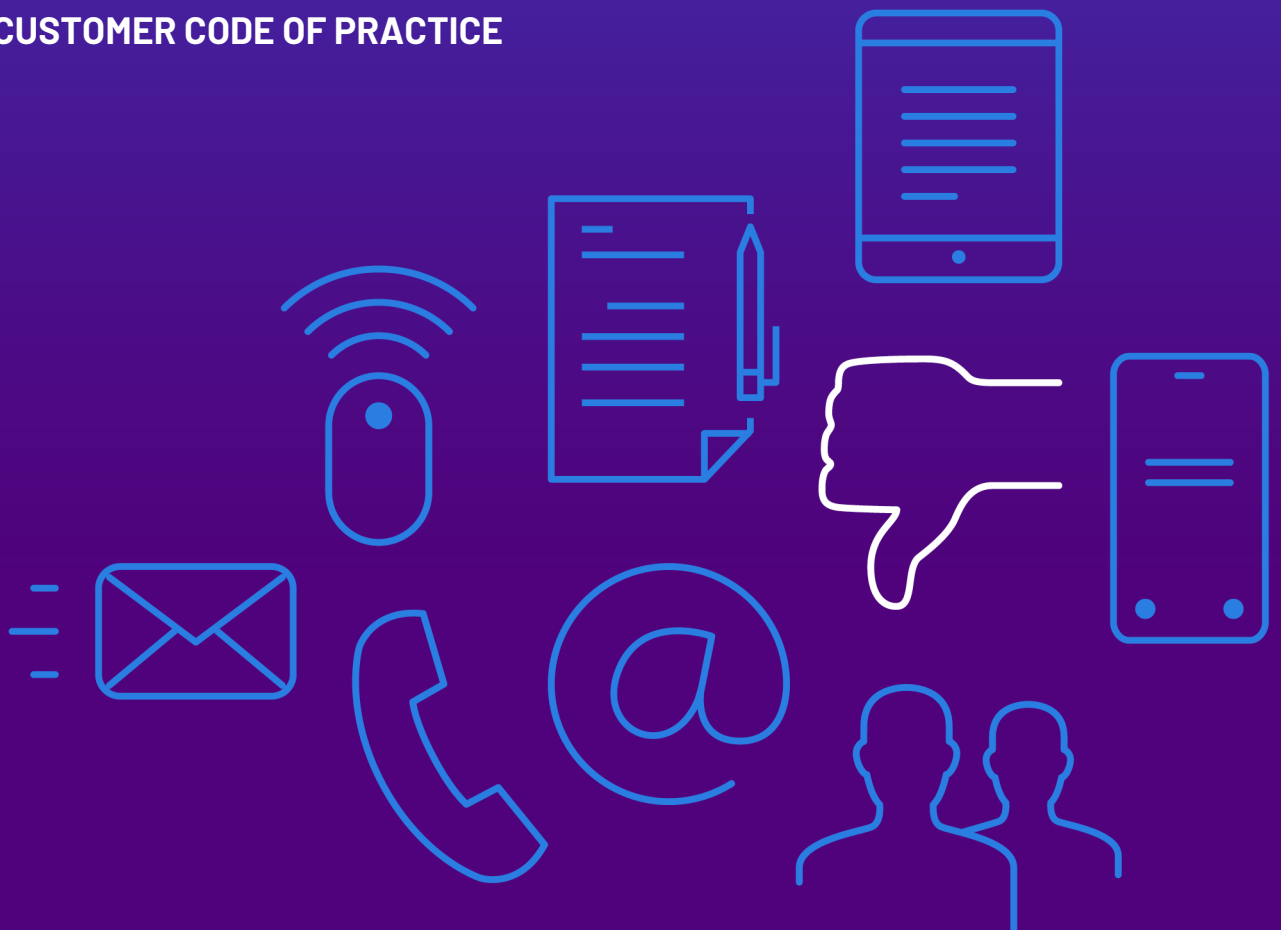




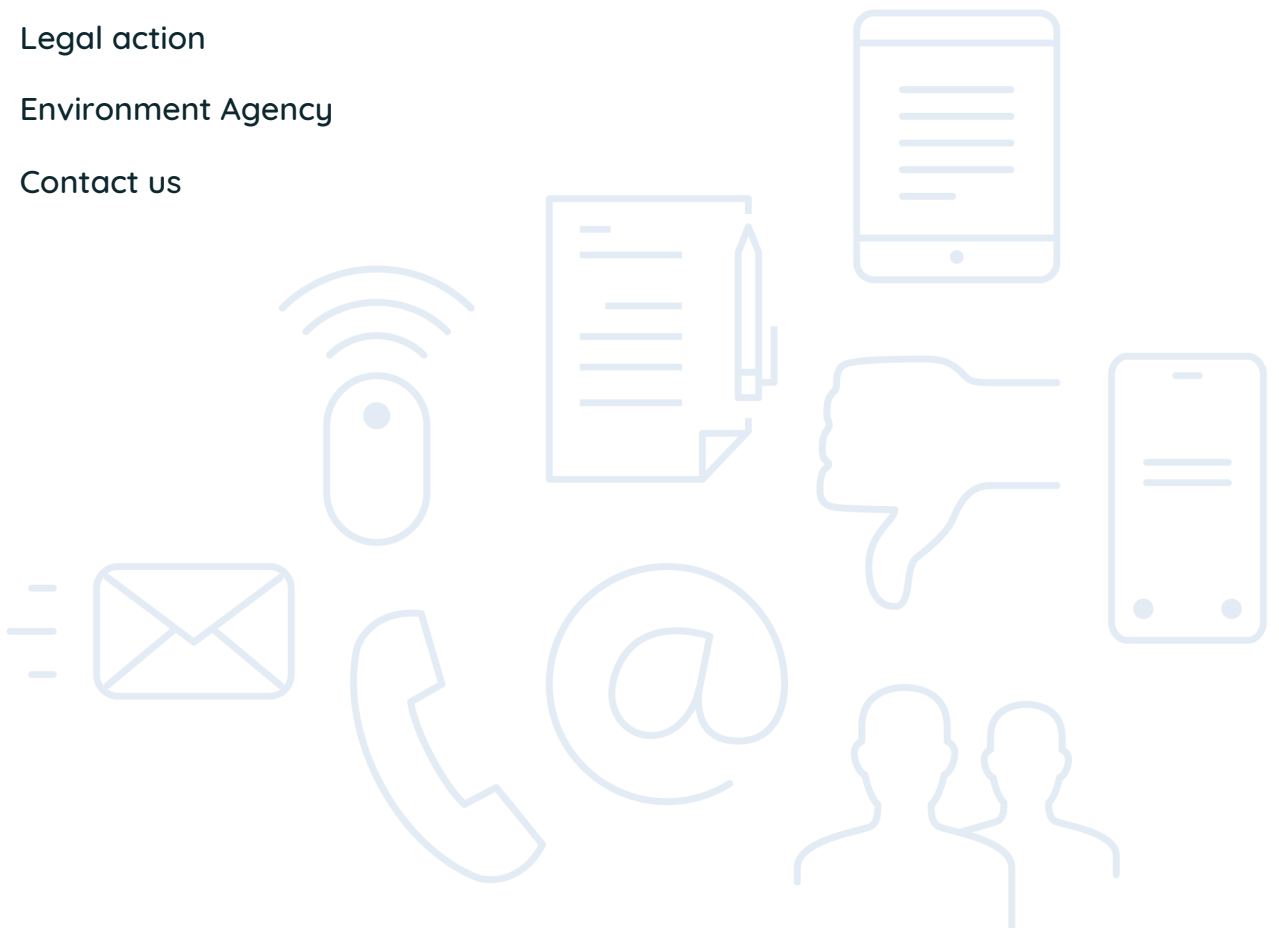
Customer Complaints Procedure

IWNL CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE



Contents

- 03 Introduction
- 04 Overview of our complaints procedure
- 05 Our response times
- 05 Complaints about employees
- 06 Further information and contacts
- 08 Arbitration
- 08 Legal action
- 08 Environment Agency
- 09 Contact us



Introduction

This document explains what the procedure is for contacting Independent Water Networks (IWNL) should you be unhappy with any aspect of our service. It also sets out how we will endeavour to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction.

It is part of a suite of documents approved by the Water Services Regulation Authority (known as Ofwat) that detail our Codes of Practice. This booklet is available in Braille or large print on request.

IWNL is the water supply company operating in your area. We take the place of your traditional water supplier and will ensure you are treated fairly and not treated or charged any differently than if you were with a regional incumbent supplier.

We are owned by BUUK Infrastructure, a company that owns and operates gas, water, electricity, fibre and heat networks across England, Scotland, and Wales.



Overview of our complaints procedure

IWNL is committed to putting the customer at the heart of everything we do. If you have a problem with our service, then it is essential that your complaint is dealt with quickly, efficiently and to your satisfaction.

We define a complaint as any communication from 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.

We aim to operate in a way that makes communication easy for all of our customers, and offer a variety of ways of getting in touch with us, including by telephone, via TextDirect, by email, by letter, Live Chat or face to face. If there is anything more we can do to make it easier for you to get in contact with us, please let us know and we will be happy to help.

We will investigate your complaint thoroughly in order to determine:

- How your complaint occurred
- What is required to resolve your complaint and stop it reoccurring
- Whether we have failed against our own standards of service and whether a payment is required under this scheme

In our response that will be issued via your preferred communication method, we will include a full outcome of our investigation; including an apology if justified; clarification of what has gone wrong; and how we will put things right. This will also include information on how to escalate your complaint if you remain unhappy.

