

About your bill

*Your charges
explained*



Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.

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Introduction

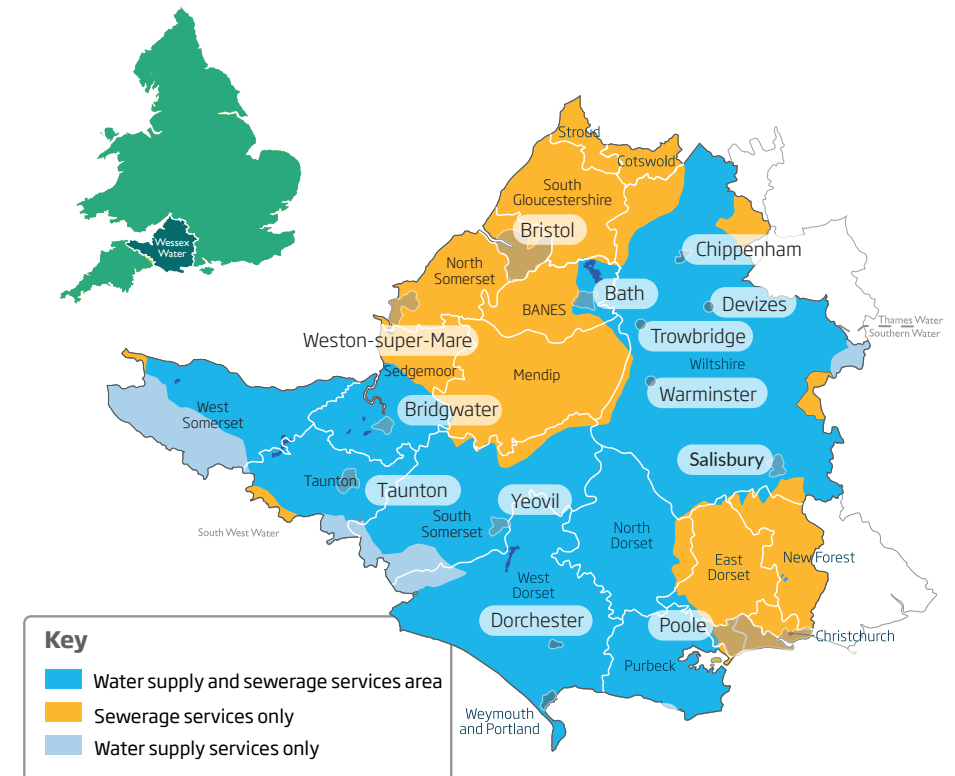
Each year we set our charges according to price limits that we agree with Ofwat every five years.

The last of these reviews was in 2019 when prices were set for the period between 2020 and 2025.

This leaflet explains more about Ofwat's price limits, how you are charged and where the money goes.

You'll find more detailed information in our charges scheme, visit [wessexwater.co.uk/our-charges](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/our-charges) or call 0345 600 3 600 for a copy.

The Wessex Water region





Charges 2022-23

Our metered charges from 1 April 2022 are:

| Meter size | Water supply | | Sewerage | | |
|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Standing charge per annum | Volumetric charge per cubic metre | Full standing charge per annum | Abated standing charge* per annum | Volumetric charge per cubic metre |
| <25mm | £25 | £2.0474 | £58 | £35 | £1.7385 |

| WaterSure Plus | | |
|------------------|--------------|----------|
| | Water supply | Sewerage |
| Charge per annum | £215 | £216 |

* The abated standing charge is payable where no part of the property is connected for surface water drainage.

Our unmetered charges from 1 April 2022 are:

| | Water supply | Sewerage |
|---|--------------|----------|
| Standing charge per annum | £7 | £7 |
| Poundage charge per £ of RV of the property | | |
| Full | £1.9212 | £1.6515 |
| Abated* | - | £1.5142 |
| Thames Water area** | - | £1.6974 |
| Garden sprinklers and similar unattended devices per annum*** | £121 | - |
| Surface water and highway drainage only charge per annum | - | £49 |

* The abated poundage charge is payable where no part of the property is connected for surface water drainage.

