

A simple guide  
to paying your  
water bill



# Introduction

**United Utilities provides daily water and wastewater services to seven million people. From Carlisle to Crewe, Morecambe to Macclesfield, we operate one of the biggest water and wastewater systems in the world.**

Around the clock, we provide water to customers' taps – safe, wholesome and essential. We also take away and treat your wastewater – making it clean before returning it safely to the environment.

**Working for  
you 24 hours a  
day, everyday.**



- **How do we work out your bill?**
- **Would I be better off with a water meter?**
- **What's the easiest way to pay my bill?**
- **Where does my money go?**

**These are all common questions that customers ask us about their bill.**

You'll find all the information in this booklet, which also includes details about:

- How to get in touch with us
- What to do if you are moving home
- Your bill in another format, such as Braille or large print
- Help if you have a meter and use a lot of water for essential purposes
- What to do if you are having problems paying your bill

# How do we work out your water bill?

## The way we work out your bill depends on whether or not you have a water meter.

However, in both cases and for most of our customers we charge for the cost of:

- treating and supplying clean water to your home; and
- taking away and treating your wastewater before returning it safely to rivers and the sea.

On your bill we split the cost of treating and supplying clean water to your home and the cost of taking away and treating the wastewater. We do this so you can see how much you pay for each service. Also, some customers may only receive a bill for one service (for example, if a customer discharges their wastewater to a septic tank and therefore only pays us for water).

If you live on the border of our area, another water company may provide one of these services for you. However, in these instances you will still receive one bill for both services (for example, if another water company is collecting wastewater charges on our behalf).

Full details about our charges can be found at [unitedutilities.com/charges](https://www.unitedutilities.com/charges). Alternatively phone our automated leaflet line on **0845 303 7711** and request a copy of our charges scheme summary for household consumers.



## If you DON'T HAVE a water meter

We base your charges on the rateable value of your property. All properties built before 1st April 1990 were given a rateable value based on their estimated annual rental income. This was set by the Valuation Officer of the Inland Revenue before Council Tax was introduced. There is no link between the way the rateable value was set and the way the Council Tax band was decided. So it would not be possible to alter the rateable value when your Council Tax band changes.

### You pay:

- A charge for clean water to your home based on the rateable value of your property;
- A charge for wastewater services (collecting and disposing of your used water, surface water and highway drainage) based on the rateable value of your property;
- A standing charge which covers costs such as sending bills and dealing with enquiries and helps improve the balance between the charge you pay and your likely use of water.

## We fit water meters free of charge

Visit [unitedutilities.com/meters](https://unitedutilities.com/meters) to apply

## If you HAVE a water meter

### You pay:

- A charge for the amount of water you have used – in cubic metres. (One cubic metre = 1,000 litres of water);
- A charge for wastewater services (collecting and disposing of your used water) based on the amount of water you have used (in cubic metres);
- A fixed charge for dealing with surface water and highway drainage;
- A standing charge which covers the cost of reading and maintaining your meter, sending bills and dealing with enquiries.





### **If you don't use a lot of water, you may be better off with a water meter**

More and more customers are choosing to have a meter fitted. If you live on your own, have a small family or live in a property with a high rateable value, you may save money.

And we fit water meters FREE of charge.

For more information visit [unitedutilities.com/meters](https://unitedutilities.com/meters) (you can also apply for a meter on-line).

You can also apply for a meter by calling **0845 303 7744**.

Alternatively phone our automated leaflet line on **0845 303 7711** and request a water meter pack.

### **Surface water drainage**

Surface water drainage charge covers the cost of disposing of rainwater and other water that drains from your property into the public sewer. Highway drainage charge covers the cost of disposing of water that drains from roads and pavements.

If your surface water does not drain into the public sewer, we may be able to reduce your charges. For more information, please call us on **0845 746 1100** if you don't have a meter, **0845 746 2222** if you have a meter, or textphone **0808 143 1195**.

You can also download an application form from our website: [unitedutilities.com/surfacewaterhome](https://unitedutilities.com/surfacewaterhome)

# Easy ways to pay

**We try to make it as easy as possible for you to pay your bill and we offer several different ways to pay. The easiest of these is Direct Debit.**



**Visit our website  
to pay your bill  
and set up a  
Direct Debit**

## **How can I pay?**

We offer many payment options to make life easier. You can pay by:

- Direct Debit
- Standing Order
- Cash
- Cheque or Postal Order
- Payment card
- Telephone, internet or TV banking
- Automated payment line.

With all our instalment options, you can pay once a year, twice a year, quarterly or monthly. With some payment methods, you can pay fortnightly or weekly to help spread the costs and there are no interest charges.



