



At a glance

# Household charges

2025/2026



Water for the North West



From making a brew to flushing the loo, most of us never give a moment's thought to where our water comes from, or where it goes to once it disappears round the U-bend.

But behind the scenes, we run a massive 24-hour operation to keep your life flowing smoothly, delivering safe, clean water to your home and taking away and cleaning your dirty water.

This leaflet provides a brief overview of our water services charges for the 2025/2026 charging year.

You'll find more details on our website at [unitedutilities.com/my-bill](https://www.unitedutilities.com/my-bill). You can also download a copy of our full charges scheme, which goes into a lot more detail than we have included in this document.

Behind the scenes, we run a massive 24-hour operation to keep your life flowing smoothly.



# A breakdown of your bill

## Water charges

If you have a water meter, you are charged for each cubic metre of water you use. A cubic metre is 1,000 litres, which is the equivalent of 3,300 cups of tea or 28 showers. You also pay a standing charge each year, which covers basic services not related to the amount of water you use, such as reading and maintaining your water meter, sending bills and answering customer enquiries (see table 1).

If you don't have a water meter, your bill is fixed each year, regardless of how much water you use. Your bill is based on your home's rateable value (see note below) plus a standing charge per year, which pays for customer services costs such as sending out bills and answering customer enquiries. The standing charge also helps to make bills fairer. Without it, customers with very low

rateable values would tend to pay too little in relation to the amount of water they are likely to use and customers with high rateable values would tend to pay too much (see table 2).

Note: The rateable value is based on the potential rental value of your home and it was set by the Valuation Office. It is the traditional method for working out water bills if you don't have a water meter. You can find out more about the rateable value at [unitedutilities.com/rv](http://unitedutilities.com/rv).

**Table 1: Charges if you have a water meter**

Water		Sewerage			
Standing charge per year	Charge per cubic metre	Standing charge per year	Foul drainage – charge per cubic metre	Surface-water drainage – fixed charge per year	Highway drainage – fixed charge per year
<b>£24.46</b>	<b>£2.733</b>	<b>£4.07</b>	<b>£2.014</b>	<b>£100.49</b>	<b>£45.49</b>

## Sewerage charges

There's more to sewerage than you might think!

Sewerage charges are shown on your bills as wastewater charges. Wastewater charges pay for removing and treating three different types of sewerage.

- **Foul drainage:** this is the used water that drains into our sewer system when you use the shower, flush the toilet or use your washing machine.
- **Surface-water drainage:** this is the rainwater which falls on your home and drains into our sewer system. We refer to this as rainwater removal on your bills.
- **Highway drainage:** this is the rainwater which falls on roads and highways and drains into our sewer system. We refer to this as rainwater removal on your bills.

If you have a water meter, your foul drainage charge is based on the amount of water you use at home, as most of this water eventually goes down the drain. You pay for each cubic metre of water used for foul drainage, a fixed charge per year for surface-water drainage, a fixed charge for highway drainage and a standing charge per year towards customer service costs such as reading and maintaining the meter, sending bills and answering customer enquiries (see table 1).

If you don't have a water meter, the amount you pay is based on the rateable value for your home (see table 2). You will pay a set amount for each pound of your rateable value (shown in the table below as charge per £RV).

**Table 2: Charges if you don't have a water meter**

Water		Sewerage			
Standing charge per year	Charge per £RV	Foul drainage – charge per £RV	Surface-water drainage – charge per £RV	Highway drainage – charge per £RV	Total sewerage – charge per £RV
<b>£101.48</b>	<b>1.668</b>	<b>£1.649</b>	<b>£0.699</b>	<b>£0.321</b>	<b>£2.669</b>

# Who pays the bill – and when?

**Normally, the occupier of a premises pays the water bill. So even if you are renting your home, the bill will usually have your name on it.**

However, in some circumstances it's more practical for the bill to go to the owner of a home instead of the tenant. A good example of this is a student house, where there are lots of separate tenants who never stay very long. These arrangements must be agreed with us first.

