



Albion Water Customer Code of Practice
March 2023

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Section 1 Introduction

Albion Water is licensed to provide water and wastewater to sites in England and Wales. Our current list of sites can be found at albionwater.co.uk/my-location.

The information included in this Code of Practice applies to both household and non household customers unless otherwise stated, any differences in standards will be clearly highlighted.

This Code of Practice contains the core customer information that Albion Water is required to communicate, and it has been issued in consultation with CCW and with reference to our licence which is issued by Ofwat (the economic regulator of the water sector in England and Wales). Further information and guidance can be found in our customer leaflets, as detailed in section 13, which are available in pdf format on our website (albionwater.co.uk) and can also be provided by email or post from the customer services team.

All of our literature is available in large print on request.

GSS – Where one of our Guaranteed Service Standards applies to the text in this document, it will be highlighted in a text box like this one.

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the **Document library** on our website or our leaflet **LEAFLET 8 – GSS**

Section 2 Contacting Albion Water

Customer Services

Contact our customer services team using one of the methods listed below:

Customer Services: **03300 242020** (Monday-Friday 8.30am-5.30pm excluding bank holidays)

Email: customerservices@albionwater.co.uk

Website: www.albionwater.co.uk/customer/my-water/report-a-problem/

Post: Albion Water Limited, Clearwater House, Castlemills, Biddisham, BS26 2RE

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency (a leak, blockage or any other emergency) please call our 24 hour emergency telephone number where your details will be passed on to our onsite team.

Emergencies: **0800 917 5819** (24/7 365 days a year)

Section 3 Employee Identification

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

The identification card you will be shown carries the employee's photograph, name, job title, Albion Water's logo, and a unique serial number. The employee will also carry a large print card giving their 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 Water 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).

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 would like to set up a password, please call customer services on **03300 242020**.

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

REMEMBER if you are in any doubt, DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR

Section 4 Our Services

Services

Depending on your location we may provide one or more of the following services to your property.

- Drinking water – drinking water regulated by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).
- Recycled water – water which is collected, treated and returned to properties for non-potable uses, such as toilet flushing and watering the garden (it is not suitable for drinking). This is also referred to as 'green water'.
- Sewerage services – the collection, treatment and safe disposal of wastewater and rainwater.

To identify the service or services that we provide to you can refer to the last three letters of your customer reference number on your welcome letter or bill. If you cannot find your customer reference number call our customer services team on **03300 242020**.

Code	Service
WON	Water only
SON	Sewerage only
WAS	Water and sewerage
WRS	Water, recycled water and sewerage
SAR	Sewerage and recycled water

Customers with the references WON, SON and SAR will receive their water or sewerage service from another supplier. They will bill you separately and you should contact them for any queries relating to this service (their contact details can be found on the **Local community** page of our website and in your **Scheme of Charges** or alternatively, on their bill).

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. 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. More details are provided in our **Water Resources Management Plan** on our website.

More information on green water services can be found on our website in the [My Water](#) section, or in our leaflet 'LEAFLET 2 – GREEN WATER'.

Drinking Water Quantity

Under the terms of our licence we are required to provide you with adequate water for normal domestic purposes by managing our network and resources effectively.

Pressure

We are legally bound to provide all customers with a minimum pressure of 7 metres head drinking water pressure. This should be powerful enough to fill a one-gallon (4.5 litre) container within 30 seconds. Water pressure and flow rates can be affected by various factors including;

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

GSS- If your pressure falls below 7 metres static head two times, lasting one hour or more in a 28 day period we will pay you (or credit your account with) £30.

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the Document Library on our website or our Leaflet 8 – GSS.

If you are experiencing low water pressure, we recommend that you check with your neighbours to establish if it is only your property that is affected. If it is then check your internal plumbing first and if the problem persists you can contact our customer services team for further advice on **03300 242020**.

Drinking Water Quality

The Water Industry Act 1991 places obligations on us to supply wholesome water for household purposes which conforms to standards laid down in The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000 and all subsequent amendments. The Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) enforce the regulations governing drinking water quality. We carry out regular drinking water quality tests and we publish annual reports to show the results of the testing. Samples are collected at random within our supply network and are analysed to check for compliance. We may need to take a sample from your property. Wherever possible prior notice will be given but in an emergency this might not be feasible. If we have any concerns about a sample taken at your property a member of our team will contact you immediately to provide advice.

Our Water quality report is available on the [Water quality](#) page of our website, or we can send a copy by email or post.

Information on the water hardness in your area can be found on the [Water quality](#) page of our website.

