



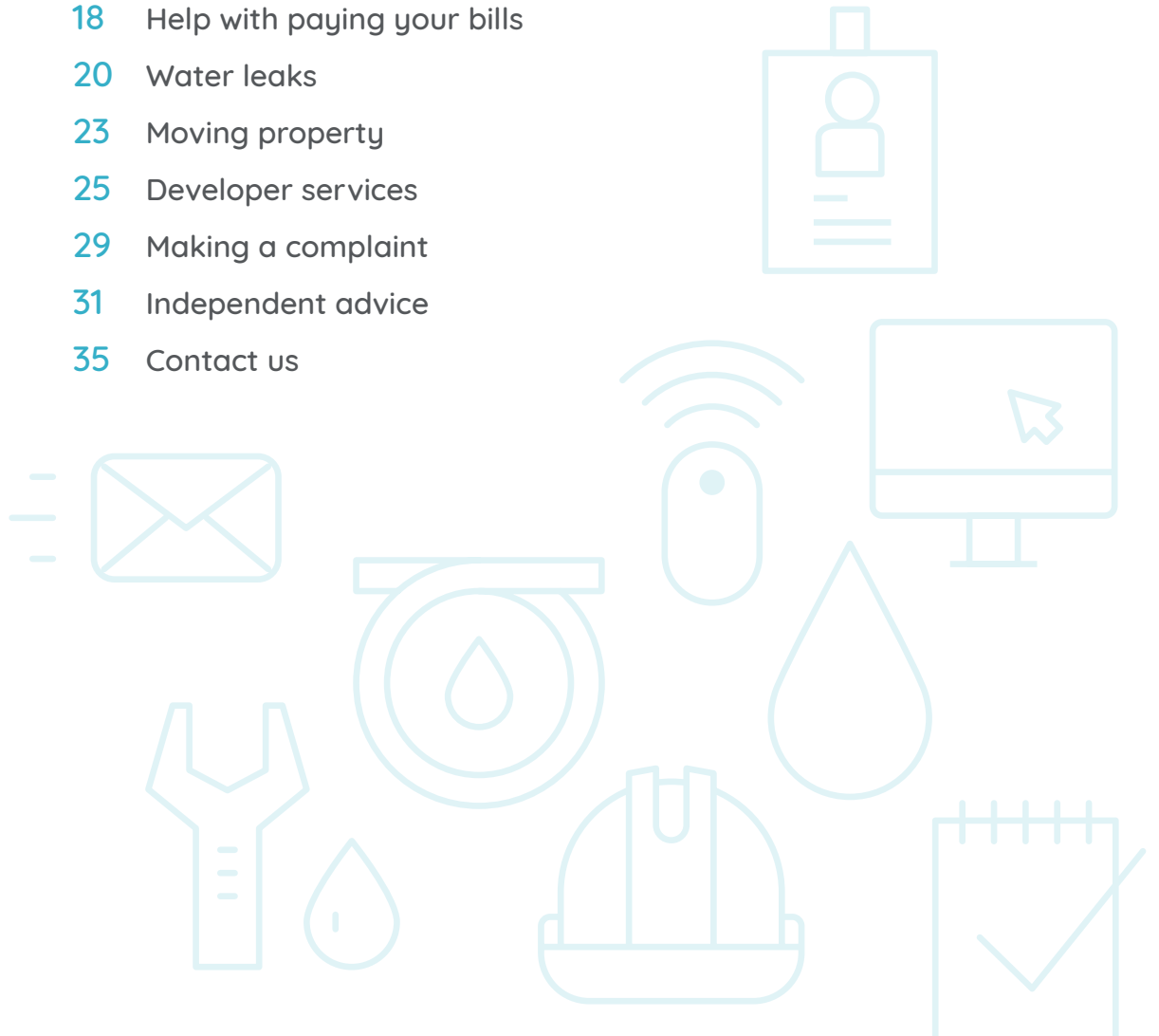
Customer Code of Practice



Customer Code of Practice

Contents

Section 1	03	Introduction
Section 2	10	Our promises to you
Section 3	13	How we charge you
Section 4	18	Help with paying your bills
Section 5	20	Water leaks
Section 6	23	Moving property
Section 7	25	Developer services
Section 8	29	Making a complaint
Section 9	31	Independent advice
Section 10	35	Contact us



Customer Code of Practice

Section 1

Introduction

- Who we are
- Our water services
- Our sewerage services
- Priority Services Register
- Doorstep password scheme



1. Introduction

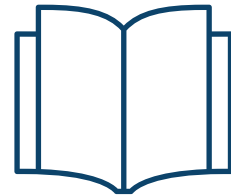
Our Customer Code of Practice explains the level of service we will provide to you. It is not a contract, but it does give you an overview of all the information you may need, and refers to other more specific policy documents where you can find more details.

This is one of several codes of practice which set out our standards of service. We have produced these codes after consulting CCW (the voice for water consumers) and Ofwat (the water services regulation authority).

Most of our policies also apply to our non-domestic (business) customers, apart from the WaterSure tariff (see **section 3**) 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 and set out all our water and sewerage services.

If you're not sure which services we provide to your property, please give our customer services team a call and they will be happy to help. Or, you can find these details on your bill.



Our documents are available in other formats such as Braille or large print. Contact us for more information.



1.1 Who we are

We are Independent Water Networks (IWNL) the company providing water or sewerage services (or both) 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 - new appointment and variation (NAV)

Under this licence, we are appointed by Ofwat to replace the previous water company in a specific area. This is known as a new appointment and variation (NAV) and means that we can provide your property with water and 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, including a modern network, an efficient wastewater service and outstanding customer service.

As our customer, your charges will not be any higher than they would be if you were being supplied by the previous water company.

If you need a new connection, either for water or sewerage services, please call our customer services team or email us with details of your plans.

