Now you have a meter
2018-19

Wessex Water
YTL GROUP

wessexwater.co.uk
Know your water meter

You’re now on a water meter

We fitted your water meter today, so here’s some useful information that covers all you need to know about your meter, how you will be charged in the future and how to save water.

Your water meter

We normally fit water meters outside your home close to the boundary – often in the front garden or pavement. It’s usually inside an underground chamber, connected to your water supply pipe at the bottom of the chamber and covered with a lid marked ‘water’.

Sometimes we put meters inside properties – under the sink or near the stop tap. If you live in a flat or apartment your water meter and our stop tap might be in a cabinet inside the building or in an underground chamber outside. Your meter should be marked with your flat number.

Reading your meter

We recommend that you read your meter regularly so you can keep an eye on your water use and check for leaks, which could affect the size of your bill. Please only read your meter if it is safe and practicable to do so.

If you’re checking your meter during the winter or when it’s wet, don’t worry if there is water in the chamber as this just shows the level of groundwater. However, if you can see water moving or flowing into the chamber, or if water is there when the weather is dry, there may be a leak.

Our picture below shows what your meter looks like. Here are some tips to help you read your meter correctly:

- Only read the black figures. These register whole cubic metres which is what we use to bill you.
- We ignore the red figures which record parts of a cubic metre (m³). If you need to check for leaks or want to see how much water different household appliances use, then you’ll need to read the red figures.
- There’s a ‘spinner’ in the centre of the meter face which spins rapidly when water is being used. So if the spinner is moving and you know you’re not using any water or appliances, it may indicate you have a leak. See page 11 for more information.

Taking a meter reading

Step 1

Once you’ve found your meter chamber, lift the outer lid using a flat-headed screwdriver (internal meters don’t have a lid).

Step 2

If there’s a polystyrene cover remove this and pull up the inner meter lid, if there is one, to see the meter face. Replace this cover when you’ve finished because it helps protect against frost damage.

Step 3

Make sure you’ve found the correct meter by checking that the serial number matches the one shown on your bill. You can now read your meter.

Help reading your meter

For customers with additional needs and the elderly we can offer an extra two free meter readings a year as part of our Priority Services scheme. See our website for more information: wessexwater.co.uk/priorityservices or call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

The meter is owned by Wessex Water and interfering with it is an offence and will result in a fine. So you shouldn’t remove it, even if you have work done on your home. 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).
Your bill

Now you have a meter you'll be charged based on the volume of water you use and we'll send you two bills a year.

Your unmetered bill
We stop charging you based on the rateable value (unmetered charges) from the day your meter is fitted. We will usually update your charges within two weeks. Any money we owe you will be refunded or the credit used towards your metered charges, whichever is appropriate. If you owe us we will send you a separate, final unmetered bill or reset your payment arrangement. We will write to you once we have updated the charges.

Your existing payment arrangement
Your current payment arrangement, such as a Direct Debit or instalment book, will be transferred to your new metered account. The payments will be adjusted to reflect your estimated metered bill and we will write to you to tell you what this will be. There's more information about paying your bill on page 7.

Working out your new payments
Metered budget payments are worked out on a 'pay as you go' basis and you should aim to build up enough credit to pay the bills as they are issued. We will use the number of occupants and the type of water user information you gave on your meter application to work out an estimate of your annual charge and divide it by 12 to give the monthly payment amount. If more than one month elapses between the installation of your meter and the update of your account, we will either increase the monthly payment or, if you have credit on your unmetered account, retain enough to cover the months missed.

When will you read my meter?
Your meter will be read at the same time as others in your area. The first reading will normally be within six months followed by further readings at six-monthly intervals, providing we can gain access to it.

If we do have to estimate your bill you can provide your own meter reading by calling 0345 600 6 600 (24 hour automated service) or via our website wessexwater.co.uk

We guarantee we'll read your meter at least once a year as long as you let us have access to it. If we don't, you can claim a no quibble payment under our Promise, see page 15.

Your metered charges
If you receive both water and sewerage services from us, ie, your property is connected to the public sewer, your bill is made up of four charges. These are:
• a charge for each m³ of water you use
• a charge for each m³ of waste that leaves your home
• a standing charge for your water service
• a standing charge for your sewerage service.

The metered charges below are for services provided by Wessex Water.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2018-19 charges</th>
<th>2018-19 charges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water supply charge</td>
<td>£2.2094 per m³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water standing charge</td>
<td>£24 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewerage volume charge (assessed as 95% of water use)</td>
<td>£1.8638 per m³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewerage standing charge</td>
<td>£56 per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standing charges
The standing charge is an annual fixed charge based on the size of the meter and paid by all customers. Your bill will include part of the standing charge based on the number of days since your last meter reading.

Sewerage bills include a charge for taking away surface water from roofs, drives and patios, and for highway drainage. This charge is included in the sewerage rate for unmetered properties.

For metered customers it is included in the standing charge, not in the rate per cubic metre, and that's why the metered sewerage standing charge is bigger than the unmetered standing charge.
**Sewerage charges**

If you are connected for sewerage services your sewerage charge is worked out in the same way but based on only 95% of the water used.

