

This Code is for our domestic customers, it sets out your statutory rights relating to the services that we supply to you. It explains the standards of service which we aim to achieve and who to contact for advice or to report a problem.

Differences in our service standards between domestic and commercial customers are highlighted.

Code of Practice

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Introduction

1. Albion Water Limited (“Albion”, “we”, “our” or “us”) aims to provide you with a high quality service and has produced this Code of Practice to explain our approach giving you, our customers, an overview of how and when we will interact with you and offer guidance to you on how to seek our advice and assistance .
2. This Code is for domestic customers (“you” or “your”), including those living in mixed use buildings, and sets out your statutory rights regarding the services we supply to you. It explains the standards of service which we aim to achieve and who to contact if you have any problems. Where there is any difference in service standards between domestic and commercial customers these are clearly highlighted. Each service we offer is separately described in the following pages including details of the service standards applicable, so that you can identify the performance you can expect from us for the service(s) you receive.
3. This Code also contains appendices explaining the measures in place for dealing with debt, and our procedures for dealing with complaints, including who you can contact if you remain dissatisfied after we have attempted to resolve your complaint.
4. This Code has been issued in consultation with the Consumer Council for Water and the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat). This Code or any subsection thereof is kept under review to accommodate, where possible, comments from customers and other interested parties.
5. Nothing in this Code affects your rights under law and it does not form a contract between you and us.
6. If you need to contact us in an emergency, please use the following freephone number:

0800 917 5819

Our main contact number and the customer service helpline is:

03300 242020

If you need to send us a Fax, our number is:

01582 767720

If you would like to contact us by e-mail please use:

customerservices@albionwater.co.uk

However you choose to contact us, one of our customer service team will respond promptly and effectively to your concerns.

David Knaggs

Director, Albion Water Limited

Section 1 Albion Water - Your Water Services Company

1.1 Ownership

Albion Water provides water and/or waste water services to various sites within England and Wales. We are supported under a joint venture arrangement between Wessex Water and Waterlevel Limited.

1.2 Services Provided

Our water services provision to you could include one or more of the following:

- Potable Water - water that is safe to drink and is regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate.
- Recycled Water - water which is collected, treated and returned to properties for non-potable uses (it is not suitable for drinking). This is also referred to as 'Green Water' or 'Non-Potable Water'.
- Sewerage Services - which is the collection, treatment and safe disposal of waste water and rain water.

1.3 Operations

We provide water, wastewater and water recycling services to various residential and mixed use sites. Our aim is to provide innovative and resilient solutions to new developments and to help address growing sustainability and environmental challenges facing the water industry and society.

1.4 Relevance

This code is intended for all of our domestic customers where we are the appointed service(s) provider. If you are in receipt of a water or sewerage bill or a new customer pack from us, then your home or, in the case of landlords, your property falls within Albion's appointed area of operations.

1.5 Tailored Services

This Code details all of our water and sewage services however, depending on the location of your property, you may not receive all of the services detailed in section 1.2 above.

You can confirm the services that we deliver to your property by either viewing your welcome letter or your last bill or by calling our customer helpline. A service code, consisting of three letters, is located alongside your unique reference code which can be found in the top left hand corner of your bill. An example of the code and its interpretation can be seen below.

EXAMPLE: Unique customer reference code: *KALB00101 WON*

Customer Reference Number: KALB00101 WON

Invoice No: 102-1111

Invoice Date: 01/04/2013



Harpenden Hall,
Southdown Road
Harpenden, Herts
AL5 1TE
T +44 (0)845 604 2355
F +44 (0)1582 767720
www.albionwater.co.uk

Invoice to:

Mr Smith
1 Albion Road
Knowle
Fareham
Hampshire
PO1 1AA

For water supply to:

1 Albion Road
Knowle
Fareham
Hampshire
PO1 1AA

Description: METERED CHARGES 01/10/12-31/03/13

Account Type: Metered Water Domestic

Your volumetric charges are based on readings taken on the 01/10/12 and the 31/03/13, as detailed below:

Meter Readings	Opening	Current	Supply Volume	Chargeable Volume	£1.90 per m ³
Meter number: 00000000	000001 01/10/12	000050 31/03/13	50m ³	46m ³	£87.40

Using the key below, the customer in the above example receives a supply of water from us but there is no recycled water and the sewage is treated by a different company.

CODE	SERVICE
WON	Water only
SON	Sewage only
WAS	Water and Sewage
WRS	Water, Recycled Water and Sewage
SAR	Sewage and Recycled Water

1.6 Water Services from a Regional Undertaker

Customers with the reference WON, SON and SAR will receive a water or sewerage service from a regional provider who remains your primary contact point for the service that they provide (their contact details can be found in your Charges Scheme or Welcome Pack or, alternatively, on their bill).

Section 2 The Regulatory Framework

2.1 Background

We were appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to supply water and sewerage services to specified geographical areas, one of which covers your property (detailed maps can be found in our Charges Scheme). Along with all other statutory undertakers we have to comply with the terms of a Licence. This sets out the rules that we must follow in providing our services, along with how we must behave towards you and the various regulators who monitor compliance with our legal obligations - obligations we are committed to meeting. The roles of the regulators are summarised below, and their contact details are included in section 12.

2.2 The Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)

Ofwat has been set up by the Secretary of State for the Environment, and for Wales. One of its main duties is to protect the interests of customers of all water and sewerage companies (known as undertakers) in accordance with legislative provisions and the Licences issued to them. It does this by:

- Imposing strict principles that guide our charging scheme.
- Ensuring that our customers are no worse off than those in the neighbouring area.
- Monitoring our capital investment to improve our services.
- Establishing the levels of services which we must provide.
- Laying down requirements about the information that we must give to our customers.

This Code of Practice is issued to comply with Licence Condition G, and is approved and regularly reviewed by Ofwat.

2.3 The Consumer Council for Water (CCWATER)

CCWater is an independent body, established in 2005, to represent consumer interests. It has 5 committees, four in England and one in Wales, the Chairmen of which represent the regions on the CCWater Board. The consumer relation team covering your area is based in Birmingham and their staff will deal with your enquiries (see section 12 for their contact details).

CCWater has a legal duty to keep under review matters affecting the interests of customers or potential customers of their allocated companies and to investigate complaints. You may refer a complaint to CCWater at any time, but usually it will not begin its own investigations until we have had the opportunity to resolve it.

2.4 The Water Redress Scheme (WATRS)

WATRS is a voluntary alternative dispute resolution scheme to help address the very small number of customer complaints that remain unresolved. WATRS, is designed to provide an independent, impartial and easy to use alternative to going to Court or a Tribunal.

2.5 The Environment Agency (EA)

The Environment Agency regulates the amount of water that undertakers can take from groundwater, rivers and other inland waters and sets standards for the condition of the waste water returned to rivers or the sea after treatment.

2.6. The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

The Drinking Water Inspectorate checks that the drinking water we supply is safe and meets statutory water quality standards. To achieve this it monitors our drinking water quality testing procedures, our approach to water source risk management and investigates our ability to manage operational incidents.

2.7. Your Local Authority

Your local authority's Environmental Health Officer monitors public health in the community along with the district health authority. We will keep these organisations informed about water quality issues arising.

2.8. Our Promise

Albion was set up in the mid-1990s to be at the forefront of competitive challenge to the existing water companies in England and Wales. As the first newly licensed water company since the privatisation of the water industry in 1989, it is committed to the delivery of high quality services to customers, using techniques and processes which minimise the impact of our activities on the environment. We aim to do more than simply meet the legal standards set by Government for the industry, by consistently out-performing the existing water companies. Our board and that of its parent company have access to a wide range of industry expertise in order to advise it on all aspects of its business and customer services.

Section 3 Our Water Supply Service

3.1 Potable Water Supply

This section is only applicable to customers receiving a water supply from us. You can confirm the service(s) that we deliver to your property by either viewing your welcome letter or your latest bill. Section 1.5, above, explains where your Service Code can be located and how to use it to identify the services that we provide. Sections 3.2 to 3.9 deal with drinking water quality, whilst sections 3.10 to 3.18 deal with recycled water used in the home. You can determine which sections are applicable to you by reference to the table at the start of each section.

WON	SON	WAS	WRS	SAR
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3.1.1 Water Quality

The quality of water supplied for domestic purposes is controlled by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000 as amended, which are set by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

These regulations are enforced by the DWI who, in the event of an incident, will investigate and, if appropriate, prosecute. When there is no danger to public safety, they may agree a period of time over which improvements must be made. We carry out regular drinking water quality tests. Samples are collected at random within our supply network and these are analysed to check for compliance. We may need to take a sample from your property. Wherever possible prior notice would be given but in an emergency this might not be feasible. A copy of our water quality records is available on request and these will be posted to you within 10 working days. If there is a serious problem a member of our team will contact you without delay.

3.1.2 Water Hardness

Water hardness varies between geographic regions in relation to the proportions of naturally occurring calcium and magnesium salts. Water containing a low proportion of salts is defined as soft water and hard water contains a greater quantity of salts. Both hard and soft waters, treated to wholesome standards, are safe to drink. To find out more information about your water please contact a member of the customer service team.

3.1.3 Water: Taste & Odour

Variations in water pressure and pipeline maintenance can occasionally affect the consistency, colour and flow of water.

If you are concerned about an unusual or noticeable change in the taste or odour of your drinking water please do not drink the water and contact our customer service team immediately.

In the case of a failure of your water supply or if you have reason to believe that your drinking water is unsafe, please call us on our emergency 24 hour number: **0800 917 5819**. We will then arrange for a representative to come and visit your property. In order to reduce your security concerns you can arrange for a password to be used when our representative visits your property, further information can be found in section 7 of this Code.

It may be necessary for us to arrange for an alternate supply of water to be made available to your property, if our investigation is on-going. If water samples are sent for laboratory analysis then we will normally provide you with written details within 5 working days of the results being available. If we suspect at any time that your water is unsafe for human consumption, you will be contacted immediately and, in this situation, we would advise you on what steps should be taken, e.g. boiling water. For customers who have registered special requirements (please see section 6) we may make alternative arrangements to ensure you are provided with essential information.

If you are dissatisfied by our response to your problem or would prefer independent advice on a water issue in your home, you can contact your Environmental Health Officer at your local council who will be able to offer you further advice and support (contact details are included in your Charges Scheme).

3.1.4 Water: Discolouration

Discolouration of water can be alarming although it is unlikely to present a health risk. It is normally due to alterations in the flow rate within the pipework which results in a disturbance to accumulated sediments. The change in flow can be a consequence of numerous factors, for example a burst main. This problem can be simply resolved by running the main tap in your property (normally in the kitchen) until the water returns to its normal colour and consistency. The time the tap will need to be left running will depend on how efficiently it is removing the sediment from the pipe and may vary within different properties; however it should not require more than 20 minutes to return to normal.

Occasionally a property may experience white water; this occurs when excessive air has entered the system and is similarly harmless. If you leave the water in a glass it will clear after a few minutes.

If you feel that these actions do not resolve the situation, or if the discolouration lasts for a few hours, please call our customers services team for further information and advice.

3.1.5 Plumbing Alterations

Alterations to internal or external plumbing must comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. These Regulations express the importance of 'safeguarding the water supply from contamination or wastage' taking into consideration the following issues; the type, arrangement, standard and maintenance of plumbing appliances and outside taps attached to the main water supply.

You and/or your landlord are responsible for the water supply pipework within the property you inhabit. Plumbing system and appliances should be in good working order and be properly maintained in accordance with regulations. Please note that we have the power of entry to inspect for breaches of Regulations. If you would like a copy of the Regulations please contact our customer service team.

3.1.6 Water Quantity

Under the terms of our licence we are expected to give you a continuous and steady supply of water, which is sufficient to meet your standard domestic requirements, these include;

- Washing
- Cooking
- Central heating
- Drinking
- Sanitation

We achieve this by managing and maintaining our network and resources efficiently and sustainably. We have developed a community-based, model which helps deliver lower cost and lower energy services and our innovative approach delivers increased bio-diversity, exceptional levels of customer service, an enhanced natural environment and improved security of supply.

Exceptional weather conditions may restrict the availability of resources, and can lead to restrictions such as hosepipe and sprinkler bans being introduced. If this occurs, relevant information will be communicated to our customers. We aim to keep disruptions due to drought to a minimum, specifically: hosepipe bans should not occur more frequently than once in 20 years; further restrictions should occur no more than once in 35 years; and standpipes should never be required.