1.2 Our water services

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

Water quantity

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

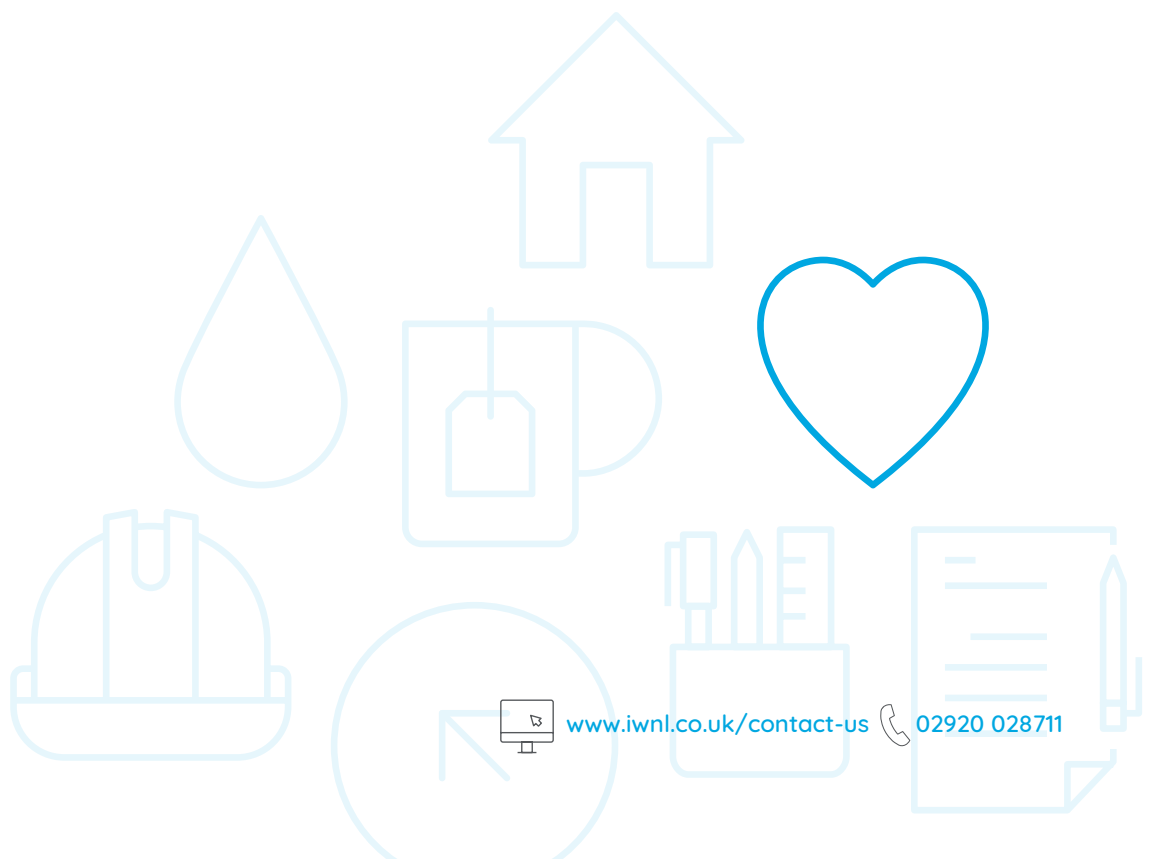
We will try to keep restrictions to your supply, such as interruptions due to drought and hosepipe or sprinkler bans, to a minimum. As our water is supplied from an existing water company, they may set restrictions which we have to keep to.

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 any amendments to those regulations.

Please visit our website (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 more information, please contact our water quality team on 02920 028711 or email waterquality@iwnl.co.uk



We are committed to making sure that you receive the highest-quality drinking water available. We regularly carry out extensive sampling of our water to make sure it meets our standards.

We are very proud of the quality of our drinking water, and we publish information about the quality of your water supply on our website at

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

If you would prefer a printed copy of this information, please contact our water quality team (see **section 10** for contact details).

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

For other complaints about water quality, if necessary we will make an appointment to visit you. If we need to, 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 we will contact you, in a way we agree with you when the results are available.

If at any time we become aware that your water supply is not fit to drink, we will tell you not to use the water, or to boil it before you use it for drinking or cooking. We will do this as quickly as possible in the most appropriate way available. We will make specific arrangements if you are on our Priority Services Scheme.

Protecting water supplies against contamination

When carrying out plumbing alterations, please be aware that these must meet the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. These regulations are aimed at preventing misuse, waste, using more water than is needed, incorrectly measuring water and most importantly, preventing drinking water from becoming contaminated.

We have a duty to enforce these regulations. We have a 'right of entry', which we can use to inspect premises where we believe the regulations may have been broken. In an emergency, we can enter premises without giving any notice, but in all other cases we would give reasonable notice.

For further, independent advice, please contact the Water Regulations Advisory Service (WRAS) at www.wras.co.uk

Water pressure

Water pressure at your property depends on the demand for water in our network and the difference in height between the source of the supply 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 is the pipe that connects your supply pipe to our water main. The size and condition of these two pipes, and the number of water-fed 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 more details on the minimum standards for water pressure, please visit www.discoverwater.co.uk/water-pressure

If you believe your water pressure is too low, please contact us. If we think we need to carry out any work on our pipework we will do it 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 supply pipe will be responsible for repairing or replacing it. If low pressure is due to system maintenance or drought, the above will not apply.

Water hardness

The hardness of your water depends on where you live. To find out more, please visit <https://portal.iwnl.co.uk/protecting-you-and-our-environment/>



Discoloured water

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

If your water is discoloured, run your kitchen tap for up to 20 minutes. 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

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 two 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 put in place initiatives to use water wisely, 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 leaks (you can help by calling us on 02920 028711 if you notice a water leak);
- offer free supply pipe repairs for all customers (depending on certain terms and conditions); and
- encourage the use of water-efficient appliances, facilities and practices in the home and garden, while increasing water recycling and keeping waste to a minimum.

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 your supply may be interrupted 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 carry out major work in your area, we aim to give you several weeks' notice. We may not be able to give you 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 12 hours, we will provide an alternative supply of water, usually in bottles or tankers in the street, and take reasonable steps to tell you where they are.

Rights of access

Under section 159 of the Water Industry Act 1991, we have the right to lay pipes on private land when working on or under land. A copy of our Code of Practice for Statutory Pipelaying is available to view on our website at www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/. The code does not affect our other rights or powers or those of landowners or occupiers. We will keep to the code whenever it is reasonable or practical to do so.



1.3 Our sewerage services

This section only applies if we provide sewerage services to your property. You can see what services we provide by calling us or checking your bill.

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

There are two basic types of systems

- Combined systems take both rainwater and wastewater from sinks, baths and toilets.
- Separate systems take away rainwater through a surface-water system, sometimes leading to a stream, river or soakaway, and take wastewater through a separate system connected to our network.

There are two main types of drainage pipes

- Drains serving just one property
- Public sewers serving more than one property

All types can 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. We offer several sewer services across our sites, including the following.

Foul water – Our sewerage system takes wastewater from your toilets, sinks and baths for treatment.

Surface water – We will provide a network that takes surface water from houses and highway drains to either the networks, local watercourses, rivers or sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), depending on local area conditions. If necessary, we do this with the agreement of the Environment Agency and planning authorities.

Highway drainage – The local highway authority, which is usually the council, is responsible for water pipes that only serve highway drains. We will provide a discharge point through our surface-water network for highway drains, if this is the best solution. However, we encourage highway authorities to discharge direct to watercourses (if the Environment Agency agrees).

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

On page 21 you will find a diagram which shows where your responsibilities for pipework start and end. If you need maps of a sewer, please contact our 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 for them. If you have a problem with a private drain or sewer and need help, you should contact a plumber or drainage contractor.



Sewer flooding

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

For example:

- it could be overloaded;
- it could be blocked or collapsed;
- a pumping station may have failed; or
- there may be severe weather conditions.

One of the most common causes of 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. Do not put wet wipes, cotton buds, cosmetic cotton pads, sanitary products, condoms and so on down the toilet.