### Direct Debit

Direct Debit is the easy way to pay. You will receive a £5 discount off your bill each year and you can even spread your payments using one of our instalment options. You can also choose any day of the month to pay. Direct Debit takes the hassle out of paying your bill.

### ***Switching to Direct Debit couldn't be easier***

We'll take care of everything. Simply contact us on one of the contact numbers shown below and remember to have your customer account number, which you will find on your bill, and your bank details handy. Visit our website [unitedutilities.com/dd](http://unitedutilities.com/dd) to sign up online.

### **Direct Debit guarantee**

This guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change, United Utilities Water PLC will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by United Utilities Water PLC or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

### Website

Visit [unitedutilities.com/payyourbill](http://unitedutilities.com/payyourbill) to set up a Direct Debit or to pay your bill on-line.

### Standing Order

For security and convenience pay monthly through your bank. With a standing order, you are in control of the amount debited from your account. Contact us and we will send you a form to fill in.

### Bank

Pay at your own bank with cash or by cheque. Some banks may not offer this service or may charge for this service. Please take your bill with you.

### By post

Use the pre-addressed envelope where provided and post it with the completed payment slip together with a cheque or postal order to United Utilities, PO Box 450, Warrington, WA5 1WA. Make your cheques payable to 'United Utilities Water PLC' and write your customer account number on the back.

### Contact us

- **0845 746 1100** if you don't have a water meter
- **0845 746 2222** if you have a water meter, or textphone on **0808 143 1195**

### **Payzone**

You can pay for free at any outlet displaying a Payzone sign which accepts United Utilities Water payments. You can find details of these at [www.payzone.co.uk](http://www.payzone.co.uk). Alternatively contact us on one of the numbers shown on the previous page for details of your nearest outlet. Don't forget to take your bill along with you.

### **Post Offices**

You can pay your water bill at the Post Office but you will be charged a fee for this service. Payment can be made by cash, cheque, credit card or debit card. Please make your cheque payable to 'Post Office Ltd' and write your customer reference number on the reverse.

### **Payment card**

You may find a payment card a more convenient way to pay your bill. You can use your payment card to pay for free at any outlet displaying a Payzone sign which accepts United Utilities Water payments. You can find details of these at [www.payzone.co.uk](http://www.payzone.co.uk). Please call us on **0845 746 2211** to find out more.

### **Debit card/Credit card**

Payment can be made by debit card or credit card by telephoning our automated payments line on **0845 402 1366** or the number shown on your bill **0845 746 2211** or alternatively online at [unitedutilities.com/payyourbill](http://unitedutilities.com/payyourbill)

### **Telephone, internet or TV banking**

To pay using your telephone, internet or TV banking service, quote our sort code 010917 and account number 58933956 together with your customer reference number.

### **Receipt**

If you pay over a counter, **please allow five days for your payment to reach us and always make sure you get a receipt.** If your payment goes missing, we will need to see your receipt to find it for you.

# A fresh start for those having difficulty paying their bill

## Payment difficulties

If you are having difficulties paying your bill, please call us, we can help. We offer a range of payment frequencies; annual, half yearly, quarterly, monthly, fortnightly and weekly. Our factsheet entitled 'Code of practice and procedure on debt recovery' explains how we can help if you are having difficulty paying your water services charges. Call us to order this factsheet or download it at [unitedutilities.com](http://unitedutilities.com)

## Arrears Allowance Scheme

In cases of financial difficulties we may be able to help you under our 'Arrears Allowance Scheme' provided you meet the criteria. If you qualify for the scheme, you must agree to pay a fixed amount towards your arrears and current bill. Call us on **0845 746 2034** for more information.

If you are accepted on the scheme, we will reduce your arrears by an additional £1 for every £1 you pay off your arrears over and above your current charges. This is as long as you keep to the payment arrangement we have agreed. If you do, we will keep reducing your arrears until they have been cleared.

## Water Direct

If you are in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or Pensions Credit, you may ask the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to pay your bill directly to us out of your benefit. This means you don't have to remember to make payments.

The DWP will take a fixed amount from your benefit to pay any amount you owe, plus your current charges. If you wish to pay this way, please phone us on **0845 746 1100** if you don't have a meter, or **0845 746 2222** if you have a meter. Or write to us and we will contact the DWP office on your behalf.

## United Utilities Trust Fund

The United Utilities Trust Fund may be able to help you if you are in exceptional hardship. You can contact the Trust on **0845 179 1791** for an application form. Your application will be independently assessed and provided you qualify, a grant will be made to pay your water services charges.

# Help for customers who use large amounts of water for essential purposes

Help is available for customers who have a water meter and face particular hardship because they use a lot of water for essential purposes.

