



# Our Code of Practice for Household Customers

April 2017

## Area of supply



## Introduction

As your water company we aim to provide you with high quality service at all times.

Our Codes of Practice for household customers, describe the main services we provide, our commitment to deal fairly with all customers, and where and how customers can get advice and help.

This document supersedes all previous Codes of Practice, except the Code of Practice for the Exercise of Pipe-Laying Powers in Private Land.

This document is divided into the following sections:

**SECTION 1:** About Cambridge Water

**SECTION 2:** The Regulatory Framework

**SECTION 3:** Your water supply – information on the quality of your water, water pressure, security of supply and interruptions to the supply

**SECTION 4:** Water pipes – who is responsible for which pipes, lead pipes and the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999

**SECTION 5:** Leaks – including Our Code of Practice for Leakage

**SECTION 6:** Water meters – including Our Code of Practice for Metering

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This document is available on our website at [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk). You can also request a copy by calling us on 01223 70 60 50.

## SECTION 1

### About Cambridge Water

The Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Act received the Royal Assent on 14 June 1853. This set up a company to supply fresh water to the town and university as a commercial enterprise.

The company remained privately owned until 1996, when it became a Public Limited Company. In 2011, Cambridge Water Plc was purchased by South Staffordshire Plc. On 1 April 2013 the company was merged with South Staffordshire Water Plc, but continues to trade under the name of Cambridge Water.

Under the Water Industry Act 1991 South Staffordshire Water is, along with its supply area in the West Midlands, appointed by the Secretary of State as the Water Undertaker for an area that stretches 1,173 square kilometres. This includes Cambridge and extends to Ramsey in the north, Gamlingay in the west, Balsham in the east and Melbourn in the south (see map). It covers a population of 319,000 and has 133,000 customers. We do not supply sewerage services; our customers receive these from Anglian Water. However, we bill for these on behalf of Anglian Water.

The company supplies excellent quality underground water that is pumped from boreholes. A total of 97% comes from chalk and 3% comes from greensand aquifers.

The water meets the standards of quality set in the European Community Directive 98/83/EC and incorporated into legislation in England and Wales by the Water Act.

Our household customer bills are amongst the lowest in England and Wales and we take pride in delivering excellent levels of customer service.

All this is achieved against a backdrop of operating in one of the driest and fastest-growing areas of the UK and demonstrates our ability to plan for the future, while maintaining affordable prices.

We have a strong set of values that recognise our influence on the environment and on the daily lives of everyone in the community from customers to our employees. Our Vision is to consistently deliver high quality water at great value with excellent service to our customers, communities, employees and wider stakeholders.

How we perform as a business is important not only to our customers, but also our regulators, our owners and our external stakeholders.

From 2015 onwards, we are measuring our performance against 15 different outcome delivery incentives (ODIs). The ODIs cover all aspects of our operations and have been split into five main outcomes:

				
Outcome	Outcome	Outcome	Outcome	Outcome
Excellent water quality now and in the future	Secure and reliable supplies now and in the future	An excellent customer experience to customers and the community	Operations which are environmentally sustainable	Fair customer bills and fair investor returns

Further details of the ODIs measures that sit underneath our performance against those measures can be found on our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk).

Should you wish to contact us regarding any of the information contained in this document please email [info@cambridge-water.co.uk](mailto:info@cambridge-water.co.uk) or call us on 01223 70 60 50. Our customer services department is open between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. We are open 24 hours a day for emergency calls relating to your water supply.

Throughout this Code there are references to useful information that can be found on our website.

**If you do not have access to the internet, please call us for any information you require and we will be happy to help.**

## SECTION 2

### The Regulatory Framework

The water industry is highly regulated. The quality of our customer service and the prices we are able to charge our customers are regulated by the Water Services Regulation Authority, or Ofwat as it is more commonly known.

Other Government agencies regulate different aspects of our operations. For example, the Drinking Water Inspectorate is responsible for ensuring compliance with the drinking water quality regulations, while the Environment Agency controls the amount of water we are allowed to take from the environment.

#### Our regulators

At Cambridge Water we work in partnership with our regulators to set minimum standards and always strive to exceed their requirements.

#### The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

Ofwat is the economic regulator of water and wastewater companies in England and Wales.

It exercises its powers to protect the interests of consumers, promote value and safeguard future water and wastewater services.

Every five years, UK water and wastewater companies submit a business plan to Ofwat which sets out how much each company will need to charge for water in order to meet their customers' needs and the needs of the environment, while continuing to deliver a safe and reliable service. It is Ofwat's job to make sure these charges represent the best value for consumers and allow efficient companies to provide a sustainable service.

#### The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater)

Customers are represented in the water industry by an independent body called the Consumer Council for Water (CCWater).

Consumer Council for Water  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ

Tel: 0300 034 2222

Email: [enquiries@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccwater.org.uk)

Website: [www.cewater.org.uk](http://www.cewater.org.uk)

## Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

Cambridge Water prides itself on delivering the highest quality water to its customers and as a water supplier is responsible for complying with the Water Quality (Water Supply) Regulations 2000.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) regulates public water suppliers, like Cambridge Water and acts on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the National Assembly for Wales.

It is responsible for assessing the quality of drinking water in England and Wales, taking enforcement action if standards are not being met and taking appropriate action when water is unfit for human consumption.

It undertakes audits of water companies to examine all aspects of water quality, treatment and monitoring and requires each water supplier to submit quality data on a monthly basis for scrutiny. Where necessary, the inspectorate can require a company to implement schemes to improve water quality, and will monitor their progress.

Drinking Water Inspectorate  
Room M03  
55 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2EY

Tel: 030 0068 6400  
Fax: 030 0068 6401  
Email: [dwienquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwienquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.dwi.gov.uk](http://www.dwi.gov.uk)

## Defra

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) works for the essentials of life - food, air, land, water, people, animals and plants. Its remit is the pursuit of sustainable development - weaving together economic, social and environmental concerns.

Tel: 08459 33 55 77  
Email: [helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

### **The Environment Agency (EA)**

It is the Environment Agency's job to look after the environment and make it a better place. Specifically, it seeks to maintain and improve the quality of 'raw' water in England and Wales, and is responsible for issuing water companies with abstraction licenses.

The EA is concerned with the quality of fresh surface and underground water, marine and estuarial waters, and strives to prevent and reduce the threat of water contamination.

National Customer Contact Centre  
Environment Agency  
PO Box 544  
Rotherham  
S60 1BY  
Tel: 08708 506 506  
Email: [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)



## SECTION 3

### Your water supply

Cambridge Water has been supplying fresh, clean drinking water to customers' homes for more than 150 years.

As a Cambridge Water customer you will benefit from some of the highest quality drinking water in the country and one of the lowest water bills.

This is despite the fact we live in one of the driest and fastest growing areas of the UK. We have less rainfall here than in Barcelona.

### Where your water comes from

100% of the water supplied by Cambridge Water comes from boreholes drilled into the chalk strata.

One of the advantages of taking water from underground is it is basically clean water. Like spring water, when it rains the layers of rock filter out the impurities. This means little treatment is required to make it drinkable.

As the water is filtered through chalk it picks up particles of calcium carbonate. This gives it a crisp, pleasant and fresh taste and is why the water is referred to as 'hard' water.

More than 60% of homes in the UK have hard water and some research has also shown that people who drink hard water have a better health record with regard to heart disease.

### Water quality

The quality of water supplies is regulated by the Government through the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). The DWI's main task is to check that the water companies in England and Wales supply water that is safe to drink and meets the standards of the Water Supply Regulations 2010.

The regulations ensure the chemical and bacterial content of the water, together with its colour, odour, taste and clarity are acceptable. Any breaches of the regulations can result in water companies being prosecuted.

### Water testing

Each year, Cambridge Water completes around 25,000 tests on water samples taken from treatment works, reservoirs and at randomly selected homes across the region.

To obtain these samples it may be necessary for one of our water technicians to visit your property. If so, please ask to inspect their ID. If at any stage you are unsure about the authenticity of a water official and believe the person may be a bogus caller we advise that you contact Cambridge Water to find out if someone is working in your area.

Once the water samples have been obtained they are tested to ensure they comply with the regulations. In 2014, 100% of Cambridge Water tests that were audited by the DWI met the

stringent national and European standards covering safety, appearance and taste of drinking water.

All of our water quality findings are summarised in reports which are available for you to access on our website. Alternatively, please call us on 01223 70 60 50 or email [info@cambridge-water.co.uk](mailto:info@cambridge-water.co.uk) and we will send you a copy of our latest findings free of charge within seven days of your request.

### Issues with your water

The water quality section of our website contains information about issues that may affect your water supply. You can read these to help you identify the cause.

Your water should be clear, bright and of a consistent pressure.

If your water is discoloured, cloudy or has an unwanted taste or smell, or if you have experienced a loss of supply or poor pressure, you should contact us immediately on 01223 70 60 50. Please note that all the water we supply is disinfected with a small amount of chlorine to ensure it is completely safe to drink.

If we cannot deal with your query over the phone then we will arrange for a technician to visit your property and where necessary take water samples for analysis. If we take a sample of water for analysis we will confirm the results by telephone to you within ten working days.

If the water does not meet the drinking water quality standards we will notify you directly, either by phone, or by leaving a card through your door.

In exceptional circumstances where it is considered there may be a risk to health, we may ask you not to use the water, or to boil it before drinking. In these instances you will be provided with advice on what to do and if necessary, we will provide you with alternative water supplies.

If we have cause to believe the quality of the water supply may be compromised we have the statutory power to access your home where necessary.

### Discoloured water

We ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, no water is supplied that causes loss or damage due to discolouration. It can occur when work is taking place in the area, for example repairs to a burst main or moving water to supply a different area. We advise you to run a cold tap in your property (preferably the kitchen tap) for 20-30 minutes or until the water runs clear, whichever is sooner. If your water does not return to a clear status or you are still concerned, please contact us on 01223 706050.

Please note: If damage is caused as a result of the water supplied, you may be eligible for a payment under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

### Independent advice

If you would prefer someone independent to reassure you about the quality of your drinking water, you can contact your Environmental Health Officer at your local council, who will be able to help and advise you.

## Quantity of water

### Short-term water supply

Cambridge Water has a duty to make sure we have enough water in our distribution system to meet normal domestic purposes. This includes water for drinking, washing, cooking, central heating and sanitation. We also expect to provide you with enough water for gardening and washing the car, either with a watering can or a handheld hosepipe. Please note that an unattended hosepipe or garden sprinkler may only be used when a supply is metered and it may be necessary during periods of drought to restrict the use of these devices.

### Long-term water supply

It is a statutory requirement for water companies to produce a Water Resources Management Plan, which sets out how they propose to maintain a sustainable balance between available water supplies and demand for water over the next 25 years.

This is influenced by factors such as demand management through metering programmes, resource developments and growth in housing. Our current plan was approved by Defra in May 2014 and came into effect in April 2015 is available to download from our website. Our next plan is due to be published in 2018 and will be effective from April 2020.

All the water we supply is abstracted from boreholes. Research into the capacity of these boreholes leads us to be confident we will have sufficient water resources available to meet demand now and in the foreseeable future.

However, Cambridge Water's supply area has been designated by the Environment Agency as an area of serious water stress and as a result the company is ever mindful of the need to ensure sufficient supplies are available now and for generations to come.

We do this in the following ways:

**Protecting water resources:** Cambridge Water works in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency to ensure our water abstractions are sustainable.

Together we aim to:

- Develop more sustainable approaches to water abstraction
- Tackle water resource and quality issues affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Develop schemes and investigations to help wetland biodiversity

**Reducing leakage:** Because all water distribution systems include thousands of kilometres of pipework they are unavoidably subject to water loss through minor leaks. Cambridge Water is planning to refurbish 5km of existing mains every year up to 2020. It also repairs around 200 leaks at customers' homes and many more elsewhere in our network.

**Metering:** Customers who have a water meter fitted are charged for the amount of water they use, rather than a fixed amount each year based on the rateable value of their property. Customers who have a meter tend to use less water simply because they are more aware of the water they use. More than 68% of households within the Cambridge Water area already have a water meter.

**Water efficiency:** We regularly engage with our customers and third party organisations to raise awareness of water conservation. We also have a statutory duty to work with our customers to help save one litre of water at each of the 138,000 properties we serve every day. Customers can find out more by visiting our website, reading our newsletter, requesting a talk or completing the CCWater online water calculator [www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/water-calculator](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/water-calculator). There are many easy ways to save water in the home. Our handy tips will have you saving water, and money, in no time. Visit our website for more information and to claim your free water saving devices, [www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/customer-water-efficiency](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/customer-water-efficiency).