For more information, please visit the Useful documents section on our website at www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/

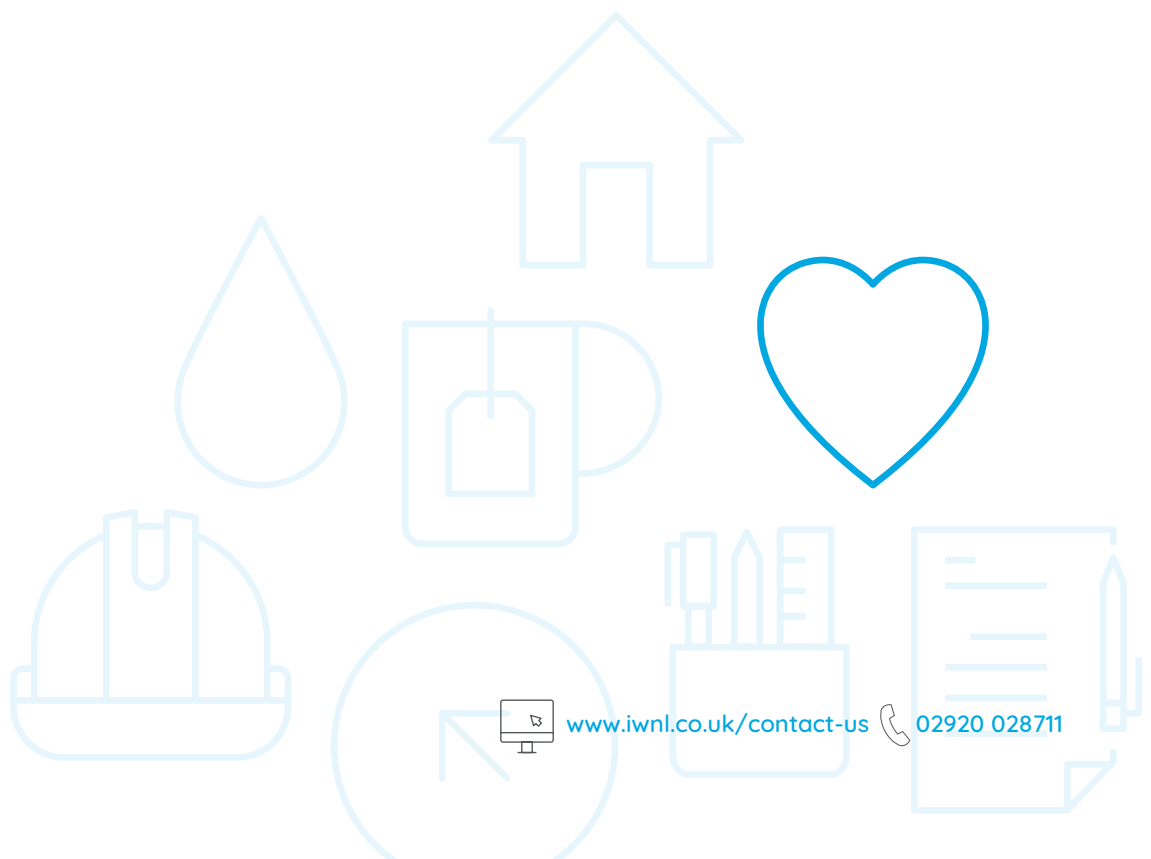
In extreme weather, such as major storms, we cannot guarantee to prevent sewer flooding, even if we respond quickly. If an incident happens which could result in a property being flooded, we will send a representative to assess the problem within four hours of being told about it. If sewage has entered your property, we will treat this as a priority.

We understand sewer flooding is very unpleasant and distressing. If this happens to you, please phone us on 02920 028711 as quickly as possible, so that we can provide help and advice.

Free cleaning service – If the blockage or sewer flooding was caused by us, we offer a free service to clean and disinfect the affected area as quickly as possible. Please see the 'Our promises to you' section (page 10) 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 tell your household insurer immediately if you have a flood. Please see **section 2** for more 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.



1.4 Priority Services Register

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

- a dialysis register;
- bills and documents In Braille;
- large-print bills and documents;
- Text Direct, which can help translate your bills;
- a nominee service;
- a password scheme; and
- payment terms for customers who have specific needs.

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

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

1.5 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.

It is very rare for us to visit your home without making an appointment. When we do visit you, all employees and service providers working on our behalf carry an ID card with their picture on it, and would be happy if you were to ask to see their proof of identity.

If you are unsure, do not hesitate to call us on 02920 028711 and we can then confirm the caller's 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.



www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us



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Customer Code of Practice

Section 2

Our promises to you

- Our Guaranteed Standards of Service



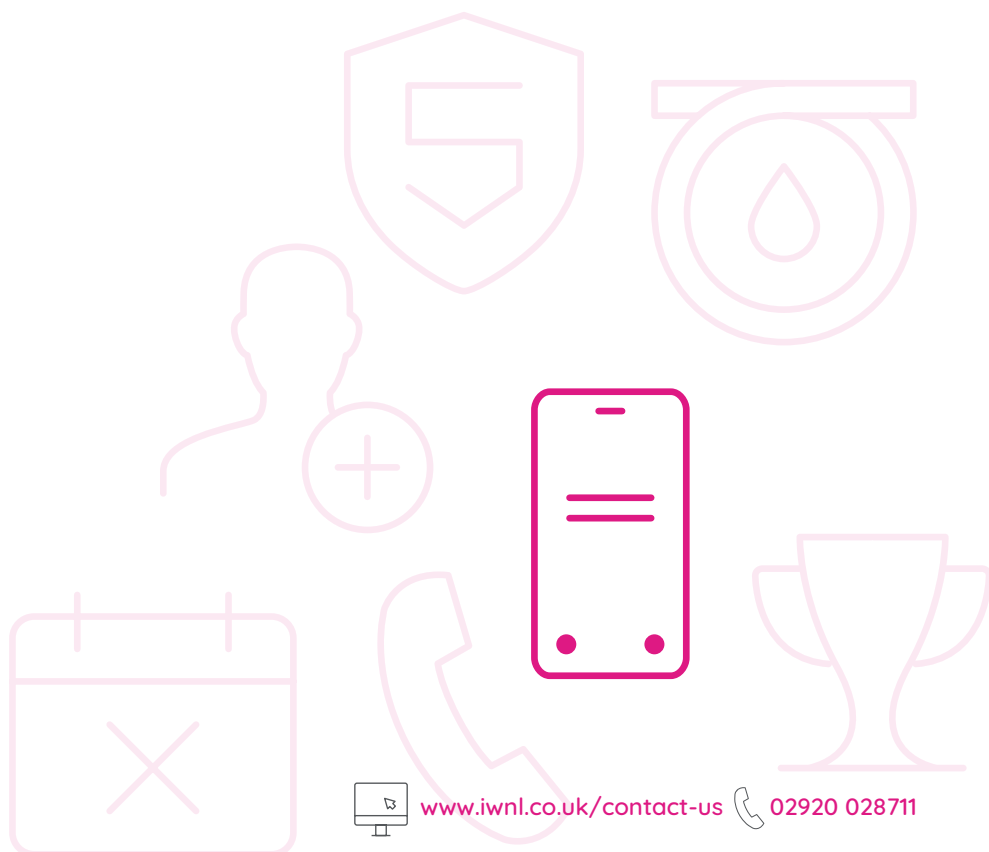
2. Our promises to you

You can find full details in our Guaranteed Standards Scheme document which is available in the Useful documents section of our website at www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/

As a water and sewerage company, we guarantee you minimum standards of service under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS). This scheme 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.

