

We're here to help



**Save
water,
save
money!**

See page 4
for details





With a water meter you always pay the lowest bill - guaranteed!

We know that the rising cost of living means that we're all looking for ways to reduce our household bills. One of the easiest ways to make a saving on your water bill is to request a free meter.

You have up to two years to see how much you save with a meter before either staying on meter charges permanently or switching back to your old fixed bill. You can't lose!

Don't miss out on a cheaper water bill. Speak to your landlord to apply for a FREE water meter today!

Visit unitedutilities.com/meters for full details.

Please check with your landlord before applying for a water meter, you can find their details opposite.

Investing in your water services

Between 2025-2030, we are undertaking the largest investment in water and wastewater services in the North West in more than 100 years.

This reflects what customers and stakeholders have told us matter to them and will deliver improvements to our services, reduce storm over flows, make sure there's always water available for your household and additional support to help more customers who may be struggling with their bills.

You can read more about our plan and the projects we are carrying out in your area at:

unitedutilities.com/businessplan

Welcome

Contacting your landlord



Westmorland and Furness Council

Housing Department, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2LD

01229 876578

housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Stockport Homes Group

Customer Finance Team, Cornerstone, 2 Edward Street, Stockport SK1 3NQ

0161 217 6016 (option 3)

rents@stockporthomes.org

www.stockporthomes.org

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

Unique Enterprise Centre, Belfield Road, Rochdale OL16 2UP

0800 027 7769

rbh.rents@rbh.org.uk

www.rbh.org.uk

How to contact us



@OfficialUnitedUtilities



@unitedutilities



We're here to put things right

If you have any queries relating to your water charges please contact your landlord direct (see above for details).

If you have any issues with your water and wastewater services please call us on **0345 672 3723** and we'll do everything we can to put it right.

If we're unable to resolve your issue you can also contact the Consumer Council for Water for free, independent advice on **0300 034 2222**, or write to Consumer Council for Water, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH or visit ccwater.org.uk



Your water quality

We work around the clock to make sure the water we deliver to our customers is of the highest quality and meets all drinking water standards. If you need information about the quality of your drinking water please call us on **0345 672 3723** or visit unitedutilities.com/waterquality where you can also download a free report about the quality of the water in your local area by entering your postcode.

Save money on your bills

It's easier than you think to make a saving on your water bill.

Save water, save money!

We all know that saving water is good for the environment and can lower your water bill if you have a meter.

However you may be surprised to learn that using water wisely in the home can help you to make a big saving on your energy bills too.

That's because around 16% of your gas and electricity bill is linked to heating water.

This includes baths, showers, cleaning, washing machines and dishwashers.

By making small changes to how you use water you could easily save more than £100 a year on your energy bills.

Some really simple ways to make a saving include:

- Keep your shower time to just 4 minutes
- Only switch on your dishwasher or washing machine when full
- Just boil what you need
- Use a bowl in the sink to stop hot water going down the plughole

For plenty more water saving tips visit:
unitedutilities.com/savewater

Get discounts for drainage

Part of your bill pays for us to remove all that lovely rainwater that falls on your home (we explain more about the services we charge you for on page 6). However, if your home is not connected to the public sewer to drain away your rainwater (for example, your surface water drains to a soakaway instead), we can reduce your charges.

Visit unitedutilities.com/surface-water-drainage for more information and to download a claim form.

Checking for leaks on your water supply pipe

The water supply pipe within the boundary of your property is your responsibility to maintain, so it's always a good idea to make sure you don't have any leaks on this pipe as it could save you money on your water bill (if you have a water meter). In some circumstances we may be able to repair a leak on your supply pipe if you meet our eligibility criteria.

Visit unitedutilities.com/household-leaks for details on how to check this pipe for leaks.

Save £5 on your bill

Good news - as your landlord collects your water charges as part of your rent, you already receive a £10 annual discount from us.

You can receive an additional £5 annual discount when you pay by Direct Debit. Please contact your landlord to set one up (see page 3 for their details).

