

Our complaints procedure



Smoothing
the waters



Did we fall short?

Our job is to help your life flow smoothly.

We're working really hard to improve our standards of customer service, but we're not perfect. If you feel we've fallen short, please give us a call so we can put things right as quickly as possible.

We'll do our best to solve your problem when you call us





Contact us by phone



0800 316 2125

(household customer complaints)

Our telephone lines are open between
9am - 5pm Mon to Fri (excluding Bank Holidays).

If you have hearing or speech difficulties and use a textphone,
please dial 18001 followed by the number you require.

How we will deal with your complaint when you phone us

If we've done something wrong we'll always say sorry and will aim to put things right as quickly as possible. We will listen to your issue and aim to resolve it there and then over the telephone. If we can't, we will take it away for further investigation and respond to you within 10 working days at the latest.

Information for businesses

Following changes to the water market in April 2017, businesses are now able to choose from a number of water retailers for their water services. If you are a business you will need to contact your water retailer direct to discuss your water account or to make a complaint. You can find these details on your recent water bill or visit www.open-water.org.uk for further information.



Contact us in writing

Contacting us by telephone is normally the quickest way to resolve any problems. However, if you would prefer to write to us, please use one of the following options:



email us via our website
unitedutilities.com/contactus



write to us at
**United Utilities, PO Box 453,
Warrington, WA55 1SE**

How we will deal with your complaint when you write to us

If you choose to write to us, please include your name, address, account number, contact telephone number and email address (if you have one). We've explained our four-stage process below:

Stage 1 written contact: when we receive your written complaint we will try to contact you by telephone to fully understand your issue. We will do all we can to resolve your complaint there and then over the telephone. However, if we are unable to contact you by telephone we will send you a written reply within 10 working days at the latest. When we reply to you we will give you the name of the person owning your complaint together with a telephone number should you wish to contact them to discuss any aspect of our reply. We want to do all we can to put things right as quickly as possible.

Stage 2 written contact: if you remain unhappy with our response, we will escalate your complaint to an agent who has not been involved in your initial complaint. They will carry out an independent review.

Stage 3 Consumer Council for Water (CCW): if you feel that your complaint is not resolved following Stage 1 and 2, you may then refer your complaint to the Consumer Council for Water,

the independent body that represents customer interests and investigates complaints.



Write to: The Consumer Council for Water,
First Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria
Square, Birmingham B2 4AJ



Call: 0300 034 2222

Fax: 0121 345 1010



Website: ccwater.org.uk

Stage 4 Water Redress Scheme (WATRS):

if you remain dissatisfied following Stage 3, you may then be eligible to take your concerns to the Water Redress Scheme who will provide an independent binding decision. You will need notification from CCW before your complaint is eligible to be dealt with by WATRS.



Call: 0207 520 3801



Website: watrs.org

Putting things right

We'll investigate your complaint and do all we can to resolve it fully.

If we have made a mistake, we will say sorry and explain the cause of the mistake. Our aim is to put things right as soon as we can. If you have suffered specific loss or damage, due to our mistake, we will need full details and may ask for any receipts. We will also make checks to see if you are entitled to a payment under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

Dealing with people acting on your behalf

We will accept complaints from your representative as long as you have confirmed that you have given permission for them to act on your behalf.

Setting the standard

We aim to respond to written complaints within 10 working days at the latest of receiving them.

If we fail to reply to your written complaint within this timescale you may be entitled to compensation under our Guaranteed Standards of Service.

We must process this compensation within the 10 working days from the date we were due to provide you with a response. If we fail to do this you can claim a further £10.

You can find out more about our Guaranteed Standards of Service by downloading 'Our Standards of Service' leaflet at unitedutilities.com/leaflets

You can also request this leaflet via our 24 hour automated leaflet request line on 0800 980 6050.

Our goal is to make your life flow smoothly,
we will do all we can to make sure that happens

Other places to turn

Arbitration

This means bringing someone else in to try to settle a dispute. In some cases, you will have the legal right to refer your dispute to arbitration. If we cannot agree on an arbitrator, OFWAT, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs or the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (depending on the dispute) will choose one. Matters that may be suitable for arbitration include:

- Disputes about compensation following our work in the street
- Positioning of water meters
- Disputes about the installation of water fittings (prevention of contamination)

Legal action

There may be cases where you consider taking legal action against us. You may wish to consider consulting a solicitor, as they will be able to advise you on the most appropriate steps to take.

Confidentiality

We collect and process personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act and in order to manage our operations effectively. We may disclose personal data, including sensitive personal data, to third parties, such as our employees, contractors and regulators in order to

help provide our service to you. We may also disclose personal data where there is legitimate need or a legal obligation to do so. If you would like someone to act on your behalf please notify us of this. Please visit [unitedutilities.com/privacy](https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/privacy) for full details about our data protection and privacy policy. We will only give information to you over the telephone if you can prove your identity by passing security questions. This applies to you or to the person you have appointed to act on your behalf.

If you make a complaint about one of our employees, a manager will look into it.

If the complaint is about alleged financial irregularity, our group audit manager will investigate. We will pass complaints about alleged criminal activity to our group security manager and then, if appropriate, the police.

Standards of service

We keep a constant watch on the speed and quality of our replies. In addition to our own internal audits, the Consumer Council for Water may carry out risk-based assessments based on our complaint responses. They provide us with feedback on our performance and report on this at their public meetings.

Ofwat The Regulator

There are some specific types of complaint which are dealt with by Ofwat, as the industry regulator, rather than by the Consumer Council for Water. These complaints include:

- those about water and sewerage companies' powers to lay pipes on private land;
- concerns that the water companies are allegedly breaking their licence conditions or their main water supply or sewerage duties; and
- those about anti-competitive behaviour under the Competition Act 1998, for example colluding on pricing or bidding for contracts.



Write to:

Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA



Call: 0121 644 7500



Website: [ofwat.gov.uk](https://www.ofwat.gov.uk)

Email: mailbox@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk

Other leaflets that may be of interest:

This leaflet is one in a series of publications containing useful information for our customers. Others that may be of interest to you are:

- **A simple guide to pipes, drains and sewers**
- **Water meter application pack**
- **Testing your household water meter**
- **A guide to paying your water bill**
- **A guide to our Priority Services**
- **WaterSure application pack**
- **A guide to using water wisely**
- **Replacing lead and common supply pipes**
- **Our standards of service**

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

In case you need to contact us:



To talk to us about your bill:

0345 672 2888 if you don't have a water meter

0345 672 2999 if you have a water meter

Opening hours: 8am - 8pm Mon to Fri; 8am - 4pm Sat

To report any problems with your water or wastewater services:

0345 672 3723

Opening hours: for emergencies we are open 24 hours.

You can also call this number to check the identity of one of our representatives.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, and use a textphone, please dial **18001** followed by the number you require.



My Account

If you are a household customer you can now manage your water account online.

Register now at: unitedutilities.com/myaccount