- 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
- How we will respond to both planned and unplanned interruptions to your supply
- Flooding
- Direct debits and standing orders
- Court action
- Discoloured water
- Water quality
- Drought orders



Customer Code of Practice

Section 3

How we charge you

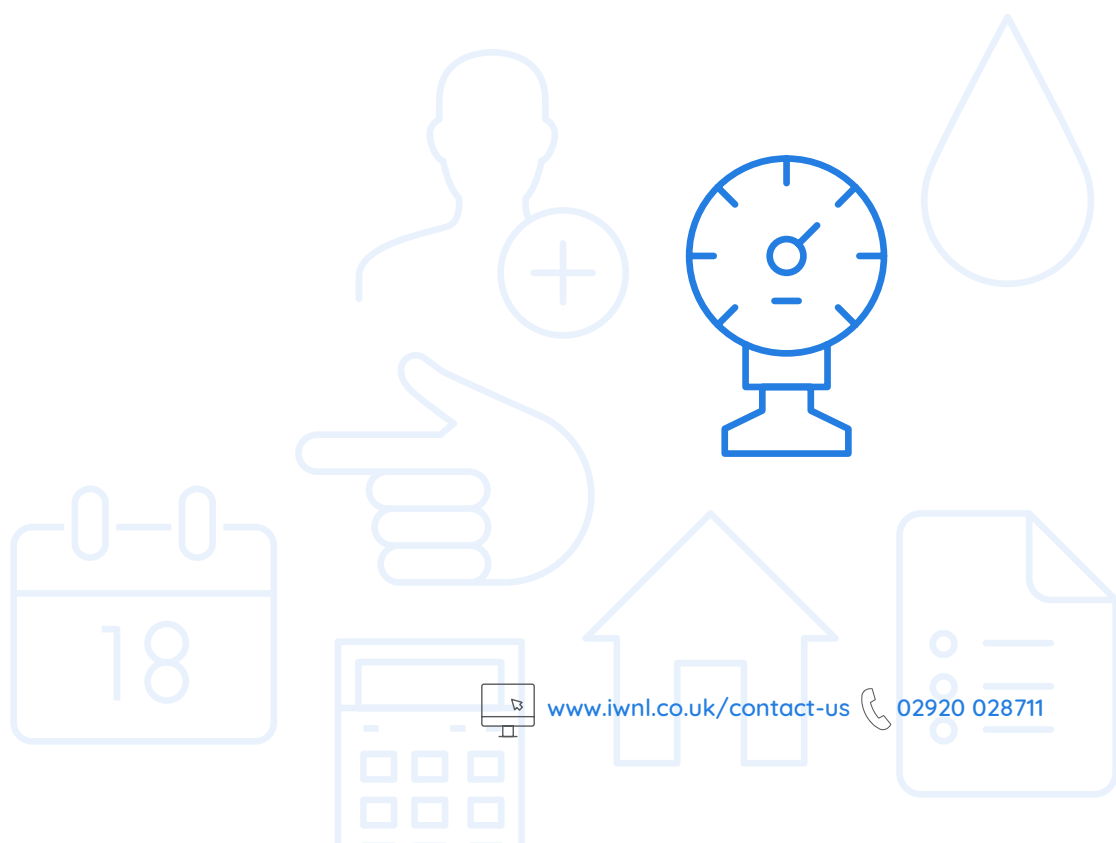
- Who is responsible for paying the charges
- WaterSure scheme
- Your payment options
- Your water meter



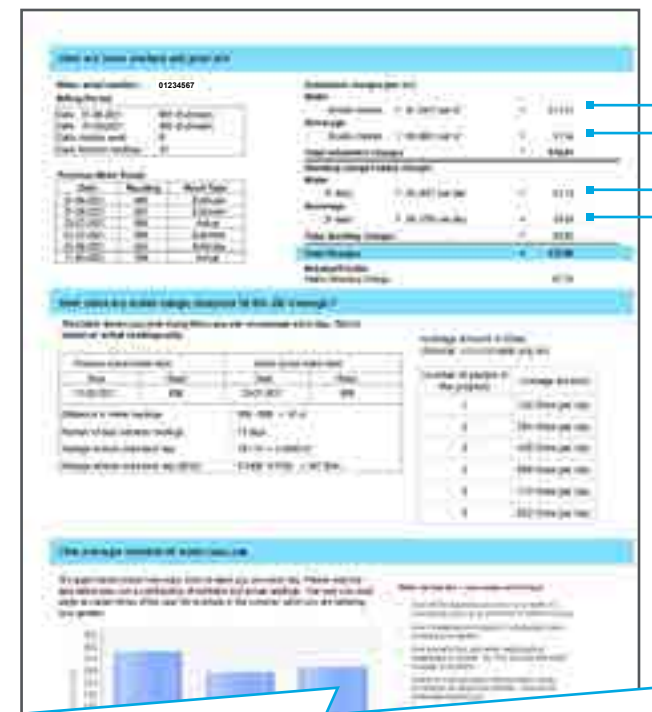
3. How we charge you

We usually charge the same as your local water company, but 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).

For more information on tariffs available in your supply area and how we calculate charges, please visit www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners and read the Charging documents under the Useful documents section.



There are four parts to your bill.



1. Water used

This is the amount of water measured through your water meter.

2. Sewerage used

We calculate this based on the amount of water measured through the water meter, taking into account that not all the water 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 rainwater that falls onto your property (surface-water drainage).

Water meters

Every property we serve has a water meter, which means we charge you for the amount of water you use, plus the standing charge. If we provide 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 think you are being incorrectly charged, please contact the customer services team.

Before 1990, properties were given a rateable value by the local council in order to calculate council charges. Water companies usually use this rateable value 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 a property without a water meter.

If no-one is living in the property, only the standing charge will apply, as the meter will record that no water is being used. Charges will build up whether the property is occupied or not, unless we are asked to turn off the supply.

If your meter reading is higher than usual and you think 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.

You can find more details in our Water Leakage Code of Practice, which is available in the Useful documents section of our website at 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 need written confirmation from the landlord.

If your property is empty, unfurnished and not undergoing renovations, please contact us or you will still be liable for our charges.

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

3.2 WaterSure scheme

We run a special scheme known as WaterSure. This scheme is designed to reduce the effect having a water meter has on vulnerable customers who use large amounts of water.

After you have qualified for WaterSure, you will pay:

- your metered bill based on the amount of water you have used; or
- a yearly charge which reflects the average household bill for a water or sewerage service (or both) in your area;

whichever is lower.