Don't let your money leak away

If you have a water meter you're paying for all the water you use - so it makes sense not to let it leak away. Check overflows (those pipes that stick out through the outside walls of your home) to see if any water is dripping out of them. And check your toilet too - modern toilet cisterns tend to overflow into the toilet bowl rather than outside and can waste an incredible amount of water. Even if you don't have a meter, you can still save money on your energy bills if you reduce the amount of hot water leaking in the home. Our website contains lots of hints and tips on how to spot leaks in your home.

Visit unitedutilities.com/household-leaks to find out more.

Your charges explained

In this section we've included a simple explanation of the services you pay for and how your charges are calculated.

You can find lots more information at unitedutilities.com/your-bill

You pay for the following services:



Collecting, storing, treating and supplying fresh water to your home



Taking away all your used water (which we call wastewater), cleaning it and returning it to rivers and the sea



Taking away rainwater that falls on your home and the roads



A standing charge for essential things such as bills and dealing with enquiries

The way we calculate your charges will depend on whether or not you have a water meter installed in your home. If you have a meter, your charges are based on how much water you use; if you don't have a meter, we use the rateable value of your home to calculate your charges. See facing page for details about meters and rateable value.

Our charges for the year ahead change every 1st April - you can find them at unitedutilities.com/your-bill

Watch our video

Why not visit unitedutilities.com/understanding-your-bill to watch a short video which explains how we calculate your bill and the services this pays for.

How to read your meter

Your meter records your water use in 'cubic metres'. When you look at your meter, you'll see a line of black and white numbers, as well as red and white dials or numbers. **The black and white numbers show how many cubic metres you've used and we use this number to work out your bill.**

A cubic metre is 1,000 litres of water and we charge you for every cubic metre you use in the home.

You may also have one of our new smart meters which have a digital readout (see pic). When reading these meters, do not include the three numbers on the right hand side which have dashes above them, only include the digits we have shown with the red box around them.



How we use rateable value

If you don't have a water meter, we use your home's rateable value to calculate your charges. Rateable values were set by the Inland Revenue prior to 31 March 1990 and were based on factors such as the size, condition and location of your home. As we didn't set these values, we're not allowed to change them and they're no longer reviewed by any official body. We work out your bills by multiplying your home's rateable value with a charge for each of our services. Rateable value isn't related to how much water you use and for many customers, a water meter can be one of the easiest ways to reduce your bills. See page 2 for further information about water meters.

You can find more information at unitedutilities.com/rv



Don't let your home get ruined by blockages and flooding - it's really easy to keep your pipes and drains blockage-free by following our simple tips:

- **Only flush the three Ps** - that's Pee, Poo and (toilet) Paper. Please put all non-flushable products, such as wet wipes, period products and nappies in a bag and into the bin.
- **Scrape or pour cooled cooking fats, oil or grease** into the bin.

Visit unitedutilities.com/stoptheblock

Water without worry

We really do understand that it's a difficult time for many households due to the rising cost of living.

If you're struggling to pay your water charges please call your landlord in the first instance. You can find their contact details on page 3. There are a number of ways we can help which will depend on your specific circumstances so please talk to your landlord so they can make us aware that you're having problems paying your charges.

Some of the ways we can help include:

- ✔ **Back on track:** if you're either receiving benefits or on a low income and finding it difficult to pay your bill following a change in financial circumstances, we can help.
- ✔ **Help to pay:** if you receive Pension Credit, and all other adults in your household receive Pension Credit or state pension, you can apply to have your bills capped at an affordable amount.
- ✔ **Low income water discount:** this scheme provides a fixed yearly discount off your water bill if you are on a low income and meet certain conditions. We will automatically credit the discount to your account annually if you qualify.
- ✔ **WaterSure:** if you have a water meter, receive benefits and use a lot of water due to ill health or having a large family, we can cap your annual bill regardless of how much water you use.
- ✔ **WaterSure Plus:** for metered customers who use a lot of water due to ill health or having a large family but don't meet the criteria for WaterSure, this scheme is aimed at customers with a low household income who receive specific disability benefits.

