

Important
changes to the
ownership of
your drains
and sewers



Albion Water

Your guide to the changes

New Government legislation means that from 1 October 2011 Albion Water takes over responsibility for some sewers and lateral drains that currently belong to home owners.

What are private sewers and lateral drains?

Private sewers and lateral drains are the sections of sewer pipe or drain that are shared with another person's property, or run through another person's land.

Will this move benefit property owners?

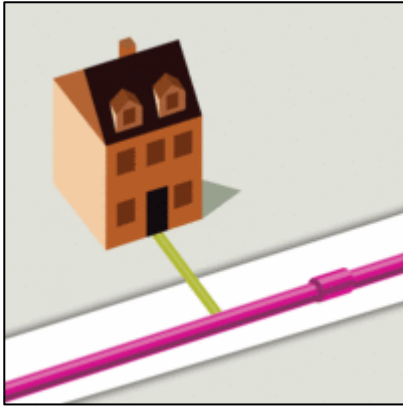
Yes. As well as causing unexpected bills for property owners, problems with private sewers can also cause disputes between neighbours over who is responsible. Property owners will have the peace of mind that future problems with these pipes will be dealt with by their sewerage company.

How much will it cost?

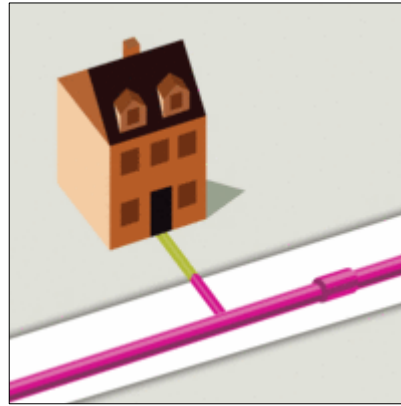
The Government has estimated that the transfer could increase customers' bills by between £3 and £14 per year. As little is known about the condition of existing private sewers and drains it makes it very hard to calculate an exact cost. We are working with the industry regulator Ofwat to ensure the impact on bills is minimised. The small increase in your bill will protect you from larger one-off costs of clearing blockages and making repairs.

How will the changes affect you?

Detached



Current



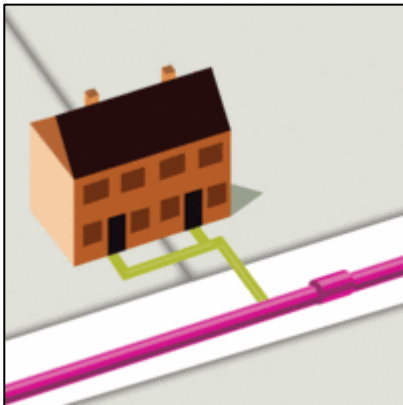
After 1 October

— Public sewer/drain— responsibility of sewerage company

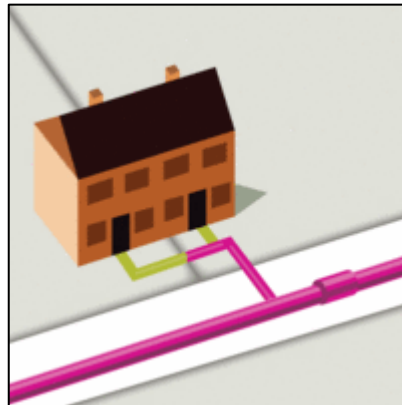
— Privately owned— responsibility of property owner

