

The Challenge

Demand on water is growing, putting pressure on water supplies:

- Personal water use in the home has **increased by over 60% since the 1960s** and there are **an additional 13 million people now living in the UK, and this figure is rising**
- This means that overall we are **using around twice as much water in UK homes as 60 years ago – an extra 2,000 Olympic swimming pools a day**

Climate change and extreme weather events are unpredictable:

- According to models developed at Manchester University, in the North West summers will be 18% drier and winters 13% wetter by 2050 with an increase in extreme weather events such as droughts and flooding
- This makes the **supply of water more unpredictable and harder to manage**

Long term supply and demand models are predicting a potential water shortfall by 2045 in the North West:

- At United Utilities we are committed to reducing leakage in our network. We have worked hard to hit our leakage targets for the last 16 years and working with the environment agency and the regulator (Ofwat), we want to halve our leakage over the next 25 years in an economic and sustainable fashion. By 2025, it is estimated that around 381 megalitres (152 Olympic sized swimming pools) will be lost through leakage per day on our network and in customers homes and businesses’.
- We also want to work with customers to help identify and fix leaks on your properties, as well as identify ways that we can all save water by being more efficient. An efficient home is considered to be one where water usage is less than 110 litres per day, per person. Currently, in the North West this figure is over 140 litres per day on average.
- Reducing water usage also reduces your carbon footprint and could save you money on your bill (if you are a metered customer).

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- There are 1.2million Non House-hold (NHH) properties in England and Wales. They consume around 30% of England and Wales’ total water about 3bn litres per day. We are committed to reducing NHH water usage along with HH water usage to make our supply more sustainable.
- Reducing water usage also reduces your carbon footprint and saves you money on your bill.

Different ways to read a meter

- There are a few different types of meters that work in slightly different ways. The biggest difference for you is the way that the meter is read.

Traditional water meter

- Meter readings are obtained visually i.e. someone looks at the meter and writes down the reading
- This can either be done by yourselves or by one of our meter reading team
- This data can be used to make sure that the amount you are paying is in line with the amount of water you are using



Digitally-read water meter

- Digital meters can send a read via a fixed communication network, much like your mobile phone
- Data can be read more frequently, e.g. every hour or even every 15 minutes
- This data can be used for bills
- It can also be used to;
 - Detect potential leaks in your property
 - See how many litres of water you are using a day
 - Help us understand our network and identify where there may be potential leaks



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Meters can either be placed inside your property or externally

Inside a property
(a cupboard in this case)



- Pros
 - It's cheaper for us to install meters internally, so we can keep bills lower for customers
 - Above ground, we get a better signal strength to communicate and read your meter
 - It will be possible to detect a leak in your property
- Cons
 - The meter will require some space in your home and probably needs to be hidden in some way (see image)
 - An appointment will be required to have the meter fitted or for any maintenance or replacements
 - We may require some minimal pipework to be reconfigured to accommodate the meter

Outside a property
(under the pavement in this case)



- Pros
 - We can get easy access to install the meter and to check it when ever we need to, without disturbing you
 - As well as being able to detect any leaks in your property, we can also detect leaks on your supply pipe (the pipe that goes from the street to your home)
- Cons
 - It costs us more to install meters like this meaning the number of meters we can install for a given investment is less
 - We will need to dig multiple holes in your street which could require street works and potential inconvenience
 - In some cases this option is not possible – for example you have a shared supply pipe or live in a flat
 - Some meter pits can be very deep, leading to communication issues meaning we can't always read the meter