Monitoring of the supply network enables us to identify unexpected fluctuations in flow and problems can therefore be highlighted quickly (for example pipework leakage). Remedial measures are taken with minimal delay, thereby protecting our customers and limiting damage.

3.1.7 Water Pressure

Pressure and flow rates in your home can be affected by a number of factors:

- height of the property above the water main,
- condition of your own pipes and fittings,
- number of properties being supplied with water from the same pipework,
- supply pipe leakage,
- periods of peak water demand and
- the quantity and type of water appliances being used.

Ofwat's guidance recommends that water pressure of '10m head' should be maintained to your property. This pipe is used to connect your property's supply pipe to our water main, with sufficient pressure to enable water delivery to reach a second floor storage tank. We aim to provide a constant supply at this minimum pressure.

During periods of high demand or if the property is too close to the level of the reservoir then supply of this pressure may be unachievable, consequently if this problem exists you may be required to install a storage tank capable of holding 24 hours supply of water.

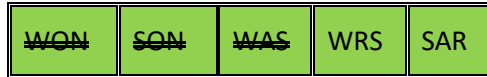
If you have a problem with your water pressure, first check the internal plumbing within your home, if you are still concerned please call our customer service team.

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3.1.8 Water Interruptions

We aim to provide a constant supply of water, but sometimes there might be interruptions. These can be caused by extreme weather conditions, burst main, pumps or power supply failure. To maintain an efficient system we may have to carry out work on our networks on various occasions during the year, this may disturb your water supply. For any planned network improvements we will give you at least 48 hours' notice and we will restore your water by the time given within this notice. If there are major alterations to a network that could cause extensive interruptions to your supply we will give you a two week notice period.

No advance notice can be given if we need to interrupt your water supply due to an unanticipated network emergency, for example a burst water main. We will aim to restore your water supply as soon as possible. If an interruption, resulting from our works, lasts more than five hours then we will supply an alternative source of water (e.g. bottled or bowser) and will inform you of how to obtain it. For our customers who have special needs we will make alternative arrangements to best suit the individual customer. If this could worsen an existing health condition, please contact our customer service team immediately.



3.2 Non-Potable Water Supply

Non potable water (also known as recycled, greenwater or greywater) is not drinking water; it has been through the process of use, collection and treatment and is then redistributed for reuse. The treatment ensures that the recycled water is free from solids and bacteria but it does not meet potable water standards. Recycled water provides a sustainable resource, minimising energy consumption and producing lower emissions. Recycled water is an alternative water source for some domestic, industrial and environmental requirements.

Within your property your non-potable supply will flow through pipes that are black with a green stripe and which should be labelled as **“Rainwater or Greywater”** every 0.5m. The only connections to this pipe will be WCs and an outside tap, marked with a permanent label stating **“Greywater, not suitable for drinking”**. On no account should you make additional plumbing connections unless adding a new WC.

3.2.1 How Does Recycled Water Benefit You and the Environment?

Recycled water is a mix of harvested rainwater together with treated wastewater. This mix is stored on site and, prior to entering the non-potable distribution system, is further treated to remove suspended solids and destroy potentially harmful organisms. It is then pumped to connected properties and provides a source of water suitable for flushing WCs, garden watering and for irrigating public open spaces. It can also be used for clothes washing, washing down hard surfaces and car washing.

Not being reliant solely on rain water, recycled water provides a reliable source of water even during drought conditions and consequently offers a lower cost, low environmental impact renewable resource that eases the pressure on potable water. Those receiving a recycled supply also benefit from Albion maintaining the community’s system rather than individuals having to maintain their own system.

3.2.2 Why Does Albion Use Recycled Water?

Fresh water sources are experiencing increasing demand. Increased population and climate change are both affecting the source and demand of water. There is a direct relationship between the growing UK population and increases in both agricultural and non-domestic demands for water. This, along with tightening environmental standards, is leading to increased costs to provide adequate potable supplies to households, agriculture and industry. Human influences on the atmosphere also appears to be altering global climatic patterns resulting in rising sea temperatures and changes to weather patterns, impacting rainfall and increasing the intensity and duration of droughts.

The introduction of a community supply of recycled water can make a dramatic difference in the amount of potable water consumed, benefiting customers financially, keeping more water in the rivers and reducing the water industry's chemical and energy usage.

The Government is committed to a Future Water Scheme for England which aims to reduce the average person's water consumption by 20 litres per day. Currently almost 50% of water consumption is used for flushing toilets, clothes washing, car washing and watering the garden. By providing a recycled alternative to meet some of these requirements in a manner that does not noticeably affect your use of water, we can decrease the amount of potable water used.

3.2.3 Is Recycled/Non-Potable Water Safe?

Recycled water has been treated to a high standard, appropriate for certain non-consumptive uses (e.g. toilet flushing, garden watering and irrigation). It is NOT suitable for drinking. All new properties connected to our distribution mains have been checked for the correct plumbing of both potable and recycled systems prior to first occupation. On-going monitoring will highlight potential problems which would result in further investigations. All pipes carrying recycled water will be labelled "**Rainwater or Greywater**" every 0.5m and external taps carrying recycled water will be labelled as "**Greywater, not suitable for drinking**" and will use identifiable pipes and fittings. We will further reduce the risk by chlorination of the recycled water to eliminate harmful organisms.

3.2.4 Maintenance Processes Undertaken on your Non-Potable Water System

We will carry out regular maintenance to the recycling system to ensure that water is safe for the intended uses. This maintenance will include the following:

- Cleaning and monitoring of system
- Removal of debris from filters and from treatment processes.
- Regular visual inspection of the system and connections
- Checks to ensure that the mains water top up (where provided) is protected from contamination
- Regular quality analysis

3.2.5 Costs

Recycled water will be charged at a discount to potable water. Please refer to our Charges Scheme for your area.

3.2.6 Plumbing Alterations

Please refer to section 3.1.5. **EXCEPT FOR REPLACEMENT OR ADDITIONAL WCs DO NOT CONNECT A NEW DEVICE ONTO THE NON-POTABLE PIPEWORK.**

We have the power of entry to inspect for breaches of Regulations and, due to the existence of different water services in your property, we must be satisfied that your plumbing is compliant. If you would like further independent advice please contact the DWI.

3.2.7 Caring for Water

We are committed to improving the quality of our rivers and natural water ways, working with the EA to ensure we exceed expectations and deliver environmental benefits that enhance the local community for generations to come. Delivering recycled water can offer a low cost, low environmental impact alternative to developing further potable water supply infrastructure.

Whilst not drinking water, our recycled water is maintained to a high standard and we will regularly monitor this at different points in the infrastructure to ensure that there are no unacceptable risks to you. It might be necessary to take occasional samples from external taps at your premises to ensure that risks can be adequately assessed and random water fittings audits will be carried out to ensure future compliance. Except in an emergency, these visits would be arranged in advance for a mutually convenient date and time.

The existence of our recycled supply system provides greater security of supply during periods of drought. Despite the availability of recycled water, we recommend that you think carefully about how you might save water, not just during drought conditions, but also day to day because every drop used has received treatment and pumping to get to your property.

Section 4 Connections, Pipework and Water Efficiency

WON	SON	WAS	WRS	SAR
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4.1 Connecting Where There is no Water Main

If you have no water main near your property, or you require an additional supply connection, you can ask us to lay or extend a main; this is known as a 'Requisition'. We will charge you for providing the new main and any network alterations required. This can be paid as a single advance payment or by agreeing payments over a 12 year period. We are entitled to make a charge for providing the main and any necessary network alterations required, however we will take into consideration the income that will be received as a result of the newly connected pipe. If you have a dispute in regard to the requisition fee required, you can contact Ofwat for advice; their details are provided in section 12.

4.2 Additional Charges for New Properties

An infrastructure charge may also be applicable for connection to a new property; this cost covers the need for the improvements to the distribution network to meet the demand created by the new connection over time. We have the right to charge for any additional costs which may be incurred when the property is connected to a water supply for the first time. Details of our charging methodology can be found in your Charges Scheme.

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4.3 Viewing Water Main Maps

You can inspect water main maps for the areas that we supply free of charge by arranging an appointment at our head office or local office. This can be arranged by ringing the customer service team.

4.4 Timescales for Connection to the Water Main

The timescale of a new connection will be dependent on the following factors which will be assessed during the initial requisition:

- Age of the property
- Type of connection required (separating an existing or creating a new supply)
- Distance from the main
- Size of house
- Amount of water required for the property
- Amount of addition network alterations which have to be performed
- The exact time frame cannot be given until the design has been agreed

Once our requirements are met, we will make a mains connection within 14 working days.

4.5 Self-Lay

The self-lay process includes the laying and connecting of a water main to a supply pipe and can be performed by an accredited contractor. More information on accredited self-lay organisations can be found on Ofwat's website (see section 12 for contact details).

4.6 Responsibility for Your Pipework

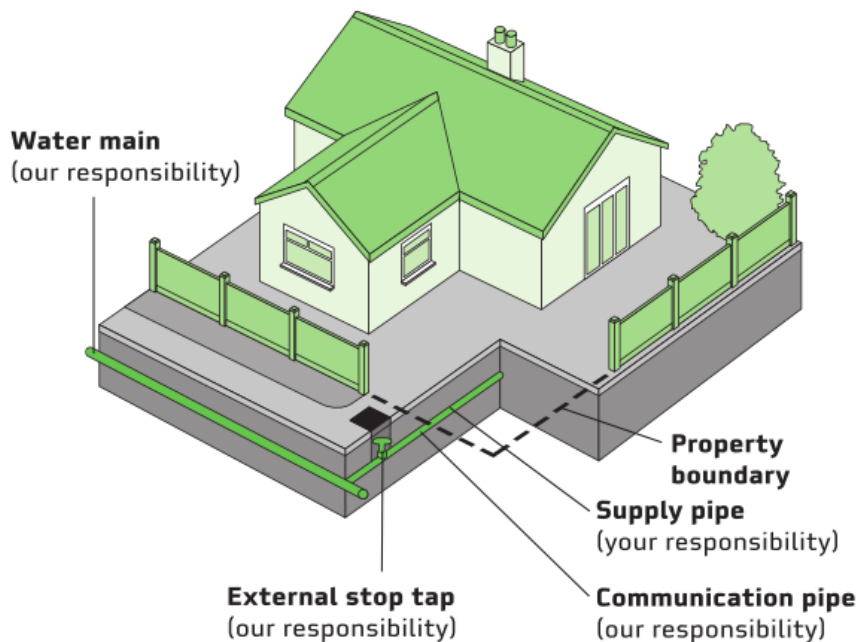
We are normally responsible for the potable water main and recycled main in the road and leading to the boundary of your property. If a meter(s) is present, we own and maintain this but you may be responsible for damage to these devices, howsoever caused.

4.7 Separate Supply

You or your landlord is responsible for the following potable and non-potable pipes (the general arrangement of these can be seen in the diagram below):

- Water supply pipe which runs from the boundary of your property into your property.
- Any water supply pipes within the boundary of your property.
- Any pipes within your property.

Separate supply



4.8 Shared Supplies and Company Policy for Replacing with Separate Supplies

Modern houses are fitted with dedicated water supply pipework which, as stated above, is your responsibility. Within older properties there may be a shared supply pipe between properties. All of our customers are fitted with independent water supply pipework; there is therefore no company policy for replacing shared systems with separate supplies. If you believe that you have a shared supply please contact our customer service team.

4.9 Information on Pipework Leaks

We offer a free leak detection and repair service and can apply a leakage allowance to ensure that you do not have to pay for water lost through a leak, these services are subject to the conditions described below and in Appendix 3, our Leakage FAQ.

Leaks from your water supply pipe can sometimes be detected by an unexpected increase in your regular meter readings, or your meter recording usage when no water appliances are turned on, or following the appearance of boggy ground or lush vegetation even during dry weather. We will monitor usage and check local pipe condition when meters' are installed, but ask you to remain vigilant and advise us if leakage is suspected.

We offer a free leak detection and supply pipe repair service for domestic customers (on both potable and recycled water systems); this is restricted to one external leak in any 12 month period (but not beneath the property) unless a subsequent leak results from our original repair. This service will operate during normal working hours and we will aim to have the work finished within 7 working days. Surface excavations will be reinstated to matching conditions.

