



Extra help when you need it most

A guide to our free
Priority Services scheme

Contents

Introduction: Extra help when you need it most	Page 3
Section 1: Our services	Page 4
Section 2: Making it easy to communicate with us	Page 6
Section 3: Here for you when your service is interrupted	Page 10
Section 4: Help with your water bill	Page 14
Section 5: Putting things right	Page 15
Section 6: How to register	Page 17

You can register for Priority Services by filling the form at the back of this booklet.

Introduction

Extra help when you need it most

We can all benefit from a bit of extra support at some stage in our lives. This could be due to age, ill health, disability, mental health problems, financial worries or language barriers. More than 19.4% of people in the North West are disabled (as defined by the Equality Act) and a further 6.7% suffer with long-term physical or mental health conditions that do not limit their day-to-day activities. Also, 1 million people in the region are from an ethnic minority, with 3.7% living in a household where there are no English speakers.

Our Priority Services scheme is free and allows us to help customers who would benefit the most from extra support and respond quickly to their particular needs.

To develop our support services we have worked with various voluntary organisations and charities, including Age UK, StepChange, Citizens Advice, Guts UK, Kidney Care UK and Mencap, who have all helped us put in place the extra help, measures and support that you can benefit from. These services are accredited for British standards on consumer vulnerability, and we work with Plain English Campaign to make sure our documents are easy to understand.

This leaflet explains the support that is available if you register for Priority Services. If you do not feel you need these services, please consider whether a family member, friend or neighbour would benefit from them and pass this information to them. Our Priority Services are available to our customers who live in the North West area. You do not have to be the named bill payer to benefit from Priority Services.

Section 1

Our services

Our scheme is designed to support people who:

- are blind or partially sighted;
- have a chronic (long-term) or serious illness;
- have a condition that affects their development;
- have dementia;
- rely on dialysis, feeding pumps or automated medication;
- live with a child aged five or under;
- are having financial difficulties;
- are deaf or hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties;
- have a mental health condition;
- are experiencing temporary life changes, including people who are recently divorced or are grieving after the death of a loved one;
- are recovering after leaving hospital;
- have restricted movement or mobility issues that make it difficult for them to answer the door; or
- may struggle to communicate because English isn't their first language.



We have a dedicated team of 75 specially trained colleagues on hand to help you.



Our nominee scheme allows you to choose a carer, family member or friend to speak to us on your behalf.



We can provide bills in Braille or large print, or on coloured paper. We can also talk you through your bill to make sure you understand what you are paying for.



Our password scheme helps to protect you from bogus callers (people who pretend to be from United Utilities to gain access to your home).



Our 'knock and wait' service means that we give you extra time to answer the door when we visit.



We offer translation services so we can communicate with you in other languages.



We provide the Recite Me accessibility service on our website. Recite Me allows you to view the web pages in your chosen language, specialised colours or fonts, and includes speech translation.



We will give you notice if we need to turn your water supply off.



We will provide an alternative water supply if your water will be off for a long time.



We will deliver bottled water to the most vulnerable customers within six hours of their water supply going off.



We can help you read your water meter or move it if necessary (for example, to a place that is easier for you to read).



We consider our Priority Services customers when planning when to do work that will involve turning their water off.

Section 2

Making it easy to communicate with us



Dedicated team on hand to help

When you register for Priority Services, you get access to a dedicated team specially trained to help with your questions.

Our teams are trained with the support of Mind, Kidney Care UK, Dementia UK and the Samaritans to help them understand individual needs and identify when you may need a bit of extra help.

You can also tell us how you would like us to contact you and we will use that method for all future communications.



Nominee scheme

If you have difficulty communicating or find it hard to understand your bill and other information you receive from us, you can nominate a carer, family member or friend to speak to us on your behalf. This person could also call us to register you for Priority Services if you cannot fill in the form at the back of this booklet or talk to us yourself.

We can also send your bill to the person you nominate if it helps, but please remember that you will still be responsible for paying it.



Text Relay service

If you have hearing or speech difficulties and use a textphone, you can use our Text Relay service by dialling 18001 followed by the number you need. This service applies to all the numbers shown in this booklet. Your call will be connected to a Text Relay service, and one of our customer service agents will be able to help with your enquiry.



Bills in other formats

If you have difficulty reading your bill, we can provide it in different formats, such as in Braille or large print, or on coloured paper. We can also talk you through your bill to make sure you understand what you are paying for.



Password scheme

When you register for Priority Services you can choose a password. Then, if we ever need to visit you at home, we will give you the password so you know the caller is genuine. This will help to protect you from bogus callers. All of our engineers carry ID cards. If you are not sure a caller is who they claim to be, call us on **0345 672 3723** to check. We won't mind.