### Restricting the water supply

Our efforts to safeguard the long-term water supply mean there is only a minimal chance of water restrictions having to be enforced on our customers. Specifically we have predicted there may only be a need for:

- A major publicity campaign requesting voluntary savings of water once in 10 years
- A hosepipe ban once in every 20 years
- A restriction on non-essential usage once in every 50 years
- The risk of rota cuts or use of standpipes on average less than once in 100 years

### Water pressure

We must supply water for household purposes at a pressure which will ensure water reaches the top-most storey of every building within our supply area, unless the building is at such a height that water will not flow to it by gravitation from our service reservoir or tank.

In practice, this means a pressure level of 10 metres at a flow of 9 litres per minute at the boundary stop tap - this equates to filling a gallon container in just over half a minute. However, we will in most cases ensure higher pressure than this.

. For a typical two-storey house this means that:

- Water will rise and fill a storage tank in the loft
- The minimum flow at the boundary stop tap will be nine litres a minute. This would be sufficient to fill a one gallon (4.5 litre) bucket in 30 seconds.

A number of factors affect the pressure and flow rates in your home. These factors include:

- The height of your property relative to the reservoirs
- The length and condition of the supply pipe
- Whether your property shares a supply pipe with other properties
- How much water is being used at any particular time
- Peak demand conditions
- Internal plumbing

If you think your water pressure or flow is too low we will investigate free of charge. If the cause is our responsibility we will take appropriate action. If the cause is your responsibility we will advise you what to do.

If, in any 28 day period, the pressure in a supply pipe falls below seven metres, on two occasions, each lasting more than one hour, you can make a claim under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

We cannot guarantee to maintain the minimum pressure during droughts or where the fall in pressure is caused by necessary repair and maintenance work.

### Separation of Supplies

If you are on a shared water supply pipe that feeds other properties you can apply to us to have a separate supply that will just feed your property. You will need to complete our Application Form for Separation or Replacement Water Connection form which you can access from the Developer Services section of our website.

Upon completion of the required information we will provide you with the following :-

- A quotation for the cost of the work required to be undertaken by us to connect you.
- A copy of our mains records indicating approximately where we will lay our pipes to.

For us to be able to connect you to a separate supply you will need to lay a new pipe from your property to the boundary of the public highway. We will need to inspect your new pipe to make sure that it has been laid in accordance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

You will also need to make arrangements with your plumber to identify where you will need to disconnect your property from the existing shared supply when your new supply is connected by us. This disconnection is required to be done in accordance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

We will only make a connection when:-

- You have paid the quote
- The supply pipe has passed our inspection.

## Replacement Supplies

If you already have a separate supply but are replacing it because it is old or has started to leak you will need to complete our Application Form for Separation or Replacement Water Connection which you can access from the Developer Services section of our website.

For us to be able to connect to your new pipe you will need to lay a new pipe from your property to the boundary of the public highway this will be your responsibility to ensure it is completed. We will then need to inspect your new pipe to make sure that it has been laid in accordance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999.

We will only make a connection when:-

- You have paid the quote
- The supply pipe has passed our inspection.

When we are undertaking the replacement of an existing supply we also need to arrange to disconnect the old supply that feeds your property at the water main. We expect to do this at the same time that we make the new connection. So, we will require you to lay your new supply to terminate at the boundary in line with the old supply.

If you intend to lay your new water supply in a different position to the existing one you must be aware that this will add extra cost to the job as it means we will have to make two separate excavations in the public highway which you will have to pay for.

Please look at the relevant information on the Developer Services section of our website or contact our Developer Services team who can advise you further.

### **Interruptions to supply**

Our primary aim is to deliver to you a constant supply of high quality water. However, occasionally your supply may be interrupted, perhaps to carry out planned work or if there is a burst water main.

### **Planned work**

There is some work we carry out which requires only short interruptions of supply of less than 1 hour. You will not receive written warning of these interruptions. If we believe the interruption will be over four hours, we will provide at least 48 hours' notice and let you know what time the supply will be restored.

If the supply is off for more than four hours, and we have failed to give at least 48 hours' notice, you may be eligible for a payment under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

### **Unplanned work**

After an emergency or unplanned interruption, we will take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers:

- That the supply has been interrupted or cut off
- Where alternative supplies can be obtained
- The time by which we plan to restore the supply
- A phone number to obtain further information

### **Restoration of supplies**

If your water supply does fail we are committed to restoring it as soon as possible. We will restore supplies within 48 hours if the interruption to the supply was on a large, strategic main, or within 12 hours for smaller leaks or bursts.

If the incident is serious you can keep track of updates and find out about alternative water supplies by visiting our website or checking local media.

If you would like to report an emergency or a burst main please contact us on 01223 70 60 50.

### **Emergency water supply**

If an interruption to your supply is likely to be longer than 4 hours, we will always aim to provide you with an emergency source of water which is usually provided by an emergency bowser situated 50 meters away. If you are unable to carry water from the emergency bowser please contact us on 01223 70 60 50 and we will do our best to assist you.

We also offer a special delivery of water to those customers who need instant access to water such as those with specific needs, kidney patient on home dialysis

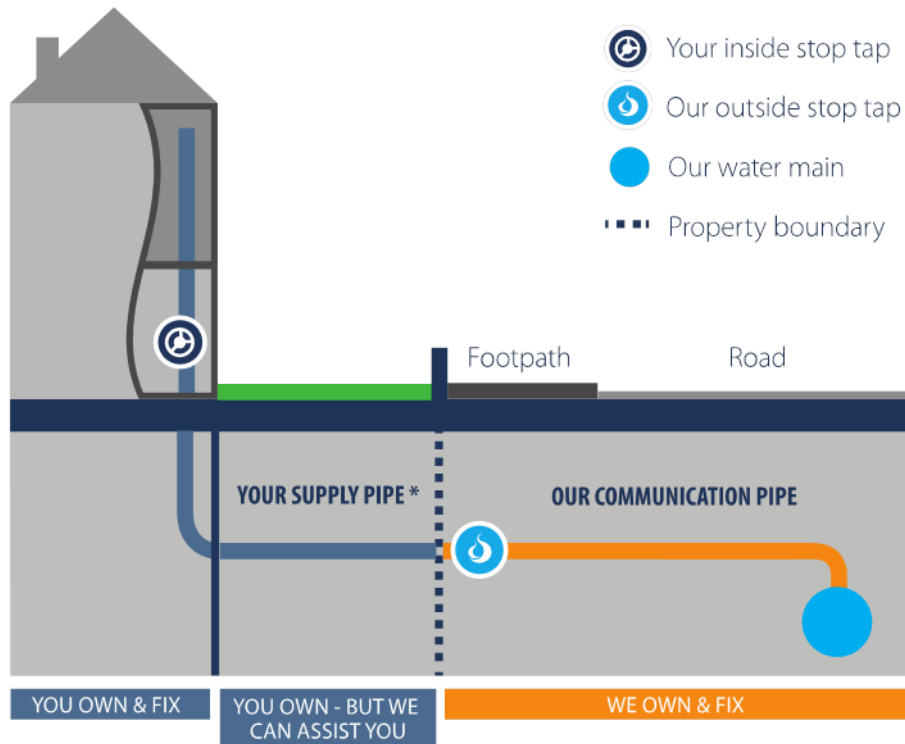
To give you the best possible service we keep a confidential register of customers who have individual needs. The register means our staff know how best to assist you. Contact us if you would like to register for an emergency water supply service.



## SECTION 4

### Water pipes

This example diagram shows who's typically responsible for pipework. It distinguishes between customer or property owner responsibility and the pipework that we're responsible for.



\* Homeowners are usually responsible for the water supply pipe up to the property boundary.

#### Service pipe

The service pipe connects our water main to the property. The service pipe has two parts – communication pipe and supply pipe.

#### Communication pipe

The communication pipe runs from our water main to the boundary of your property (usually the back of the public footpath). We are responsible for the repair, maintenance and replacement of this section of pipe.

#### Supply pipe

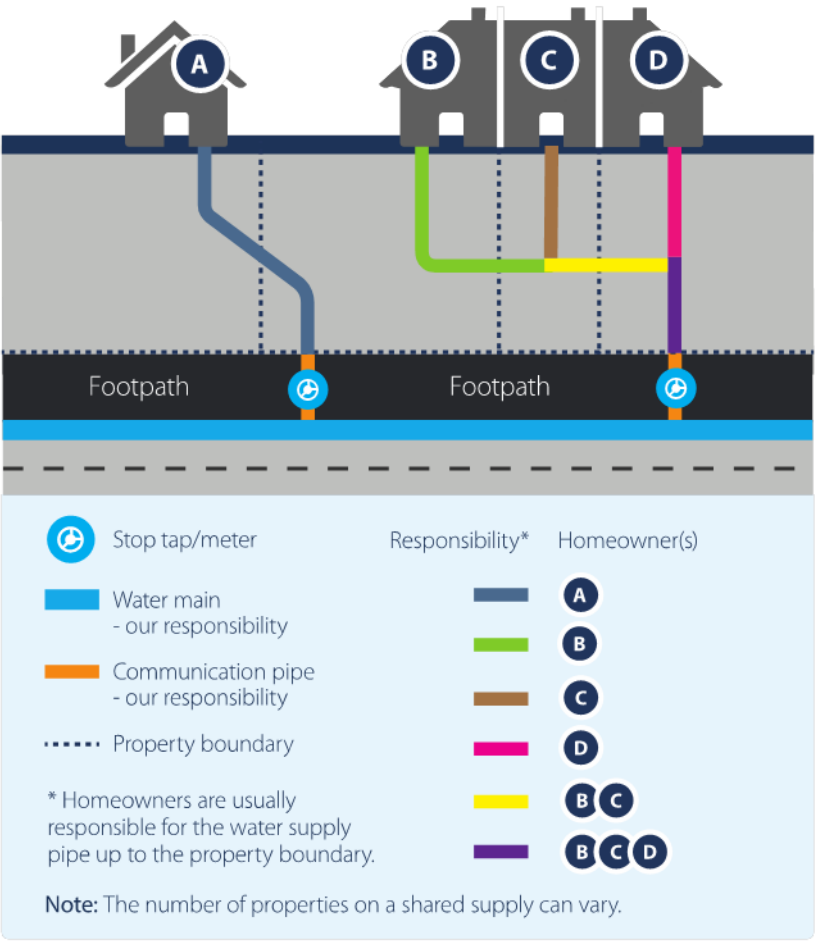
The supply pipe which can be laid in the highway, on the property owner's land, or land owned by someone else is your responsibility to maintain and to ensure any leaks found there are fixed. If it serves more than one property it's the responsibility of all property owners. Under

most circumstances it runs from the boundary to your property. The owner of the property is responsible for its repair, maintenance and replacement.

Customers or property owners are responsible for pipework and fittings inside the property as well as the supply pipe described above. We are responsible for maintaining and repairing any pipework on the other side of the boundary.

Shared pipework responsibility

It’s often the case, particularly with older properties either semi-detached or terraced that several neighbours share a water supply pipe rather than each having their own. This diagram shows a typical shared supply pipe arrangement and explains how responsibility is split between each of the properties.



Please note: Cambridge Water has the right to lay and maintain pipes on private land subject to serving the required statutory notices. For further information please refer to our Code of Practice for the Exercise of Pipe-Laying Powers in Private Land.

## Electrical earthing

The water pipes in some older houses (particularly those built before 1963) may be used as an earth for household electrical appliances.

The increasing use of plastic water pipes reduces the effectiveness of your water pipe as an earth. The use of water pipes as an earth is illegal and highly dangerous.

Providing electrical earthing is not one of our services. If you would like more information and advice you are advised to contact a qualified electrician.

## Lead pipes

Lead is a common substance. It can come from a variety of sources, including vehicle exhausts, and old paintwork, and may be present in air, food, soil or water.

### How does lead get into drinking water?

Water leaving the Cambridge Water treatment works and travelling along our network of pipes is effectively lead-free. Where lead is found in tap water it usually comes from old lead pipework and in some cases lead solder in or near the home.

For a long time, generally up to the 1960s, lead was used for some water pipes and in solder used to join copper pipes and fittings.

Some types of water, particularly soft water, can dissolve lead from pipes. However, the water we supply is hard and as such is less prone to dissolution.

The amount of lead dissolved from pipes also depends on acidity, temperature and the standing time of the water.

### Is lead harmful?

Excessive exposure to lead can be harmful to humans. Young children, and unborn babies are particularly vulnerable and studies have shown lead may have some effect on their mental development. It may also be a factor in behavioural problems.

To ensure all the water is safe to drink Cambridge Water treats its water to remove the potential harmful effects of lead.