** No standing charge will be made in the Thames Water area.

*** We require sprinkler users to be metered where possible.

How you're charged

There are two ways we can charge you for water and/or sewerage services.

One is based on the rateable value (RV) of your property (unmetered charging) and the other depends on how much water you use (metered charging) - this is measured using a water meter.

All household customers have the

option to ask for a meter to be installed free of charge.

If you live on your own, have a small family, live in a house with a high rateable value, or have low water use, you could pay less on a meter. 70% of our customers are on a meter and now only pay for what they use.

How the charges are set

Our customers are a very important part of our process for setting charges. We consult with them at length and take their views into account in our five-yearly business plan. There's more information on pages 8 and 9 about where we are investing.

Our economic regulator, Ofwat, then examines our plan and sets a price formula that enables us to put the plan into practice while limiting increases in our charges each year.

Within these limits, we may need to change individual charges by different amounts so that charges to customers are fair in reflecting the cost of the services. For example, this means that the increase in unmetered charges can be less or more than those for metered services.

Since 2015 Ofwat has said that if we receive more income than we had expected - for example, if a dry summer prompts customers in metered properties to use more water in their gardens - the following year we have to return that extra amount to customers through slightly lower bills than we had planned. This year charges are increasing by around 4.5%.

Your bill will change by more or less depending on the service you receive from us, how much water you use if you're a metered customer or the rateable value of your property if you're an unmetered customer.

The difference between metered and unmetered charges

We make sure that the difference between metered and unmetered bills reflects the difference in the cost of providing these services. By using the average amount of water that an unmetered household would use, we calculate what an average household's bill would be if it was paying on a metered basis. This is then compared with the actual average unmetered bill.

This difference is around £86 per year for water bills and £54 for sewerage bills.

A metered bill is higher than an unmetered bill because it costs us more to serve a customer with a meter. These extra costs include the maintenance, replacement and reading of the meter and the costs of sending two bills every year instead of one.

When comparing metered and unmetered bills, you must look at the overall bill and not just the separate elements. It is not appropriate to make direct comparisons between one element of a bill for unmetered and metered, as they do not cover the same services.





Metered customers

Metered charges – charging for the water you use

If you have a meter your water charges depend on the amount of water you use.

Water supplies to new homes will be metered as no rateable value exists for these properties. We also aim to install water meters on properties which are currently unmetered when there is an occupier change following a property sale or a new tenancy.

Customers who use a sprinkler or have a swimming pool must also have a metered supply.

Where a metered bill spans a period before and after 1 April 2022, we charge for water used before 1 April at 2021 rates and water used after that date at 2022 rates. We assume that use is consistent throughout the entire billing period. Sewerage charges, where applicable, are applied on the same basis.

Sewerage is normally charged on the assumption that 95% of the water used returns to the sewer.

The 5% allowance covers virtually all household situations, eg, evaporation, car washing, drinking, cooking and all garden related use (including normal

use of hosepipes, sprinklers, paddling pools and hot tub top ups). It also takes into account wet and dry years.

The average UK household uses 130 cubic metres of water per year. The 5% allowance amounts to about 6,500 litres or 1,430 gallons.

If considerably less than 95% of your water use is returned to the sewer, please let us know and we'll find out if you qualify for a reduction in charges.

Your bill

If you have a water meter you will be billed in arrears, normally twice a year, for the water you have used. Payment is due immediately unless you have a payment arrangement with us. If you have recently had a water meter fitted, your first bill will normally arrive within six months of this date.

Meter testing

If you think your meter is not recording accurately you can ask for it to be tested. If the results confirm the meter is reading accurately, you will be liable for the cost of the test which will be no more than £70+VAT (total £84).

Metered standing charges

Your meter connection size determines your standing charges. Meter connection sizes vary. The metered water supply standing charge covers some of the cost of reading the meter, its repair or replacement and billing costs.

The metered sewerage standing charge includes billing costs and the costs associated with the collection and treatment of surface water and highway drainage.

The standing charges are annual fixed charges and each metered bill includes a proportion of the standing charge based on the number of days since the last meter reading.