Our emergency contact number (**0800 917 5819**) is available 24 hours a day free of charge. Any urgent problems or concerns should be reported via this number as soon as possible. If a leak occurs in the householders supply pipe and it is not covered by our free repair service, the householder will then be responsible for repairing the pipework. We can provide a list of approved plumbers to carry out this work. If you fail to take remedial action within a certain period of time we may perform the repairs and charge you for the work (subject to 14 days' notice) unless you have a reasonable explanation for the delay.). The period of time in which we will not intervene is dependent upon the reason, type and the degree of damage to the pipe and/or the personal circumstances of the occupant.

In exceptional circumstances (for example, if there is imminent danger of damage, misuse or water contamination), under section 75 of the Water Industry Act, Albion has the power to disconnect the water supply without notice. Notification of the steps to re-connect the property would be served on the occupier.

If your supply is metered (either by us or a different water supplier) and you find, report and have a leak on a supply pipe fixed you may be eligible for an allowance for the water lost. Such an

allowance will only be granted once in a year for a domestic property (which, if appropriate, can be applied separately to potable and recycled pipes) and no allowance will normally be given for losses caused by negligence or on internal pipework. This allowance will be a credit applied to your bill to account for additional charges incurred during the leak period. To make a claim you will need to call our customer service team who will investigate your claim and, if accepted, provide you with a calculation of assessed water usage or, in the case of a separate water supplier, pass through the relevant calculations. This procedure will take a number of days and will not commence until the leak is satisfactorily repaired in a reasonable timeframe.

We will also apply the allowance to your sewerage charges, or pass the details of the allowance on to your sewerage supplier if they are another company.

Our leakage Question & Answer sheet contains additional helpful material and can be found in appendix 3.

4.10 Preventing Burst or Leaking Pipes

To prevent or minimise the damage caused by a burst pipe please:

- Identify where your main stop valves are located and keep them accessible, this will enable you to stop the water supply to your property immediately. The potable and recycled supply valves are usually located under the sink or in the garage (wherever the mains enter the property). If you are having trouble locating the main stop valves you can ring our customer service team for further information.
- Maintain disused rooms at a temperature above freezing point in order to minimise the risk of burst pipes or leaking taps.
- Ensure that water pipes and tanks are properly insulated; this will reduce wasted energy.
- Repair dripping taps and faulty washers.
- If the property is going to be uninhabited during a cold spell of weather, leave the central heating system on low level to prevent pipes from freezing (many modern systems will have a freeze activation setting).
- Ensure the use of an accredited, reputable plumber (WIAPS registered).

4.11 Water Efficiency

As a company which prides itself on sustainable development within the water industry, we support initiatives to conserve water and we encourage and will help you to do the same. We aim to do this by:

- Enhancing our efficiency in regards to leakages, please notify us if you identify any problems with your systems, for example low pressure within the taps as this could be the result of an unrepaired burst main.
- Offering free supply pipe repairs for all of our customers subject to terms and conditions. Please see section 4.9 for further information.

- Promoting the use of water efficient appliances, facilities and practises in both the home and the garden.
- Operating water recycling schemes to minimise potable water use in the home and garden.

Further details on water efficiency are included in our Water Resource Management Plan and the Drought Plan for your area. These can be accessed via our website or by calling our customer services team.

4.12 Water Meter Information

Where we install a supply meter to your property, we aim to read it at least once a year to provide evidence of water supplied and therefore to raise accurate bills. If we fail to do this we will compensate you, providing access was not restricted or denied, for further information see Section 11. During periods of time when we do not read your meter we will estimate your bill using your average consumption or other proxy. If you receive an estimated bill that you feel is incorrect then please contact our customer service team. You can inform the customer service team of your correct meter reading, we will then send you a revised bill. For any other billing enquiries please contact the customer service team.

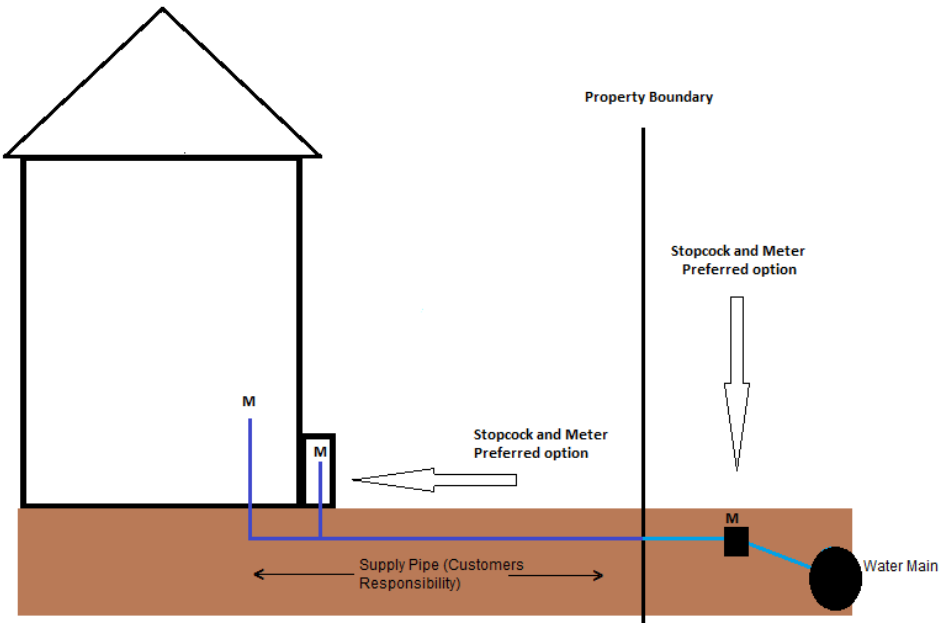
All occupants with a meter should note that, the meter belongs to us irrespective of its location; therefore to detach, interfere or otherwise tamper with it is a criminal offence.

4.13 Location of Your Meter(s)

In accordance with Government regulations there are three potential locations for a meter:

- External – at our stopcock just outside the boundary of your property
- External – inside the boundary of your property (either in your garden or on the outside wall of your property).
- Internal

For ease of access (for maintenance and reading) our preferred meter location is one of the external options. On some new developments planning restrictions may apply to outside wall boxes.

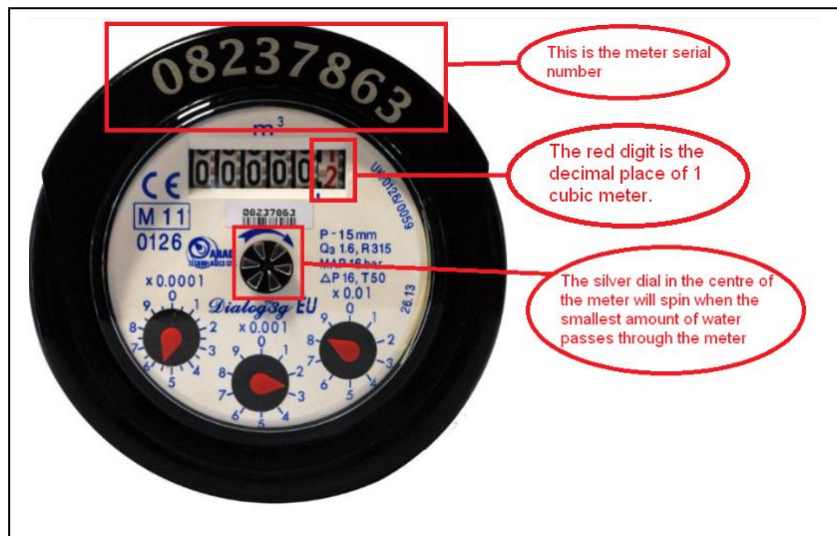


4.14 How to Read Your Meter?

Most of the properties in our area are 'new build' and will have been fitted with a meter for both potable and recycled water. In some cases we may wish to install a meter on an existing unmetred property. There are a number of reasons why we would choose to install a water meter, these include to:

- raise accurate charges
- introduce demand management techniques
- provide a baseline to help guide sustainable development in both water and sewage services
- constrain the need to build expensive new reservoirs or boreholes
- meet our commitment to monitor the effectiveness of supply metering and consider the costs and benefits of alternative approaches to manage water consumption.

The meter reading is normally automatically generated, but these and older meters require occasional manual checks. If you are providing a reading to us, we only require the digits in black (an example is shown below). If you have any further queries or require any additional assistance please contact our customer service team.



4.15 Movement of the Meter

If you request a relocation of the water meter you will need to apply in writing, explaining why you require this course of action. If we consent to your application we will provide you with relevant information and costs. If you are currently unable to read the meter due to particular personal circumstances, there will be no charge. However, if we refuse, we will write to you explaining why your proposal was not acceptable.

If you are having problems locating your meter please contact our customer service team for advice on its location.

Please note that the position of the meter has no influence on the ownership of the pipe, you are accountable for pipes in your property and the service pipe running from your property to the boundary, irrespective of the meter location. If the meter is situated near our stopcock it will register the entirety of leaks from your property boundary. This could consequently result in charges for the water wasted as a result of leaks in your service pipe. However, in certain circumstances a leakage allowance can be granted for either or both water supplied (whether potable or recycled) and sewage treatment so that your bill is based on historic usage or an assessed figure - for more information regarding this please speak to our customer service team.

If you suspect that your meter is faulty, please contact our customer service team. If your concern cannot be resolved by the customer service team then you may request a meter test. The meter will be tested in its current location and if necessary it will be removed and replaced within a period of 40 days. If you disagree with the initial results then you can request an independent analysis. If the test authenticates that the current meter reading falls within the error limits set in the Measuring Equipment (cold-water meters) Regulation 1988 you will consequently be liable for the cost of the test (up to a maximum £40). If the meter is found to be over recording, charges will be adjusted accordingly either by the date that the meter became faulty or, if this isn't known, from six months prior to the date of the last reading recorded by us. Conversely if the meter is under recording, charges will NOT be backdated. A copy of the meter test report will be forwarded to you as soon as it is available.

4.16 Requesting a Meter for an Unmetered Property

We are able to fit a free meter in unmetered properties so that our charges are based on actual water used in addition to your fixed charge. If, however, you opt for a free meter and then decide you want to return to an unmetered charge you must request this within your first year of having a meter or within one month of receiving your second bill (whichever is later). Subsequent occupiers will not have the option to revert to an assessed charge and will be charged on a metered basis.

If you are renting a property you may still be able to arrange for a meter to be fitted, however it is recommended that you seek your landlord's permission prior to the request. If you have fixed tenure of less than six months you MUST ask the landlord's permission; if you have a fixed tenancy of longer than six months your landlord cannot stop you from having a meter. The terms of your tenancy agreement should be taken into consideration as you may need consent to alter or improve the property. For more information please contact CCWater or Ofwat, their details are in section 12 of this Code of Practise.

4.17 Compulsory Water Metering

Over the last 50 years water demand per person has doubled in the UK. We are committed to working towards sustainable development in every aspect of our performance. Therefore it is essential to raise awareness of supply and demand balance issues. There are specific circumstances, in which we have a legal right to fit a compulsory meter at a domestic property, this occurs at:

- All new properties built after 1989
- Properties where swimming pools, sprinklers, power showers and high water usage equipment is operational
- Properties where there is a change in occupation

It is our policy to fit a meter into properties where there is water intensive equipment in use, as assessed water charges do not cover exceptional usage. If we identify a property using such equipment which has not been registered with us, we may issue back dated invoices. If you require further information please contact our customer service team.

4.18 Why Would a Meter Installation Request be Rejected and What Would Happen Instead?

It may not be possible for us to fit a meter if the following applies to your property:

- If there is a supplementary supply of water to the property (more than one)
- Your property is on a shared supply
- The pipework inside your property is inaccessible, obstructed or in a poor condition.
- If the meter could not be situated in an appropriate position, neither internally or externally (potential positions are set out in Section 4.13)
- You live within a flat whereby you share facilities, such as hot water supply.

In these circumstances we will issue bills based on an assessed charge, please contact our customer service team for further information.

4.19 Replacing Lead Pipes

Although all new pipework is not made of lead it is possible that an old property linked to our system may have lead pipework. Contamination from lead pipes can be dangerous to children and unborn babies. The responsibility of the pipework is addressed in 4.6 & 4.7. To help identify lead pipes, they are dark grey (underneath any paint) and are also soft, marking easily. If you believe you have lead pipework we would advise you to replace it.

4.20 Moving Home

In order for us to take meter readings, you must advise us at least two days before you leave your property (whether you are a home owner or a tenant) or within two days of moving in so that a final reading can be arranged; failure to do so could result in continuing liability for payment (up to a maximum of 28 days).