To qualify for help, you or people living with you must be in receipt of one of the following:

Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit (not single person discount), the Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only), Pension Credit or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

And have either:

Three or more dependent children under 19 (in full-time education and residing in your property) or a medical condition that results in the use of large amounts of water.

For more information, call our automated leaflet request line on **0845 303 7711** or textphone **0808 143 1195** and ask for our booklet 'WaterSure Scheme for Households' or visit our website **[unitedutilities.com/watersure](http://unitedutilities.com/watersure)**

**Please note:** if you applied for a water meter and we were unable to fit one at your property and you have chosen to pay an assessed charge, you may still apply for this scheme. Refer to the WaterSure booklet for full details.

Do you need to use large amounts of water for essential purposes?

# Extra help with your bill

We have a range of ExtraCare services for customers with extra needs

**If you have problems reading your bill because you are visually impaired we can help by sending it in a format that's easier for you.**

## **Braille or large print bills**

We can send your bill in Braille or large print.

## **Talking bill**

We can phone you with details about your bill, and answer any questions you may have, before we send your bill.



## **Nominee scheme**

If you would like a friend or relative to help you, we can send your bill straight to them. Please make sure that you check with them before you give their details to us.

Customers who register on our ExtraCare scheme can also benefit from additional services such as our password protection scheme and personal notification of water shut-offs. For further information and an application form please telephone our automated leaflet request line on **0845 303 7711** or textphone **0808 143 1195**.

Alternatively visit our website **[unitedutilities.com/extracare](https://unitedutilities.com/extracare)**

# Moving home

Visit our website [unitedutilities.com/move](https://unitedutilities.com/move)

**Moving home can be a busy time, but please remember to tell us if you are changing address. This will allow us to finalise your bill quickly and set up your account for your new home.**

If you don't have a water meter, call us on **0845 746 2233**. If you have a water meter at either address, call us on **0845 746 2222** so we can arrange to take a reading if necessary.

**If you are moving, please let us know as soon as possible**



**We may shut off your water supply to protect against leakage – please tell us as soon as you occupy your new home**

### **Your final bill**

When you move, you pay for your water at your old address up to the day you move the furniture out. If you are moving out of the United Utilities area, we will send a final bill to your new address for anything you owe. Or, if you have overpaid we will send you a refund. We will deal with your request within five working days of receipt by letter, telephone, fax or email.

If you are moving within the United Utilities area, we will transfer any balance to the account for your new address. We will also bill you from the date you move in.

If you do not give us at least two days notice of you leaving the premises, you may be liable for charges for a further 28 days, or until the next meter reading is taken, or until the new occupier tells us that they are responsible (whichever occurs first).

### **Empty properties**

If a property is both empty and unfurnished and no consumption is registered for metered customers, no water charges are payable. If you are not going to be living in your property for some time, you can have your water supply temporarily disconnected and avoid paying charges whilst you are away. We make a charge to reconnect the water supply. We need at least 14 days notice. You will remain responsible for charges (including any fixed or standing charges) until the water supply is disconnected.

However, if the property remains furnished while you are away, surface water and highway drainage charges are still payable.

# Where your money goes

**As well as paying for the water we supply to your home and taking away, cleaning and treating your wastewater, the amount you pay also helps us to improve the water and wastewater networks.**

## **Investing in the North West**

By 2010 we will have invested over £10 billion to improve the region's treatment works and network of water pipes and sewers, bringing real benefits to our customers and the environment.

We have made significant improvements in the quality of drinking water, which, according to the Drinking Water Inspectorate is now the best it has ever been.

Also, river quality in the region has improved – so much so that our rivers are now cleaner than at any time in the past 100 years.

The North West's bathing waters are also now cleaner than ever before.

The improvements in the North West have been dramatic but we have to meet even higher standards for our drinking water quality. New legal requirements emerge all the time to reduce the impact that we have on the environment and our customers' expectations are constantly rising.

Our investment programme is reviewed every five years by the water regulator, Ofwat, who limit the increase in charges we can apply during this period.