How can we help?

If you have a water meter and you need to use a large amount of water for reasons you cannot control, WaterSure Plus may be able to help. WaterSure Plus puts a limit on the amount you have to pay.

To qualify for WaterSure Plus, you must receive one of the means-tested benefits or tax credits, such as income support, income-related employment

and support allowance, working tax credit, housing benefit or universal credit.

In addition, you must either:

- receive child benefit for three or more children under 19 living in your household, or
- have someone in the household with a medical condition that causes them to use significantly more water.

See our website for more information: wessexwater.co.uk/watersureplus or call 0345 600 3 600.

Discount for low income pensioners

You might be able to get to around £60 off your water bill if state pension is your only form of income or you receive Pension Credit. It's easy to apply, speak to our friendly team on 0345 600 3 600 or visit wessexwater.co.uk/pension



In your local area people are saving water... and you could do the same.

We have three top tips to help get you started saving water and energy. This will also benefit your local environment.



1 Shorter showers

Around 25% of your daily water use is from showering. Try taking a minute off your shower time.



2 Wash on full loads

Washing machines use around 45 litres a cycle - try to only use when you have a full load.



3 Check for leaks

A toilet leak can be invisible but use up to 400 litres of water a day

FREE for you

Visit wessexwater.co.uk/getwaterfit to see how you can save more water, order FREE water saving devices and raise money for charity.



Unmetered customers

Unmetered charges – charging on the basis of your rateable value

If you pay for your water on an unmetered basis, the rateable value of your property is used to calculate your bill. Rateable value was used up to 1990 as the basis of the general rate bill paid to your local council. Values were assessed and changed by the Valuation Office of the Inland Revenue and were based loosely on the rental value of a property.

A number of factors were taken into account when assessing the rental value, including the size of the property, general condition and availability of local services. We don't know exactly how individual values were calculated because it was never our responsibility.

In 1990 the government introduced the community charge (poll tax) and the Valuation Office stopped assessing or changing rateable values. The community charge was replaced by the council tax and the Valuation Office started assessing council tax bands.

Unlike rateable values, these bands are based on the actual value of a property rather than the rental value. The two assessments can't be compared and a change to the council tax banding does not change a rateable value.

By law water companies have the right to continue using rateable values as the basis of charge. The Valuation Office no longer deals with rateable values and there is no mechanism in place to change them.

It is important to remember that if your water bill is based on the rateable value of your property, it means it is not directly related to your use of water and/or sewerage services. So if you feel your unmetered charge is higher than your water use you can normally have a water meter fitted free of charge.

The single occupier discounts associated with the council tax don't apply to water or sewerage charges, but if you are a low water user a water meter could help you reduce the amount of water you use and lower your bill.

You may find that your neighbour lives in a similar house but the rateable value for each property is different, which means your water and/or sewerage bills will be different too.

Unmetered standing charges

The unmetered standing charges are the same for both water supply and sewerage. This year we have once again held our unmetered standing charge at £7. Part of this covers the cost of billing as well as an element that reflects some of the fixed costs of providing you with water and/or sewerage services.

Each water company decides what proportion of fixed costs to include in its standing charges so standing charges can vary considerably between different companies.

Your bill

Unmetered customers normally receive one bill each year and the charges are payable in advance because we know the full year's charge right from the start. Council tax works the same way.

Most of our customers spread the cost of their bill with an instalment

arrangement. For customers who prefer standard options, payment can be made in full by 1 April or in two half-yearly amounts due on 1 April and 1 October. If you do not pay the first half in April, the total bill has to be paid immediately.

**Switch
to a meter
and save**

See
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Most households now have a water meter and only pay for what they use.

Customers who have swapped to a meter found they had been paying £100 more than they needed to on average.

Try out a meter for free, and with our Money Back Guarantee you won't pay more.



What we do for you

Wessex Water provides your water and sewerage services.

Every day we supply you with water and take away your sewage and waste water, treating it to a high standard so it can be returned to the environment. But that's not all we do...