You should not use your supply to water gardens (other than by hand) or refill a pond or swimming pool that holds more than 10,000 litres.

To find out if you are eligible to apply for WaterSure, please visit our website or contact our customer services team.

3.3 Your payment options

If you pay by direct debit we will send you a bill twice a year. If you pay by another method, you can choose to receive your bill every month or twice a year. You must pay the full balance within 10 working days of receiving the bill. 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 to agree a suitable schedule.

If you are a non-domestic customer, you must pay your bill within 28 working days of receiving it. All payment options except Water Direct are available.

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

If you owe us money or miss payments, we will send reminders. We also have the right to use debt-collection agencies or take legal action where appropriate to recover debts. This is in line with our Code of Practice for Help with Paying Your Bills. You will have to pay any court costs associated with this.

For non-domestic customers, we may, as a last resort, disconnect your supply if you don't pay your bill.

There are many ways to pay your bill, including the following.

- Direct debit
- By speaking to our Customer Services team
- Using your credit or debit card (24 hours day, seven days a week, through our automated telephone system)
- Online banking
- Bank transfer
- Over the counter at any Barclays Bank
- By Payzone
- By Water Direct
- By post with a cheque

You can find more details on our website at www.iwnl.co.uk/help-and-advice/paying-your-bill/



3.4 Your water meter

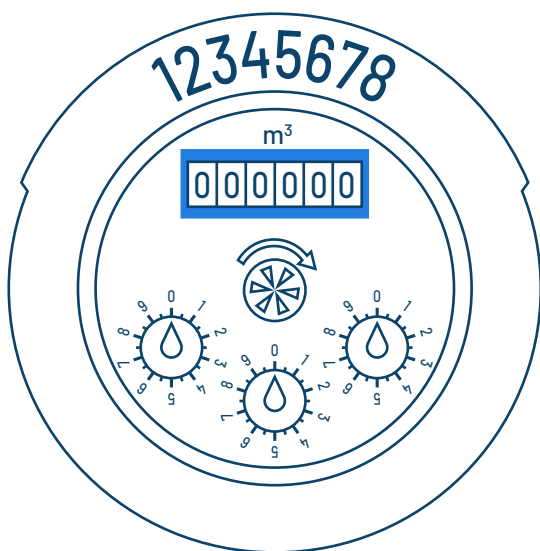
We aim to read your water meter at least once a year. When we have not been able to read the meter, we will send you an estimated bill based on your average use. If it is safe to do so, you can also read your own meter and send us a reading online. **Just log on to your online account and click on the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

The meter is our property, regardless of where it is, and it is a criminal offence to tamper with or remove it.

3.4.1 Where to find your meter

In line with government regulations, there are three possible locations for a meter.

- At our stopcock just outside the boundary of your property
- 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 shown above. When you send us a reading, we only need the numbers in the light blue area.

If you cannot find the meter, please contact us and we will be able to tell you where it is.

3.4.2 Can I move the meter?

If you want to move the water meter you will need to contact us with the reason why. If we agree that it can be moved, we will give you details of how much the work will cost. If we do not agree to it being moved, we will give you a reason. We will not charge customers who need to move the meter to enable them to read it.

The position of the meter does not affect who is responsible for the pipe. You are responsible for the service pipe running to the boundary of your property regardless of where the meter is. If the meter is at or near our stopcock, it will record any leaks that happen from your property boundary, which means that you may be charged for water wasted as a result of a leak 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 ask us to test it. If necessary, we will replace it. We will not charge for the test if we find that the meter is faulty. If you disagree with the results of the initial test, you can ask us to remove the meter and send it for independent testing.

If the meter is over-recording, we will adjust charges to reflect the correct level of use, either from the date the meter became faulty or, if this is not known, from six months before the date of the last reading we took. If the meter is under-recording, we will not backdate the charges. We will give you a copy of the meter test report as soon as it becomes available.

3.4.4 Charges

As your local water company, we fix your charges. Our charges are in turn set by Ofwat, in line with the Consumer Price Index (a system used to measure the average price of goods and services).



Customer Code of Practice

Section 4

Help with paying your bills

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



4. Help with paying your bills

4.1 Responsibility for water charges

You are responsible for water or drainage and sewerage charges if:

- you are the occupier of the property; or
- if the property is not occupied, you own or maintain it.

Charges apply when a supply of water is made available for your property, whether you use the supply or not.

Charges should always be paid by the occupier of the property unless we agree otherwise. We need written agreement from the landlord if they are responsible for the water charges. If more than one person lives in the property, any of you 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.