If you are concerned about an unusual change in the taste or odour of your drinking water please refer to the information on water quality in the [My Water](#) section of our website or in our leaflet entitled '[LEAFLET 1 - Water Quality](#)', or you can contact our customer services team for advice on **03300 242020**.

If you have reason to believe that your drinking water is unsafe, please call us on our 24-hour emergency number **0800 917 5819**. It may be necessary for us to arrange for an alternate supply of water 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.

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 the Environmental Health Officer at your local council who will be able to offer you further advice and support (contact details are on our website in the [My Location](#) section and also included in your [Scheme of Charges](#)).

Green water (the non-potable supply of water to toilets and outside taps) is not suitable for drinking but it is tested to ensure that it is bacteriologically safe. For more information on water quality and green water please visit the [My Water](#) section of our website or our leaflet entitled '[LEAFLET 2 Green water](#)'.

GSS – If we have to issue you with a 'Restriction of use Notice' after we have become aware of a water quality issue we will pay you £30

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the [Document library](#) on our website or our leaflet '[LEAFLET 8 – GSS](#)'

Plumbing alterations

Plumbing alterations must comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 in order to prevent wastage or contamination of supplies. We have powers of entry to inspect for breaches of these regulations. If you would like further information, please visit the Water Regs UK website waterregsuk.co.uk. To find an approved plumber visit watersafe.org.uk.

Interruptions to drinking water supply – planned

We may have to carry out repairs or improvement works on our networks throughout the year and this may disturb your water supply. Where we need to interrupt your supply for planned works we will give you at least 48 hours' notice, this is usually done by posting a notice through your door, and we will restore your water by the time given within the 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.

For our customers who have special needs and are registered for Priority Services we will make alternative arrangements to best suit the individual customer. If an interruption to water supply could worsen an existing health condition, please contact our customer service team immediately on **03300 242020**.

GSS - If we fail to give you the required notice of interruption to supply, we will pay household customers £30 and we will pay non household customers £50. If we don't pay this in 10 working days you can claim an additional £30.

If we are unable to restore your supply by the time on the notice we will pay household customers £30 and we will pay non household customers £50.

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the **Document library** on our website or our leaflet **LEAFLET 8 – GSS**

Interruptions to drinking water supply – unplanned

We aim to provide a constant supply of water, but sometimes there might be unplanned interruptions. These can be caused by extreme weather conditions, a burst main, pumps breaking down or a power supply failure.

No advance notice can be given if we need to interrupt your water supply due to an unanticipated network emergency. We will aim to restore your water supply as soon as possible.

If the interruption is caused by a leak or burst on a strategic main we will restore your supply within 48 hours. If the interruption is caused by a leak or burst on another pipe within our network, or failure of another part of our system we will restore your supply within 12 hours.

GSS – If the interruption is due to a leak or burst in a strategic main and we can't restore your supply within 48 hours we will pay household customers £30 and we will pay non household customers £50.

If the interruption is caused by something else and we can't restore your supply within 12 hours we will pay household customers £30 and we will pay non household customers £50.

In both scenarios if we will pay household customers £10 and non household customers £25 for each additional 24 period where supply is not restored.

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the **Document library** on our website or our leaflet **LEAFLET 8 – GSS**

Interruptions to green water supply – planned and unplanned

For interruptions to your green water supply we will offer the same levels of service as for our drinking water supply.

Wastewater and sewage disposal service

We maintain a system of sewers which takes the wastewater from your property to the public sewer system for treatment and disposal. The system of pipes which carries the wastewater is called the sewerage system. Surface and highway drainage may or may not be connected to our system.

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

Sewer flooding

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. 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 we become aware of a flood risk we will attempt to contact occupiers who are likely to be affected.

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.

GSS – If your home is flooded, you are entitled to a payment equal to your annual sewerage (up to a maximum of £1000). You may also be entitled to payment equal to 50% of your annual sewerage charge if you suffer external sewer flooding.

If we fail to make a payment within 20 working days of receiving your claim we will pay an additional £30 for household customers and £50 for non household customers.

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the **Document library** on our website or our leaflet **LEAFLET 8 – GSS**

Connecting to a public sewer

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

Requisitioning and provision of public sewers

If you live in an area which is not served by a public sewer, we are not obliged to 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 wastewater 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.

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

- the properties must be domestic and built before 20 June 1995; and
- two or more properties must be experiencing amenity or environmental problems, e.g. odour, flooding of land or property, pollution of watercourses; and
- 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 us once a connection has been made.

For information relating to new connections please visit the **Working with us** section of our website or our [leaflet entitled 'LEAFLET 5 – New Connections'](#).