— Property boundary

Semi-detached



Current



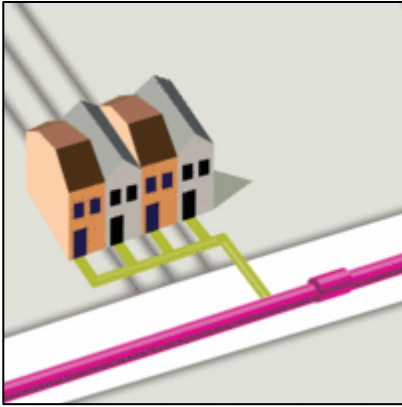
After 1 October

— Public sewer/drain— responsibility of sewerage company

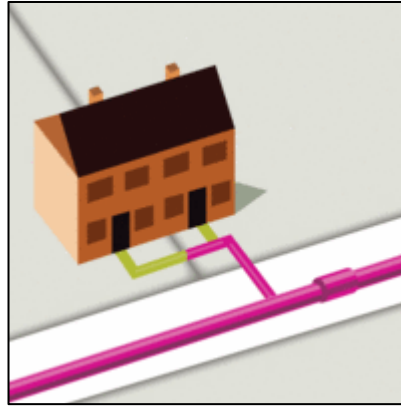
— Privately owned— responsibility of property owner

— Property boundary




Terraced



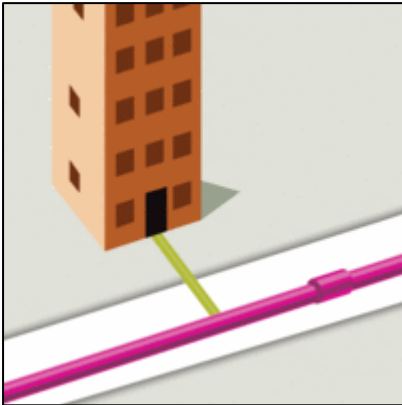
Current



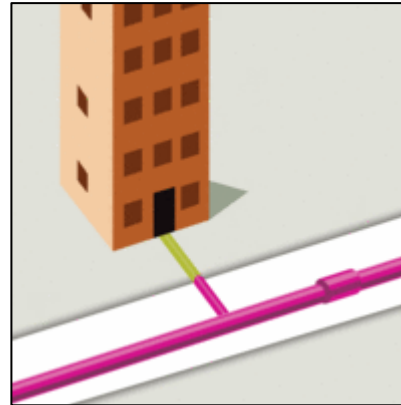
After 1 October

-  Public sewer/drain– responsibility of sewerage company
-  Privately owned– responsibility of property owner
-  Property boundary




Flat or multiple dwelling



Current



After 1 October

-  Public sewer/drain– responsibility of sewerage company
-  Privately owned– responsibility of property owner
-  Property boundary

Are there any pipes that will not transfer?

Drains serving one property inside the property boundary will remain the responsibility of the property owner. Privately-owned septic tanks, treatment works and cesspits and their connecting pipework, large multi occupier commercial sites, and rain water drains and sewers that carry water directly to a watercourse or to soakaways will not transfer.

Can you appeal against the transfer?

Yes, however the circumstances in which you can appeal are very narrow. Appeals must be submitted to the industry regulator, Ofwat, within two months of receipt of this leaflet and the accompanying letter.

Appeals can be made by email to :

appealpstransfer@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk or by post to :

OFWAT, Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA.

Will I be able to build over a sewer once it has been transferred?

Yes, but only with our permission. You currently need approval to build over a sewer owned by a sewerage company and this will be the same for private sewers that transfer. It is important that permission is formally given so that the structure of both the building and the sewer are properly protected.

What to do if you have a problem with your sewers

It's important that you try to identify where the problem is as it may be your responsibility. You will still be responsible for any internal plumbing and the section of pipe leading to the public sewer.

If you have a shared sewer, try asking your neighbours if they have a drainage problem. If they don't, it's likely that the problem is on your section of pipe or waste plumbing, meaning you will need to resolve it yourself. This will help avoid any unnecessary call-outs, which we may charge for.

If your neighbours do have a problem, it may be on a shared section of pipe. You are still responsible for any maintenance until 1 October. After that you can contact us.

Emergency Helpline: 0800 917 5819 (24 Hour)

For more information please visit our website at

www.albionwater.co.uk

Additional information regarding the transfer of private sewers can also be found by visiting :

www.ofwat.gov.uk

www.ccwater.org.uk

www.defra.gov.uk

This leaflet and accompanying letter can be sent to you in braille, large print or audio format upon request.