### How do I know if there are lead pipes in my home?

If your home was built:

- Before 1963 it may have lead pipes
- After 1963 it is unlikely to have lead pipes

If your home has been modernised since the early 1960s and all of its pipework replaced, there should be no lead pipework on your property.

If you are unsure, you can make a simple check:

- Look at the pipework inside your home, such as the pipes leading to the kitchen tap or the pipe which leads to your internal stop tap (usually under the kitchen sink)
- Unpainted lead pipes are dull grey and soft. If you scrape the surface gently with a knife or coin you will see the shiny, silver-coloured metal beneath

As a guide other pipe materials have the following appearances:

- Copper - bright or dull orange in colour, and hard
- Iron - dark, very hard and may be rusty
- Plastic - may be grey, blue or black

To identify whether you have lead pipes supplying your property open the stop tap chamber outside your property and examine the pipe which leads from the stop tap back to your property to see if it has the lead appearance described above.

The pipe from the boundary of your property to the internal plumbing is the owners' responsibility along with all of the internal plumbing.

If you have any lead pipework between the stop tap outside your home and your kitchen tap, the best solution is to replace it with copper or plastic pipework.

### How can I find out if there is lead in my drinking water?

If your home does have lead pipes, your drinking water may sometimes contain high levels of lead. If you are concerned about the level of lead in your supply please contact Cambridge Water. We will send a technician, free of charge, to determine the material your supply pipe is made from and take a water sample for analysis if appropriate. The results will be sent to you after the analysis.

More than 99% of the samples we test every year pass the lead compliance standard.

### What can I do to reduce lead levels?

If you believe lead pipes are causing high lead levels in your drinking water there are some simple short-term precautions you can take:

- ?? Do not drink water that has been standing in pipes for long periods, for example, overnight, or if the supply has not been used for several hours.
- ?? In these circumstances draw off a washing-up bowl of water from the kitchen tap to clear the water that has been standing in the pipes. This need not be wasted but can

be used in the garden or for something other than drinking or cooking. You can now use water from the kitchen tap as usual.

?? Ensure you only use cold water for cooking or drinking purposes, as hot water dissolves more lead than cold water

## Can Cambridge Water help?

At Cambridge Water we are committed to continuously improving the quality of the water supplied to our customers. To help reduce lead in the water we are able to offer the following water quality initiative.

We will replace free of charge the communication pipe if:

- ❑ A sample exceeds the permitted maximum concentration of 10ug/l for lead, or
- ❑ You have replaced your part of the supply pipe up to the first draw-off tap (some conditions may apply) and request that we replace the communication pipe, regardless of the levels of lead in your drinking water.

You can download our lead pipe replacement leaflet from our website or call us on 01223 70 60 50.

Grants may be available for renovation and minor works for households with low income. For further information contact your local authority.

## Where can I get more advice?

If you would like further information about lead in the water supply, please contact us and we will be happy to help you. Your Environmental Health Officer can also give advice.

Qualified plumbers registered with the Institute of Plumbing can assist with pipe replacement. If you would like details of a suitable plumber, please visit our website.

The Drinking Water Inspectorate has also published an information leaflet on lead which you can access on its website.

## Water regulations

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 are national requirements for the design, installation, composition and maintenance of water fittings and water-using appliances.

These regulations are designed to protect consumers and the environment from poor water quality, unnecessary waste, misuse, and the contamination of wholesome water supplies.

All water systems must comply with the regulations and they should be referred to when carrying out plumbing works.

We are responsible for inspecting water systems to ensure they comply with the water fittings regulations and, if necessary, will use legal powers of entry to inspect for breaches.

## Where do they apply?

Since 1999, all plumbing systems, water fittings and equipment supplied, or to be supplied, with water from the public water supply are covered under these regulations in England and Wales. This applies to plumbing systems in all types of premises. A plumbing system includes the premises' underground supply pipe from the point connecting it to the water main, to where the water is drawn off for use.

They also apply to plumbing systems that use a private water supply and have a mains backup provided by Cambridge Water.

## Where do they not apply?

They do not apply where a property uses a private water supply and does not have a supply of water from us. However, it is good plumbing practice to follow the requirements of the regulations.

## Who has to comply?

Owners and occupiers of premises and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings have the legal duty to ensure that the systems satisfy the regulations.

In most cases, advanced notice must be given for proposed installations, so architects, building developers and plumbers have to follow the regulations on behalf of future owners or occupiers.

## How can I ensure the plumbing work at my property meets these standards?

While many simple plumbing jobs can be safely tackled by someone with competent DIY skills, more complex tasks should be completed by a professionally qualified plumber.

We always recommend that an approved plumber is used for repairs to internal or external leaks or an approved groundworker who does repairs to external leaks only. Visit [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk), simply enter your postcode and then search either groundworker or plumbers or visit [www.watersafe.co.uk](http://www.watersafe.co.uk) to search for a water industry approved plumber. A WaterSafe recognised plumber is a qualified professional plumber who is employed by a business, which is a member of one or more Approved Contractors' Schemes. Approved plumbers or groundworkers will also have public liability insurance cover. Each of the schemes is either operated by a water company or appointed by the Secretary of State.

We, along with the majority of water companies, subscribe to the Water Industry Approved Plumber Scheme (WIAPS). This scheme is run by the Water Regulations Advisory Service (WRAS) on behalf of water companies.

**Please note:** Non-approved plumbers and contractors are not able to issue such certificates.

Whether you decide to appoint an approved plumber, or undertake DIY, it is advisable to use only materials that have been approved to be in contact with drinking water.

WRAS check and endorse product compliance to ensure that they do not affect drinking water quality. These products carry the WRAS logo.





### Who is responsible for enforcing the regulations?

The regulator is the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. View the Defra website for more details.

The Government requires water suppliers to enforce the regulations within their area of supply. We may undertake inspections of new and existing installations to check that the regulations are being met.

Where breaches of the regulations are found, Cambridge Water will require them to be remedied as soon as practicable. Where breaches pose a risk to health, the water supply to the premises may be disconnected immediately to protect the health of occupants or others fed from the same public supply. It is a criminal offence to breach the regulations and offenders may face prosecution.

Should you require independent advice please contact the Drinking Water Inspectorate or the Health Protection Agency.

## SECTION 5

### Leaks

#### What if I notice a leak?

Call our FREE 24-hour leak hotline: 0800 316 76 76.

We aim to inspect all water leaks within 48 hours of your call. Leaks will be assessed in terms of how much water is leaking, whether any customers are receiving loss of supply or low pressure, and if they are likely to flood properties or cause a danger to traffic or life.

If the leak is within the boundary of your property we will also confirm who is responsible for its repair.

If you wish you could also report a leak to us via our website: [www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/report-a-leak-to-us](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/report-a-leak-to-us).

#### Signs of leaks

Damp patches in or outside the property, lush vegetation in dry periods or running water from overflow pipes may be indications of leaking pipes or faulty plumbing.

You can also use your meter to check for leaks. More information on this follows in this section. An unusually high reading may indicate a leak.

#### What should I do if there is a leak at my property?

##### Leaks inside your property

If you find you have a leak on your internal pipework please contact your own plumber. Our website has details of how to contact approved plumbers in this area. It is advisable to turn off your water at the internal or external stop tap to prevent further leakage.

You may also wish to check your insurance policy (water service specific cover or relevant cover within your building and contents policy). Further details are available on our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk)

If you have a problem with your wastewater service you should contact Anglian Water on 03457 145 145.

##### Leaks outside your property

#### Assisted leak repair service - we want to help

As previously described, legally the supply pipe is your responsibility to repair – however, we want to help out where we can.

We'll assist you in getting your leak fixed as quickly as possible.

It's really important to note that this service isn't to help deal with emergencies and any visits or repairs will be done in normal working hours, which are between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm.

## How the service works

### The service is available for household properties and doesn't apply to businesses

- We'll visit your property, identify if there's a leak and get back in touch to let you know who's responsible for the repair. We can provide further assistance to help get the leak repaired quickly; taking away the uncertainty that can be felt when faced with this sort of problem. We can point you in the right direction when you're looking for a reputable plumber. We aim to investigate and advise you within 5 working days
- If you feel that the repair is an emergency (for example, it's causing damage to property) then we advise you to contact a contractor or plumber to carry out the work - visit [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk), simply enter your postcode and then search either groundworker or plumbers or visit [www.watersafe.co.uk](http://www.watersafe.co.uk) to search for a water industry approved plumber. A WaterSafe recognised plumber is a qualified professional plumber who is employed by a business, which is a member of one or more Approved Contractors' Schemes. Each of the schemes is either operated by a water company or appointed by the Secretary of State
- If your supply pipe runs under your house, conservatory or any other permanent structure, for example sheds or a wall, we may not be able to do the repair if one of our own direct teams were carrying out the repair. In these circumstances, you'll need to contact a private plumber or builder. We can help you to get in touch with someone who can help
- If one of our own direct teams or appointed contractors are doing the repair we may have to do some digging in your driveway, yard or garden – so please be prepared for some disruption. We'll provide a temporary refill of the ground after a repair to make it safe and flush to ground level using stone or sand and we'll leave everything neat and tidy, but it's down to you to organise a permanent finish at your own cost – (for example laying new tarmac, concrete, slabs, coloured bitumastics, and block paving or repairing printed concrete). Where we have to dig out turf, we'll relay the original turf if possible
- If there are bushes or trees over or around where the repair is to be done, we'll need you to remove them before we start and we're not responsible for replanting or landscaping garden areas after the work

- We do recommend upgrading rather than repairing and we know from experience newly fitted supply pipes give on average another 30 years trouble free service and an old pipe can spring another leak somewhere else. The cost may or may not be greater – all situations are different and as part of our service, the approved contractors we can put you in touch with will be happy to talk through the options and associated costs with you. The choice of who carries out the work is down to yourself. You may decide to do it yourself. In some instances we'll contribute up to £300 if you have the whole supply pipe replaced. We'll need the invoices and the work must be done in line with The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations – see [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk). We can talk to you in more detail about this. Remember replacing the pipe will provide longer term reassurance
- If you live in a rented property it's your landlord's responsibility to get the repair done. Again, as previously described, we always recommend that an approved plumber or groundworker does the work
- There is a 12 month guarantee on all work that we do
- This service is applied to the property not to the customer. So to qualify, there cannot have been a previous free repair or contribution made by us at the property since 1997

#### Conditions of the assisted repair service when we're involved in the repair

- The customer agrees and accepts that all work is completed under the conditions of the assisted repair scheme
- The customer accepts that under this service where we carry out any work, we will only complete a repair on the private underground pipework in line with these conditions. We are not obliged to repair or alter any pipework or fittings, in particular it should be noted that internal private pipework is excluded
- As we are not responsible for any leaks on private pipework, including the supply pipe, we are not responsible for any loss, damage or any associated costs or expenses resulting from any escaped water from the supply pipe or fittings at the property
- If we are involved in carrying out any repairs, then finding the leak is part of the assisted repair service and either we or our appointed contractors will do that at the time of the repair. We use a range of methods to do this, including the use of listening equipment
- It's important to note that it's not always possible to pinpoint leaks using listening equipment alone. Sometimes we need to use specialist equipment to trace the exact location of the leak.

- The location of the break in the pipe isn't always in the place where the water is seen rising to the surface
- We don't offer a free leak tracing service for customers who use their insurance policies to have leaks fixed or are using contractors to do the repair for them
- For metered properties, a 'once only' leakage allowance is also available dependant on the leak or fault being repaired or rectified. We'll allow a maximum of 30 days for work to be done in order to qualify for an allowance
- We're unable to guarantee that once any repairs are done, the existing supply pipe will be free from further defects or leaks. We'll continue to provide an assisted repair service and provide support with getting the repair done at your cost
- If you have a leak and you don't arrange within 30 days to have it fixed we may issue a legal notice to you called a Defective Fittings Notice. If after a further 30 days you've not fixed the leak we may decide to do a compulsory repair of your pipework and send you an invoice for the cost of doing the work

## Landlords and tenants

### Landlords

Landlords are responsible for repairing leaks on pipework and fittings inside the property as well as on the supply pipe as previously described.

### Tenants

To help make sure leaks are repaired as quickly as possible, we urge tenants to pass on any information they receive about a leak to their landlord as soon as they can.

### Leasehold properties

If the property you live in is leasehold, you'll need to check the leasehold agreement to find out who has responsibility for repair and maintenance of the pipework and then let us know. Otherwise a bill may be sent to the property owner for any work that's done.

If you have a leak and the person responsible for maintaining the supply pipe doesn't arrange within 30 days to have it fixed, we'll issue a legal notice to them called a Defective Fittings Notice. If after a further 30 days the leak hasn't been fixed we may decide to do a compulsory repair of your pipework and send an invoice for the cost of doing the work to the person responsible for maintaining the supply pipe.