4.21 Resale Order Law

If you buy water or sewerage services from another person or company instead of directly from us, you should enquire into the 'Water Resale Order'. This protects residents from being overcharged for either water or sewage or both services. If you have any queries or concerns about this please contact our customer service team in the first instance or, subsequently, CCWater or Ofwat for more information.

Section 5 Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Service

The information within this section is only applicable to those to whom we supply our sewerage service. To identify which services we provide you with please use the service code (as detailed in section 1.5) and if your code corresponds to one of those not deleted in the table below, you should read this Section.

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We maintain a system of sewers which takes the waste water from your property's connection to the public sewer for treatment and disposal. The system of pipes which carries the waste water is called the sewerage system. Surface and highway drainage may or may not be connected to our system; please call our customer service team for further information.

We must provide and maintain an adequate sewerage system for our sewerage areas.

5.1 Storm and Surface Water Sewers, Foul Sewers and Combined Systems

The sewerage system in your area is likely to be of one of two types, either:

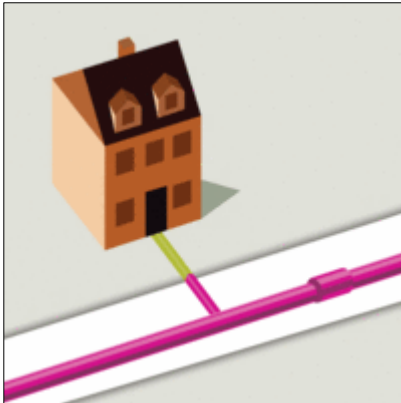
- (a) a dual system in which storm and surface water drains to one sewer pipe and foul water from your property drains to a separate pipe; or
- (b) a combined system where storm, surface water and foul water from your property drain to the same sewer pipe.

5.2 Responsibility for Pipework

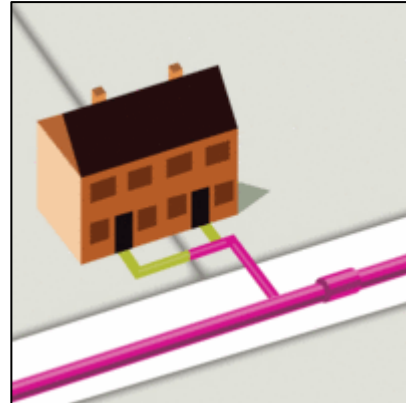
The pipework which comprises the sewerage system in our area of operation can be categorised in three ways:

- a private drain
- a private sewer
- a public sewer

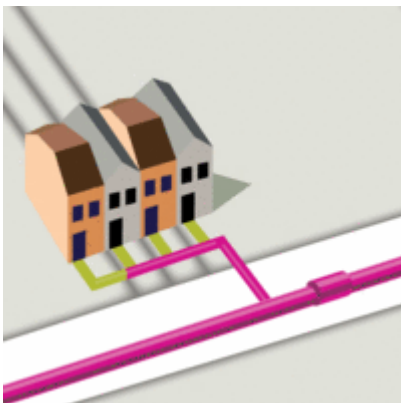
A private drain is a pipe which conveys foul or storm water from one property to a sewer or to the boundary of the property, whichever is the shorter distance.



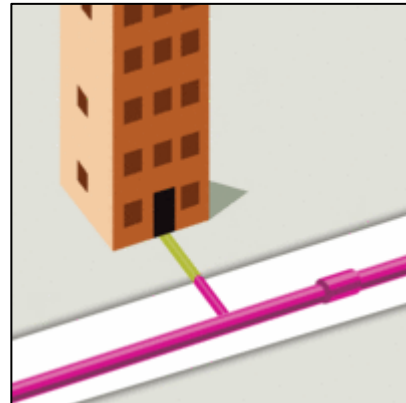
Detached



Semi-detached



Terraced



Flat or multiple dwelling

 Public sewer/drain– responsibility of sewerage company

 Privately owned– responsibility of property owner

 Property boundary

A private sewer is a pipe which collects and conveys foul or storm water from several units in a multi-occupancy property (including communal grounds). A private sewer may connect to a public sewer or a private sewage treatment works. Responsibility for a private sewer lies jointly with the owners of the properties which it serves.

A public sewer is one which has been vested in the Company and is shown as such on a statutory sewer map (many private sewers were adopted by water undertakers in October 2011 and may not yet be included in statutory maps). We are responsible for public sewers.

In most cases our sewers are situated in roads or public open places. Occasionally, however, our sewers may run through private land and gardens, in which case we have a right of access for maintenance and legal protection against you building over, or near, our sewer. Where we need to lay or maintain pipes in your land we will observe clear rules for working in private land. A copy of these rules (the Code of Practice for Pipe-Laying) is available free of charge by telephoning our

customer service team. Ofwat has a duty to investigate complaints about our exercise of works powers on private land, unless it considers that we have not had sufficient opportunity to do so

5.3 Protection Against Flooding from Public Sewers

Sewer flooding is unacceptable; we aim to provide adequate capacity in our sewers to protect homes from flooding. However, extreme weather will always create some flooding risk as it is not always financially feasible or environmentally sustainable to provide sewers of sufficient capacity to cope with any amount of rain. The aim of our capital investment programme is to protect homes against flooding from storms which are so severe that, on average, they put properties at risk of flooding once in 20 years. Flooding from sewers can also occur for other reasons, such as blockages.

If there is a sewer blockage or a pumping station breakdown which threatens to flood domestic premises, we aim to have a representative on site as quickly as possible and to start work within 8 hours. If you identify a problem with the sewerage system, please call our Emergency Helpline on **0800 917 5819**. If Albion becomes aware of a flood risk it will attempt to contact occupiers who are likely to be affected by visiting their property.

If you are affected by sewer flooding call our Emergency Helpline. We will help with any clearing up necessary as a result of sewer flooding. We aim to complete a clear up within 12 hours for internal flooding and 24 hours for external flooding. The clear up can include pumping out, hosing down, litter picking, and cleaning floors and contaminated areas with disinfectant. If any damage has been caused, you will need to contact your insurance company. We are not liable for any damage caused by sewer flooding unless we have been negligent.

If you are not insured or your insurers decline to help, please contact our customer service team. We can arrange for a specialist contractor to assist.

If your home is flooded, you are entitled to a payment equal to your annual sewerage charges under our Guaranteed Standards Scheme, see Section 11. You may also be entitled to payment equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charge if you suffer external sewer flooding. Any dispute as to liability can be referred to Ofwat whose decision is final.

5.4 Statutory Sewer Maps

It is our duty to produce a map showing the location of every public sewer or disposal main which is vested in us or which is likely to become vested. You have the right to inspect this map. If you would like to examine the map, please call our customer service team and we will advise you where the relevant map can be inspected.

If you would like us to provide you with information from the map rather than inspect it yourself, there may be a charge for this service (details of this can be found in your Charges Scheme).

5.5 Connection of Drains or Private Sewers to a Public Sewer

You are entitled to have your drain or private sewer connected to our public sewers, subject to certain practical requirements. Also you will have to pay our expenses involved in making the connection.

You will need to supply us with details of the drain or private sewer to be connected and how the connection will be made. We will let you know within 21 days whether we can accept your proposals and what the costs will be. Albion can refuse permission if we consider that the mode of connection or the condition of the connecting pipe would damage our sewers. If you disagree with our decision the matter may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

You will have to pay:

- (a) a charge for our inspecting the work or undertaking it ourselves.
- (b) a contribution to our costs of providing the overall sewerage system. Further information on this charge - the sewerage infrastructure charge - appears in your Charge Scheme.

Once you have paid the inspection charges you must give us 14 days' notice of the day you, or your builder, propose to do the work so that we can inspect it to ensure that it meets our standards.

If Albion opts to make the connection to the sewer ourselves, any dispute about the costs we charge for making the connection may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

5.6 Requisitioning and Provision of Public Sewers

If you live in an area which is not served by a public sewer, you cannot demand that we provide one at our expense. However, if you and your neighbours - or your local authority - asks for a sewer to be provided we will provide one, but you and the other applicants - or your local authority - will have to pay any difference between the income we receive from charges for the disposal of waste water to the sewer and our reasonable costs in providing the sewer in each of the following 12 years. Alternatively, you can ask to pay for mains using the discounted aggregate deficit method, which is a single statutory commuted sum. The Water Industry Act 1991 states that this is an amount equal to the sum of the estimated relevant deficits for each of the 12 years following the provision of the main, in each case discounted to a net present value.

We will also want some security from you before doing the work. For our part, we must provide the sewer within 6 months of your agreeing that we do so. Unless you agree to an extension of time, if we break this deadline and you sustain loss or damage as a result, you may have a legal claim against us.

Any dispute in respect of the amount Albion requires you to pay; or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give; or any extension to the period of six months within which we must provide a public sewer; or the places at which private sewers or drains join the public sewer may be referred to Ofwat.

Under Section 101a of the Water Industry Act 1991 new public sewers can be requested to serve existing properties currently connected to private waste water disposal facilities. This can only happen where the following criteria are met:

- a) the properties must be domestic and built before 20 June 1995; and
- b) two or more properties must be experiencing amenity or environmental problems, e.g. odour, flooding of land or property, pollution of watercourses; and
- c) the problems must not be caused by inadequate maintenance of the existing private disposal system.

If a new sewer is provided, an individual householder would be responsible for payment of a sewerage infrastructure charge and sewer connection charge; installing and paying for a drain to connect her or his home to the new sewer; making safe any private disposal system no longer required; and paying sewerage charges to Albion once a connection has been made.

Section 6 Additional Services Available

We are committed to ensuring that access to customer information is available to all our customers and communication with customers, especially in an emergency, is made in an appropriate manner. There are no extra charges for any of these services.

6.1 Register of Customers with Special Requirements

Any of our customers can register information with us so that we can accommodate specific personal requirements. If you wish to register we will send you a registration form and information on the services we offer, please write to us for further information or, alternatively, you can register by telephoning our customer service team.

Those of you who register with us can be re-assured that we will not pass any information recorded on the register to anyone other than our employees or one of our partner companies working on our behalf. Furthermore, only those who need to know will have access to any information you provide.

6.2 Services Available

WARNINGS IN EMERGENCIES

Deaf or blind and visually impaired customers registered with us will be provided with warnings in emergencies in a manner appropriate to their individual circumstances.

BILLS

Registered customers may choose to use our bill reading service whereby we will telephone with details of a bill before we post it.

Registered customers may also choose to have bills sent to a friend or relative. If any problems with payment occur we would contact the person nominated to discuss matters however we would not hold that person responsible for payment.

CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

LARGE PRINT VERSIONS OF CUSTOMER LITERATURE ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

SECURITY

When you make an appointment with us to visit your home, you will be offered the opportunity of providing a password which the visitor, or any other member of the customer service team, will use



to confirm that she or he is from Albion. This scheme can also be extended to include all telephone communications.

In an emergency we may issue leaflets to you to explain our activities and to inform of our presence; also giving our emergency telephone number for you to contact us to seek further information.

Section 7 Powers of Entry and Employee Identification

We have statutory rights of entry to your premises or land to investigate, take samples and to carry out surveys or work relating to the provision of our services. Except in an emergency, we will call at a reasonable time and, if exercising our statutory right of entry, we will give you appropriate notice (normally 7 days). If we have not given you that notice you have the right to refuse us entry.

7.1 Employee Identification

All of our employees who may need to visit you carry identification which they will show you before asking to be allowed in to your home.

The identification card you will be shown carries the employee's photograph and hologram, name, Albion's logo, and a unique serial number. The employee will also carry a large print card giving her or his name and the 0800 917 5819 telephone number.

If you have any doubts concerning the person visiting you, do not let them into your home before you have clarified that they work for us, by telephoning **0800 917 5819**.

NB: Employees of our partner companies may not be carrying an Albion identity card but they should carry their own company's identity card and a statement confirming that they are representing us (on our headed paper).

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Where we make an appointment to visit you, we can operate a password system. When we make the appointment on the telephone you will be asked whether you want to give us a password for our visiting employee to use so that you know the person who calls works for us.

If you have reason to doubt that a person calling on you does not work for us, **DO NOT LET THE INDIVIDUAL/S INTO YOUR HOUSE**. No Albion employee will mind if you ask them to wait outside while you telephone our customer service helpline or emergency number (both of which can be found on your bill) to verify the caller is who they claim to be.

REMEMBER: NO CARD..... NO ENTRY!