Free independent debt advice

If you're struggling with your household bills, there are a number of organisations who can provide free, independent advice to help you out of debt. There are also free tools online to help you check what welfare benefits you are entitled to and what charitable funds are available.

Visit unitedutilities.com/debt-advice for further information.



Visit the Hardship Hub for details on support services available in your local area.
hardshiphub.co.uk

Priority Services

We can all benefit from a bit of extra help at some stage in our lives. This could be due to age, ill health, disability, mobility needs, mental health problems, financial worries or language barriers.

Registering for Priority Services is free and means you'll benefit from additional services to support your needs including:

- ✔ A dedicated trained team on hand to listen and help.
- ✔ You can nominate a carer, family member or friend to talk to us on your behalf.
- ✔ Our 'knock and wait' service means we give you extra time to answer the door when we visit.
- ✔ Password scheme to protect you from bogus callers.
- ✔ Recite Me accessibility service on our website.
- ✔ Notice if we need to turn off your water supply.
- ✔ Additional support if you have a medical need for water.
- ✔ Alternative water supply if your water will be off for a long time.

So if you, or someone you know would benefit from extra support, please register online at unitedutilities.com/priorityservices or give us a call on **0345 672 2888**.

Once registered we will contact you every two years to check your details haven't changed, just to make sure we are providing you with the right support for your specific needs.

By registering with us we will automatically add you to a similar register with your electricity network operator, so if there is ever a problem you will be offered help by both your water and energy providers. For more information and our data protection promise to you, read our Priority Services privacy policy on our website at unitedutilities.com/priority-services-register-privacy-policy



Our promises to you

You deserve the very best when it comes to your water and wastewater services. This section sets out the standards of service you can expect to receive from us and what we'll do if things go wrong. Some of these standards, known as the Guaranteed Standards Scheme, are laid down by law.

We'll always do what we can to go beyond these standards.

Your water charges

- Enquiries about your water charges should be made to your rent officer. Your rent officer may need to ask United Utilities about this, and we will respond to written contacts about the correctness of your account within 10 working days of receipt. If we fail to do this we'll automatically pay you £40

Keeping appointments

- We'll agree with you whether it will be a morning or afternoon appointment. We'll also confirm the earliest and latest times we'll arrive. If you need a more specific time, we can offer you an appointment within a two-hour time band
- If we fail to tell you that your appointment is for the morning, the afternoon or within a specific two-hour time band, we'll automatically pay you £40
- We'll give you 24 hours' notice to cancel any agreed appointment. If we don't we'll automatically pay you £50
- If we turn up early, late or not at all for your agreed appointment we'll automatically pay you £50

Written complaints

- We'll respond to written complaints about your water and wastewater services within 10 working days of receiving your letter, email or fax. If we don't do this we'll automatically pay you £40

Water supply being turned off because of planned work

- When carrying out work on the mains we'll give you written notice of the times between which we expect your water supply to be cut off
- If the water is to be off for more than four hours, we'll give you written notice at least 48 hours in advance. If we fail to do this we'll automatically pay you £50
- If we identify that we've failed to restore your water supply within the times we've told you in the written notice we'll automatically pay you £50 plus another £50 for every additional 12 hour period we leave you without water
- If we restore your supply by the times we've told you in the written notice, but your water has been cut off for more than 12 hours, we'll automatically pay you £50 plus another £50 for every additional 12 hours that we leave you without water

Water quality notices

- This standard applies where we send you a notice restricting the use of water due to a possible water quality issue. Specifically, it includes the following notices asking you:
 - Not to drink water
 - Not to use water
 - Boil water prior to drinking or using it
- When we issue these notices, we will aim to fix the water quality issue as soon as possible. If the issue isn't resolved within 48 hours, the following compensation payments will apply:
 - Household customers will receive £40, plus £20 for every additional 24-hour period the issue is not resolved
 - Non-household customers will receive £60, plus £40 for every additional 24-hour period the issue is not resolved
- We won't pay compensation if the water quality issue was caused by the customer's own private issue, the notice was due to a drought or the water was cut off due to emergency works.