## Spotting leaks

It's important that customers check for leaks on pipework they're responsible for.

We check for leaks on our part of the water network and we also need your help to spot leaks that appear on pipework that we're responsible for. Some leaks are not easily noticeable. Damp areas on the ground in dry weather or lush vegetation during hot weather can be signs of a leak.

If you spot a leak in the road or anywhere else, please let us know.

## Metered customers

If you have a water meter you may also notice unusually high meter readings and you may be paying for water that's being lost. It's advisable to take readings on a monthly basis to see if you have a leak. If you think you might have a leak, the checks below can help to confirm either way. We can advise you.

When a meter is fitted as part of our service, we'll check for any leaks that may be present on your supply pipe free of charge. If we do find a leak, it's your responsibility to ensure it's repaired. If we find we can repair it without doing any more digging, we'll fix it at our cost whilst we're there. If further digging is needed, you may have to pay for the work. We'll explain your options and how we can assist you. If you're responsible for fixing the leak and it's not done, we're entitled to charge you for any subsequent loss of water.

If we notice a significant increase in consumption during our normal meter reading process, we'll let you know. To avoid any shocks, we advise our customers to monitor their consumption monthly.

## Using your water meter to check for leaks

Water charges are based on per cubic metre of water used. On your meter the black numbers indicate the cubic metres used and the red numbers indicate the fractions of cubic metres. To check for any leaks on pipework after the meter:

- Turn off all taps and ensure no appliances etc. that need water are in use e.g. dishwashers, toilets, washing machines
- Read the meter (including the red digits)
- Don't use any water for at least an hour after taking the reading
- Read the meter again
- If the second reading is higher than the first there may be a leak. Call us on 01223 70 60 50, we'll give you some advice and if needed we'll send a technician to help further

## Leakage allowances

### Metered properties

- Any water that leaks from your supply pipe is recorded through your meter, so you'll be billed for it
- We may consider granting an allowance to cover the cost of the extra water that's been lost, as long as the work to repair the leak is done within 30 days
- The allowance is based on refunding the cost of the additional water that has been measured through the meter due to the leak, compared to past consumption
- Where there's no record of past consumption, the adjustment is based on typical usage for a property of a similar type. It may be possible to adjust this again if your subsequent actual usage is significantly different
- The leakage allowance is usually applied to one billing period only. If the excess water didn't drain into a public sewer, we'll grant a 100% allowance on excess sewerage charges for the same period
- To qualify, you must submit your claim within 12 months of any work being done
- You'll be advised of any adjustment within 10 working days of us receiving a claim
- If work to repair the leak is delayed we'll reduce the allowance to a maximum of 50%. We won't make any adjustment where the leak has been caused through negligence of the customer/property owner
- We will not be responsible for any loss, damage or any associated costs or expenses resulting from any escaped water from the supply pipe or fittings at the property
- Please contact us to request a leakage allowance claim form

### Unmetered properties

If you don't have a water meter, a leak from your supply pipe has no impact on your bill, so a leakage allowance isn't granted. The owner of the property is responsible for the pipework as previously stated in section 4.

### Leaks on shared supply pipes

Leaks that happen on the supply pipe from the boundary to your property, all stop taps located either in your garden or inside your house and all the plumbing inside the house are your responsibility to repair. To stop water running to waste we have a legal right that requires you to repair any leaks or faults on the supply pipe or defective fittings.

If the shared pipe develops a leak, it can affect the water pressure for all homes in the row; so it's in everyone's interest to get it fixed as soon as possible. Please see section 4 for more information about shared pipework responsibility.

### **What happens if the leak is Cambridge Water's responsibility?**

At Cambridge Water we take all leaks very seriously. If you do report a leak, we will repair it as soon as we possibly can dependent on the severity of other leaks that have been reported to us at the time. We appreciate your patience during any waiting time.

### **What is Cambridge Water doing to reduce its leakage?**

Cambridge Water has legal duties regarding water efficiency. We have recently adopted a programme of installing meters in our rural supply area. These measure the flow of water and by comparing readings, we can rapidly identify if there is a leak within the metered zone.

Cambridge Water also runs a free 24-hour leak hotline 0800 316 76 76 and aims to inspect all leaks within 48 hours of a call.

This work means Cambridge Water regularly meets the leakage targets set by the industry. You can find out more about our environmental commitments by reading our Business Plan and our Strategic Direction Statement, which are available on our website.

### **How to prevent burst or leaking pipes**

One of the easiest ways to prevent burst or leaking pipes inside your property is to ensure they are properly maintained, particularly during the winter months. Frost damage to water pipes isn't just inconvenient; it may prove expensive.

Few simple precautions to prevent pipe bursts during winter:

- Ensure water tanks are properly insulated. Do not insulate beneath water tanks in the loft as this will prevent warm air getting to them and could cause freezing.
- Fix dripping taps – even a small trickle can result in a frozen pipe.
- Find your property's inside stop tap and make sure you can turn it off if necessary. Inside stop taps are usually located under the kitchen sink, or perhaps in a downstairs toilet or cupboard. Check you know where yours is located and the tap is operating correctly. If you cannot turn the tap you may have to call a plumber for assistance.
- Have your boiler serviced.



## SECTION 6

### Water meters

It's generally considered fairer that we pay for the amount of water we actually use, in the same way as we all pay for electricity and gas - rather than by a fixed amount.

Water is a valuable resource and if we all use it wisely, we can help reduce the amount taken from rivers and underground sources. If you don't already have a meter, by opting to have one you not only benefit the environment by being more aware of your own use, it may also help reduce your water bills. Using less water can also help reduce your energy bills, as you can make savings on the cost of heating water up.

#### Our Code of Practice for Metering for Household Customers

The information contained in this Code of Practice for Metering gives guidance and information on all you'll need to know about water meters.

#### New properties

All houses built since 1 April 1990 are fitted with a water meter. If you have a meter, your charge is based on the water that's registered through it. Sewerage charges are also based on the water that's registered through the meter. For most customers, it's assumed that water going in to the property is equal to the water going out.

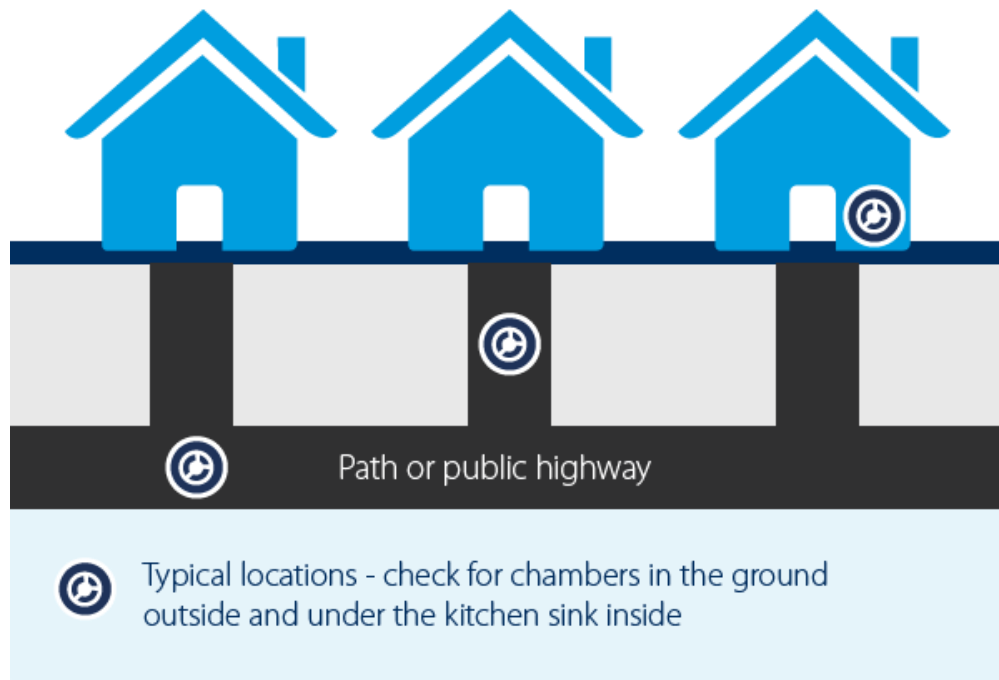
Properties built prior to this, haven't been fitted with a meter and are billed for water based on rateable value. More information about this can be found on our website.

It's compulsory to have a water meter fitted in cases where a substantial amount of water would be used that's over and above that of a normal household. These are:

- If you use a garden sprinkler
- If you leave a hosepipe running unattended
- If you have a swimming pool or garden pond with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres

## Meter location and ownership

We prefer to fit the meter outside at the boundary of the property. This is normally where our existing main stop tap is, either on the footpath or just within the boundary of the property.



If this isn't possible, usually due to the supply being shared with neighbouring properties, we may need to fit the meter inside your property at the point where the supply enters it. We need to ensure that all water that passes through your pipes and any external taps is measured by the meter. We fit meters we can read remotely, which means that in most cases our Meter Reader won't need to enter your property to take a reading.

Some older meters may be connected to an external touch pad that enables us to take a reading remotely without the need to go into your property. In some cases, if the meter doesn't have remote read functionality, or if there are some queries around the meter readings, we may need access to your property to read our meter.

The meter is our property and under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991, we have the right to access to read it, check it's working and to check it's not been tampered with.

## Metered bills and charges

The charge for a metered water supply to a property comprises two elements:

- A standing charge that covers costs associated with reading, maintaining and replacing defective meters
- A charge for how much water we've supplied to your property in cubic metres. This is calculated by multiplying the volume of water supplied by the cost per cubic metre

## Multiple supplies to premises

Where a property has two or more separate supplies each supply will be metered. We'll bill \*one standing charge and bill for the water usage and wastewater that's registered by each meter.

(\* We reserve the right to charge a standing charge for each meter).

One cubic metre is equal to 1000 litres or 220 gallons – which is around the same as twelve and a half baths each holding 80 litres. For more detailed information about charges please see our current charges published on our website.

## Wastewater charges

As a water only company we supply drinking water but we don't deal with anything relating to wastewater. Once water has been used it becomes wastewater, and together with surface water drainage, these services are the responsibility of Anglian Water. So that you only receive one bill covering all water services we bill and collect wastewater charges on behalf of Anglian Water.

The number of cubic metres charged for wastewater is usually calculated to be 90% of the fresh water supplied to the property. The 10% difference is an allowance for activities like garden watering, which is an appropriate average for most household customer purposes. The volume charge for wastewater is calculated by multiplying the number of cubic metres of clean water used at the property by Anglian Water's charge per cubic metre for wastewater.

## Billing frequency

Customers will normally receive two bills a year. Where we don't have an actual reading, bills will be based on an estimate.

The estimated bills are calculated by using two of our readings to work out an average daily usage, this is then multiplied by the number of days in the billing period. If we don't have any readings, the usage from the previous billing period will normally be applied as the basis for the estimate. When you receive an estimated bill you can provide an actual reading by visiting our website at [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk) or by calling 01223 70 60 50 and we'll send an amended bill to you.

## Estimates on unread meters

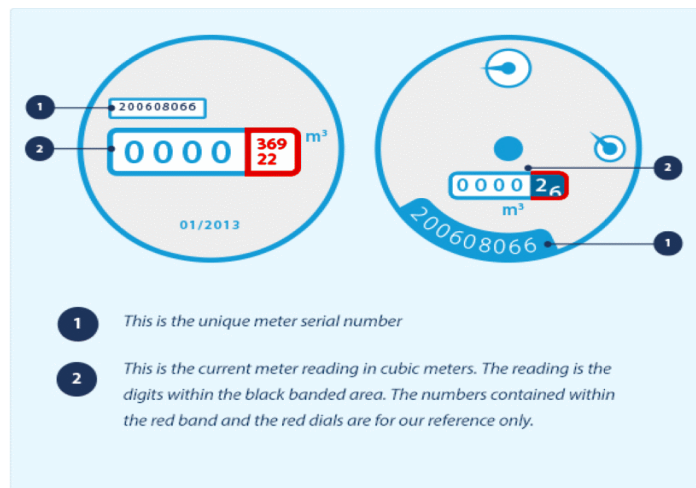
It's important that we read our meter at least once a year, and we'll make every effort to do that. If we're not able to confirm the amount of water that's been supplied to the property, we have to use an estimate as the basis for charging you. If we haven't been able to access your property to read our meter we may have to pursue our right of access to do so.