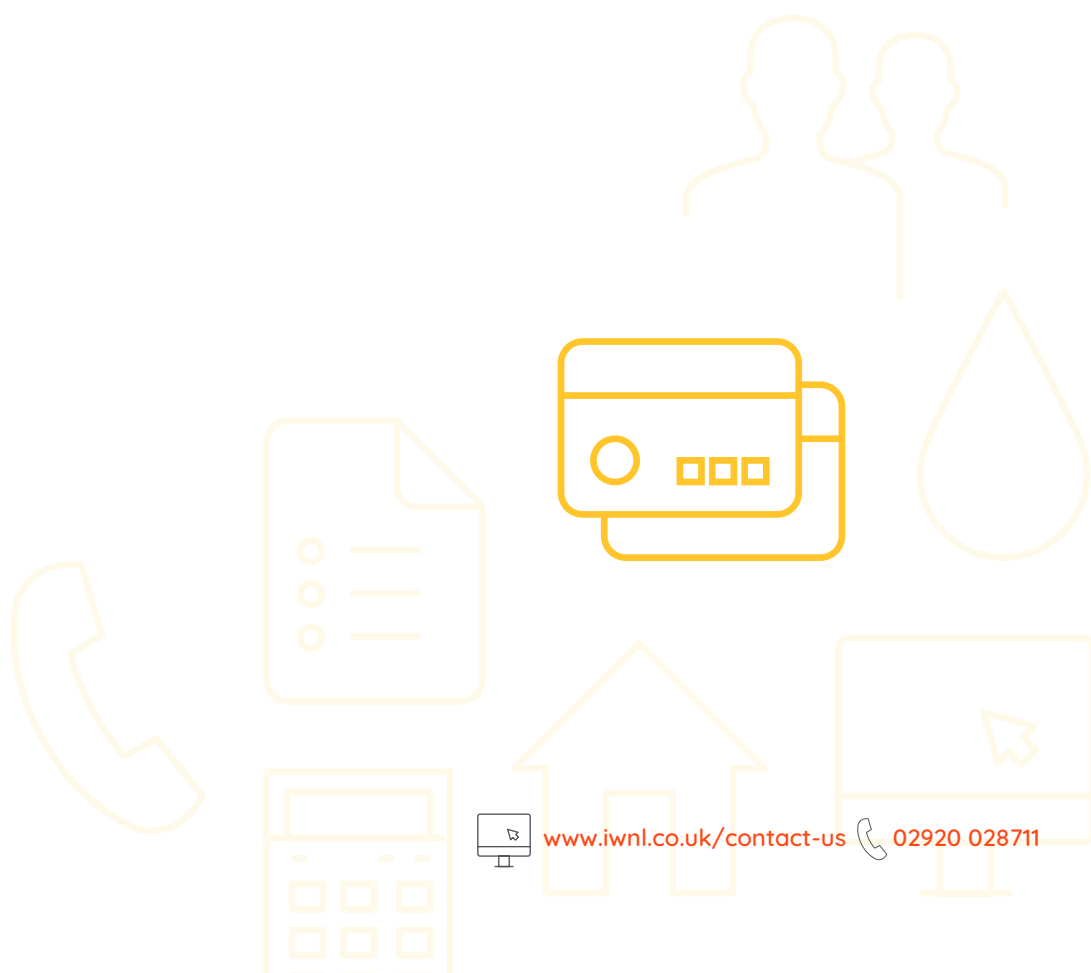
4.2 How we can help you

We understand that it can sometimes be difficult to find the money to pay your living costs, including your water or sewerage service. 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 - we will not be able to help you unless you tell us.

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

If you do not get in touch with us and you have not been paying your bills, we may start our procedure to recover what you owe us, as set out in our Help with Paying Your Bills Code of Practice.

You can find details of this in our Help with Paying Your Bills document, which is available in the Useful documents section of our website at www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/



Customer Code of Practice

Section 5

Water leaks

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



5. Leaks

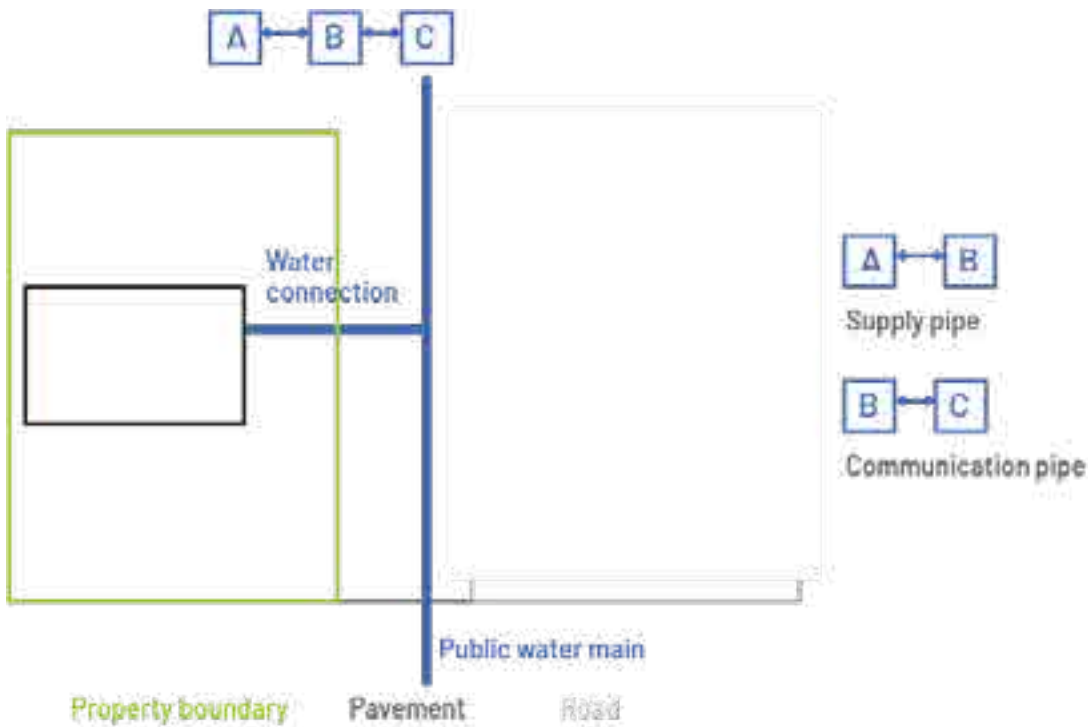
We will do all we can to help you find and repair leaks on your supply pipe if it is accessible and not under a building, and within the boundary of your property. We will repair or replace, free of charge, a leaking supply pipe to an individual property.

Full details of our leak policy are in our Water Leakage Code of Practice, which is available in the Useful documents section of our website at

www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/

The code gives all the information you need about who is responsible for the pipe that is leaking and what to do if you discover a leak.

Boundary diagram



5.1 Leaks from our pipes

Spotting leaks on our system helps us save water, keeps our effect on the environment to a minimum, reduces our costs and keeps your water charges down. By law, it is our duty to prevent water being wasted because of leaks on our system and make sure that our networks are as efficient as possible.

Our networks are relatively new and designed to prevent leaks. However, leaks can still develop. If you see a leak, please call our customer services team as soon as possible on 02920 028711.

5.2 Leaks from your pipes

You are responsible for maintaining all of your internal pipework 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, and for the water meter and our stopcock. The diagram on page 21 shows a typical water network system. If you are not sure what you are responsible for 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 happens within 12 months of the date the water supply was first installed in the property, you may be covered by the builder's guarantee and they should repair any fault 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 more 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; and
- the sound of running water in your property when none is being used.

If you suspect that you may have a leak, turn off all taps and make sure no water is being used by any 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 you haven't used any water in the meantime, you may have a leak.