Water supply going off because of an emergency or burst pipe

- Where water mains have burst, we aim to restore your supply within 12 hours. If we identify that we've failed to get your supply back on within 12 hours, we'll automatically pay you £50 plus another £50 for every additional 12 hour period that we leave you without water

Water pressure

- If the water pressure in the communication pipe to your property falls below seven metres static head twice within a four week period (each time for longer than an hour) you can claim £50 up to a maximum of five times per year. In simple terms, this means the water pressure should be powerful enough to fill a 4.5 litre (1 gallon) container in 30 seconds. If we're aware of this problem we'll pay this automatically. Unfortunately we won't be able to pay compensation if the drop in pressure is because we've had to introduce restrictions due to a drought or because of work we've had to do to resolve an emergency such as a burst main, planned works on our water mains or issues with your own pipework

Sewer flooding

- Where the flooding from sewers enters your home we'll automatically pay a sum equal to your sewerage charge for the year (minimum payment £300 up to a maximum of £2,000 per incident)
- If you experience internal sewer flooding again within 12 months of the first incident, the minimum payment amount increases by £100, and the maximum payment amount increases by £500. For example, compensation payments for a second incident would be £2,500 or £400, and for a third incident would be £3,000 or £500 (whichever is greater).
- In addition to this sum we'll automatically pay you up to £100 for the disturbance the flooding causes. We'll determine the amount payable on a case-by-case basis
- We'll consider making a contribution to your uninsured losses where the flooding has caused damage to your home and contents
- If you have critical health related circumstances at the time of the flooding and need to move into temporary accommodation we'll consider making a discretionary payment of up to £50 per day, up to a maximum of £500 towards your costs
- Where the flooding from sewers enters only your land or garden, you can claim back a sum equal to half of your sewerage charges for the year (minimum payment £150 up to a maximum of £1,000 per incident). Your claim will only be valid if you were materially affected by the flooding incident to your land or garden. You will therefore need to show or explain the effect of the sewer flooding on your land or garden when you make a claim. Normally, we'll make this assessment when we visit to view the flooding and if we consider you've been materially affected we will process the payment for you without you needing to submit a claim. If we don't visit your home to assess your claim for external flooding you will need to submit your claim to us in writing.
- If you experience external sewer flooding again within 12 months of the first incident, the minimum payment amount increases by £50, and the maximum payment amount increases by £250. For example, compensation payments for a second incident would be £1,250 or £200, and for a third incident would be £1,500 or £250 (whichever is greater).
- Sorry, but you won't be able to make a claim for sewer flooding to your land or garden if you are entitled to an automatic payment for sewer flooding inside your home for the same incident

Emergency drought interruptions to supply

- If we've turned off your water supply because of emergency drought restrictions we'll pay £10 for each day or part day you are without water.
- The maximum we'll pay is equal to the amount of the average household water bill for the previous year.

Installing a meter

- If you ask us to fit a water meter, we will do this within 8 weeks. We'll also send you a notice explaining what happens next, including any payments and when your metered charges will start.
- If we fail to install the meter within 8 weeks, you won't pay water charges until the meter is installed and we switch you to metered charging.

Reading a meter

- We'll read your water meter at least once every 13 months. This doesn't apply if you have a smart meter, as we read these meters remotely so don't need to visit your home.
- If we don't, we'll pay you £40 for the first missed reading and £80 for each subsequent period of 13 months that we fail to read your water meter.
- Compensation will not be paid if we were prevented from reading the meter due to the customer obstructing or refusing access, industrial action or third-party issues.

Compensation arrangements

- **Appointments and Written Complaints** - Where we compensate you automatically we'll do so within ten working days of the failure occurring. If we fail to do so we will also automatically send you a further £40
- **Poor pressure, supply interruptions, sewer flooding, installing a meter, reading a meter, providing Priority Services, water quality notices** - Where we compensate you automatically, we will do so within 20 working days. If we fail to do so we will automatically pay you a further £40
- If we fail to make an automatic compensation payment, as we were not practically able to identify you as being affected, you can make a claim for payment within three months
- When you make a claim, we treat it on its merits and we aim to settle it within 20 working days. If you wish to make a claim, you should do so either via the telephone or in writing within three months of the event giving rise to the claim
- If you're more than six weeks behind with paying your water services charges we'll automatically take the compensation payment off the amount you owe to us
- Payments can be made by BACS payments direct to your bank account or by cheque. We aim to pay using the fastest and most convenient method.