## Reading the meter yourself

The black numbers register the cubic metres of water you've used. Red numbers record fractions of a cubic metre you've used. It's a good idea though to keep an eye on your meter

readings in case you spot anything unusual which may mean there's a leak somewhere. You can give us your reading at any time by visiting our website.

### What to look for



### If you're moving home

We need you to tell us when you're moving home and to provide us with a final meter reading on the day you're moving. We'll also need:

- Your forwarding address
- The name of the new occupier – if you have this available

### Stopped and inaccessible meters and the replacement of older meters

If a meter stops we'll need to replace it, so please let us know about this as soon as you're aware and we'll arrange to replace it free of charge at a time to suit you. If the meter has stopped or becomes temporarily inaccessible, we may have to send an estimated bill to you whilst we're working to resolve the issue.

Although meters don't have a specific working 'life expectancy', our own and Water Industry research, suggests that the optimal replacement age is between 15 and 20 years. Research identifies that over time; meters tend to under register and may eventually stop working. Our aim is to have no meters older than 15 years and our priority is to replace meters that have stopped working altogether. Some of our meters are battery powered and have a life expectancy of between 10 and 12 years. We're also working proactively to replace these.

### Meter accuracy

Water meters are approved for accuracy and are tested by the manufacturer before leaving the factory. All of our meters comply with the relevant legislation so that they're fit to be used for billing purposes. The numbers registered on the meter confirm the amount of water that we've supplied to you.

## Keeping check of your water use

When a meter is fitted, as part of our service we'll check for any leaks that may be present on your supply pipe free of charge. If we find a leak, we'll let you know straight away. This may temporarily delay the process of installing a new meter on your supply, but we'll keep you informed. For more information about leaks please refer to Our Code of Practice for Leakage in section 6 of this document.

Today we're all using more water than ever before, often without realising. If you can, we advise you to take readings on a monthly basis to get an idea of your normal water use. If you find you have an unusually high reading you may be paying for water that's being lost.

## Leaks

If we notice a significant increase in consumption during our normal meter reading process, we'll let you know. This may be because of a leak or a change in circumstances, for example new appliances that use water or changes in the number of people that live in the property. If you think you might have a leak, there are some simple checks you can do. For information on how to use your meter to check for leaks see Our Code of Practice for Leakage in section 6 of this document.

## Save water, save money and help the environment

On average, we each use around 150 litres of water a day, which is equivalent to around two baths full of water. Water is a valuable resource and we all need to do our bit to minimise waste. There are many easy ways to save water in the home. Our handy tips will have you saving water, and money in no time. Visit our website for more information and to claim your free water saving devices.

## Resolving issues

If you think there's a problem, we want to know so that we can help to sort it out as quickly as possible. Please call us in the first instance on 01223 70 60 50 and a member of our customer service team will aim to resolve your issue at the time of your call. To help speed this up, it's handy to have your customer or meter reference number, which you'll find on your bill.

## Meter tests

This is usually a last resort as it involves removing our meter, replacing it with a new one and sending the original meter to be tested. We don't test the meter ourselves; it's done independently in accordance with the Measuring Equipment Regulations 1988. There is a set fee of £75.57 for this test if the meter is found to be accurate, which you're responsible for paying. If the meter fails the test, there will of course be no charge to you.

If the test shows that the meter is not accurate we'll assess the impact on your account. For the billing period (s) affected, we'll either work out your water usage based on previous readings and estimate your bill or we may need to take readings from the new meter to confirm the necessary adjustments.

## Removing a meter without consent

The Water Industry Act 1991, states that it's a criminal offence to remove, wilfully damage or tamper with a water meter. Anyone charged with this, can face going to court and being fined. If our meter is located on your property e.g. inside your kitchen cupboard, and you're having your kitchen refitted, please contact us straight away if the meter will be affected.

- The meter must not be removed without our permission
- It must not be made inaccessible, e.g. covered up by the units
- If the meter is removed you'll be charged for the cost of replacing it
- If a tenant or other third party removes our meter without consent, the property owner will be liable for the cost of replacement

## Relocation of a meter

Water meters mustn't be relocated without our permission. If you wish to have the meter moved, you must contact us so that we can arrange a survey to see if it's possible. The survey will identify the work that's needed and we'll discuss the costs with you. If our meter is outside your property it's unlikely that we'll relocate it inside. There may be some circumstances where this can be done and we'll discuss this with you.

## Choosing to have a meter

It's free to household customers to have a meter fitted. We'll do a survey first to check whether or not one can be fitted. Occasionally the layout of the plumbing in some properties means we can't fit a meter, and the survey will confirm if we're unable to fit one at your property. In these situations, we'll be able to let you know if there are any alterations you can make so that a meter can be fitted.

## Metered or rateable value charges?

To help you decide if a water meter is likely to save you money and to apply for one, visit <http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/water-meter-calculator> where there's a link to The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) calculator. Or call 01223 70 60 50 to speak to us. To help you get the best from the calculator, it's good to have the following to hand:

- The rateable value of your property
- How many people live in your property?
- How often is the washing machine or dishwasher used?
- Are more baths than showers taken?
- How often are any motor vehicles washed?
- How often is the garden watered?

## How to get a meter fitted

We'll arrange a time with you to do a survey to see where the meter can be fitted. If substantial alterations to plumbing are needed before it can be fitted, you'll be responsible for doing this at your own cost. We advise that you find a reputable, water industry approved plumber by visiting [www.wras.co.uk](http://www.wras.co.uk) or [www.watersafe.co.uk](http://www.watersafe.co.uk).

If you've applied for a meter and we've completed the survey, the meter should be fitted within 90 days of us receiving your application. We do aim to fit meters sooner than this if we can.

We aim to update your account within one month of the meter being fitted. It's important that you continue to pay your unmetered bills during this time.

## Rights of tenants to have a meter

Where a tenancy applies for six months or more, a tenant has the right under section 209a of the Water Industry Act 1991 to request that we fit a water meter. While landlords may not legally prevent an application or the fitting of a meter; if you are a tenant, we recommend that you discuss this with your landlord.

## Paying your bill up to the point a meter is fitted

Customers applying for a free water meter are required to pay their unmetered water charges until the meter is fitted. Once the meter is fitted any over or underpayment will be refunded or billed accordingly and we'll send a letter to you confirming this. We'll carry on requesting payment in the normal way if unmetered charges aren't paid.

## Possible impact of having a meter fitted

The survey will confirm where our meter will be fitted. If we need to dig the public footpath to fit it there, we're responsible for the permanent resurfacing of the area.

If the meter is going to be fitted on your property, for example in the driveway or patio, the permanent reinstatement of any disturbed area is completed at your expense. We'll ensure the area is made safe after it is fitted.

## Two meters at one property

Occasionally, where the property has more than one supply pipe, it may be necessary to install more than one meter. We'll fit one meter free of charge if you pay for any additional meters. We can speak with you about this if the survey finds it's needed.

## Refusal of your request

Very rarely, we may refuse to install a meter if it would be impractical or unreasonably expensive. Such circumstances include those where the property's water services are shared, or where substantial alterations to existing plumbing are required. We can speak

with you in detail if the survey finds this to be the case.

### **If you want to switch back**

If you have chosen to have a meter you can revert back to being charged by rateable value without any cost to you, anytime within 24 months of the meter being fitted. Please note that the meter will remain connected at the property. If you want to switch back please contact us so we can fulfil your request and let you know what your revised charges will be. We'll need you to pay for the water registered through the meter up to the date of your request to switch back. Other metered customers do not have the option to switch back e.g. if you have moved into a property that already has a meter.

### **When we can't fit a meter**

We're able to fit a meter at most properties, but if the survey shows that we can't meter your property we'll confirm why not and will discuss a way of charging that's an alternative to rateable value. This is known as assessed charges.

### **Special tariffs**

#### **Assessed charges**

If the survey shows that a meter can't be fitted either outside or inside at reasonable cost, we'll offer the alternative of paying an assessed charge for your water and sewerage services. This is based on an estimated average use for the type of property you live in – for example, detached, semi-detached, flat or terrace property.

If a person is the sole occupier of a property, they may be entitled to a single person assessed charge. Proof of single occupancy, for example a council tax bill showing single person discount, will be required before we can consider eligibility for this tariff. We'll require an annual renewal notice showing single occupier status for this discount to continue.

If there is a change of occupancy at the property, this should be confirmed to us in advance. Once notified, we can revert to the original rateable value based charge until either the circumstances change or a new occupier makes a successful application for single person status. Fraudulent claims will also result in the property reverting to the original rateable value based charge.

In instances where a customer applies for a meter but can't have one fitted, the assessed charge will apply from the date of the meter survey. If your rateable value is lower than the assessed charge, then you'd continue to be charged based on the rateable value for your property.

Where a meter can be fitted at reasonable cost, or if you refuse to carry out any work needed for the meter to be installed, the assessed charge is not offered. The charges will continue to be based on the rateable value of your property.



For more detailed information about assessed charges please see our current charges published on our website.

### WaterSure

WaterSure is a scheme to help household customers who have a water meter, have a low income and use higher than average amounts of water due to a large family or medical conditions.

For more information about WaterSure, please visit our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk) or call us on 01223 70 60 50.

### Fitting a meter when there's a change of occupier at a property

When a property without a meter either changes ownership or tenanted occupancy of more than six months, we may install a meter and charge that property based on the water used. We're able to charge a new occupier by metered charges as long as the new occupier has not been billed for unmetered charges. We cannot charge a new occupier by metered charges if one of the original occupiers still lives at the property.

If there's a water meter already installed at your property, you'll be charged on a metered basis for your water use.

### Good to know...

#### Keeping appointments

Whenever we need to book an appointment with you, our aim is always to keep them, and if we can't for some reason and need to re-arrange, we'll give you 24 hours' notice. If we don't, or we're late we'll give you £20. If you're unable to keep an appointment with us, please let us know as soon as possible on 01223 70 60 50.

#### Bogus callers

You need to feel safe in your own home and we recognise that for any number of reasons and at different times, you might feel vulnerable.

Our password scheme can help protect you against distraction burglars or 'bogus callers'. Simply let us know the password you'd like us to use if we visit you. When any employees visit ask them to give you the password before you let them in. If they fail to identify it correctly, you should not allow them access and call us on 01223 70 60 50 for assistance. For more information visit us at [www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/bogus-callers](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/customers/bogus-callers)

### Complaints

We aim to provide an excellent service for you, but sometimes things can go wrong. We take complaints very seriously, so if you're not happy with our service for whatever reason, we'll do our best to put things right.

If you're unhappy about any aspect of our service we want to know so we can put it right as quickly as possible. Please call us in the first instance on 01223 70 60 50 and a member of our customer service team will aim to resolve your issue there and then. More information about our complaints procedure can be found on our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk).

## SECTION 7

### Your bill

#### Our charges

Our water charges are set in line with the Water Industry Act 1991.

For each five year period Ofwat determines how much revenue water companies need to fund their services. Companies set annual charges based on these revenue allowances, plus inflation\*.

You can find out about our current prices for water in our Charges Scheme which is available on our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk) or by calling 01223 70 60 50.

As a water only company we only handle drinking water. Once the water has been used in your home it becomes wastewater, and this is the responsibility of Anglian Water, together with all issues relating to surface water drainage.

So that you only receive one bill Cambridge Water bills and collects wastewater charges on behalf of Anglian Water.

*\* The measure of inflation used is the Retail Price Index (RPI) in the November prior to the beginning of the charging year (April).*

#### Liability for charges

Water charges are normally payable by the occupier of the property receiving the supply or any other persons as may be made liable under the Water Industry Act (WIA) or any other Act of Parliament, unless agreed separately by the company in writing or otherwise confirmed by a court of law.

Exceptions to this:

- The owner of the property who is not the occupier is liable by or under any statutory enactment
- By agreement of any person who has agreed to pay the charges
- By agreement with us

Where a tenancy is for a period less than 12 months the owner may be liable to pay the water standing charges. If we are unaware of any tenants, we will continue to bill the owner as occupier until we receive details of a tenancy. Where tenant information is provided after the date of first occupation, the owner shall remain liable for the charges incurred up to the date of notification. Billing and payment times will vary dependent upon whether the customer is a metered or an unmetered household customer.

A property is regarded as being vacant in the following circumstances:

- Premises which are left unoccupied but are left with bedding, a desk or other furniture, so that they may be used as a dwelling, office or commercial premises
- Premises used for multiple occupation with shared facilities
- Premises used as holiday, student, hostel or other accommodation
- Premises used for short-term occupation or letting where the occupation of term of the tenancy is for less than six months
- Premises in respect of which renovation of building work is being undertaken
- Premises which are not normally regarded as being occupied such as cattle troughs, car parks etc.