Our customer complaints procedure is divided into four steps:

Step 1

Initial Complaint. Get in contact with our customer services team and we will try and resolve your problem as soon as possible. If the complaint is of a complex nature, we may take a little longer to provide an outcome, however we will keep you updated on our progress.

Step 2

Escalation. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our investigation, we will escalate your complaint internally.

Step 3

Independent Advice. Should you remain unhappy with the way in which we have handled your complaint, you are able to seek independent advice. The voice for water consumers (known as CCW) will work on your behalf.

Step 4

Independent Advice - WATRS. Following CCW's review of your case, you may have the right to refer your case to WATRS (known as the Water Redress Scheme) who will make a final decision on your case.



Our response times

Making a complaint by telephone

IWNL makes every effort to answer calls promptly and resolve your complaint quickly. If the person who received your call is unable to assist, we will arrange for a call back to take place as soon as possible.

If your complaint is complex and requires further investigation, we will let you know. We aim to respond to all complaints made in accordance with this procedure within 10 working days.

Making a written complaint

We aim to deal with all written complaints within five working days either by telephone or in writing. However, if your complaint requires further investigation, we will make you aware of the reasons why, and aim to respond within 10 working days.

Making a complaint in person

If you do wish to approach a member of staff working in the area, you are also able to do so, who will refer your complaint to our customer services team who will be in touch.

If your complaint is complex, and requires further investigation, we will let you know. We aim to respond to all complaints made in accordance with this procedure within 10 working days.

Complaints from customers for whom English is not their first language

We will always try to deal with a customer for whom English is not their first language in a way that makes communication easy. The arrangements necessary to enable this may mean that it takes longer to handle these complaints.

Complaints about employees

If you have a complaint about one of our employees, please direct it to the customer services department, or to the customer services manager should your complaint involve an employee working in the customer services department. We take any complaint made against our employees very seriously and we will investigate it thoroughly. However, in accordance with our company policy, we will not disclose the outcome to you of any disciplinary action we may choose to undertake.

Step 2 - Escalation

If you are not satisfied with either of the ways in which we handled your complaint, or the way in which it was resolved, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed, and it will be directed to the most appropriate level in the company.

IWNL will review your complaint and respond within five working days, either by telephone or in writing. However, if your complaint is complex and requires further investigation, we will let you know and aim to respond within 10 working days.

Step 3 - Independent advice - CCW

If you have escalated your complaint and you are still dissatisfied with our response, you can refer the matter to the voice for water consumers (known as CCW) who represents the interests of water and sewerage customers.

You can refer your complaint to CCW at any point, but they will usually ask that you contact us to investigate the 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



If you remain dissatisfied following CCW efforts to resolve your complaint, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Water Redress Scheme (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.

We have signed up to the scheme's commitments which are set out below.

1. Commitment to provide WATRS free of charge to customers
2. Commitment to support the principles set out in the ADR Specification
3. Commitment to respect the independence of WATRS
4. Commitment to be bound by the decision of the WATRS' adjudicator if accepted by the customer and to implement the decision as required by the scheme rules
5. Commitment to co-operate with and have due regard to the recommendations of the ADR Panel
6. Commitment to provide accurate and reliable information to, and co-operate with, the WATRS' adjudicators

A full copy of the scheme rules can be found here:

www.cedr.com/consumer/watrs

You can make an application, free of charge, via the WATRS website www.watrs.org or you can ask for an application form to be sent to you by emailing info@watrs.org. Guidance notes are available on the website or you can ask for a copy to be sent to you by telephoning 0207 520 3801.

You can contact the 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

Email: applications@watrs.org

Further information and contacts

In some cases, a customer has a legal right to refer a problem either to arbitration, or to the Water Services Regulation Authority for determination, to the Courts, to the Drinking Water Inspectorate or to the Environment Agency.

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 CCW.

A limited number of types of complaint are dealt with by Ofwat, rather than by the CCW. For these types of 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 more quickly on an 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 their decision.



These disputes include the following:

Guaranteed Standards Scheme

- A customer's right to a payment or credit under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme

Water connections

- 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 (see Ofwat's guidance on transfer of private sewer appeals on the Ofwat 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 decide 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.gsi.gov.uk

Or in hard copy to:

CASE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA
United Kingdom

Ofwat does not deal with any complaints 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

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.



Arbitration

Under the Water Industry Act 1991, some disputes can be referred for arbitration.

This means that an independent person will make a decision on the dispute. **Matters that can be referred for arbitration include disputes about:**

- Requisitioning water mains
- Standards to prevent domestic water being contaminated or wasted
- Installing meters and water fittings

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

Email: dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk

Legal action

You may also be entitled to take legal action against us in some cases. You should talk to a solicitor about this.

If you want to know more about your rights, you can contact us or the CCW to ask for more information.

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

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk



Contacting us

You can contact IWNL at:

Independent Water Networks

Driscoll 2

Ellen Street

Cardiff

CF10 4BP

Website:

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



02920 028711