Section 8 Charges, Bills and Accounts

Details of charges and tariffs for the current year; liability to pay charges; how we apply charges; our infrastructure and miscellaneous charges are contained in our Charges Scheme for your area (this is available on request from our customer services team or can be found on our website). Our charges are approved by Ofwat on an annual basis.

The person(s) living in a property is legally responsible for payment of the water services. If you are a tenant who pays for water services through rental payments to a landlord then you must provide the landlord's contact details so that payments can be requested directly from the landlord. Failure to provide such details may result in us taking debt recovery action against you.

8.1 Types of Charges

While there are a number of different tariffs covering water supply, recycled water and wastewater treatment and disposal, there are basically two types of charges for our services:

- (a) metered charges if your water is supplied through a meter (including a fixed, or standing, charge and a volumetric charge); and
- (b) unmetered charges if your water is not supplied through a meter - which are based on the old rateable value of a property or an assessment for more recent properties.

The chargeable rateable value of the property is:

- (a) rated properties – the Rateable Value of the property
- (b) unrated properties – where a property does not have a rateable value specifically assigned to it, and we have not exercised our rights under the Water Industry Act 1991 to charge by reference to volume, an assessed charge will be set
- (c) where two or more separate properties with Rateable Value are merged to form one property (flats being returned back to one house for example) the chargeable Rateable Value of new single property will be the same as the combined Rateable Values of the previously existing properties.

Full details of charges and tariffs are contained in our Charges Scheme.

If you are paying unmetered charges, you can choose to have a meter installed and pay metered charges. If your service code is any from the box below, you will need to contact your regional water undertaker, their contact information can be found in your Charges Scheme.

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8.2 Paying Water Service Charges – Unmetered Properties

Unless a customer has agreed a different payment arrangement with the Company, unmetered charges are payable in two equal instalments, on 1st April and 1st October.

The Company offers regular payment plans for unmetered charges:

- (a) the standard plan is for payment by 12 instalments, with payment being due on a set day of each month.
- (b) Payment by a maximum of 10 instalments between April and January is also possible (if you ask to use this option after April, the charges due will be apportioned on a monthly basis so that they are settled by January). Payment is due on a set day of the month.
- (c) If you need to pay more frequently, alternative plans may be available on request.

8.3 Metered Charges

The annual standing charge element of metered charges is payable in advance, and the volumetric part is payable in arrears (based on meter readings) and, unless you have agreed a different payment arrangement with us, they are payable within 28 days of a bill being issued.

Metered bills are usually issued on occupation, moving out or around 1 April (including the annual standing charge) and, thereafter, every six months (or quarterly in the case of some commercial properties). We aim to base every bill on meter readings but estimates may need to be used on occasions. It is recommended that a meter reading is taken and sent to us when moving into or out of a property, otherwise closing or opening bills may include assessed usage.

We reserve the right to take meter readings and issue bills on a more regular basis.

We operate a special meter payment plan for metered customers. Under the plan you agree to pay a fixed amount each month. At the end of each year we will review the account and make any adjustments to the required monthly payment if water use (on which discharge volumes are based) has changed and the amount being paid is too high or too low.

If the account is in credit, you can choose to have the over-payment refunded or carried forward to reduce next year's payments. If not enough has been paid, the debt will be added to the following year's bill and monthly payments re-set to repay the outstanding balance and that year's charges over the next 12 months. Alternative plans for paying metered charges, or repaying any arrears, are available on request.

Monthly or more frequent plans are available for re-paying any arrears of metered charges, or the assessed volume charge or any other tariff system.

8.4 Help with Metered Bills

The Government has decided that certain metered customers should receive help with their bills so that they do not reduce water use below the levels they need (the WaterSure scheme).

To qualify for help, in addition to paying metered charges, you must also be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits (or have someone else living in your household in receipt of the benefit):

- (a) under Part VII of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 - **council tax benefit, housing benefit, income support (and its successor, the income related employment support allowance)**;
- (b) under section 1(4) of the jobseekers Act 1995 – **income based job-seeker's allowance**;
- (c) under section 8 of the Tax Credit Act 2002 - **the new Working Tax Credit**;
- (d) under sections 10 and 11 of the Tax Credit Act 2002 - **the Child Tax Credit** (except for families in receipt of the family element only);
- (e) under the State Pension Credit Act 2002 - **Pension Credit**.

The person in receipt of the benefit must then have either:

- (a) three or more dependent children under the age of 19 normally living with them; or
- (b) be diagnosed as having one of the following medical conditions (or any member of the household has been diagnosed as having the condition):

- desquamation (flaky skin loss)
 - weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
 - incontinence
 - Crohn's disease
 - ulcerative colitis
 - abdominal stomas
 - kidney failure requiring home dialysis (unless your health authority provides financial assistance towards water used in the dialysis process)
- and, as a result of that condition, the person concerned is obliged to use a significant additional volume of water.

In addition to the groups set out above, we will consider requests for assistance from customers in receipt of benefit who have other medical conditions which involve significant extra use of water.

Proof of a relevant medical condition would be required, such as a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner which states:

- the name and address of the person with the illness,
- the illness which requires a significant extra amount of water to be used,
- the date on which the certificate is issued,
- the name and address of the registered medical practitioner.

You will have to pay any charge the medical practitioner makes for issuing such a certificate.

Where a person qualifies for help, they will pay an annual amount equivalent to the average household bill for water/sewerage/recycling in Albion's area (or their actual metered charges if these are lower).

Please see our charges scheme for your area for full details of charges and tariffs.

8.5 Agreeing a Payment Plan

To set up a payment plan please complete and return the Direct Debit mandate, enclosed with your welcome letter, or call us so that we can discuss your requirements with you and agree a suitable plan.

We will always require a payment plan to be set at a level which clears the current year's charges by the end of the financial year (31 March) but if there are arrears on the account we may be able to agree a longer period of time to clear these to make instalments more manageable.

8.6 Paying Charges

Payment can be made by:

- (a) Direct Debit (please contact our customer service team for a form or, alternatively, download one from our website, complete it and return it to us)
- (b) Internet banking (please use details provided on the back of your bill, remembering to include your unique customer reference number)
- (c) Cheque (with your address and customer reference number written on the back) by post to: Customer Accounts, Albion Water, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE (please do not send cash through the post)
- (d) cash at a PayPoint facility (please contact our customer service team for a payment slip), details and the location of participating outlets are available on request
- (e) credit or debit card via Albion Water's customer helpline.

Please refer to our charges scheme for your area for further information on charges and tariffs.

8.7 Code of Practice on Payment

We operate under a Code of Practice regarding the recovery of outstanding charges which helps to protect your interests. A copy of the Code appears in Appendix 1. Further copies can be obtained free of charge by telephoning us.

8.8 Financial Assistance

A restricted special assistance fund is available to help customers who are trying to pay bills but who are having difficulties so doing for reasons of severe financial hardship or personal circumstances. If you believe that you require special assistance please contact the Company as soon as possible to discuss eligibility and the various options that might be available to you.

Section 9 Complaints procedure

Under Sections 29 and 33 of the Competition and Services (Utilities) Act 1992, we have produced a Complaints Procedure for dealing with complaints from customers or potential customers.

There are three levels for investigating and responding to complaints within the Procedure:

Level 1. You will receive a response from an employee working in one of our complaints teams.

Level 2. If you are dissatisfied with our first response, you can ask for a senior manager to review your complaint and the way we have handled it.

Level 3. If you are still dissatisfied after having had a response from our Customer Service Representative and Senior Manager, you can ask CCWater to investigate your complaint (the area office address is in Section 12), if you are still dissatisfied after CCWater have investigated you can refer the issue to WATRS (address in Section 12).

The full Complaints Procedure appears in Appendix 2.

The Complaints Procedure explains how Albion will handle complaints. A summary of this will be sent with our first reply to a complaint.

Additional copies of the full Complaints Procedure may also be obtained free of charge from our customer service team.

Section 10 Referral to Ofwat for Determination

Under the Water Industry Act 1991 certain disputes between you and us can be referred to Ofwat for a binding decision (or 'determination'). These are:

10.1 Entitlement to a Free Meter

All new domestic properties in our area will, prior to occupation, be fitted with a meter(s) to record water usage. Section 144A of the Act allows customers of existing properties to require their water company to fix its charges to them by reference to the volume of water supplied. We are not obliged to do so if it is not reasonably practicable to do so or if it would incur unreasonable expense. Disputes relating to the provision of a meter can be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.2 Connection to Water Mains

We have a duty (subject to certain conditions) to make a connection, where you serve notice us requiring us, for the purposes of supplying water for domestic purposes, to connect a service pipe from your premises, with one of our mains.

The Act provides that we may recover from the person who has requested a connection the expenses reasonably incurred in making that connection. It also provides that any dispute about the financial conditions or whether the expenses were incurred reasonably may be referred by either party for determination by Ofwat.

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10.3 Terms and Conditions for Disconnections, Reconnections and Non-Domestic Supplies

Ofwat may determine the reasonableness of a charge levied in respect of a connection to the main for non-domestic purposes where no provision is made in our charges scheme for charges in respect of such a supply. This determination must have regard to the desirability of Albion recovering the expenses incurred in providing the supply and securing a reasonable return on capital.

10.4 Requisitioning of a Water Main or Public Sewer

Any dispute in respect of the amount we require you to pay; or the undertakings or securities we expect you to give; or about extending the six months' time limit for us to provide a water main or sewer; or about where your water pipes join our mains or your private drain or sewer communicates with the public sewer, may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.5 Adoption of Water Mains, Sewers and Sewage Treatment Works

If we refuse to adopt a water main, sewer or sewage disposal works, or offer to adopt on terms which the person who constructed the sewer or works objects to, or we do not respond to an application within two months of receiving it, that person may refer the matter to Ofwat for determination.

An appeal to Ofwat for determination may also be made by the owner of any sewer or sewage disposal works if she or he is aggrieved by our proposal to make a declaration under Section 102 of the Water Industry Act 1991 that the sewer or sewage treatment works becomes vested with us.

10.6 Connection of Drains to a Public Sewer

Any dispute as to whether:

- (a) our refusal to permit a drain to be connected to a public sewer is reasonable; or
- (b) a requirement by us that a drain or private sewer be laid open for inspection for the purpose of examining its mode of construction and condition is reasonable; or
- (c) an estimate provided by us for making a connection which it has opted to make itself under Section 107 of the Act is reasonable; or
- (d) any security required to be paid before we will make a connection which it has opted to make itself is reasonable; or
- (e) any excess payment is repayable, or any additional expenses are recoverable after we have made a connection to the sewer, or the amount of any such excess or expenses, may be referred to the Ofwat for determination.

10.7 Requirement that a Proposed Drain or Sewer be Constructed so as to Form Part of the General Drainage System

Where we consider that a proposed drain or sewer is, or is likely to be, needed to form part of a general sewerage system and requires the person proposing to construct the drain or sewer to construct it in a manner differing from the manner in which that person proposes, she or he may appeal to Ofwat within 28 days of the Company making the requirement.

10.8 Alterations to the Drainage System of Premises

Any dispute arising from our serving notice on the owner of premises which drain to a public sewer or cesspool that at its expense it intends to close the existing drain and/or sewer or fill up the cesspool and provide a drain or sewer which effectively drains the premises to a public sewer may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.9 Closure and Prohibition of Use of a Public Sewer

If there is a dispute about the effectiveness of any sewer provided by us as an alternative for the use of a person who was lawfully using a public sewer prior to our discontinuing or prohibiting its use, the matter may be referred to Ofwat for determination.

10.10 Exercising Work Powers on Private Land

Any complaint about the exercise of our powers to carry out works in private land may be referred to Ofwat. Ofwat is empowered to direct us to make payment up to a maximum of £5,000 in respect of any failure to consult the complainant adequately about the exercise of its powers or the manner in which they are exercised, or any loss, damage or inconvenience unless compensation is recoverable under any other enactment.

However if Ofwat believes that any such compensation fails to reflect the fact that it was not reasonable for us to cause the complainant to sustain the loss or damage or to be subjected to the inconvenience he may direct us to make the payment in addition to the compensation.

Section 11 Our Guaranteed Service Standards

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme is a statutory scheme, which applies minimum performance standards to the regulated services of all water and sewerage companies. In many cases we provide levels of payment in excess of those required by this scheme. We guarantee to provide the following standards of service in our day to day dealings with you, subject to the exceptions specified.

If we fail to achieve any of the standards set out in section 11.1 we will pay you £50, and for those in section 11.2 we will pay you £30 automatically within 10 working days, or credit the relevant amount to your account if it is in arrears. If payment is not made within 10 working days you can claim a further £30 by telephoning, or writing to, our customer service team (contact details are in section 12).