Customer Code of Practice

Section 6

Moving home



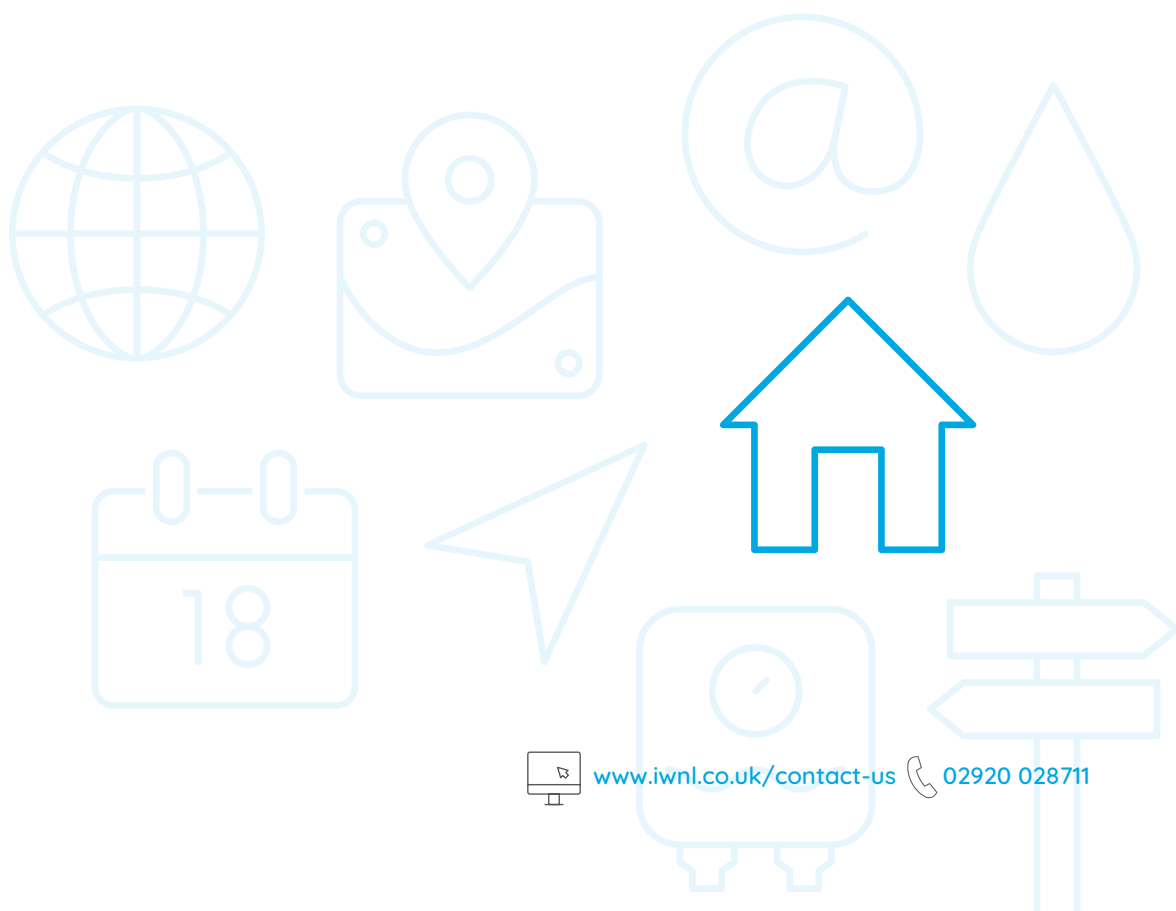
6. Moving home

When you tell us that you are moving, you can either give us a meter reading, allow us to use an estimated meter reading or we can come and take a meter reading for you, to calculate your final bill. Please remember that if your sewerage services are provided by another company, you will also need to tell 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:**

- the new occupier contacts us and tells us that they are now responsible for the charges;
 - the 28th day after you tell us would like us to read your meter; or
 - the date on which the meter would normally have been read in order to calculate the final bill;
- whichever happens first.

If you want a supply disconnected, you must give us 14 working days' notice.



Customer Code of Practice

Section 7

Developer services

- New water connection
- New sewer connection
- New main or sewer
- Self-lay connection
- How to get a new water or sewage connection, main or sewer
- Building work near public sewers
- Competition for business customers



7. New connections

7.1 New water connection

We must connect all new domestic properties to our water mains, if you ask us to. All new connections will have a meter and be charged according to our tariffs (rates).

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

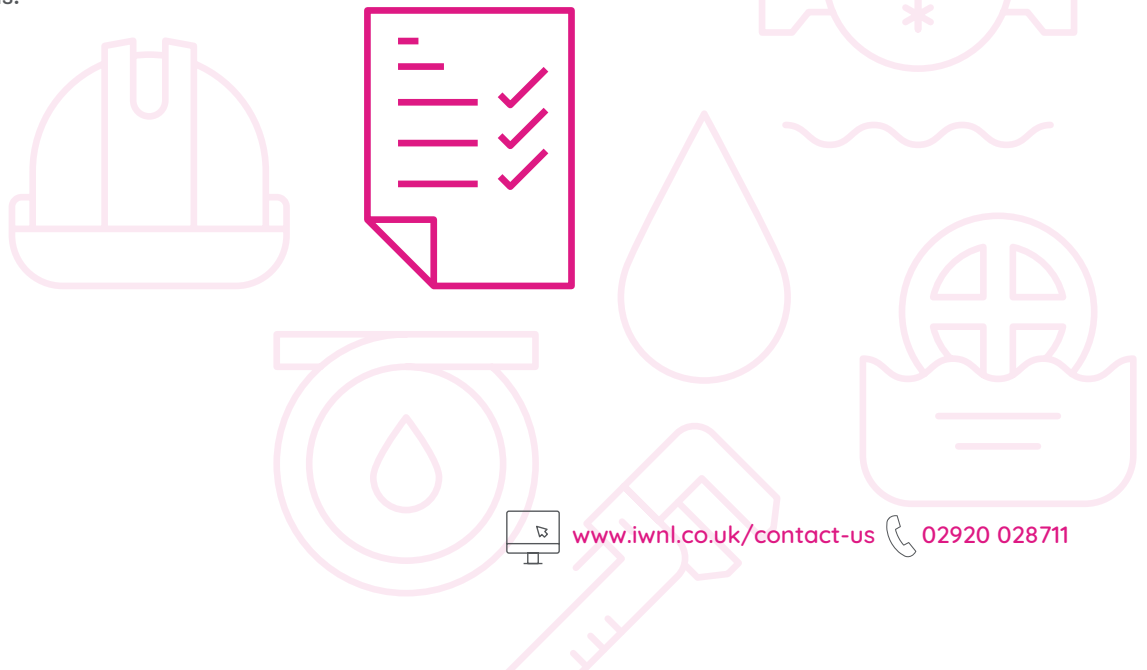
- making the connection and any necessary inspections;
- laying our part of the service pipe and installing the stop valve and meter; and
- a fixed payment towards our overall costs of making sure that our water supply system can cope with the extra load of making more water supplies available. This is called the infrastructure charge.

Once you have filled in an application form on our website at www.iwnl.co.uk, we will inspect the site as soon as possible and send you a quote. The quote will also include useful information about what you need to do before we will make the connection.

This will normally include:

- making sure you have the necessary permission from landowners;
- making sure your supply and plumbing keep to the Water Supply and Fittings Regulations 1999;
- making sure that laying your part of the service pipe meets our specification; and
- providing a separate service pipe to each part of a building that is separately occupied.

Once all the above is in place, we will then aim to connect your property to our main within 14 days. When we connect a new property to the main, we need to fit a water meter and you will be charged for this.



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 costs. Our sewer network does not serve all properties so please contact us if you are not sure 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 a drain or sewer 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, CCW (the voice for water consumers) can help settle any disputes. You can either ask us to do the work and we will give you 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.

For the new connection, you will need to pay us:

- a charge to inspect the work if you or your contractor makes the connection, or the amount of our quote if we make the connection for you; and
- 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' 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 New main and sewer

If you ask for a new main we'll provide it, but you and anyone else who applies must pay the difference between:

- the income we receive from charging for water we supply for domestic purposes from the main; and
- our reasonable costs in providing the main.

You can pay this over a 12-year period or in one lump sum. Both these payment options are based on a formula set by the government. We may also need a payment from you before starting the work. We will give you a quote for this payment.

We must provide the main within three months of you signing the agreement for us to do so.