‘Knock and wait’ service

When we visit your home we will wait outside for a longer period of time after knocking to give you time to come to the door.



Translation services

If you would prefer to talk to us in a language other than English, or using British Sign Language, we can arrange an interpreter, free of charge, to communicate with you. You can also click on the ‘Accessibility help’ button at the bottom right of the screen to change the way you use our website so that it better meets your needs. For example, you can change the font or the size of the text, or change the language used.



Our website

There are lots of ways you can use our website to get in touch with us. You can:

- chat to one of our friendly team using our online webchat service;
- fill in a contact form asking for one of our friendly team to contact you; and
- use our fully accessible ‘report a problem’ tool to let us know about any supply issues you are having.

All of our information leaflets are on our website, so you can download them without having to contact us.



Section 3

Here for you when your service is interrupted



Notice of interruptions to your water supply

Occasionally, we may need to turn off your water supply, either because a pipe has burst or because we're doing some important maintenance work.

If we have to turn off your water to carry out planned maintenance work, we will always tell you beforehand when this is happening.

There will be times when it's not possible to tell you before we need to turn your water off, for example, if there is a burst water main. If this happens, we will contact you to keep you up to date about what is happening.



Alternative water supplies

If your water supply is likely to be off for a long time, we will make water available in your area using other means. This includes delivering bottled water to those most in need.

Our customer incident team, who are specifically trained in supporting customers with additional needs, are on hand to keep a close eye on any upcoming emergency situations.

If we need to turn your water supply off, we follow a tiered approach to providing services. This helps to make sure we provide water to the most vulnerable customers, and those who rely on a water supply for medical reasons, first.

Tier	Description	Communication	Bottled water
1	The most vulnerable customers, including those who rely on water for medical equipment, cannot leave the property or have a chronic illness.	We will communicate with customers using whichever method they have told us they prefer. This could be by text, email or phone call. Our friendly team will provide updates throughout the incident.	We will prioritise the most vulnerable customers and deliver bottled water to them if their water is likely to be off for over six hours.
2	This includes customers who may need extra support, particularly in the way we communicate with them.	We will communicate with customers using whichever method they have told us they prefer. This could be by text, email or phone call. Our friendly team will provide updates throughout the incident.	We will deliver bottled water to customers if their water is likely to be off for over 12 hours.
3	Customers who are less likely to be severely affected by an incident. This is often people who are experiencing life changes that are making them temporarily vulnerable.	We will communicate with customers using whichever method they have told us they prefer. This could be by text, email or phone call. Our friendly team will provide updates throughout the incident.	We will deliver bottled water to customers if their water is likely to be off for over 12 hours.



Support if you have a medical need for water

We provide extra help if you have a medical need for water, for example, if you need dialysis at home. We will contact you as soon as possible if we need to turn off your water supply in an emergency, such as a burst water main, and try to time any planned work so that it doesn't happen on the day of your dialysis.

Your hospital should have already registered your details with us if you have dialysis at home, but you can also tell us this when you register for Priority Services.

It isn't just about when we need to turn your water off. We also recognise the effect changes to the water quality can have, and we will always contact you if we become aware of a problem that may affect you.



Flooding

If you are a Priority Services customer and suffer flooding from the sewers, you can contact our dedicated team and we will arrange to visit your home to help with cleaning up the mess. If you have to move out of your home while we clean up, we'll suspend your bills during the time you're away from your home.



Help with your water meter

If you have a water meter and find it difficult to get to it or read it due to a disability, we may be able to help by moving the meter to a more accessible place, as long as your plumbing arrangements allow this. If you are blind or partially sighted, we can also arrange for your meter to be read every three months to help you keep track of how much water you are using.



Section 4

Help with your water bill

We all have times when it can be difficult to make ends meet. Losing a job, going through a divorce, a death in the family or illness can all have a major effect on household income and cause a strain on your finances.

If you're struggling to pay your water bill, our message is simple – don't suffer in silence. We're easy to talk to, and the last thing we want is for you to worry about it.

As a Priority Services customer, you have access to a dedicated team who can offer advice and support to make sure that your bills are not keeping you awake at night. We have a range of support schemes to help you depending on your circumstances.

You may be better off with a water meter

A water meter can be a great way to reduce your bill. If you live on your own, or as a couple, it is well worth checking if you could save money by having a meter fitted.

Visit **unitedutilities.com/meters** or call us on **0345 672 2888** to find out more.

Section 5

Putting things right

We are committed to providing customers with a service that is tailored to them, and we want to make sure we put things right if that doesn't happen. You can claim compensation if we fail to meet the commitments shown in the table below.