11.1 Keeping Appointments

When we make an appointment with you in writing or by telephone, we will as a minimum tell you whether we will visit before or after 13:00 hours or you can ask for an appointment within a two hour time-band. We will keep the appointment within the correct time-band. Wherever possible we will make an actual time appointment for which we will not be late by more than 30 minutes.

If we have to change any appointment we will give you at least 24 hours' notice.

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We are not required to make a payment if you cancel the appointment, nor if it is impracticable to keep the appointment due to:

- (a) severe weather, or
- (b) industrial action by our employees, or
- (c) an act or default of a person other than our representative

11.2 Replying to Correspondence

We will send you a reply within 10 working days of receiving a written query about the correctness of your account. Similarly, we will send you a reply within 10 working days of receiving a written complaint.

We will notify you within 5 working days of receiving a written request to change the method by which you pay your account if we cannot meet the request.

We are not required to make a payment:

- (a) if you inform us that you do not wish to pursue the query or request, or
- (b) if a response is not made within the required period because of industrial action of our employees, or the act or default of a third party, or

- (c) if the query or request was incorrectly addressed, or
- (d) from the point at which a correspondence becomes frivolous or vexatious.

11.3 Flooding from Sewers – Internal Flooding

If we know that effluent has escaped from our sewers and entered the buildings of your property, or passed beneath a suspended floor, we will automatically make a payment equal to your annual sewerage charges for each incident of sewer flooding. We will make a minimum payment of £150 up to a maximum of £1,000. We will make this payment within 20 working days or we will automatically make a further payment of £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

We are not required to make a payment if:

- (a) sewer flooding was caused by:
 - exceptional weather conditions
 - industrial action by our employees
 - your actions
 - a defect, inadequacy or blockage in your drains or sewers, or
- (b) it is impractical for us to have identified you as being affected, and you did not make a claim within three months following the date of the internal sewer flooding incident

11.4 External Flooding

Where you are materially affected by effluent escaping from our sewers and entering your land or property, and you make a written claim (to the address in section 12) within three months of the incident, we will make a payment to you. We will pay a sum equal to 50% of the annual sewerage charge, subject to a minimum payment of £75 and a maximum payment of £500 in respect of each incident. We will make this payment within 20 working days of your claim or we will automatically make a further payment of £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

We are not required to make a payment if:

- (a) sewer flooding was caused by:
 - exceptional weather conditions
 - industrial action by our employees
 - your actions
 - a defect, inadequacy or blockage in your drains or sewers, or
- (b) we have made a payment to you in respect of the same incident for internal flooding, or
- (c) you were not materially affected by the incident (see below), or
- (d) you have not claimed payment within three months following the date of external sewer flooding incident

In deciding whether you have been materially affected by the incident, we will take into account:

- (a) what parts of your land or property the effluent entered
- (b) the duration of the flooding
- (c) whether the flooding restricted the access to your land or property
- (d) whether the flooding restricted the use of your land or property
- (e) any other relevant considerations of which we are aware

For both internal and external flooding we will endeavour to provide assistance with removing sewage debris and disinfecting the area affected.

11.5 Notice of Interruption to Supply

Where the supply of water to you is to be cut off to carry out necessary works we shall, before the supply is cut off, notify you in writing of the time by which the supply will be restored.

Where the supply of water to you has been interrupted or has been shut off to carry out necessary works in an emergency (and notice is not given in accordance with section 60(3) of the Water Industry Act), we shall take all reasonable steps to notify affected customers as soon as is reasonably practicable:

- (a) of the fact that the supply has been interrupted or cut off;
- (b) where an alternative supply may be obtained; and
- (c) of the time by which it is proposed the supply should be restored.

Other than in emergency situations and necessary but unplanned works, if the water supply is cut off for more than 4 hours and we have failed to give notice to you we will, except in the circumstances below, pay you £30, or £50 for non-domestic customers. If we fail to pay this within 10 working days you can claim an additional £30.

The circumstances described above are:

- (a) that industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agent made it impracticable to give the notice at least 48 hours before the water supply was cut off; or
- (b) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as being affected and that the you did not make a claim for payment, whether orally or in writing, under this guarantee within 3 months following the date on which your supply was cut off.

11.6 Supply Not Duly Restored

This guarantee applies where the supply of water to your premises is interrupted or cut off by us as described in section 11.5. Where this guarantee applies we shall, except in the circumstances

described in section 11.5, pay to you (or credit your account) the sum of £30 in the case of domestic premises and £50 for non-domestic customers if:

(a) the supply of water to the premises is not restored by the time specified for restoration of that supply in a notice given in accordance with section 11.5.

(b) where the supply is interrupted or cut off in such circumstances as are mentioned in section 11.5 because of a leak or burst in a strategic main, if the supply is not restored within 48 hours from the time when we first became aware of the interruption or the supply was cut off;

(c) where the supply is interrupted or cut off as mentioned in subsection (b) and there is no leak or burst as is so mentioned, if the supply is not restored within 12 hours from the time when we first became aware of the interruption or the supply was cut off. Where a payment is due to be made or credited to you by virtue of this section we shall, except in the circumstances described below, pay to you or credit your account) a further sum in respect of each further complete period of 24 hours during which the supply remains unrestored of £10 in the case of domestic premises and £25 for non-domestic customers.

The circumstances mentioned above are:

(a) that severe weather conditions or industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agent precluded the restoration of the supply within the relevant period; or

(b) in a case described in the circumstances of (b) or (c) above which were so exceptional that it would be unreasonable to have expected the supply to be restored within the relevant period; or

(c) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as being affected and that the you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within 3 months following the date on which the supply was cut off.

This guarantee does not apply where a supply is interrupted or cut off because of drought.

11.7 Low Water Pressure

We will maintain a minimum pressure in a communication pipe serving your premises with water at 10 meters static head. At this pressure it should not take longer than 18 seconds to fill a 2 litre container. Where in any period of 28 days the pressure in a communication pipe falls below this level of pressure on 2 occasions lasting more than 1 hour we will, except in the circumstances described below, pay you (or credit your account) the sum of £30.

The exceptions described in this paragraph are:

(a) that a payment under this regulation has already been made to you in respect of the same financial year; or

(b) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within 3 months from the later date of the 2 occasions on which the pressure fell below 10 metres static head; or

(c) that industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agents made it impracticable to maintain the minimum pressure referred to in the first paragraph; or

(d) for non-potable water where an alternative site specific minimum pressure has been communicated to our customers (e.g. on bills).

This regulation does not apply where the pressure falls below the minimum pressure referred to in this section, in connection with the carrying out of necessary maintenance works or because of drought.

11.8 Restrictions on Use

This guarantee applies where we issue you with a 'Restriction of Use Notice' after we have become aware of an actual water quality problem. Where this guarantee applies we shall, except in the circumstances described below, pay to you (or credit your account) the sum of £30, each time it happens.

The circumstances in this paragraph are:

(a) that it was impractical for us to have identified you as affected and that you have not made a claim for payment, either orally or in writing, under this guarantee within 3 months from the date of the Restriction of Use Notice; or

(b) that it was necessary to issue the Restriction of Use Notice as a result of severe weather conditions, industrial action by our employees or the act or default of a person other than an officer, employee or agent of Albion or a person acting on behalf of its agents.

11.9 Working in the Street

Except in emergencies we will always try to carry out work in the street so that access to individual properties is not blocked. Where this cannot be avoided, we will agree with you in advance times when work will be carried out. If we do not keep to these times, we will pay you £10. We are not required to make a payment if we fail to meet this standard because of circumstances outside our reasonable control, e.g. exceptional weather conditions, strikes or actions of third parties.

11.10 Money Paid in Error

If we discover that over a period of time a customer has wrongly paid money for a service not provided (e.g. for sewerage services when a property is not connected to our sewers), we will refund all money paid in the 6 years before the mistake is discovered or the period during which we were

appointed as undertaker, whichever the shorter, together with interest if the period in question is longer than 12 months.

11.11 Direct Debits

If we make an error in the handling of a Direct Debit payment, we will refund on proof of any bank charges incurred or financial loss.

11.12 Receipts

Where you request a receipt for cheques paid to us, we will pay you £10 if we do not despatch one within 5 working days of receipt. We are not required to make a payment if we fail to meet this standard because of circumstances outside our reasonable control, e.g. exceptional weather conditions, strikes or actions of third parties.

11.13 Court Claims

If we make an error or omission which causes a Court Claim to be issued against you erroneously for non-payment of charges, we will pay you £100.

11.14 Access to Private Property

If we fail to consult over access to your private property where rights of access do not already exist, we will pay you £25.

11.15 Failure to take an Annual Meter Reading

If we installed a meter or meters at your property and fail to base at least one water supply bill a year on an actual reading, we will pay you £10.

11.16 Exceptions

If you owe us money and the debt has been outstanding for more than six weeks at the time when a payment is due to you under this Scheme, any payment will normally be credited to your account. We will notify you in writing that we have done this.

Your legal rights to take action for any loss or damage suffered are not affected by payments under this Scheme. Payments do not constitute an admission of liability on our part.

Any dispute regarding your right to a payment may be referred to Ofwat for a binding determination.

Section 12 Useful Contact Details

Albion Water Limited

Emergency Helpline **0800 917 5819**

Customer Service Helpline **03300 242020**

Our Customer Service Helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 am until 5:30 pm. Please call it if you want information on our water services in your area or if you have any concerns or comments on the service you receive. The customer helpline number can also be used to report faults, notify us of a change of address or to explore payment options.

Contacting Albion in writing

If you want to write to us about any customer service or billing issue, please use:

Albion Water Limited, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

Albion on-line

Our website - **www.albionwater.co.uk** - contains customer information and email addresses if you wish to contact us electronically.

Registered Office:

Wessex Water, Operations Centre, Claverton Down Road, Claverton Down, Bath, England, BA2 7WW

Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)

Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA
Telephone: 0121 644 7500
e-mail: mailbox@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk

Consumer Council for Water (CCWater)

CCWater
c/o 1st Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square
Birmingham
B2 4AJ
Telephone: 0300 0342222
e-mail: You can email via the CCWater website at www.ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 4:30

Water Redress Scheme (WATRS)

WATRS
Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution International Dispute Resolution Centre
70 Fleet Street
London
EC4Y 1EU
Telephone: 0207 520 3801
e-mail: info@watsr.org

Environment Agency (EA)

Environment Agency
National Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 544
Rotherham
S60 1BY
Telephone: 03708 506 506
e-mail: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI)

Drinking Water Inspectorate,
Area 4a Ergon House,
Horseferry Road,
London SW1P 2AL
Telephone: 030 0068 6400
e-mail: dwi.enquiries@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Citizens Advice
Myddelton House,
115-123 Pentonville Road,
London, N1 9LZ
Telephone: 0344 111444

Customer Information Literature

We produce information notes on many aspects of our business. Copies of the information notes listed below are available on request and accessible on our website.

Customer Code of Practice	Environmental Policy
Charges Scheme	Health & Safety Policy
Code of Practice on Payment	Regulatory Accounts
Complaints Procedure	Code of Practice on Pipe-laying
Leakage FAQ	

Appendix 1

Payment and Debt Recovery

WHAT CAN ALBION DO TO HELP?

This Code of Practice applies to domestic customers only and has been approved by the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).

1. Having Difficulty Paying Your Water or Sewerage Bill?

We recognise that it is difficult for some customers to pay their bills. We will not disconnect a domestic customer from the water or sewerage network for not paying, but we will take other action to obtain payment.

We will always try to help a customer trying to pay. We guarantee that we will keep our side of any agreement we make with you. You must keep yours.

This Code confirms how we will help and what we will do if you do not pay.

2. How to Get Help?

Please contact us as soon as possible. We cannot help you unless you tell us that you are having difficulties paying your bill. The sooner you contact us, the sooner we will be able to suggest a way to help you pay.

If you are having difficulty in making payments, please call our Customer Services Helpline on 03300 242020 (weekdays between 8:30am and 5:30pm)

Alternatively please write to us at:

Albion Water, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

You may find it helpful to obtain independent advice or debt counselling. If so, you could contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, their contact details can be found in your Charges Scheme.

We will agree to a payment plan suggested by an approved debt counsellor and will take no further action to recover any debts provided that you keep to the agreed plan. Please let us know if you are in discussion with an advice centre so that we can keep up to date on the steps that you are taking to manage your debt and may be able to put a hold on our debt recovery actions.