We may not have a suitable existing sewer for you to connect your property to, or we may need access across private land. In these circumstances you can ask us to provide a suitable sewer for you to connect to and, if practical, we'll do so. If a new sewer is needed, we aim to install it within six months (or longer if agreed with you). You and anyone else who applies must pay any difference between the income we receive from sewerage charges for the properties the sewer serves and our reasonable costs in providing the sewer. We may also need some security, in the form of a payment, from you before starting the work. We will provide you with the quote for this payment, which will include details on how you can pay.



7.4 Self-lay connection

In line with section 51A of the Water Industry Act 1991, we allow developers to lay water mains and services, as long as the work is done to the same standard as that done by us or our contractors.

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

The specification for laying 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.

You can find Ofwat guidance on how new water mains contributions and self-lay asset payments are calculated in the periodic review 24 guidance at www.ofwat.gov.uk.

You can get more details by calling our customer services team or visiting our website.

7.5 How to get a new water or sewage connection, main or sewer

Please contact us on 02920 028711 to discuss your requirements and get 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 put the future sale of your property at risk.

We're responsible for public sewers within our area and many public sewers which cross private land. We must make sure that any building work does not damage a public sewer, cause a 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, if the risk to the public sewer is small and we cannot divert the sewer, we may allow building over or close to a sewer.

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

7.7 Competition for business customers

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. Retail suppliers, for example IWNL Retail, can compete for all eligible business customers. Business customers can change to another retailer if they prefer.

This new market allows businesses to switch from their local water company to another supplier.

All businesses in England (including charities, public-sector organisations and not-for-profit organisations) have been able to switch their water supplier and sewerage service supplier, much like you can switch your energy supplier.

IWNL Wholesale will remain the wholesaler for your development and will provide water and sewerage services to IWNL Retail. A wholesaler is an appointed company that owns and operates the network of pipes, mains and treatment works (if this applies). They act as the wholesalers in the market, selling water and wastewater services to retail suppliers. You can find a full list of retailers on the Open Water website at www.open-water.org.uk

If you would like to discuss your account, please contact our Customer Service Team.



Customer Code of Practice

Section 8

Making a complaint



8. Making a complaint

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

We have developed our complaints procedure to make sure that all employees and contractors working on our behalf can handle customer complaints effectively, whether face-to-face, over the phone or in writing.

You can find full details of our complaints procedure in the Customer Complaints Procedure document, which is available in the Useful documents section of our website at www.iwnl.co.uk/homeowners/. Or, please call us for a printed copy.

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 about a bill, we will not take anything you owe us until you have received a full response from us.

We will investigate your complaint thoroughly and aim to:

- be sympathetic to your circumstances;
- apologise if your complaint is justified, and give you an explanation of what went wrong;
- explain any company policy that may have given rise to the complaint;
- give you details of any action we will take to sort out the complaint, or reasons why we believe that we do not need to take any action;
- give you details of any action we can take to solve the problem or prevent it happening again;
- tell you if you are due any compensation under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme or other compensation payment;
- give you as full an answer as possible; and
- tell you how to take your complaint further if you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with it.

We will consider claims for payments for any loss or damage that results from our services.

In some cases, you have a legal right to refer a problem to:

- arbitration;
- the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat);
- the courts;
- the Drinking Water Inspectorate; or
- the Environment Agency.

More information on this can be found in **section 9**.



Customer Code of Practice

Section 9

Independent advice

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



9. Independent advice

9.1 Ofwat



Ofwat do not generally handle complaints from individual customers. These are handled first by your local water and sewerage company and then, if you are still not satisfied, by CCW. If you are not happy with the outcome from CCW you can refer your complaint to WATRS (see 9.5).

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

These complaints include:

- complaints about water and sewerage companies' powers to lay pipes on private land;
- concerns that water companies might be breaking their licence conditions or their main water supply or sewerage duties; and
- complaints about anti-competitive behaviour under the Competition Act 1998 (for example, plotting on pricing or bids for contracts).

Ofwat can also decide on certain disputes between you and us, but you should still contact CCW first as they may be able to settle your complaint quicker and more informally. If CCW are not successful, they will consider referring the complaint to Ofwat. Once Ofwat start a formal investigation into the dispute, both we and you must keep to their decision.

The disputes Ofwat can decide on include those about the following.

Disputes under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme

- Your right to a payment or credit under the scheme

Disputes about water connections

- The charges and conditions we set for making connections to water mains
- The terms and conditions for a non-domestic supply
- The need for your property to have a separate service pipe
- The charges and conditions for providing a water main (requisition)
- The terms and conditions for self-laying a main
- The charges or disconnection costs that business customers must pay us before their supply is reconnected
- Refusing to allow you to pay by charges through your water meter because a meter is not practical or is unreasonably expensive to install

Disputes about 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 we ask for when we connect premises to a sewer
- The charges and conditions for providing a sewer (requisition)
- A proposal or refusal to adopt sewers or sewage-disposal works
- The conditions in an adoption agreement (the agreement made between us and your developer on the adoption (transfer) of sewers)
- The position or suitability of a drain or sewer to replace an existing private drainage system which we consider to be unsuitable
- The effectiveness of a sewer that has been provided to replace an existing one that is due to be closed
- The need for a proposed drain or sewer to become part of a general sewerage system



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

Send complaints about the above, in writing, to the Ofwat case management office, either by email at casemanagementoffice@ofwat.gov.uk or by writing to:

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

Complaints Ofwat cannot deal with

Ofwat do not deal with any complaint about the following.

- Non-regulated businesses. These are activities of companies that Ofwat do 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 us 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



Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) is a UK Government department. Its main and most important challenge 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

Phone: 03459 33 55 77

Website: www.defra.gov.uk

Email: 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
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Phone: 0300 068 6400

Website: www.dwi.gov.uk

Email: 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; and
- river management.

You can contact the Environment Agency at:

Environment Agency
National Customer Contact Centre,
PO Box 544,
Rotherham,
S60 1BY

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

9.5 WATRS

WATRS is a voluntary scheme for settling disputes. It helps deal with the very small number of customer complaints that remain unresolved. WATRS is 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
100 St. Paul's Churchyard,
London
EC4M 8BU

Phone: 0800 008 6909
Website: cedr.com

9.6 CCW



CCW are the independent industry watchdog that represent the interests of water and sewerage customers in England and Wales. CCW deal 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
23 Stephenson Street,
Birmingham,
B2 4BH

Phone: 0300 034 2222
Website: www.ccw.org.uk

9.7 Your local council

If you are still not satisfied with the quality of your drinking water, you can get independent advice from your local Environmental Health Department, which is normally part of your local council.

It is a duty of environmental health officers to keep themselves informed about the amount and quality of water supplied in the area they are responsible for.



Customer Code of Practice

Section 10

Contacting us

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



10. Contact us

You can contact us at:

Independent Water Networks
Driscoll 2
Ellen Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BP

Website: www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us
Phone: 02920 028711

Our office hours

General enquiries and bills

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm
Saturday 9am to 1pm

Water or drainage emergencies

24 hours a day, seven days a week.