Your tap water is clean, safe and ready to drink

Your water is treated to the highest standard before being pumped to your home. We take daily water samples and test it to make sure it is safe for everyone to use.

You have a reliable supply of water

Every day we're renewing pipes and fixing leaks to save water. In your area we take care of 7,200 miles of water mains and use modern techniques to identify and fix leaks.

Always here to help

Sometimes you need to get in touch. But don't worry, if there's a problem we're on hand 24 hours a day to deal with emergencies and to help.



Saving water helps the environment

We carefully manage our water sources so you have enough water when you need it and at the same time we ensure we don't take any more than we need to from the environment.

Protecting your rivers, lakes and the sea

By maintaining an underground network of pipes and treating sewage to a high standard we keep local watercourses healthy and free from pollution.

Looking after your home

We look after sewers and manage waste water to minimise risk of flooding. We're investing in upsizing sewers or building large underground tanks to cope with our growing population.

Making the most of your waste

During the sewage treatment process we generate renewable energy, which is used to power homes and businesses.

Find out more about what we do at: wessexwater.co.uk

Your comments

If you have any comments or complaints about the services we provide, our core customer information for enquiries and complaints shows how you can get in touch.

If you are unhappy with the response you receive, you can then contact CCW - the voice for water consumers, the independent customer watchdog or, in some cases, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat). For more information visit: wessexwater.co.uk/policy (www.ccwater.org.uk and www.ofwat.gov.uk) or call 0345 600 3 600 for a leaflet.

Our promises

Wessex Water offers customers the best overall guarantees in the industry which apply to our sewerage services, such as sewer flooding, and to customer services. For a full list of our promises visit wessexwater.co.uk/promises or call 0345 600 3 600.

Get involved

It's not just water and sewerage services that we invest in. Every day we're working in your local community visiting schools to help educate children about the importance of the water cycle, supporting environmental projects and working with partners, such as debt advice agencies, to help those customers who need that extra care.

Find out more at wessexwater.co.uk/community



**IN
YOUR AREA
WESEX WATER
COMMUNITY**

Get involved with your community

**Explore
days out**

**Support
for your project**

**Find out
latest news**

Sign up to our community e-newsletter at wessexwater.co.uk/sign-up



Common questions

Why are Wessex Water bills higher than some other water companies?

The cost of water and sewerage services varies around the country because each water and sewerage company works in a different geographical area and to different standards of service and efficiency. These factors are taken into consideration when Ofwat agrees the overall level of charges that companies can apply.

Our charges are higher than some other water companies because we serve a

largely rural population and the cost of getting water to rural areas is high. We also have some of the highest quality and service standards in the industry.

Why are unmetered charges billed in advance?

Originally charges were collected by local authorities who provided sewerage and/or water services. They charged in advance in the same way that the council tax is now billed. While we continue to bill in advance, customers can choose to take advantage of different payment options to spread the cost of the bill over the year.

Can I have a water meter?

Most households now have a meter and only pay for what they use.

If you live on your own, have a small family, live in a house with a high rateable value, or you are a low water user, having a water meter could help you lower your bill. We can normally fit a meter for free. We'll let you try it out and if you decide within two years it isn't for you, we'll let you go back to paying on an unmetered basis*.

Apply online at [wessexwater.co.uk/meter](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/meter) or call us on 0345 600 3 600. Bournemouth Water supply customers should call 01202 590 059.

*You can go back to unmeasured charges if you ask within 30 days of getting the second bill in year two and we'll refund or credit the difference.

**You can go back at any time during the first two years, but you won't be eligible for the Guarantee.



We offer a money back guarantee to all customers who swap to a meter. We're confident you will save money, but if you don't after two years with a meter, you can return to unmetered charges and we'll credit your account with any overpayments.**

Why do I have to pay standing charges?

Standing charges for metered customers contribute towards the cost of reading the meter, its repair or replacement and billing costs. Some of these costs are recovered through the water supply standing charge and the rest through the sewerage standing charge.

We recover the costs of dealing with surface water and highway drainage with a fixed charge because these costs bear no relation to the volume of water used. The unmetered standing charges are the same for water supply and sewerage and part covers the cost of billing and the fixed costs of providing you with water and/or sewerage services.