Priority Services

- When you register for our Priority Services scheme, we will send you a notice that explains the services you will receive from us and what services will be provided during incidents (such as alternative water during emergencies).
 - We will also use alternative communication formats such as braille, audio or large print if the customer requests this.
 - Customers will also have the option to appoint someone to act on their behalf to manage their account.
- If you have been added to our Core Priority Services Register, you will receive £100 compensation if:
 - We fail to provide the registration notice within 30 days of registering
 - We fail to deliver the promised services during an incident, or provide the services beyond the timescales indicated in the registration noticeThe registration notice you receive from us will indicate if you've been added to our Core Priority Services Register based on the information you have provided.

Exclusions

- There are times when our levels of service cannot be met or the compensation scheme does not apply. The reasons vary from standard to standard, but they include us not meeting the standards because of circumstances beyond our control. These might be things such as unexpected weather conditions, the actions of a third party or industrial action. The standards and the exclusions which apply to the Guaranteed Standards Scheme are laid down in The Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations 2008. Visit unitedutilities.com/leaflets for further information on all of our guaranteed standards of service.

Additional information

Water meters: we're responsible for maintaining your water meter. Tampering with or moving/removing your meter is a serious offence. To request a meter test please visit unitedutilities.com/leaflets and download a 'Testing your water meter' form - remember to check for leaks or faulty overflows before asking us to test your meter as there is a charge if the meter is found to be working correctly.

Please note: All occupiers are jointly responsible for charges.

How we manage your personal details

Your personal information (your 'personal data') is very important and this is why we are very careful about what we do with the information about you that we need to collect so that we can manage your account and our relationship with you.

We have set out in detail what we do with your personal data in our Privacy Notice, which is available on our website unitedutilities.com/privacy. This also explains what your data protection rights are and how you can contact us if you have any concerns.

Although we suggest that you consider the Privacy Notice carefully, the main processing activities include:

- Collecting and sharing information of existing and new accounts about your ability to pay, whether you are in debt, your occupancy of the property with Credit Reference Agencies (CRAs). We also share this information with fraud prevention agencies, for example the Department for Work and Pensions, Action Fraud, to validate and populate your account details as well as to prevent or detect fraud. We also do this to help us make decisions regarding your account. Sharing this information may affect your credit rating.
- Collecting and sharing information with tracing and debt collection agencies, CRAs, local authorities, government agencies if you fall into debt and we need to locate your whereabouts.
- Collect and share information about the risk of flooding, flooding history to your property and your area with flood management agencies such as the Environment Agency, local authorities, to help manage any local network and flooding issues.
- Collect and use any data we have obtained or you have given to help us improve our services to you in a focussed way. This may include for example carrying out customer satisfaction surveys, promoting payment plans, our priority service schemes or water usage advice.
- We may use your data for marketing water-related products which we think may be of interest.
- We may share data in an emergency or major incident, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 provides a legal basis and on occasions a duty to share data before, during and after an emergency or major incident. In these circumstances we ensure we only share data which is appropriate and proportionate.

We will collect and share your data as described above and in the Privacy Notice from the information you have provided us verbally, or communicated to us in writing such as emails, letters, texts, faxes, or via our mobile app, social media as well as any customer feedback you provide. Please note that we also record outbound and inbound phone calls to us for training and coaching purposes as well as to improve our services.

Full details of how we handle your personal data can be found in our Privacy Notice. If you have any difficulty in accessing the internet for any reason, then please get in touch by calling **0345 672 2999** and asking for the Data Protection Team or via e-mail DataProtectionandFraud@uuplc.co.uk and we will be happy to help.

Our promise of great service

We hold the Institute of Customer Service's ServiceMark with Distinction.

The ServiceMark is a national standard, independently recognising an organisation's achievement in customer service and its commitment to upholding those standards.