In the case of vacant premises:

- **In metered properties** - Non-occupation is proven by zero consumption on the meter and no volume charges will be made. The standing charge will still be payable.
- **In unmetered properties** - The full rateable value charge is applicable, together with the standing charge. Customers who leave properties unoccupied are advised to opt for metered charges.

No charges will be levied in respect of furnished but unoccupied premises where the non-occupation is due to exceptional circumstances such as death or long-term hospitalisation of the customer.

### Multiple supplies to premises

Unless otherwise agreed with Cambridge Water, where premises have two or more separate supplies, the water and wastewater supply charges will be calculated separately and a separate standing charge will be payable for each supply.

### Charges for metered customers

Your metered water bill consists of a standing charge and a volume charge.

**Standing charge** - The standing charge is a fixed charged for maintaining the supply to your property.

The standard fixed charge is for a 15mm meter and is increased in proportion to the maximum continuous flow rate of the meter necessary to meet the customer's needs.

Where two or more metered supplies feed the same premises occupied by the same customer, a separate standing charge is levied to each supply.

**Volume charge** - The volume charge for water is calculated by multiplying the number of cubic metres used at the property (one cubic metre is equal to 1000 litres or 220 gallons) by the charge per cubic metre for water.

The number of cubic metres charged for wastewater is usually calculated to be 90%

of the fresh water supplied to the property. The 10% is an allowance for activities like garden watering, which is appropriate for most household customer purposes. The volume charge for wastewater is calculated by multiplying the number of cubic metres used at the property by Anglian Water's charge per cubic metre for wastewater.

Some non-household customers may be required to pay trade effluent charges, further details of which can be obtained from Anglian Water.

All metered tariffs are subject to a volume charge unless otherwise specified. In the case where there is no meter reading, the volume charge will be based on an estimated reading. As soon as an actual reading is obtained, the estimated reading may be amended.

### **Bill frequency**

Customers will normally receive two metered bills a year. This will be for the previous period based on your water consumption or an estimated read where an actual read was not available. All customers have the opportunity to pay their bill in the following ways:

- ☐☐ Within 14 days of receipt
- ☐☐ In monthly instalments
- ☐☐ In more frequent instalments by prior arrangement

### **Apportionment of charges**

All prices are updated from 1 April each year. If the previous bill was received before 1 April, the next bill will be apportioned so that the customer pays one rate to 31 March and the new rate from 1 April.

### **Metered tariffs**

Special tariffs are available for some customers.

### **Social tariff (Assure)**

In accordance with section 44 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 we have from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 introduced a social tariff called Assure.

The Assure tariff is open to both metered and unmetered customers with a household income of less than £16105 (excluding Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance). Eligible customers may qualify for a discount that will be established through an assessment of a completed income and expenditure form.

Using the Common Financial Statement an assessment of income and expenditure will be carried out and the level of discount determined.

The Assure tariff applies to water charges only but where a customer is accepted on to the tariff we will apply the equivalent tariff offered by the sewerage provider.

Evidence of income is required along with a completed application form.

The customer will be eligible for Assure for one year after which a renewal form will be sent to the customer.

Full details of Assure are available on request, from our website or by contacting 0800 09 30 610.

**Aquacare Plus:** This tariff is for customers who are on a low income. It works by reducing your charges for wastewater services. To be eligible you must meet the following conditions:

☐☐ Have a water meter

☐☐ Be entitled to receive certain income-related benefits or tax credits, for example: Income Support, income-based Jobseekers' Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Pension Credit, Working tax credit, Child tax credit (other than just the family element) and income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

Please note this tariff will only benefit you if the amount of wastewater you are billed for exceeds 73 cubic metres a year.

### **WaterSure**

WaterSure is a scheme intended to help household customers with a water meter that have low incomes and use higher than average amounts of water due to a large family or medical conditions. The scheme allows eligible household customers' charges to be capped if paying for your water service based on a meter and you are receiving any of the following benefits:

Housing Benefit

Income Based Job Seekers Allowance

Income Support

Working Tax Credit

Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only)

Pension Credit

Income Related Employment and Support Allowance

Universal Credit

And have:

Three or more children under the age of 19 who are entitled to receive child benefit who are in full time education and live at the premises, or a person living at the property is diagnosed as suffering from a medical condition which causes them to use greater than normal quantities of water. Examples of such medical conditions are:

Desquamation

Weeping skin disease

Incontinence

Abdominal stoma

Crohn's disease

Ulcerative colitis

Renal failure requiring dialysis at home

Or any other medical condition for which a qualified medical practitioner has provided a certificate or written evidence confirming the requirement for additional water use, and as a result of that condition our customer uses a significantly additional amount of water.

**Watersure**

Full details of WaterSure are available upon request, from our website or by contacting us on 0800 09 30 610.



## Surface Water Drainage

If none of the rain water from your property drains into the public sewers either directly or indirectly, you may be entitled to pay a lower standing charge.

Call Anglian Water's enquiry line on 03457 145 145 to obtain an application form, or alternatively you can pick up a form from your local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

## Charges for unmetered customers

Your bill consists of a standing charge, which is a fixed charged for maintaining the supply to your property, and a charge based on the rateable value of your property.

?? **Standing charge** - The standing charge is a fixed charge for maintaining the supply to the property. Standing charges are payable whether or not water is supplied to the premises or wastewater is discharged.

?? **Rateable value charge** - Water bills are calculated by multiplying the rateable value of the property by the rate the company charges for water. The wastewater element of the bill is calculated in a similar way using a standing charge and volume charge set by Anglian Water.

## What is a rateable value?

?? All properties built before 1 April 1990 were given a rateable value by the Inland Revenue, based on their size and value.

?? This means every unmetered property with the same rateable value receives the same water bill, regardless of how many people live there. So a single person pays the same amount as a family of six.

?? It is no longer possible to appeal against the rateable value of a property and because of this many customers choose to have a water meter installed.

?? Customers can find out the rateable value of their property by contacting their local authority.

## Bill frequency

If you do not have a meter we will send you a bill for the water and wastewater services once a year in advance of the charging period.

All customers have the opportunity to pay their annual bill in the following ways:

?? In full by 1 April

?? In two equal instalments by 1 April and 1 October

?? In 8 monthly instalments from 1 April to 1 November inclusive

?? In more frequent instalments by prior arrangement

If you do not keep to the instalment arrangement you will have to pay any remaining outstanding balance in full immediately.

## Bill apportionment

Where a period of occupation of premises is less than the full year, charges will be apportioned on a daily basis.

## Considering a meter?

If you have a water meter fitted your charges are based on the amount of water you use, rather than being a fixed amount each year based on the rateable value of your property.

For more detailed information please refer to Our Code of Practice for Metering in section 7.

## Moving home

Please remember to tell us if you are moving home. You can do this by completing the moving house form on our website or by calling us.

We need a minimum of two working days' notice when you are moving. We will read your meter on the day you are moving house, subject to receiving five days' notice. If we fail to do this, you may be eligible to a payment under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

Where a customer who is liable to pay metered charges vacates the property without notifying the company, and a new occupier takes up residence without notifying the company, Cambridge Water will take a meter reading as soon as it becomes aware of the new occupier to establish average daily use. The average daily use will then be used to calculate charges due from the new occupier between the date they occupied the property and the date of the first meter reading taken by the company.

If you do not tell us you are moving premises, you could be liable to pay charges until whichever is the earliest of:

- The next scheduled meter reading date
- The date we are informed by a new occupier; or
- 28 days from the date that you do inform us.

Where a customer who is liable to pay unmetered charges vacates the property without notifying the company, and a new occupier takes up residence without notifying the company, Cambridge Water will continue to charge the existing customer until it becomes aware of the new occupier.

Customers moving out of the Cambridge Water area may be eligible for a refund on their water bill. Cambridge Water will send this if a forwarding address is supplied.

If a customer has an outstanding debt, and fails to notify Cambridge Water when moving house, the company will use all possible methods to recover the sums owed.

## New occupiers

Prospective occupiers may contact Cambridge Water by phone or in writing for information on the existing charging basis for the property in question.



### Ways to pay your bill

Cambridge Water offers a range of flexible ways for customers to pay their water bill. Bills can be paid annually, monthly or more frequently by prior arrangement. Customers who have a particular problem making payments are advised to contact Cambridge Water to discuss alternative options.

**Direct Debit** - Cambridge Water can arrange for a pre-agreed fixed amount to be regularly taken direct from a bank account. Payments are then spread out and are easier to manage. Customers can sign up for this service via Cambridge Water's website or by calling 01223 70 60 50.

### Online

Customers can pay with their debit card free of charge using Santander's secure payment service, via our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk).

### Debit and credit card payments

Customers can pay by debit or credit card over the phone. Please note we cannot accept American Express. Debit cards will be processed free of charge, however for credit card payments an administrative charge of 0.955% is applied for Visa and 0.985% for MasterCard credit cards.

### Save time and do it online...

You can make a pay as you go payment or set up a direct debit by logging into our online system 'Myaccount. In addition to making a payment, you can gain instant access to all previous bills over the last 12 months, update your personal details and view your payment history by logging into Myaccount.

### At any Post Office

Sign and date the payment slip, and take the whole bill with your payment. You can pay by either cash or cheque. Make cheques payable to Post Office Counters Ltd. The Post Office will charge you a counter fee for this service. You should receive a printed receipt as proof of payment, which will detail your customer reference number.

### By post

Send your cheque or postal order with the completed payment slip (no receipt will be issued). The address to send your payment to is:

Cambridge Water  
90 Fulbourn Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 9JN

Make cheques payable to Cambridge Water and write your name, address and customer reference number on the back of the cheque. Please do not send post-dated cheques. Please do not send cash through the post - we do not accept any responsibility for cash sent by post. This service is free of charge.

### **At banks and building societies**

Using the payment slip at the bottom of your bill you can pay at any bank and most building societies. Cheques are to be made payable to Cambridge Water. This service is free at your own bank or building society. If you do not hold a bank account at the bank where you make a payment, you may be charged by the bank.

## PayPoint

Some payment mechanisms may support payment via PayPoint outlets, please see our website for further information.

### Instalment plans

Instalment plans are designed to spread the cost of your water bill. The aim of an instalment plan is to build up credit in your account. This is so that when we issue your water bill, sufficient funds are available to meet the payment.

#### If you are metered

We estimate how much water you are likely to use over the coming year based on your previous consumption figures and other information regarding your personal circumstances and add an additional amount that allows for inflation.

We also take into consideration any existing arrears or credit on your account. Using these figures we are able to calculate how much each payment should be.

#### If you are unmetered

We divide your water bill by however many instalments you wish to pay. We also take into consideration any existing arrears or credit on your account.

In both cases we will review your instalment plan annually. These reviews help us to make sure your regular payments are accurate, spread out equally and paid promptly.

Call us on 01223 70 60 50 if you would like more information about instalment plans. You do not need to have a bank or building society account. Once we have received your request, we will set up your instalment plan and let you know in advance what your regular payments will be. If a customer defaults on an instalment plan, 100% of the full bill amount will become immediately due.

**Deduction from benefits:** If you are in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance, Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit, we may be able to arrange for money to be deducted from your benefit and paid directly to us. This is called the Water Direct scheme.

Alternatively, if you owe us money, we may make a request to these agencies for money to be paid to us.

All collection activity on the account will be put on hold while we are awaiting a response from JobCentre Plus. If approved, these deductions will cover the weekly liability as well as a contribution towards paying off any arrears that may be on the account.

For further information about deductions from benefits please contact your local JobCentre Plus or the Department for Work and Pensions.

For further information on our prices and ways to pay, please refer to our Charges Scheme which is available on our website.

## **VAT**

All of our prices are exclusive of VAT. Household customers do not pay VAT on their water bills.

Supplies to some non-household customers are subject to VAT. For more information please refer to our Charges Scheme which can be accessed at [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk), alternatively call 01223 70 60 50.

## **Questions about your bill**

We aim to send you a bill that is clearly laid out and accurate.

If you believe that you should not have received a bill, or it is wrong, please let us know as soon as possible. If there is a genuine dispute, any recovery processes will be put on hold while we investigate. If you have a metered property an unusually high reading may indicate that you have a water leak. For further information read Our Code of Practice for Leakage in section 6 to find out how you can use your meter to check for leaks.

If you write to us about your account, we will reply within 10 working days from receipt. If we do not, you may be eligible for a payment under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

If you ask us to change a payment arrangement (including requests to change to instalments and/or change the frequency of payments), we will make the change or reply stating why we cannot, within five days. If we fail to do this, you may be eligible to a payment under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

## **Bills for tenants**

Our water charges have to be paid for and this is usually by the person who lives in the property and uses the water. Unless your landlord has accepted responsibility for the charges, by entering into a special written agreement with us, this remains your responsibility. To check whether this is the case you will need to read your tenancy agreement.

