



Customer Complaints Procedure



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Introduction

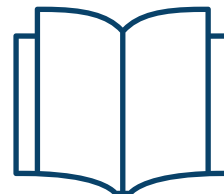
This document explains what the procedure is for contacting us should you be unhappy with any aspect of our service.

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.

We are 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.



Our documents are available in other formats such as Braille or large print. Contact us for more information (please see page 9 for contact details).



Overview of our complaints procedure

We are 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 three stages:

Stage 1 – Tell us about your complaint

Contact our Customer Services team and we'll do our best to resolve your issue as quickly as possible. If your complaint is complex, it may take longer, but we'll keep you updated throughout.

- We aim to respond within 10 working days.
- We'll ask what resolution you're looking for, so please have this in mind to help us meet your expectations where possible.

Stage 2 – Escalation

If you're not happy with our initial response, let us know why. We'll escalate your complaint internally for further review and aim to provide our final Stage 2 response within 10 working days.

Stage 3 – Independent Advice – Consumer Council for Water (CCW)

If you're still unhappy, you can contact the CCW for free, independent advice and support:

- Phone: 0300 034 2222 (England) / 0300 034 3333 (Wales)
- Online: www.ccw.org.uk/contact-us
- Write to: CCW, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH

You can contact CCW if:

- You're not happy with our final response
- Your complaint is over 8 weeks old
- You just want free, trusted advice



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, or 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 license 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 sewerage 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

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 of damage through the courts.



Arbitration

Appointing an arbitrator

Water and sewerage companies have the power to:

- lay, inspect, maintain, adjust, repair or alter any pipe which is in, under or over any street;
- carry out in a street all such works as are requisite for securing that the water in any relevant waterworks is not polluted or otherwise contaminated; and
- carry out works in connection with metering.

Schedule 12 of the Water Industry Act 1991 (WIA91) states that it is the duty of the water or sewerage company to do as little damage as possible and to pay compensation for any loss or damage caused in the exercise of the above powers. For any loss or damage they do cause when exercising their street works powers companies must pay compensation.

Under schedule 12 WIA91, a dispute about compensation must (if not resolved between the parties themselves) be resolved by the appointment of a single arbitrator. The arbitrator is to be agreed by the parties or, failing agreement between the parties, appointed by Ofwat.

There are also other areas that require that we appoint an arbitrator if the parties in dispute are unable to do so. For example:

- Certain metering disputes between customers and undertakers;
- Compensation disputes if an undertaker carries out work on a meter for a customer and does not exercise reasonable care; and
- Where different services are provided to the same premises by different service providers (either undertakers or licensees) and there is an agreement between service providers as to the allocation of costs relating to meter reading, a dispute in relation to that agreement.

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

General enquiries: 03708 506 506
Flood line: 0345 988 1188 Incident hotline: 0800 807 060
Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

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

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.



www.iwnl.co.uk/contact-us



02920 028711

Contacting Us

You can contact us 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

Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays: 9am – 5pm

WATER OR DRAINAGE EMERGENCIES:

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