If you don't have a water meter, you'll usually receive a bill from us once a year. You can normally pay the bill either all at once when you receive the bill, or in half-yearly or monthly instalments. Each payment you make covers the period to come. If you choose to pay in instalments and you do not make a payment on time, the whole balance of your charges will become due.

If you do have a water meter, you'll usually receive a bill every six months and you must pay it by the date shown on the bill or arrange to pay by a monthly payment plan.

If you own a premises that is empty, it's worth remembering that you will still receive a bill from us if it is connected to our water network and continues to benefit from our services (for example, if water is being used for any purpose, such as renovation work or central heating, then charges will apply). If you do not need a water supply while the premises is empty, you can ask us to temporarily disconnect the supply until someone moves in.

**Even if you are renting your home, the bill will usually have your name on it.**



# Reductions in charges

**It's worth checking that you are not being charged for a service that you don't actually use. Here are the most common ways to reduce your charges.**

## Surface water drainage

(Shown as rainwater removal on your bills): we charge you for taking away and treating the rainwater that falls on your home (see 'a breakdown of your bill' on page 4).

Some properties are drained naturally as the rainwater flows directly into a brook, stream or underground soakaway, without ever entering our sewer system.

To qualify for a reduction in your charges, you need to prove that all the rainwater that falls on your home (including your roof, garden, drive, patio, yard and so on) drains directly into the ground or a watercourse, such as a brook or stream, without ever entering our sewer pipes.

You'll need to carry out some detective work to find out for sure. There's plenty of information at [unitedutilities.com/surface-water-drainage](https://unitedutilities.com/surface-water-drainage) to help you, and there is

also a claim form to fill in to make your claim.

If your claim is successful and you have a water meter, the yearly charge of £100.49 for surface-water drainage will no longer apply. If you do not have a water meter, your rateable-value charge for sewerage services will reduce to £1.970 per £RV.

## Foul drainage

If the foul drainage from your home (for example, used water from your toilet or dishwasher and so on) does not drain into our public sewers, you'll qualify for reduced charges for that part of your bill.

If you have a water meter, you will not have to pay the charge per cubic metre for foul drainage. If you do not have a water meter, your charge for sewerage services will be £1.020 for each pound of the rateable value for your home.

The same charges apply if you have a septic tank and only the foul drainage from your home drains into our sewers from that tank.

## Non-return allowance

If you have a water meter and less than 5% of the water supplied to your home is returned to the sewer, you can fill in our form to claim an allowance against the total foul drainage bill. We will assess any allowance based on the information you provide. If you qualify for an allowance, it will apply from the date we receive your claim form.



# Can I choose to have a water meter?

If you don't already have a water meter you can choose to have one installed free of charge. With a water meter you only pay for the water you use, so many customers find it's the easiest way to reduce their existing bill.

If you apply for a meter, we offer a 'lowest bill guarantee' for the first two years. This means that every time we send you a bill, we will compare the amount of your bill with the meter against what it would have been if you didn't have a meter fitted, and charge you the lower amount. This guarantees that you won't pay more than you would do without the meter, and any savings you do make are yours to keep.

You can switch back to having your bills based on the rateable value of your home at any point during the first two years of the meter being fitted. At the end of the first two years, you can decide whether to stay on meter charges if you've made a saving or switch back to your old rateable-value charges. If you do switch back, we will leave the meter in place so we can use it for any future occupier of the premises.

You can apply for a free meter by phoning us on **0345 072 6065** or visiting our website at **[unitedutilities.com/meters](https://www.unitedutilities.com/meters)**

Although we provide and install water meters free of charge, you do have to pay for the following services.

## Installing your meter outside

We would always prefer to install a meter inside your home, free of charge. However, if you want to have one installed outside, and we agree to this, you'll have to pay to have it installed. The charge is £267.87 plus VAT.