The local office of the independent CCWater may also be able to advise you on where you can get help, their contact details and a brief introduction to their structure can be found in sections 2.3 and 12 of our Code of Practice.

3. How Can We Help?

We cannot simply reduce the amount you have to pay but if you are paying on a rateable value or assessed basis and it is possible that your annual bill would be lower if you had a water meter installed, we will suggest that you consider taking this action.

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If your code is highlighted above you will need to contact the company that supplies your water to arrange meter installation (their contact details can be found in your Charges Scheme). You will have a legal right to change back to unmetered charges within 12 months of the meter being fitted (or within one month of receiving a bill showing the total amount of water you have used in the 12 months since you had a meter fitted).

If you are already on a meter, we will check to see whether you are entitled to pay the WaterSure tariff which may give you a lower annual bill (see Section 8.4, for further information). We can also send you water saving advice which may help you reduce the amount of water you use and hence, the amount you have to pay.

Once we have checked to see whether you are paying the lowest possible bill for your situation, we will discuss your concerns with you and try to agree a payment plan which will help you to pay your bill. For both metered and unmetered payment plans, payments can be made monthly or on an alternative agreed frequency.

We operate a special Meter Payment Plan for metered customers. Under the Plan customers agree to pay a fixed amount at agreed intervals (normally by monthly Direct Debit). At the end of each year we will review the account and make any adjustments to the required payments if water use has changed and the amount being paid is too high or too low.

If the account is in credit and a bill has been issued recently, customers can choose to have the over-payment refunded or carried forward to reduce next year's payments. If not enough has been paid, the debt will be added to the following year's bill and monthly payments re-set to repay the outstanding balance over the next 12 months.

We will always require a payment plan to be set at a level which clears the current year's charges by the end of the financial year (31 March) but if there are arrears on the account we may be able to agree a longer period of time to clear these to make instalments more manageable.

Instalments can be paid by:

- (a) Direct Debit
- (b) internet banking
- (c) cheque by post to:

Customer Accounts, Albion Water, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

(Please do not send cash through the post)

(d) cash at a PayPoint facility, details and the location of participating outlets are available on request

(e) credit or debit card via our customer helpline.

Full details of all charges, payment plans and payment options are included in our Code of Practice and Charges Scheme, both available on request.

If you have difficulties in getting to a PayPoint service provider, where you can make payment, because of disability we will try to find a convenient arrangement to help.

To set up a payment plan please call us on **03300 242020** so that we can discuss your requirements with you and agree a suitable plan. The Helpline is open weekdays (Monday through to Friday) from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

4. Where Else Can You Get Help?

If you receive Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit, you may be able to have payments made directly to us from your benefit under the 'Water Direct' payment scheme. Under this scheme your water and sewerage charges (and arrears) will be paid directly from your benefit and, whilst payments are made, no further debt recovery action would be taken. We can help you to arrange this with the Department for Work and Pensions if you call us on **03300 242020**. If you contact Jobcentre Plus or the Department for Work and Pensions directly please also notify us so that payment receipts and debt recovery procedures can be adjusted.

A restricted Special Assistance Fund exists to help eligible customers who are trying to pay their bills but who are having difficulties so doing for reasons of severe financial hardship or personal circumstances. If you believe that you are eligible for special assistance please contact us on **03300 242020** to discuss.

AVOID WORRY – ACT NOW – GET IN TOUCH

5. What if you think your bill is wrong?

If you think that you are not responsible for a bill we send you, or if you think that the amount claimed is wrong, or if you have asked CCWater (the consumer body charged with representing customers interests – please see Section 12 for their details) to investigate an unresolved complaint, please contact us immediately on **03300 242020**.

We will look into the matter and try and resolve it with you; during these investigations the debt recovery process will be put on hold. If we cannot agree with you, or an action plan with CCWater was not arranged, debt recovery will continue and we may have to ask the County Court to decide.

6. Tenants

If you are a tenant you are responsible for paying water and sewerage charges unless your landlord has agreed with us in writing to pay the charges. If your tenancy agreement states that the landlord is responsible please check that she or he has a written agreement with us to pay.

7. What Will Happen if you Do Not Pay Your Bill or Keep to a Payment Plan?

Our water and waste water disposal services have to be paid for. We will pursue charges where they are not being paid. If after we have sent you a bill we do not receive payment or any contact from you to discuss payment, we will send you a reminder. We will also send you a reminder if you miss paying instalments.

If we do not hear from you or do not receive payment after sending you a reminder, we will send you notice of our intention to ask the County Court to issue a Claim for non-payment. If you had been paying by instalments and not responded to a reminder, you will receive a combined notice of cancellation of your instalment plan and intention to issue a Claim covering the whole amount of debt.

If you do not respond to this notice, depending on your payment history, we may:

- ask the Court to issue a Court Claim; or
- contact you again ourselves; or
- ask a Debt Collection Agency to recover the outstanding money.

If a Court Claim is issued it will add to the debt you owe us as you will have to pay Court and Solicitors' Costs.

If you receive a Court Claim you can ask the Court to decide how you should pay off the debt but if you do, you may have to pay additional Court costs. You can also dispute the Court Claim if you believe you do not owe the money claimed.

If you do not respond to the Court Claim, the Court will make an Order against you for the full debt. Further legal action, such as the issue of a Warrant for the seizure of goods, can be taken against you once an Order has been made and will add extra costs to your outstanding debt. A Court Order for payment may affect your ability to obtain credit.

Where an Order for payment has been made by the Court and there is still no agreement with a customer to pay a debt, depending on the circumstances we may take one or all of the following actions:

- ask a Debt Collection agency to recover the outstanding money,
- visit a customer ourselves to try and agree a payment plan,
- ask the Court to issue an enforcement process such as:

- a Warrant to allow a Court Bailiff to seize your goods (county court bailiffs work for and are regulated by the Court).
- an Attachment of Earnings Order requiring your employer to pay money from your wages directly to us.
- a Charging Order if you own your home. This will mean that you have to settle the debt before you can complete the sale of your home.

8. Debt Collection Agencies

Where a Debt Collection Agency has been asked to recover money, any disputes or offers of payment must be made to the Agency using the contact telephone number or address on correspondence the Agency has sent you.

The Debt Collection Agencies we use are regulated by the Office of Fair Trading, are rigorously vetted by us and operate to strict codes of practice. If you have any concerns or complaints about a Debt Collection Agency please write to us immediately (contact details in section 12).

9. Complaints

Our complaints procedures are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Code of Practice, a copy of which is available on-line or from our customer service team.

10. CCWater

CCWater is an independent body, established in 2005, to represent consumer interests. It has 5 committees, four in England and one in Wales, the Chairmen of which represent the regions on the CCWater Board. CCWater has a customer service team covering your area, based in their Birmingham office (see Section 12 for full contact details).

Appendix 2

Complaints Procedure

INTRODUCTION

THIS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE PROVIDES INFORMATION ON:

- our definition of a complaint;
- arrangements for receiving, handling and registering complaints;
- compensation;
- arrangements for reviewing a case if you are dissatisfied with the way in which your complaints have been handled previously;
- monitoring and analysis of complaints; and
- confidentiality.

The Procedure is supported by staff training, documentation and appropriate contractual arrangements with third parties.

PROCEDURAL STEPS

Under Sections 29 and 33 of the Competition and Services (Utilities) Act 1992, we have produced a Complaints Procedure for dealing with complaints from customers or potential customers.

There are three levels for investigating and responding to complaints within the Procedure:

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Level 1

You will receive a response from an employee working in one of our complaints teams.

Level 2

If you are dissatisfied with our first response, you can ask for a senior manager to review your complaint and the way we have handled it.

Level 3

If you are still dissatisfied after having had a response from our Customer Service Representatives and a Senior Manager, you can ask the independent CCWater (address in section 19 below) to investigate your complaint, if you are still dissatisfied after CCWater have investigated you can refer the issue to WATRS (address in section 19 below).

The full Complaints Procedure follows, setting out how we will handle complaints, a summary of this will be sent along with our replies to complaints.

COMPLAINTS

1. DEFINITION OF COMPLAINTS

- 1.1. A complaint is defined as any contact with us by a customer or potential customer in which an allegation is made that any action, or inaction, or any service provided by us has fallen below his or her expectation.
- 1.2. A contact will be defined as a complaint if you express dissatisfaction with the services provided by us regardless of whether the complaint is made on behalf of another party or the person making the complaint does not pay charges us.

2. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

- 2.1. Complaints which are made anonymously will be considered carefully and action taken where it is warranted. Anonymous complaints will not be recorded by us for reporting purposes.

3. RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS

- 3.1. You are asked to direct complaints to our Customer Service Department in the first instance.
- 3.2. Full details of how to contact us with a complaint will be sent to you annually.
- 3.3. The telephone number and the address to contact our customer service team about accounts or service issues are:

Accounts and Customer Service Issues

Our team can be contacted by telephone on **03300 242020**

Alternatively, if you need to contact us in writing about an accounts or customer service issue, please write to:

Albion Water Limited, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

or email to: complaints@albionwater.co.uk

4. COMPLAINTS MADE IN PERSON

- 4.1. You are encouraged to make a prior appointment if you wish to speak to a named employee or manager although every attempt will be made to meet your wishes when visiting in person.

5. COMPLAINTS MADE BY TELEPHONE

- 5.1. Telephone calls will be answered promptly. However it may take longer to answer a call in an emergency situation when a lot of customers are telephoning us so we have to ask you to be patient.
- 5.2. Employees will give their names when answering telephone calls to provide you with a point of reference should further contact be necessary.
- 5.3. If the employee who answers a telephone call cannot deal with the complaint, the call and details of the complaint will be passed to someone who can deal with it effectively. If the

appropriate person is not available immediately, that person will telephone you later. Where this is unlikely to be the same day, you will be notified of this as soon as possible.

- 5.4. If you wish to speak to a named employee or a senior manager who is not available immediately, arrangements will be made for the call to be returned.
- 5.5. If a complaint made by telephone requires a site visit or other investigation we will aim to provide a full written response within ten working days.
- 5.6. Wherever possible, in cases such as a blocked sewer where flooding is imminent, or when water supply has completely failed, an employee or contractor will be on site addressing the problem within four hours of the telephone call being received.

6. WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

- 6.1. If requested, we will send an acknowledgement of receipt of a written complaint on the day it is received.
- 6.2. We guarantee to provide a substantive response to all written complaints within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. In appropriate cases we will provide guidance as to how a complaint may be progressed where it cannot be resolved immediately.
- 6.3. If we fail to reply within 10 working days a cheque for £30 will be sent to you automatically (unless you have owed us money for more than six weeks or are in arrears with an instalment facility in which case £30 will be credited to your account. You will be informed of this).
- 6.4. In the case of a complex complaint which may involve us in discussions and negotiations with other parties, then we will keep you informed of progress at least monthly.
- 6.5. There are exceptions to the requirement to make a payment, and these are:
 - (a) you inform us that you don't wish to pursue the complaint
 - (b) industrial action by our employees make it impractical to despatch a reply within the relevant period
 - (c) the act or default of a person other than our representative made it impractical to despatch a reply within the relevant period
 - (d) the complaint was not sent to the address notified in writing by us to our customers as the appropriate address for complaints of that nature
 - (e) the complaint was frivolous or vexatious, or
 - (f) the company reasonably considered a visit to be necessary, but severe weather made it impracticable to make the visit

7. HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

- 7.1. All complaints will be dealt with courteously, fairly, efficiently and as simply as possible.
- 7.2. Where it is in our power to do so, the cause of the complaint will be put right as quickly as possible. If we are not responsible for the cause of the complaint a full explanation of why we cannot help will be given together with suggestions as to who you should contact for assistance.
- 7.3. It may not be possible to remedy some problems immediately. Wherever possible in these cases we will take action to reduce the effect the problem has and keep you informed of action to eliminate the problem in the longer term.
- 7.4. Complaints will be overseen by one of our complaints handling teams in our customer service team. Staff who deal with complaints have undergone specific training in complaints handling and our procedures and policies for dealing with customers who wish to register a complaint. Regular training in complaints handling is provided for employees.

7.5. A response to a complaint will include:-

- Thanking you for contacting us.
- An apology where we are at fault.
- Explanation of all matters raised by you, including:
 - an explanation of the cause of the problem, where appropriate;
 - a description of the action which has been taken to overcome the problem; or
 - a description of the action which we will be taking together with timescales for that action; or
 - a description of the action which has been taken to reduce the problem together with an explanation of further action planned to resolve the problem ultimately and a commitment to keep you informed of progress; or
 - a full explanation of why we are not able to satisfy your requirements or expectations.
 - Advice on who to contact where responsibility for the problem does not lie with us.
 - A named contact and telephone number for further enquiries where this is appropriate.