What if I receive water or sewerage services from another water company?

If you are on the boundary of the Wessex Water area and receive your water supply from us and sewerage services from another water company, you will receive two separate bills. If you have a water meter, we will forward details of your water use to the relevant company so your sewerage charges can be billed in relation to the volume of water on the meter.

If you receive your water supply from Bournemouth Water or Cholderton and District Water and we provide your sewerage services you will receive two separate bills. If you have a water meter, we will base your sewerage charges on the information provided by your water supply company.

I am moving home. What should I do?

If you are moving, please read your meter (if you have one) on the day you move and call us on 0345 600 3 600 or complete our online form at [wessexwater.co.uk/moving](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/moving) so that we can amend your bill.

If you have difficulty reading your meter, please give us five working days' notice and we will take your final meter reading.

We now aim to install water meters on properties which are currently unmetered when there is an occupier change following a property sale or a new tenancy.

Do I have to pay charges if I am renovating my property?

Yes. If you are using water full charges are payable. If you have an unmetered supply you can choose to have a meter and be billed for what you use.



Help to pay your bill

If you're struggling to pay, we can help.

Talk to us today and we may be able to:

- spread the cost of your bills
- pay us directly from your benefits
- lower your water bill
- repay debt and get back on track.

Visit: [wessexwater.co.uk/helptopay](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/helptopay) or call 0345 600 3 600.



Reduction of your sewerage bill

If you can prove that the majority of the rainwater from your property doesn't drain to a public sewer you could be entitled to a reduction in your sewerage bill. To claim, you must prove that:

- the majority of rainfall from your roof or shared roof drains into a soakaway at the front and rear of your property
- the majority of rainfall from your garden, drive, patio or yard runs off into the ground.

Your claim will be unsuccessful if:

- you use a water butt but have no soakaways
- rainwater from your roof runs indirectly to a sewer, eg, across a pavement, driveway or hard-paved areas.

A soakaway is where water from your roof, etc, is piped to a form of underground concrete or plastic chamber, tank or simple pit filled with stone or gravel, within or outside the boundary of the property, or shared with adjacent properties and normally at least three to four metres (10 to 15 feet) away from the house foundations.

Most properties are connected to a public sewer and are not entitled to the allowance.



It's free to make a claim

Visit [wessexwater.co.uk/surfacewaterdrainage](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/surfacewaterdrainage) or call 0345 600 3 600 to request a leaflet.



Have your say

Sign up today and you will be entered into a draw to win £200 every time you complete a new survey.

Visit [wessexwater.co.uk/haveyoursay](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/haveyoursay)



Contact us

Questions about your bill

- Payment arrangements • Metering • Moving house • Problems paying
- High water use • Priority Services

0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm; Saturday, 8am to 2pm)

Submit an online enquiry via our website: [wessexwater.co.uk/contactus](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/contactus)

Write to: Wessex Water, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA
[wessexwater.co.uk](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk)

Automated billing telephone services

0345 600 6 600 when connected PRESS:

- 1 Meter option leaflet
- 2 Surface water drainage leaflet
- 3 Charges explained leaflet
- 4 Submit meter reading after an estimated bill
- 5 Information on rateable value charging

Questions about your water supply or sewerage

- Loss of supply • Leak • Water quality problem • Sewage flooding
- Blocked sewer

0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, emergencies only at other times)

Submit an online enquiry via our website: [wessexwater.co.uk/contactus](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/contactus)

Bournemouth Water customers with enquiries about their water supply, billing or metering should call 01202 590 059.

This leaflet forms part of our core customer information, covering key aspects of our work including leakage, enquiries and complaints. All these leaflets can be found at [wessexwater.co.uk/policy](https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/policy) or contact us.

We welcome calls via the Relay UK Service.

Calls to 0345 numbers from UK landlines cost no more than calls to standard UK landline numbers. If you're calling from a mobile please check with your service provider as sometimes calls can cost more. We may record telephone calls into our contact centres for quality, security and training purposes.



Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

FOR YOU. FOR LIFE.