## Moving your meter

If you want to move your water meter from one place inside your home to another place (still inside your home), the work will need to be done

according to our specifications, and we will need to inspect it once it is finished. We charge an inspection fee of £98.54 plus VAT for this service.

## Testing your meter

if you think that your meter is not working properly, we can take it away to be tested. If we find that the meter is working properly, you'll have to pay for the cost of the test, which is currently £70 plus VAT. If the meter is faulty, there's no charge and we will correct your bill. You can find out more at **[unitedutilities.com/leaflet](https://www.unitedutilities.com/leaflet)**



# Assessed charges if we can't install a water meter

**Occasionally it's not possible to install a water meter at all, for example if you share your water supply with other properties, you have more than one supply of water to your home or your pipework is not suitable for having a meter fitted**

If that happens to you, all is not lost. We'll check to see if your bill would be lower based on an assessed charge instead of a charge based on the rateable value of your home. Assessed charges are based on the type of premises you live in or the type of household (see table 3).

If your home is not connected to the public sewer system for surface-water drainage, either directly or indirectly, the yearly sewerage charge will be reduced by £100.49 for each type of premises.



**Table 3: Assessed charges if you can't have a water meter installed**

Type of premises	Water	Sewerage	Total
Single person household (not applicable to any premises which have a swimming pool that automatically refills and can hold more than 10,000 litres)	£143.57	£252.01	£395.58
Detached (includes houses, link detached houses and bungalows)*	£353.49	£402.79	£756.28
Semi-detached (includes houses and semi-detached bungalows)*	£313.52	£374.19	£687.71
Other household premises (includes flats and terraced houses)*	£233.44	£317.03	£550.47
Larger properties – a premises which either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a swimming pool that automatically refills and can hold more than 10,000 litres of water); or</li> <li>• is larger than 250m<sup>2</sup> in area, and has six or more bedrooms</li> </ul>	£683.66	£638.64	£1,322.30
Single pensioner household*	£132.01	£244.35	£376.36
Two pensioner occupiers*	£217.68	£305.74	£523.42

\*excludes premises which meet the larger premises criteria

# Leaks on your pipework

If you have a burst pipe or leak at your home, and it turns out to be on your outside water supply pipe, there's a chance we can repair it for you free of charge. If you have a water meter, we may also be able to refund you for the cost of the lost water if it's your first leak and it's repaired quickly.

You can find out more about the help we provide at [unitedutilities.com/household-leaks](https://unitedutilities.com/household-leaks), or by calling 0345 672 2999.

# Billing mistakes

We hate making mistakes. If you believe that your bill is wrong, please contact us as soon as you can and we'll look into it. If we find a mistake, we will correct it straight away.

We always try to deal with any problems quickly and with as little fuss as possible. If you feel you are not getting results, please visit [unitedutilities.com/complaints-procedure](https://unitedutilities.com/complaints-procedure) for information on how to make a complaint. We hope it won't come to that!



# Ways to pay your bill

We offer a wide range of payment methods. You can pay by direct debit, on our website, using our app, at a post office PayPoint, Payzone outlet or by post. If you pay by direct debit, we'll give you a discount of £5 off our bill each year.

Visit [unitedutilities.com/my-bill](https://unitedutilities.com/my-bill) for full details of all the payment options. If you pay your water services bill direct to a registered social landlord or local authority who issue bills and collect water services charges on our behalf, we will give you a discount of £10 off your bill each year.

# Managing your water account online

If using the internet makes your life easier, why not manage your water account using our online service? Register now at [unitedutilities.com/myaccount](https://unitedutilities.com/myaccount) to pay your bill, give us meter readings, update your personal details and switch to paperless billing.

We also have a smartphone app which is available from the App Store and Google Play – search 'United Utilities' to download the app.

# A helping hand when you're struggling to pay

There's nothing worse than worrying how you're going to pay when a bill lands on the doormat. If you're going through a tough financial patch and are finding it hard to meet our payments, please get in touch with us. We're easy to talk to, and the last thing we want to do is leave you struggling. Don't worry, everything you tell us is strictly confidential, so please either go to [unitedutilities.com/difficulty-paying-bill](https://www.unitedutilities.com/difficulty-paying-bill) or call us on 0800 072 6765.