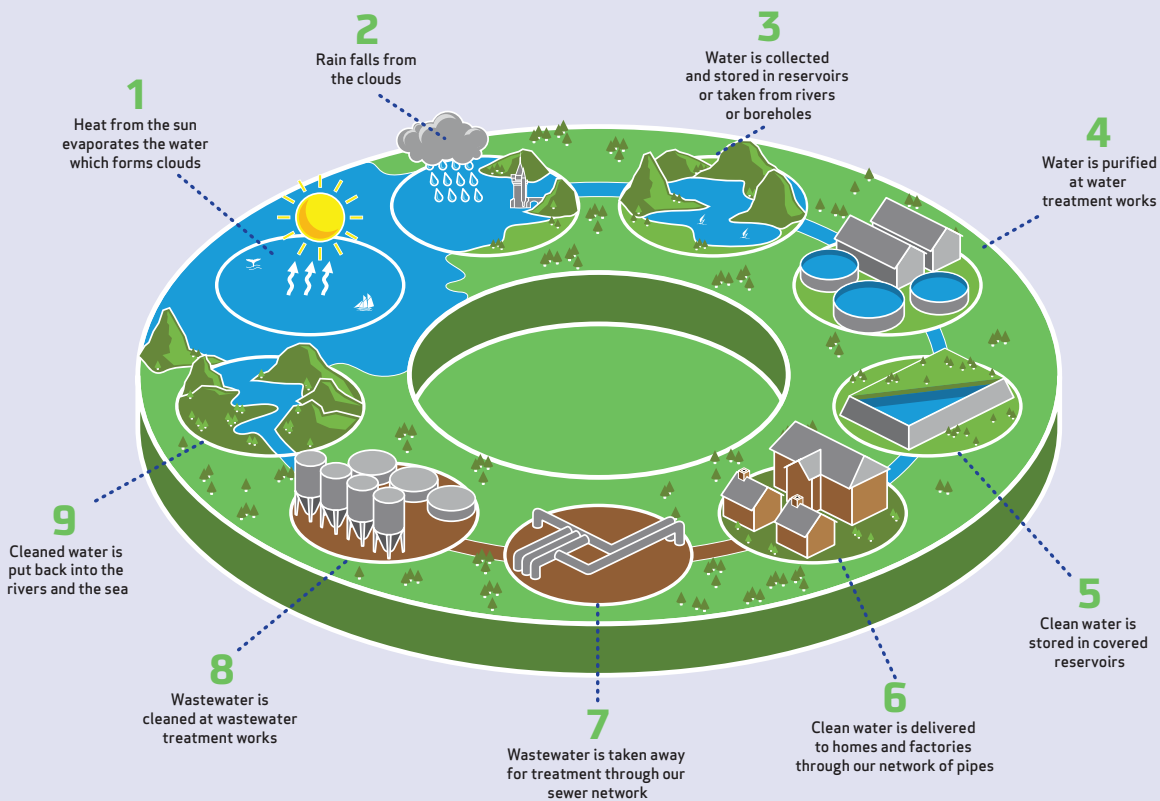
For further information on our investment programme for 2010-2015, please visit our website [unitedutilities.com/planningforthefuture](http://unitedutilities.com/planningforthefuture).

**Alternatively phone our automated leaflet line on 0845 303 7711 and request our 'planning for the future' booklet.**

## Our services to you

United Utilities provides essential water and wastewater services to seven million people in the North West. We supply clean water to your taps and take away and treat your wastewater before returning it safely to the environment.

Customers' bills contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the water and wastewater systems in this cycle. With bills at an average cost of around £1 per day, we believe this represents great value for money.



## Other leaflets that may be of interest:

- Our standards of service
- A simple guide to pipes, drains and sewers
- Could you pay less with a water meter?
- Testing household water meters
- Extracare
- A guide to using water wisely
- Watersure
- Our complaints procedure
- Replacing lead and common supply pipes

All our leaflets are available to download from our website: [unitedutilities.com/leaflets](http://unitedutilities.com/leaflets). Alternatively, please call our 24-hour automated leaflet request line on **0845 303 7711** or textphone **0808 143 1195**, or write to: United Utilities (Dept LR), 1050 Europa Boulevard, Warrington WA55 1LR.

## All our booklets are available in large print, Braille and on audio cassette.

If English is not your main language, we may be able to help you. We translate all our key service booklets into: Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Chinese, Bengali and Punjabi. Please call us on **0845 746 1100** or textphone **0808 143 1195** to request a copy.

## Your bill

To discuss your bill call **0845 746 1100** (if you don't have a water meter) or **0845 746 2222** (if you have a water meter) or textphone **0808 143 1195**. Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 8am to 5pm.

**Or write to:** United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington, WA55 1WB.

## Your water and wastewater services

To report problems with your water or wastewater services call **0845 746 2200** or textphone **0808 143 0295**. Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 8am to 6pm, Sunday 8am to 12 noon. Emergency service out of hours.

**Or write to:** United Utilities, PO Box 453, Warrington, WA55 1SE.

[unitedutilities.com](http://unitedutilities.com)

United Utilities Water PLC  
Haweswater House  
Lingley Mere Business Park  
Lingley Green Avenue  
Warrington  
WA5 3LP

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