This 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). And it takes into account wet and dry years.

For the national average annual household water use of 130 cubic metres a year, the 5% allowance amounts to about 6,500 litres or 1,430 gallons.

If considerably less than 95% of the water you use is returned to the sewer, let us know and we’ll find out if you qualify for a reduction (see page 8).

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**Paying your bill by Direct Debit**

Water services charges for customers with water meters are billed in arrears. When a bill is produced for the previous six-month period it is payable on receipt.

To make it easier for customers to pay their bills, we offer a budget scheme enabling you to make regular monthly payments towards the cost of your bill.

Unless you have moved from a property with a water meter, we will not yet know how much water you normally use. Therefore we cannot calculate the exact amount you should be paying each month.

When you apply for Direct Debit we will estimate your payments based on the number of people you tell us live in the property as well as your estimated type of usage.

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Paying your bill by Direct Debit allows you to spread the cost of your water and sewerage services monthly at no extra charge. For more information visit [wessexwater.co.uk/directdebit](http://wessexwater.co.uk/directdebit) or call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

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**Paying your bill**

To make it easier to pay your bill, we offer the following options free of charge:

- **Direct Debit** - the easiest way to pay your bill. Metered customers can pay monthly on a budget plan or on receipt of the bill. There is no charge or discount. To set up a Direct Debit visit wessexwater.co.uk/directdebit or call us on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)

- **at your bank** - take your bill or instalment book with cash or a cheque. Normally no fee is payable at your own bank

- **telephone/internet/mobile banking** - payment should be made to Bristol Wessex Billing Services Limited quoting sort code 40-02-50 and account number 612 29737 *

- **online** - make a payment with your debit/credit card and sign up to eBilling to manage your bill *. Visit wessexwater.co.uk

- **PayPoint** - take your bill and payment in cash to a local PayPoint outlet – see [www.paypoint.com](http://www.paypoint.com)

- **at a post office** - fill in the payment slip and take it with your bill and payment in cash

- **credit or debit card** - pay by credit card or debit card by calling our automated 24-hour line on 0345 600 1 019 *. Make sure you have your credit or debit card and your bill to hand

- **by post** - write your customer reference number on the back of your cheque and post it with the payment slip to BWBSL, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA. Cheques should be made payable to BWBSL. Do not send cash or post dated cheques

* Please quote the 13 digit payment reference number that begins 20 shown in the box on the payment slip (see your bill).

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If you would like further information about any of the above payment options please call us on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).
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 an underground concrete or plastic chamber, tank or simple pit filled with stone or gravel, within or outside the boundary of your 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 not entitled to a reduction.

It’s free to make a claim. To request a leaflet and application form call 0345 600 6 600 (24 hour automated service) or visit wessexwater.co.uk/surfacewaterdrainage

WaterSure Plus

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 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

Moving house

If you are moving, please read your meter on the day you move and call us on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or complete our online form at 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 for you.

Pension Credit discount

If you receive Pension Credit or state pension is your only income, we may be able to offer you a discount of around 20% off your bill. For an application form visit wessexwater.co.uk/pensioncredit or call 0345 600 6 600 (24 hour automated service).

Going back to unmetered charges

Customers who opt for a meter can revert back at any time during the first two years with the cut-off date being 30 days following the bill at the end of your second year.

With our Money Back Guarantee if you don’t save money after the two years you can revert back as if you’d never been on a meter and we will credit any overpayments.* To qualify for the Money Back Guarantee you must have kept your meter for the full two years.

There’s more information on our website at wessexwater.co.uk/meter

* First, the overpayment will be credited towards your new unmetered bill. Following this, if your account is still in credit, we will refund any overpayment. The Money Back Guarantee was launched on December 27, 2017. It does not apply if you’ve had a meter fitted through our change of occupancy scheme.
**Think you have a leak?**

**Pipework responsibility**
You’re responsible for the maintenance of the plumbing inside your home, eg, taps and overflows.

The cost of repairs to internal pipework is your responsibility so it’s worth checking your insurance policy to check that you’re covered.

By law you’re also responsible for the service pipe from your house to the street boundary. However, sometimes we can help – see page 12 for details of our free leak repair service.

**What pipework are you responsible for?**

It is important to know which pipes you are responsible for and which we look after.

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**Leak check**

Before you check for a leak rule out any other reasons why your water use might have increased such as those listed on page 13.

Then make sure you are not using any water by checking:
- dripping taps
- leaking overflows
- appliances using water.

Check your water meter to see if it is turning – if it isn’t you don’t have a leak on the supply and your bill is correct. See page 14 for ideas on how you can reduce your water use.

If the meter is turning you may have a leak on your internal pipework or your private service pipe.

To find out, carry out a leak check and start by locating your internal stop tap and turning it off as tightly as possible.

Next run the cold kitchen tap until the water stops to ensure you have isolated the supply to your property.

