

# Help when you need it most

A photograph of two elderly women sitting on a dark leather sofa, laughing heartily. The woman on the left has short pink hair and is wearing a colorful floral patterned cardigan over a black top. The woman on the right has short grey hair and is wearing a white cardigan with a dark floral pattern. They are both wearing glasses. The background shows a living room with a wooden chair and a television.

**A guide to our free Priority Services scheme**

# Introduction

## 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.

Our Priority Services scheme is free and registering allows us to help our customers who would benefit the most from extra support and respond quickly to their particular needs. Every two years we will contact you in case we need to update your details, just to make sure you are receiving the right support.

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 Priority Services 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.

It's easy to register:

- Visit **[unitedutilities.com/priorityservices](https://unitedutilities.com/priorityservices)** and fill in the online form
- Fill in the enclosed application form and post it back to us
- Call us on **0345 672 2888**

If you wish to register a friend or family member on their behalf, please call us. Once registered, you'll then be able to update your details online at any time if any of your needs change.

# Section 1

## Priority Services... communicating with you

### **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.

You can also tell us how you would like us to contact you and we will use that method for all future communications. Remember, we treat everything you tell us in the strictest confidence.

### **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 enclosed form 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 the bill.

## **Text Relay service**

If you have hearing or speech difficulties and use a textphone, you can access 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, through which one of our customer service agents will be able to help with your enquiry.

## **Bills in braille, large print, on coloured paper and ‘talking’ bills**

If you have sight difficulties, we can produce your bill in Braille, large print or on coloured paper. We can also phone you to 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 (people who pretend to be from United Utilities to gain access to your home). All of our engineers carry identification cards, so if you are unsure, call us on **0345 672 3723** to check. We won't mind.

## **‘Knock and wait’ service**

If you tell us you have mobility needs, when we call at your home we will wait outside for a longer period of time after knocking.

## **Translation services**

If you would prefer to talk to us in a language other than English, we can arrange an interpreter, free of charge, to communicate with you using our translation service when you call us. Our website can also be changed in a way that could suit your needs and help you online by clicking on the 'Accessibility help' button located on the bottom right of the screen.

## **Leaflets available on our website**

Our website contains all our information leaflets so you can download them without having to contact us.

## **Webchat**

You can communicate with us on our website using our online webchat service.

# Section 2

## Priority Services... and your water supply

### **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 make sure you are kept informed about what is happening.

### **Alternative water supplies**

If your water supply is likely to be off for more than 12 hours, we will try to make water available in your area using other means. We will contact you in an emergency to understand how we can help.

## **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 they don'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.

If there is a burst water main which means we need to turn your water supply off, our dedicated team will contact you as soon as we can.

## **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 in your home but 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 3

# Priority Services... when you're struggling to pay your water bill

We all have times when it can be difficult to make ends meet. Losing a job, 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.

- **Payment Matching:** if you've built up a lot of debt, for every £1 you pay we'll match it with £1 too, with our contribution increasing to £2 if you continue to make payments until your debt is cleared.
- **Water Direct:** if you are in debt and receive income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Universal Credit, Pension Credit or income-related Employment and Support Allowance, you can ask the Department for Work and Pensions to pay your water bill direct to us out of your benefit.



- **Restart grant:** if you're in real financial difficulty, you may qualify for a grant from the United Utilities Trust Fund to pay off your water debt.
- **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.
- **WaterSure:** if you have a water meter and you use a lot of water for essential purposes, you may benefit from this scheme. The scheme is available to customers who receive certain benefits and either have a large family or a member of the household has a medical condition which means they use a lot of water.
- **Back on track:** if you're finding it difficult to pay your water bill and receiving benefits we can help; we also have additional help for those on a low income who have been financially affected by COVID-19.
- **Payment break:** if you're struggling with your bill due to losing your job or having to pay out for an unexpected household emergency, we can delay your payments for an agreed period of time.
- **Universal credit:** if you're applying for Universal Credit we can delay your water bill payments for up to eight weeks until your first UC payment arrives.

## 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 make savings by having a meter fitted.

Visit [unitedutilities.com/meters](https://unitedutilities.com/meters) or call our team on **0345 672 2888** to find out more.

# Section 4

## Register for Priority Services today

### It's easy to register for Priority Services, you can:

- visit [unitedutilities.com/priorityservices](https://unitedutilities.com/priorityservices) and fill in the online form; or
- fill in the enclosed application form and post it back to us for free;
- phone our team on **0345 672 2888** between 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday and 8am-4pm Saturday.

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**.



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 our Priority Services Register by calling us on **0345 072 6093**, visiting our website at: **unitedutilities.com/priorityservices**, or filling in the form below and posting it using the envelope enclosed (you don't need a stamp).

If you would prefer, you can ask a friend or relative to speak to us to register you for our Priority Services scheme or they can complete this form on your behalf.

### Please complete the details of the person who would like be added to the Priority Services register

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"/>
Landline phone number	<input type="text"/>
Mobile phone number	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
10 digit United Utilities account number (this is shown on the top right hand corner of the bill)	<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"/> <input type="text"/>

### Please tick all boxes below that apply to the customer registering for Priority Services. These services can be altered in the future if circumstances change.

<input type="checkbox"/> Dialysis, feeding pump and automated medication <input type="checkbox"/> A chronic or serious illness <input type="checkbox"/> A medical condition dependant on water <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to answer door or have restricted movement <input type="checkbox"/> Dementia <input type="checkbox"/> Blind <input type="checkbox"/> Partially sighted <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing loss (including deafness and speech difficulties due to deafness) <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impaired	<input type="checkbox"/> Speech difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental condition (e.g. learning difficulties) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to communicate in English <input type="checkbox"/> Pensionable age <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme financial difficulties <b>Temporary reason:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Post hospital recovery <input type="checkbox"/> Families with babies, 12 months and under <input type="checkbox"/> Life changes (e.g. loss of job or bereavement) <input type="checkbox"/> Young adult householder (aged 16 to 18)
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**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?**

If so, 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"/>
Landline phone number	<input type="text"/>
Mobile phone number	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>

If you would prefer that we 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 and write your password in the box below.

<input type="text"/>
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Please refer to our privacy policy at [unitedutilities.com/privacy](http://unitedutilities.com/privacy) for full details of the way we use and share the information collected during our interactions with customers and enquirers.

Form completed 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"/>