If your landlord is responsible for the bill, but chooses not to pay it, we may start to take recovery action against you. If your bill is for a previous tenant it is important you contact us immediately on 01223 70 60 50.

## **Request a copy of your bill**

Cambridge Water is happy to provide you with copies of your bills, either electronically or through the post. If you would like to request a copy please email [info@cambridge-water.co.uk](mailto:info@cambridge-water.co.uk) or call us on 01223 70 60 50.

Please remember to include your contact details, your account number and indicate which period you would like the bills to cover.

## **Wastewater**

Cambridge Water collects wastewater charges on behalf of Anglian Water. All billing queries should be directed to Cambridge Water on 01223 70 60 50. If you have a problem with your wastewater service you should contact Anglian Water on 03457 145 145.

## SECTION 8

### Help with paying

Water and wastewater services have to be paid for, but we know that finding the money can be difficult sometimes.

If you are having difficulties paying your Cambridge Water bill, or if you think that you may experience future difficulties paying your bill, please contact us as soon as possible on 01223 70 60 50 so we can help.

We have trained advisors available who can offer tailored advice to suit your needs.

#### What happens if I contact you about payment issues?

There are lots of options available and our trained advisors can work with you to help identify the best solution for your needs. We can do this by:

- Advising you how to reduce water consumption
- Offering flexible payment options
- Seeing if you are eligible for special tariffs
- Notifying you of organisations that offer independent advice

This advice is important. If you do not pay, or we do not come to an agreement with you about how you can pay, we have the powers to take you to court. In this situation you may have to pay all court costs, as well as the original debt. A court judgement may also affect your credit rating.

#### Reduce water consumption

**Metering:** Your charges are based on the amount of water you use, rather than being a fixed amount each year based on the rateable value of your property.

Any financial benefits of having a meter fitted depend on how much you pay now, the number of occupants in the property and how much water you use. If there are more bedrooms in your house than people, you could be better off on a meter.

Household customers can have a water meter installed free of charge where possible.

Installing a meter also means you may be eligible for special tariffs that are available for some customers. You can find out more about these in section 8 of this document and in our Charges Scheme which is available on our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk).

You can find out whether or not you would be better off with a water meter by completing the water meter calculator also available on our website.

For more information and advice about meters please refer to Our Code of Practice for Metering in section 7 of this document. To request a free survey to see if your property is suitable for a meter, please call us on 01223 70 60 50.

If you do opt for a water meter, you have the option to revert back to rateable value charges within 24 months, although the meter will remain in place. Any subsequent occupiers of this property will be metered.

**Water efficiency advice:** Our trained advisors can provide advice to help you identify whether water savings can be made in your home. We supply free water saving devices on request. For more details please visit our website at [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk) or call us on 01223 70 60 50.

#### **Flexible payment options**

Bills can be paid annually, monthly or more frequently by prior arrangement. If you have a particular problem getting the money to us we will try to find an arrangement that suits you. For more information please read section 8.

If you are a metered household customer you may be eligible to pay a special tariff, WaterSure or AquaCarePlus. For more information please read section 8 of this document and our Charges Scheme which is available on our website [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk).

**Water Direct** - Customers in receipt of income-based Jobseekers' Allowance, Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit, may be able to arrange for money to be deducted from their benefit and paid direct to Cambridge Water.

Any collection activity on the account will be put on hold while Cambridge Water awaits a response from JobCentre Plus. If approved, these deductions will cover the weekly liability as well as a contribution towards paying off any arrears that may be on the account.

Alternatively, if a customer owes money, Cambridge Water may make a request to these agencies for money to be paid to us directly.

For further information about deductions from benefits customers should contact their local JobCentre Plus or the Department for Work and Pensions.

#### **Independent advice**

If you want independent advice you can contact the National Debt Helpline on 0808 808 400 Monday to Friday 9am-9pm and Saturday 9.30am-1pm or visit their website at [www.nationaldebthelpline.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebthelpline.co.uk).

You can also contact organisations in your local area such as:

#### **Citizen Advice Bureau:**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

03444 111 444

CAB offices are located at:

- 66 Devonshire Road, Cambridge CB1 2BL (main office)
- Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge CB2 0QQ
- John Huntingdon House, Tannery Rd, Sawston CB22 3UW
- Doctors' Surgery, 1a Pepys Way, Girton, CB3 0PA
- 6 All Saints Passage, Town Centre, Huntingdon PE29 3LE

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

The website contains links for Jobcentre Plus, the Child Support Agency, The Pension Service, Veterans UK and Disability and Carers Service.

**JobCentre Plus**

[www.jobcentrepplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentrepplus.gov.uk)

Cambridge Jobcentre Plus is located at:

Henry Giles House  
73-79 Chesterton Road  
Cambridge  
CB4 3BQ  
01223 545 000

**StepChange Debt charity**

<http://www.stepchange.org/>

0800 138 1111 (Freephone, including mobiles)

StepChange Debt Charity is the new name for the UK's leading money and debt advice organisation. Previously known as Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) they have over 20 years' experience of helping people become debt free.

If you're struggling to keep on top of your money, their simple debt check will give you straightforward advice based on your circumstances.

StepChange Debt Charity are experts in helping people to manage and repay their debts. They offer tailored advice and practical solutions to help you make a fresh start.

It is important to tell us if you are receiving benefits or have approached any other organisations for help.

If your local authority, the Department for Work and Pensions or JobCentre Plus ask us to withhold recovery action while they look into your case, we will do so.

Where customers have approached a debt advisory service (such as the Citizens Advice Bureau), we will allow you the appropriate time to talk with them and take their advice. In line with CSAs Debt Collection guidelines, this will be set at a minimum of 30 days. However, if we do not hear from you or your supporting agency we will re-commence collection activity.

**Trust Funds:** Customers who are in arrears and experiencing serious financial difficulties may wish to contact an independent organisation that could provide assistance to customers experiencing hardship. For more details please call 01223 70 60 50.

**Pension Credit:** If you are a pensioner and are on a low income you may be entitled to Pension Credit. To find out more call the Pension Credit application line on freephone 0800 99 1234 or textphone 0800 169 0133.

**Working Families Tax Credit:** If you are earning a low wage and you have a family you may be entitled to Working Families Tax Credit. To find out more contact the Tax Credits helpline on 0845 300 3900 or textphone 0845 300 3909.

**Other support:** It may be worth contacting your local authority's health and social care services department and JobCentre Plus. They will not be able to give you any money to pay your water bill but they might be able to offer help and advice.

### Failure to make payments

We strongly advise you to get in touch with us on 01223 70 60 50 if you are having difficulties in paying your bill. Please note if you do not keep to your agreed payment arrangement, without discussing this with us first, the whole debt will become due. If you still do not pay your bill then we will take the following steps:

**Write to you:** We will write to you to notify you of the outstanding amount and inform you that additional charges will be incurred if your bill is not paid. If you contact us we can try and resolve any queries and possibly set up a payment arrangement.

**Personal contact:** If you still do not contact us we will telephone you, or visit you at your home to advise you. The purpose of this is to:

- ?? Find out why the payment has not been made.
- ?? Collect all money, some money, or agree a repayment plan.
- ?? Discuss options for independent advice, e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau.
- ?? Collect relevant information which may enable us to arrange for payments to be deducted from your benefits.
- ?? Find out if you are eligible for special tariffs, or arrange to have a meter installed to reduce the size of your bills.

**Collection agencies:** If, after writing and attempting to contact you, your bill has still not been paid we may use the services of a reputable debt collection agency. We will only use agencies that are members of the Credit Services Association, and as a condition of their membership, have signed up to their code of practice. Any complaints about agents' behaviour should be addressed to Cambridge Water in the first instance.

**County court claim:** If you still refuse to make an arrangement to pay we may ask the county court to order you to pay. This means that you will get a county court claim against you. You will also have to pay legal costs.

**County court judgement:** If we receive the judgement from the court, and you still do not pay we may take further legal action. A county court judgement will affect your credit rating.

We will write to you after we have received judgement to tell you what further legal



action we will take if you do not pay the full amount due. These options are listed here:

**Warrant of execution:** The bailiff of the court is instructed to levy on goods belonging to you in order to satisfy the judgement. This means the bailiff may be able to remove your possessions from your property and sell them to satisfy the debt.

**Attachment of earnings order:** The company may apply to the court for an order to be made which enables your employers to deduct an amount each week/month to eventually settle the debt.

**Third party debt order:** An application is made to the court for an order to have funds deducted from your bank account or similar source. This involves a hearing before the district judge.

## SECTION 9 Extra help

Priority services register:

Need to group these together and see whether the information is correct.

### 10. Priority Services Register

We understand that there are times when our customers need extra help. Customers who have additional needs or require extra help can access a range of free services we offer by joining the Priority Services Register.

Customers who have difficulty reading or understanding their bills can have the information delivered in the following ways:

Large type,

Braille or recorded onto CD,

Bills read out over the phone,

Translated into other languages Arrange for a copy of the bill to be sent to a nominated relative, friend or responsible who is helping them look after their affairs.

Where we need to interrupt a customer's water supply, if a customer is receiving dialysis or medical treatments such as dialysis at home, as they rely on a constant supply of water we will advise you and help you with any necessary special arrangements. .

These, and other services are explained in more detail in our leaflet 'Our commitment to you' and on our website <http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk>.

### 10.1 Bogus callers

All employees of Cambridge Water carry identity cards with their photograph. They will always produce this when calling at customer's homes. Call 01223 70 60 50 check the validity of a caller.

We work with trusted partners to deliver some of our services to the very highest levels of service. Anyone working on our behalf will carry photo identity cards with a unique number. BY calling 01223 70 60 50 their identity can be verified.

If we need to enter a property we rarely go upstairs and don't need to send more than one person into the house at any one time.

Always be aware of any callers to your door –

STOP – are you expecting anybody? Do they have an appointment?

CHAIN – secure your door bar or chain before opening your door

CHECK – ask for and double-check the caller's ID

If you're still suspicious, you should call the Police or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

For added reassurance that a caller to your home is genuine, you can register a password with us. Only the relevant members of our staff will know the password, and they will use it when they call on you or your representative. If you suspect that the caller is not from South Staffs Water, advise them that you are going to call us, then close your door.

### 10.2 Other utility providers

If you require additional help from us, you may also want to register for help with your other utilities. Energy companies offer password schemes and other services similar to ours. To find out more you should contact your energy supplier directly and ask about their Priority Services Register.

At Cambridge Water we offer a range of services for our customers who may have individual

needs such as those who are elderly, disabled or have a medical condition.

#### **Other services you can register for**

**Emergency water supply** - Some customers are entitled to special deliveries of water if we have to interrupt the water supply. If you cannot carry water from an emergency bowser situated 50 meters away, or if you have specific needs, such as a kidney patient on home dialysis, we may be able to deliver bottled water directly to you.

**Appoint a carer or friend to deal with your bills** - If you find it difficult to read or understand your bills, or you have someone else looking after your affairs, we will be happy to talk to them with your written permission. All correspondence, including bills can be sent directly to them. You can withdraw this permission at any time.

**Password protection** - Our password protection scheme can help to keep you safe from bogus callers. All you have to do is let us know the password you would like us to use if we visit you. The password will only be known to you and us.

When any employees visit you ask them to give you the password before you let them in.

## SECTION 10

### Complaints

#### **Our commitment**

At Cambridge Water we are committed to providing the best possible service at all times.

If you are not happy with any part of our service, please call us in the first instance – we value and act on your comments to improve the way we deal with customers in the future.

#### **Complaints procedure**

#### **Querying your bill**

If you believe that you should not have received a bill, or it is wrong, you should advise the company as soon as possible by calling 01223 70 60 50. If there is a genuine dispute, any recovery processes will be put on hold while we investigate. If you have a metered property an unusually high reading may indicate that you have a water leak. Please see more information about leaks in section 6.

#### **Issues with your water supply**

Cambridge Water prides itself on delivering the highest quality water to its customers. If you have a complaint about the quality of your water you should contact us in the first instance. Our water quality is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and we have a duty to ensure the water we supply is wholesome and fit to drink.

#### **Complaints about your wastewater**

Your wastewater service is provided by Anglian Water. Cambridge Water bills and collects on their behalf. If you have a complaint about your wastewater service please contact them directly on 03457 91 91 55 or write to them at:

Anglian Water  
Customer Services  
PO Box 10642  
Harlow  
CM20 9HA

## **Making a complaint**

When we receive a complaint, we have set in place a procedure that will ensure that your complaint is handled by the most appropriate person.