8. COMPLAINTS ABOUT EMPLOYEES

- 8.1. A complaint about an employee of Albion will be reviewed and handled by a Manager or Director senior to the person about whom the complaint has been made.
- 8.2. In line with our general policy not to discuss publicly matters relating to individual members of staff, any disciplinary action taken by us in response to such a complaint will not be disclosed to the complainant.

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9. REDRESS

- 9.1. If we fail to provide you with a service which it guarantees, financial redress will be made in accordance with the levels set out in our Guaranteed Standards Scheme. Details of these standards, periodically updated, are contained within the Code of Practice.
- 9.2. Where a complaint involves a matter not covered by the Guaranteed Standards Scheme recompense will be considered taking into account the cause of the problem and loss suffered.
- 9.3. We may make an ex-gratia payment or provide other redress where an immediate remedy is not available for a problem or where worry or distress has been caused.
- 9.4. In certain cases, especially those where you allege specific loss or damage, it may be necessary to ask you to provide us with full details, together with receipts for any expense incurred.

10. REGISTERING AND MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

- 10.1. All written complaints will be registered by us on the day that they are received. Where the complaint needs to be directed to another office for investigation it will be transferred there on the day it is received.
- 10.2. In registering a written complaint we will record the substance of the complaint; any special circumstances relating to the customer; whether a Guaranteed Service Standard is involved; and the date on which a reply is due to be sent as well as details of the person making the complaint.

- 10.3. Relevant managers will monitor complaints not answered within five days to ensure that target response times are met.

11. TELEPHONE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLAINTS MADE IN PERSON

- 11.1. Telephone complaints and complaints made in person normally will be recorded on our customer contact system as they are received. However in an emergency situation it may be necessary to register the complaint at a later stage.
- 11.2. Relevant managers will monitor complaints not answered within five days to ensure that target response times are met.

12. COMPLAINTS FROM CUSTOMERS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS NOT THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE

- 12.1. We will always try to deal with a customer for whom English is not their first language in a way which makes communication easy. The arrangements necessary to enable this may mean that it takes longer to handle these complaints.

13. DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS

- 13.1. Where a customer is dissatisfied with the way in which we have handled a complaint, or action it has taken to resolve a problem, the case will be reviewed by the senior manager responsible for the area of the business associated with the complaint.
- 13.2. If the relevant senior manager has been involved in a case previously the review will be carried out by a Director of Albion to ensure an independent review. Both senior functional managers and the Director are empowered to take any action necessary to resolve the matter under review with the customer and are expected to do so.
- 13.3. A substantive response will be sent within 10 working days. A £30 payment will be made automatically for failures to meet this target.

14. CUSTOMERS WITH SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

- 14.1. We recognise that complaining in writing may not be possible for all of our customers. Where you are dissatisfied but are not able to write to explain why, we will make arrangements either to telephone or to visit to take details. Where appropriate we will send a written note of the details we have recorded to confirm that they reflect accurately what we have been told.
- 14.2. Customers requiring our assistance with registering a complaint should call **03300 242020** and ask for our Special Requirements Complaints Service.
- 14.3. Only when we know that you are satisfied with what we have recorded will we begin formally to review the complaint. A response will then be made in an appropriate format within 10 working days. This may be by telephone or a further visit but where we do this we will always send written confirmation afterwards.

15. THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER (CCWATER)

- 15.1. In the event that you remain dissatisfied after a senior manager has reviewed her or his complaint the matter may be referred to the CCWater, the independent customer watchdog for the area.
- 15.2. CCWater is independent of us. A complaint may be referred to it at any time but usually it will not begin its own investigations into a complaint until we have had the opportunity to resolve it.

The address and telephone number for the local area CCWater is:

CCWater
c/o 1st Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square
Birmingham
B2 4AJ

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

e-mail: You can email via the CCWater website at www.ccwater.org.uk

Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 4:30

- 15.3. If you remain dissatisfied following CCWater's efforts to resolve your complaint, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Water Redress Scheme known as WATRS. WATRS is a voluntary alternative dispute resolution scheme to help address the very small number of customer complaints that remain unresolved. WATRS, is designed to provide an independent, impartial and easy to use alternative to going to Court or a Tribunal.
- 15.4. You can make an application, free of charge, via WATRS website www.watrs.org or you can ask for an application form to be sent to you info@watrs.org. Guidance notes are available on the website or you can ask for a copy to be sent to you by telephoning 0207 520 3801. Their address is:

WATRS
70 Fleet Street
London
EC4Y 1EU

- 15.5. We have signed up to the scheme's commitments which are set out below. A full copy of the Scheme Rules can be found here www.watrs.org/commitments.
Commitment to:
1. Provide WATRS free of charge to customers;
 2. Support the principles set out in the ADR Specification;
 3. Respect the independence of WATRS
 4. Be bound by decision of the WATRS' adjudicator if accepted by customer and to implement decision as required by Scheme Rules;
 5. Co-operate with and have due regard to the recommendations of the ADR Panel
 6. Provide accurate and reliable information to and co-operate with the WATRS' adjudicators;
- 15.6. What type of complaint can be referred to WATRS?
Only disputes relating to the following apply:
Bills, payment, collections and debt recovery
Metering
Water supply services

Wastewater/sewerage services
Development and new supplies

16. LEGAL REDRESS

- 16.1. In some cases you have a legal right to refer a problem either to arbitration, or to the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) for determination, or to the Courts. Where we cannot reach agreement with you in such cases we will ensure that we notify you of your right to refer the matter to another body.
- 16.2. Matters which may be referred elsewhere include
- Financial conditions for water supply or sewerage requisition.
 - Entitlement to a free meter
 - Conditions for disconnecting and reconnecting non-domestic supplies
 - Extensions to the period within which a sewer must be provided after requisition or the places at which private drains and sewers connect with the requisitioned sewer.
 - Adoptions of water mains, sewers and sewage disposal works.
 - Conditions for the connection of a drain to a public sewer.
 - Requirement that a proposed drain or sewer be constructed so as to form part of the general drainage system.
 - Alterations to the drainage system of premises.
 - Closure and prohibition of use of a public sewer.
 - Our exercise of entry powers on private land.
- 16.3. Further information on arbitration is included in our Code of Practice.

17. ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS AND PERFORMANCE

- 17.1. A regular report on types of complaints received and our performance in responding to them is reviewed by the Board. This information will be used to identify areas of service and policy which need to be reviewed and action which needs to be taken to improve services to customers.
- 17.2. We will undertake regular quality audits of the way in which complaints have been handled. The quality audit may involve customer research.
- 17.3. Independent audits of the way we handle complaints will also be undertaken at our office by CCWater. Its reports on its audits will be addressed to, and reviewed by, our Chief Executive.

18. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 18.1. All information held about you will be treated in strict confidence. Access to information by employees will be on a “need to know” basis only. Similarly information relating to individual employees and their actions will be treated as confidential.
- 18.2. Relevant provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to information held by us. A disciplinary offence may be committed if an employee releases information protected by the Act.

19. CONTACT DETAILS

Our contact details are set out below.

WON	SON	WAS	WRS	SAR
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Please note that, for customers with one of the service codes above complaints relating to the provision of water services should be addressed to the incumbent whose contact details will be shown on your water supply bill and, for convenience, are reproduced in your Charges Scheme.

ALBION WATER LIMITED

Emergency Helpline **0800 917 5819**

Customer Service Helpline **03300 242020**

Our Customer Service Helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am until 5:30pm.

If you want to write to us about any customer service or billing issue, please use:

Albion Water Limited, Customer Services, Harpenden Hall, Southdown Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 1TE

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Our website - www.albionwater.co.uk - contains customer information and email addresses if you wish to contact us electronically.

THE WATER SERVICES REGULATION AUTHORITY (OFWAT)

Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham
B5 4UA
Telephone: 0121 644 7500
e-mail: mailbox@ofwat.gov.uk

THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR WATER

CCWater
c/o 1st Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square
Birmingham
B2 4AJ

Telephone: 0300 034 2222
e-mail: You can email via the CCWater website at www.ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 4:30

WATER REDRESS SCHEME (WATRS)

WATRS
70 Fleet Street
London EC4Y 1EU
Tel: 0207 520 3801
e-mail: info@watrs.org

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB)

To find your local CAB please contact the central CAB using the contact details listed below.

Myddelton House,
115-123 Pentonville Road,
London, N1 9LZ

Telephone number: 0344 111444
<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Appendix 3

Leakage FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

This appendix and section 4.9 together form our leakage code of practice. This appendix provides answers to commonly asked questions regarding our procedures on leakage from properties.

1. Will I have to pay to have a leak repaired?
Our free repair service applies to the supply pipe as shown in the diagram in section 4.7 of our Code of Practice. It does not cover internal pipework, or pipes under buildings. If you would like further information please speak to our Customer Services team on 03300 242020. If a leak occurs in the householders supply pipe and it is not covered by our free repair service, the householder will then be responsible for repairing the pipework. We can provide a list of approved plumbers to carry out this work. If you fail to take remedial action within a certain period of time we may perform the repairs and charge you for the work (subject to 14 days' notice) unless you have a reasonable explanation for the delay.
2. Does the leakage code of practice refer to domestic or commercial properties?
Unless specifically stated, all properties served by us, irrespective of ownership, are covered by our leakage code.
3. Are metered and unmetered properties covered?
The relevant provisions apply to both metered and unmetered properties and all of our water services (potable water, recycled water and, for metered properties, sewerage).
4. Who is responsible for leakage?
Leakages from pipes within the boundary of your property are your responsibility, whether or not you are metered and irrespective of where the meter is installed.
5. What causes leakage?
Pipes can leak for many reasons, for example from: ill-fitting joints, corrosion, vibration, freezing temperatures, ground movement and excavations. Your internal pipes can also lose water from fittings and overflows.
6. How can I spot a leak?
Leakage can develop over a long period without being noticed. Signs to look out for are lower water pressure at your kitchen tap, your meter recording usage when there is no water appliance on, boggy ground or lush grass during a drought and, occasionally (on a dry day), running water in the pavement or road. If you believe that there may be a leak you should contact our customer service team without delay.
7. How quickly will Albion repair a leak?
We aim to repair leaks in our mains (located predominantly in the street) within 7 days, sooner if they are large or present a significant danger. If the leak is within your boundary and you are eligible for our free repair scheme (see section 4.9) we will aim to carry out repairs within 7 days.
8. What happens if a leak is detected when a meter is being fitted?
If we detect a leak on the incoming pipework we will fix it for no charge if no additional digging is required. If extra work is required we will, if eligible, take action under our free leak repair scheme. If the leak is within your property then you will be advised and charged for the water lost (based on the meter reading).

9. Can I have my water supply cut off?

Under most circumstances we are not able to cut off domestic properties. However, if you are required to fix a leak at your own expense and fail to take any action, we have a legal right to carry out the work and charge you for our reasonable costs. Section 75 of the Water Industry Act 1991 also gives us the right to cut off a supply if the leak is not repaired.

10. What is a leakage allowance?

If your supply is metered (either by us or a different water supplier) and you find, report and have the leak fixed you may be eligible for an allowance for the water lost. Such an allowance will only be granted once in a year for a domestic property (which, if appropriate, can be applied separately to potable and recycled pipes) and no allowance will normally be given for losses caused by negligence or internal pipework. The allowance will be a credit on your account to cover the usage over and above your normal usage during the period of the leak. We will use previous readings to establish your normal usage or use the assessed usage in your area for similar properties if previous readings are not available. We do not offer cash alternatives.

11. How do I make a claim?

You will need to call our customer service team who will investigate your claim and, if accepted, provide you with a calculation of assessed water usage or, in the case of a separate water supplier, pass through the relevant calculations. This procedure will take a number of days and will not commence until the leak is satisfactorily repaired in a reasonable timeframe.

12. Is there a leakage allowance for sewerage charges?

Yes, if sewerage charges are based on metered supply volumes and these have been found to be eligible.

13. What should I do if I am dissatisfied?

Please contact a member of our customer service team who will try their best to help and will be able to initiate a complaint procedure. The Consumer Council for Water will provide independent advice if we are unable to resolve your enquiry or complaint to your satisfaction (their details are in section 12).