We run a range of support schemes.

- **Payment matching scheme:** if you've already built up a lot of debt with us, this scheme could help you clear it. For every £1 you pay, we'll pay £1 too. After 12 months, we'll increase our contribution to £2 for every £1 you pay until your debt is cleared.
- **WaterSure and WaterSure Plus:** this scheme may be able to help you if you receive benefits and also face the financial pressures of having a big household or having a family member with a medical condition which means they need to use a lot of water. To benefit from this scheme, you must have a water meter or your bills must be based on assessed charges.

- **United Utilities Trust Fund:** if you are in real financial difficulty and have nowhere else to turn, you may qualify for a grant to pay off your bill – giving you the fresh start you need.
- **Back on Track scheme:** this is a scheme to help our customers on low incomes who are struggling to pay their water bill. You may be able to get help from the scheme if you meet the criteria shown on our website at [unitedutilities.com/back-on-track](https://www.unitedutilities.com/back-on-track).
- **Help to Pay scheme:** if you receive Pension Credit, and all other members of your household receive Pension Credit or State Pension, you may be eligible for our Help to Pay scheme.

- **Payment Break scheme:** if you have a low income or receive benefits and are struggling financially due to losing your job or having to pay out for an unexpected emergency, we can delay your bill payments for an agreed period of time.
- **Help with Universal Credit:** we can delay your bill payments for up to eight weeks until your first Universal Credit payment arrives.
- **Low Income Water Discount:** an annual discount for customers with a low household income to help make water bills more affordable.

You can find out more about these schemes by visiting our website at [unitedutilities.com/difficulty-paying-bill](https://www.unitedutilities.com/difficulty-paying-bill) or calling 0800 072 6765.

# Failed payments

We have the right to recover administration charges which result from failed cheques or direct debits. The current charge for dealing with each failed payment is £5.

# How we manage your personal details

Your personal information is very important, so we're careful with the information we need to collect and process about you in order to manage your account. We also use information we get from credit reference agencies, trace and debt collection agencies and other third parties to carry out an identity check and confirm the information you give us, and to locate customers who haven't paid their bills. This helps us manage your account.

Please visit [unitedutilities.com/privacy](https://unitedutilities.com/privacy) for more information, or call our general enquiries number shown on your bill if you want to discuss your account.



## Other leaflets that may be of interest:

- Water meter application pack
- Surface water drainage
- Support with your water bill
- A guide to using water wisely
- Our leakage code of practice
- Debt recovery: our code of practice
- Our standards of service
- A guide to our Priority Services
- Our complaints procedure
- A guide to paying your water bill
- Replacing lead and common supply pipes
- Testing your household water meter

You can download any of our leaflets from our website: [unitedutilities.com/leaflet](http://unitedutilities.com/leaflet), or write to: **United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB.**

## In case you need to contact us:



### Water services billing enquiries (8am to 8pm):

If you have a water meter: **0345 672 2999**

If you don't have a water meter: **0345 672 2888**

For opening hours please visit [unitedutilities.com/contactus](http://unitedutilities.com/contactus) where you can also get in touch with us online.

### Water and wastewater enquiries (24 hours): **0345 672 3723**

If you have hearing or speech difficulties and use a textphone, please dial 18001 before the relevant phone number above.

We also have an emergency out-of-hours service. If you call us outside our usual opening hours, your call will be diverted to our emergency call-handling team. To report an emergency with your water or wastewater supply, please call **0345 672 3723** (24 hours a day).



You can also find out about emergency incidents in your area by visiting our website at [unitedutilities.com/emergencies](http://unitedutilities.com/emergencies)

Land and highway drains in all areas are the responsibility of the local council.



### Or write to us at:

**United Utilities, PO Box 459, Warrington WA55 1WB**



## Translations

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