### **Stage 1: Notify us**

In the first instance please call us on 01223 70 60 50. Our offices are open 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. Our control room is staffed 24 hours a day for emergency notification of loss of water, pressure or water quality complaints.

Our overriding aim is to resolve your complaint as efficiently and effectively as possible and if appropriate we will provide an immediate response.

All our employees have a thorough knowledge of the company's procedures and are committed to providing the highest quality of service at all times. We will ensure your complaint is thoroughly addressed and we will aim to resolve it to your complete satisfaction.

### **Written complaints**

If your complaint is in writing (this includes complaints received by fax or email), please include your phone number, as we may need to call you to ask for further clarification of the issue or to arrange a visit in order to carry out an investigation.

All complaints should be addressed to:

Cambridge Water

PO Box 7040

Green Lane

Walsall

WS1 9QG

## **Response to complaints**

We will endeavour to reply to written complaints, and when necessary to telephone complaints, within 10 working days. If we need to visit your property first, we will inform you of this and reply in full within 20 working days. The Government requires all water companies to respond within 10 working days of receiving your written complaint. If we fail to do this you may be eligible to receive a payment under the terms of our Guaranteed Standards Scheme.

### **Stage 2: If you are not happy with the reply**

We hope that you will always be satisfied with our response. If you are not, please write to our Customer Services Manager at the above address. It is our aim to respond to all Stage 2 complaints within 10 working days.

### **Stage 3: Independent review**

If you are dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with you may request an independent review from the Consumer Council for Water (CCWater).

Consumer Council for Water  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Victoria Square House  
Victoria Square  
Birmingham  
B2 4AJ

Tel: 0300 034 2222

Email: [enquiries@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccwater.org.uk)

[www.cewater.org.uk](http://www.cewater.org.uk)

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) is a non-departmental public body representing consumers of water and wastewater services in England and Wales. CCWater will tell you how they will take the matter forward and what further resolution, if any, you can expect.

### **Stage 4: Alternative Dispute Resolution**

If you remain dissatisfied following CCWater's efforts to resolve your complaint, you may be eligible to refer it to the Water Redress Scheme known as WATRS.

WATRS is an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) scheme to help resolve the very small number of customer complaints where the customer remains dissatisfied after the company procedure and CCWater involvement. WATRS provides an alternative to going to Court or a Tribunal.

WATRS decision is binding on the water company.

Following notification from CCWater you can make an application, free of charge, via WATRS website [www.watrs.org](http://www.watrs.org) or you can email [info@watrs.org](mailto:info@watrs.org) to ask for an application form to be sent to you.

Guidance notes are also available on the website or you can request that a copy be sent to you by telephoning WATRS on 0207 520 3801.

### Disputes determined by Ofwat

Under the Water Industry Act 1991, either you or we can refer certain disputes to Ofwat for determination. Those that can be referred are:

- ?? A customer's right to a payment or credit under the Guaranteed Standards Scheme.
- ?? The charges and conditions set by a company for making connections to water mains.
- ?? The terms and conditions for a non-household supply.
- ?? The need for a customer's property to have a separate supply pipe.
- ?? The charges and conditions for providing a water main (requisition).
- ?? The terms and conditions for the adoption of a self-laid main.
- ?? The charges or disconnection costs that must be paid to a company before a business customer's supply is reconnected.
- ??

Ofwat can be contacted at:

Ofwat  
Centre City Tower  
7 Hill Street  
Birmingham  
B5 4UA

Telephone: 0121 644 7500

Email: [enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)

### Further help and advice

You can contact a solicitor or get free advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau, consumer advice centre, local authority trading standards or consumer protection department. You'll find contact details in your local telephone directory, or you can ask at your town hall or local authority offices.

None of the above affects your rights to instigate legal proceedings for any loss or damage caused to you by our failure to comply with our duties under the Water Industry Act.

### Complaints made by third parties

If you wish to make a complaint to Cambridge Water on behalf of someone else, for example a friend, relative or a client, we will handle the complaint to the best of our ability. Under the Data Protection Act, we will only be able to provide you with personal details about a customer's account if we have permission from the account holder.

### **We act on your complaints**

All your complaints are logged and reviewed regularly by the directors and senior management of the company. They review the speed and response and the pattern of complaints to plan where improvements need to be made to our service to you.

The Consumer Council for Water will audit a number of written complaints and provide recommendations for improvements where appropriate. Cambridge Water values their feedback and acts on their recommendations.

This procedure is the result of consultation with and approval from Ofwat. A copy of our complaints procedure is included with all written complaint replies. We will always provide a full explanation and an apology where appropriate. Where the company is at fault we will explain what has happened, automatically consider compensation and pay it where appropriate. Immediate action will be taken to put things right where possible.



## SECTION 11

### Guaranteed Standards Scheme

At Cambridge Water we are committed to providing the best possible service at all times.

The quality of that service is very important to us and our Guaranteed Standards Scheme explains the minimum standards we aim to achieve for our customers.

If you are not happy with any part of our service, please call us in the first instance – we value and act on your comments to improve the way we deal with customers in the future. Our office hours are 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. Our control room is staffed 24-hours a day for emergency notification of loss of water, pressure or water quality complaints.

If we do fail to meet the standards outlined here you may be eligible for a payment. For more details please call 01223 70 60 50.

This scheme is monitored by our regulator Ofwat. Further information on the Guaranteed Standards Scheme can be found at [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk).

### Keeping appointments

When we make an appointment we will specify if the visit will be made before or after 1pm. If you would like a more specific appointment, we will offer you one with a two-hour time- band.

We will automatically pay you £20 if:

- ❑❑ The appointment does not specify whether the visit will be before 1pm or after 1pm, or where requested, within a two hour time-band; or
- ❑❑ The visit is not made as arranged.

In the unlikely event that we have to cancel the appointment, we will give you at least 24 hours' notice.

If a payment is not made within 10 days an additional penalty payment of £10 can be claimed.

### Account queries and requests about payment arrangements

If you write to us with a query about your account, we will reply within 10 working days from receipt.

If you ask us to change a payment arrangement (including requests to change to instalments or change the frequency of payments), we will make the change or reply stating why we cannot, within five days.

If we do not reply in the timescales stated above, we will automatically pay you £30. If a payment is not made within 10 days an additional penalty payment of £10 can be claimed.

## Complaints

If you complain in writing we will automatically pay you £30 if we fail to send a full reply to you within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the written complaint. Where a payment or credit is due it will be made within 10 working days or a further £10 will become due.

## Interruptions to supplies

Sometimes we have to interrupt the supply of water to carry out essential works.

When the interruption is planned we will give you written notice and let you know what time the supply will be restored.

If the supply is off for more than four hours, and we have failed to give at least 48 hours' notice, we will automatically pay you £20 (£50 to business customers).

After an emergency or unplanned interruption, we will take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers:

- The supply has been interrupted or cut off.
- Where alternative supplies can be obtained.
- The time by which we plan to restore the supply.
- A phone number to obtain further information.

Sometimes it is impractical for us to identify who has been affected by an interruption. If we have not made an automatic payment you can make a claim (either verbally or in writing) within three months following the date the supply was cut off. We will ensure the payment due is paid or credited to your account within 20 working days.

If we fail to process your payment within 20 working days we will automatically pay you an additional £20 (or £50 for business customers).

## Restoration of supplies

We will pay £20 (or £50 to business customers) if:

- a) We do not restore supplies following planned interruptions within the specified time on the notice.
- b) We do not restore supplies within 48 hours if an emergency incident affects a large, strategic main, or within 12 hours for smaller leaks or bursts.

We will pay a further £10 (£25 to business customers) for every 24 hours the supply remains unrestored.

Sometimes it is impractical for us to identify who has been affected by an interruption. If we have not made an automatic payment you can make a claim (either verbally or in writing) within three months following the date the supply was cut off. We will ensure the payment due is paid or credited to your account within 20 working days.

If a payment or credit is not made within 20 working days following the date the water is cut off, we will automatically pay you a further £20 (or £50 to business customers).

### Installation of meters

If you request a meter and the installation is to be carried out free of charge, we will survey the property and install the meter within 90 days subject to acceptance of survey within a reasonable timescale.

If you are paying for your meter to be installed, we will survey, invoice and install the meter within 30 days, subject to receiving payment of the invoice.

If we fail to survey or install the meter within these times, you may claim a payment of

£10. This guaranteed does not cover situations where the customer causes the delay, for example where no access is provided to the property.

### Meter reading

We will read your meter on the day you are moving house, subject to receiving five days' notice. If we fail to do this, we will automatically pay you £20.

### Meter changes

We will notify you when a meter is to be changed. When a meter is situated externally, we may change the meter when you are out, and we will leave a card to let you know. If we fail to do this, you can make a claim to us in writing for a payment of £10.

### Pressure standard

You can expect a minimum static water pressure of 10 metres at the stop tap at the boundary to your property. For a typical two-storey house this means that:

- ❑❑ Water will rise and fill a storage tank in the loft.

- ❑❑ The minimum flow at the boundary stop tap will be nine litres a minute. This would be sufficient to fill a one gallon (4.5 litre) bucket in 30 seconds.

If, in any 28 day period, the pressure in a communication pipe falls below seven metres, on two occasions, each lasting more than one hour, we will automatically pay you £25.

Sometimes it is impractical for us to identify who has been affected by low pressure. If we have not made an automatic payment you can make a claim for £25 (either verbally or in writing) within three months of the date of the later of the two occasions. Customers can claim one payment every 12 months.

We cannot guarantee to maintain the minimum pressure during droughts or where the fall in pressure is caused by necessary repair and maintenance work.

### Discoloured water

We ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, no water is supplied that causes loss or damage due to discolouration. If damage is caused as a result of the water supplied we will pay for the actual loss or damage.

### Court claims or judgements

If we issue a county court claim or judgement in error we will pay you £30 for a false claim and £70 for a false judgement.

### Exceptions

We will not make payments if we have failed to reach these standards as a result of severe weather conditions, industrial action by Cambridge Water's employees, or an act/default of a person not representing the company, for example, malicious damage or vandalism.

### Payments due

Generally, where a payment or credit is required under these standards, it will automatically be paid within 10 working days. If we fail to make a payment within that time, a further £10 becomes due.

If you are eligible for a further payment, you need to claim in writing within three months of the payment becoming payable. We will not make payments if a customer cancels an appointment or a request for information.

However, if the payment or credit is due under our Restoration of Supplies Guarantee or our Notice of Interruption Guarantee and is not made within 20 working days following the date the water is cut off, we will automatically pay you a further £20 (or £50 to business customers).

### Customers in arrears

If you are entitled to a payment but you owe money to Cambridge Water, and the debt has been outstanding for more than six weeks, the payment will be made by crediting your account.

Payments do not affect other legal liabilities or statutory rights.

A payment/credit by Cambridge Water does not constitute admission by us of any other liability other than an obligation to comply with the standards. If you accept a payment or credit it does not affect other liabilities or statutory rights.

### Referrals to Ofwat

Where a dispute arises between a customer and the company regarding a payment, the matter can be referred by either party to Ofwat for determination. For more details please call 01223 70 60 50.

### Natural England

We work closely with Natural England on biodiversity initiatives and on the management of the many Sites of Special Scientific Interest that we own.

We also seek their advice on wildlife issues connected with our capital investment programme, for example when working to avoid adverse impacts on protected species and their habitats.

Tel: 0845 600 3078

Email: [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

Website: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

### Health Protection Agency

We work in partnership with the Health Protection Agency (HPA), which provides us

with support and advice to safeguard public health.

We work closely with HPA when an incident is reported to protect and inform the public, especially vulnerable groups.

Anglia Health Protection Team,  
Thetford Community Healthy Living Centre  
Croxtan Road,  
Thetford  
IP24 1JD

Tel: 01844 2253546

Email: [anglia.hpu@phe.gov.uk](mailto:anglia.hpu@phe.gov.uk)

The Anglia Health Protection Team is part of Public Health England -  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

## SECTION 12

### How to contact us

Our offices are open 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). We are open 24 hours a day for emergency calls.

**Head Office:** Cambridge Water, 90 Fulbourn Road,  
Cambridge, CB1 9JN

**Website:** [www.cambridge-water.co.uk](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk)

**E-mail:** [info@cambridge-water.co.uk](mailto:info@cambridge-water.co.uk)

#### By phone:

Customer Service: 01223 70 60 50

Minicom: 01223 40 30 98

Fax: 01223 21 40 52

Anglian Water can be contacted for all issues relating to wastewater.

**Postal address:** Anglian Water Customer Services, PO Box 10642  
Harlow CM20 9HA

**Website:** [www.anglianwater.co.uk](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk)

**By phone:** 03457 145 145 (sewerage service queries and emergencies).  
This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