Look at your meter again. If it’s stopped turning, you may have an internal leak and will need to arrange for a plumber to locate and repair it. If the meter is still turning when the internal stop tap is tightly off, then you probably have a leak on your external service pipe and you should contact us – see page 12 for information on our leak repair service.

If you need more information or can’t carry out this leak test please call us on 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 6pm).

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**Turning off your supply**

You need to find your internal stop tap to turn off your supply and it’s usually under the kitchen sink or in an adjoining garage.

It’s important your stop tap works if it doesn’t call a plumber.

It needs to be working to shut off your mains water in an emergency or if we need to check your supply.

If you want to turn off the supply outside, you’ll find the stop tap next to your meter in the chamber.
Think you have a leak?

Don’t worry if you have a leak, we can help you with our free leak repair service and our leak allowance.

Free leak repair service
We can help reduce leaks on your service pipe or shared external pipework.

Providing it’s accessible and doesn’t pass under anything, we’ll detect and repair or replace, free of charge (during normal working hours), a leaking service pipe to a domestic property up to the point where it enters – normally up to the outside wall of the house.

Contact us to report the leak and discuss the effects on your bill. Make sure you’ve carried out the leak check (see page 11) before calling us.

Leak allowances
If your bill is higher than normal because of a leak on your service pipe, we normally offer household customers a full allowance which will reduce your water and sewerage charges to your normal level.

For a copy of our leakage code of practice, see our website: wessexwater.co.uk or call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

Understanding your water use

Your metered bill is based on the amount of water you use and there are lots of reasons why you may be using more than you expected. It could be:

• high use of water-using appliances eg, power showers. Normal showers use around 45 litres but power showers can use up to 80 litres per five-minute shower. Use a water efficient showerhead or flow restricting device so your shower uses around eight litres of water a minute
• watering gardens – a hose or sprinkler can use a significant amount of water. Collect rainwater in a water butt to use in your garden instead
• problems with internal plumbing, appliances and overflows, eg, leaking toilets can waste up to 200 litres a day and most new toilet cisterns have an internal overflow down the back of the pan so water loss is not always obvious
• a change in circumstances, eg, visitors staying or having a baby
• other household members using more water than you expect
• topping up ponds or swimming pools
• a faulty or incorrectly set water softener – if faulty they can run to waste almost continuously without being noticed
• a previous estimated bill (if we didn’t have an actual meter reading to base your previous bill on).

Leakstoppers
If you spot a leak in the Wessex Water supply area please call us on our free Leakstoppers line - 0800 692 0 692 (24 hours).
Save every drop

Making small changes to how you use water in your home can help reduce your water use, save you money and help your local environment. Try using these three easy tips to help you save water where you use it most - the bathroom.

**Brushing teeth**
Do you leave the tap running when brushing your teeth, washing or shaving? Turning it off could save you up to 18 litres a day.

**Having a shower**
How long do you spend in the shower? Try taking the 4-minute shower challenge. Every minute less you spend in the shower could save you 10 litres.

**Using the toilet**
Could you flush the toilet once a day less than you currently do? Each flush uses an average of 7 litres of water.

Following these simple tips could save you up to 13,000 litres of water a year. You could make even further savings by fixing leaking taps, showers and toilets, which can waste over 200 litres of water a day!

For more advice and to order FREE water saving devices for your home, visit our website [wessexwater.co.uk/savingwater](http://wessexwater.co.uk/savingwater)

Other information

**Our Promise**

Our Promise sets out the standards we aim to meet. It offers our customers one of the best overall guarantees in the industry and, should we fail to meet these high standards, compensation payments that are among the highest in the water industry.

For more information, visit [wessexwater.co.uk/promises](http://wessexwater.co.uk/promises) or call 0345 600 3 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

**Priority Services**

If you have particular requirements due to your age, ill health, a disability, mental illness, or additional needs register for our Priority Services register so that we can help.

We can offer:

- extra assistance in the event of water supply interruptions
- bills and leaflets in braille, large print or a language other than English
- a security password system to protect against bogus callers.

Apply online today - visit: [wessexwater.co.uk/priorityservices](http://wessexwater.co.uk/priorityservices) or call 0345 600 3 600.

Energy providers offer a similar service - you can sign up by contacting them.
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 6pm)

Email: customer.services@wessexwater.co.uk
(please quote your customer number and telephone number)

Write to: Wessex Water, 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA
wessexwater.co.uk

The following billing numbers are automated, unmanned and available 24 hours a day.

Pay over the phone by credit/debit card
0345 600 1 019 (have your credit/debit card and your bill to hand. Payment should be made using the 13 digit payment reference on your bill)

Other billing telephone services
• Surface water drainage leaflet • Charges explained leaflet
0345 600 6 600

• Helping you to understand your water use leaflet
0345 850 0 043

Questions about your sewerage service
• Sewage flooding • Blocked sewer
0345 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm, emergencies only at other times)

Email: operational.enquiries@wessexwater.co.uk
wessexwater.co.uk

We welcome calls via the Text Relay service.

Calls to 0345 numbers usually cost the same as standard UK landline numbers. Please check with your telephone service provider. To protect our customers and staff telephone calls may be recorded.