Commitment	Compensation
We will register you on the Priority Services Register within five days of you contacting us. If we fail to do this, you can claim compensation.	£50
We will send your bill in the format you have asked for, such as in Braille or large print, or on coloured paper. If we fail to do this, you can claim compensation.	£50
We will deliver bottled water to you if there is an emergency and your water is likely to be off for over: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• six hours if you are in tier 1 (our most vulnerable customers); or• 12 hours if you are in tier 2 or 3. If we fail to do this, you can claim compensation.	£100



Section 6

How to register

It's easy to register for Priority Services. You can:

- visit unitedutilities.com/priorityservices and fill in the online form;
- fill in the application form at the back of this booklet and post it back to us for free;
- phone us on **0345 672 2888**; or
- register in person at one of our information stands at local community events.

By registering with us you will automatically be added to the Electricity North West or SP Energy Priority Services Register.

In certain situations, another person can register you for Priority Services. For example:

- if you tell one of our employees or contractors that you suffer with a certain health issue or need extra support, they may register you;
- another organisation, such as your electricity provider, may let us know about your additional needs (if we register you for Priority Services because of this, we will let you know);
- a trusted partner, such as your local authority, may share your information with us as part of an incident or in an emergency; or
- a carer or family member may tell us that you need extra support and ask us to add you to the Priority Services Register.

Confirming our support

Once you register for Priority Services, we will send you a welcome letter to confirm the support we will provide and tell you how you can contact us. The letter will also explain how we handle your personal information and how you can opt out of the Priority Services scheme.

We will also contact you every two years to check whether your circumstances have changed. This will help us to make sure you are still receiving the most suitable services for your needs.



Do you know someone who needs a little extra help?

If a neighbour, friend or family member would benefit from Priority Services, please ask them to give us call on **0345 672 2888**.



**Your Priority Services registration
form is enclosed**



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

Registered in England and Wales. Registered number 2366678.



Priority Services

Register or update your details



Priority Services are free for customers who need extra support.

You can sign up for Priority Services by calling us on **0345 672 2888**, visiting our website at **unitedutilities.com/priorityservices**, or filling in the form below and posting it to us in the envelope provided (you don't need a stamp).

If you would prefer, you can ask a friend or relative to contact us to register you for Priority Services or they can fill in this form on your behalf.

Your details (If you are filling in this form on behalf of someone else, please give their details.)											
Title	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) <input type="text"/>										
First name	<input type="text"/>										
Surname	<input type="text"/>										
Address (and postcode)	<input type="text"/>										
Daytime phone number	<input type="text"/>										
Evening phone number	<input type="text"/>										
Email	<input type="text"/>										
10-digit United Utilities account number (this is shown in the top right-hand corner of the bill)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Please tick all the boxes below that apply. You can change your selection in the future if circumstances change.											
Dialysis, feeding pump or automated medication <input type="checkbox"/> A chronic (long-term) or serious illness <input type="checkbox"/> A medical condition that means you depend on water <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to answer the door or restricted movement <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia <input type="checkbox"/> Blind <input type="checkbox"/> Partially sighted <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf (including speech difficulties due to deafness) <input type="checkbox"/> Hard of hearing <input type="checkbox"/>	Speech difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental condition (for example, learning difficulties) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health condition <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to communicate in English <input type="checkbox"/> Pensionable age <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme financial difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary reason: Recovering after a hospital stay <input type="checkbox"/> Family with a child aged five or under <input type="checkbox"/> Life changes (such as loss of job or bereavement) <input type="checkbox"/> Young adult householder (aged 16 to 18) <input type="checkbox"/>										

If you have problems with your sight, or have a developmental condition, we can help by sending your bills in a format that's easier for you.

I would like my bills in Braille ☐

I would like my bills in large print ☐

I would like my bills on coloured paper ☐

I would like you to call me before sending out my bill (talking bill) ☐

Would you like a friend or relative to speak to us on your behalf? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give their details below. Please make sure you check with them before you give their details to us.

Title	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) <input type="text"/>
First name	<input type="text"/>
Surname	<input type="text"/>
Daytime phone number	<input type="text"/>
Evening phone number	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>

If you would prefer us to send your water bills to a friend or family member, please call us on **0345 072 6093**.

Password scheme

If one of our employees has to visit your home, would you like us to use a password? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what password (up to 12 letters) would you like us to use?

Please use CAPITAL LETTERS to write your password in the box below.

Please see our privacy policy at unitedutilities.com/privacy for full details of the way we use and share information we collect during our interactions with customers.

Form filled in by (full name)	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to the customer (if applying on their behalf)	<input type="text"/>
Your signature	<input type="text"/>
Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>