Rights of access

We have the right to lay pipes on private land under section 159 of the Water Industry Act 1991 when exercising our powers to carry out works on or under land. A copy of our Pipe laying code of practice is available in the **Document library** on our website.

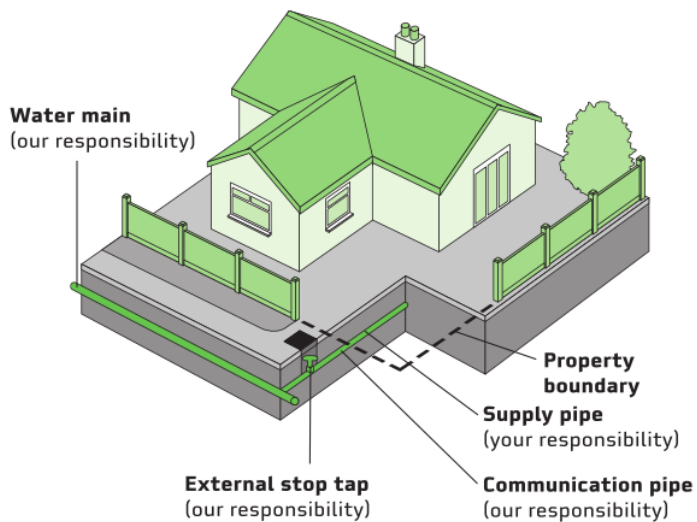
Your pipework

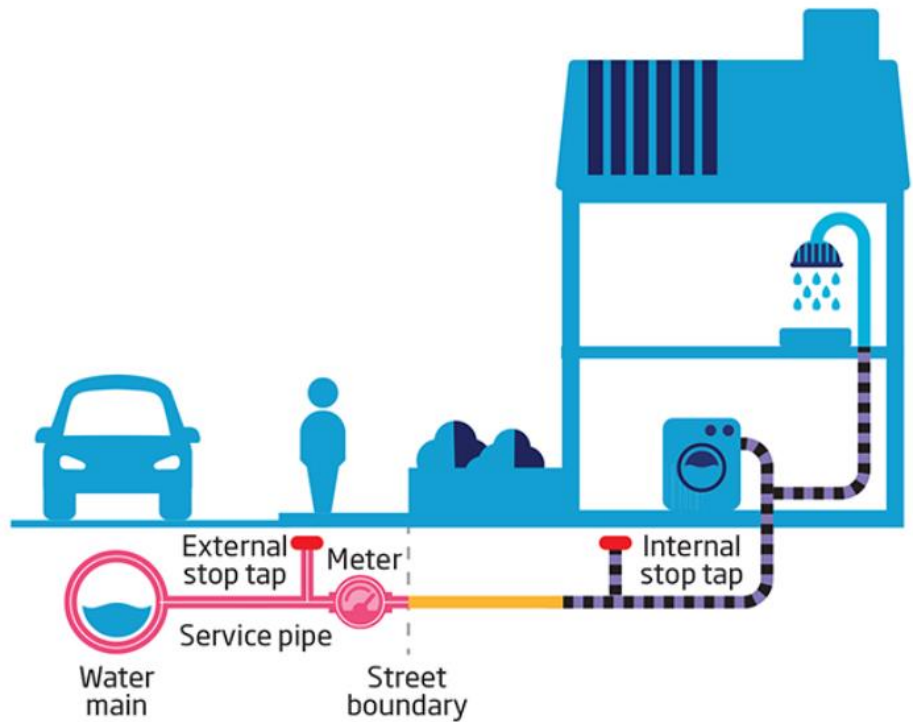
Water

We are normally responsible for the drinking water main and green water main in the road and leading to the boundary of your property. If a meter (or meters) is present we own and maintain it (and we will require access in order to do this so we ask that you do not cover or obstruct the meter cover), it is an offence to tamper with a meter, as set out in section 175 of the Water Industry Act 1991, and you may be responsible for damage caused to it. You are responsible for the supply pipe and pipework within your property boundary.

The usual layout for pipework for a separate supply is shown in the diagram below.

Separate supply





Our pipework	Your private supply pipe	Your pipework and fittings
We maintain it and fix leaks as quickly as we can.	Your responsibility, but we'll help you look after it.	Your responsibility, and you'll need to contact a plumber if you have any problems with them.

What pipework are you responsible for?

An example of pipework for shared supplies is shown below.

SHARED SUPPLY DIAGRAM

For information on our leak detection and repair service please see [section 8 below](#) and our leaflet entitled '[LEAFLET 3 - Leaks](#)', information is also available in the **My Water** section of the website.

Sewerage

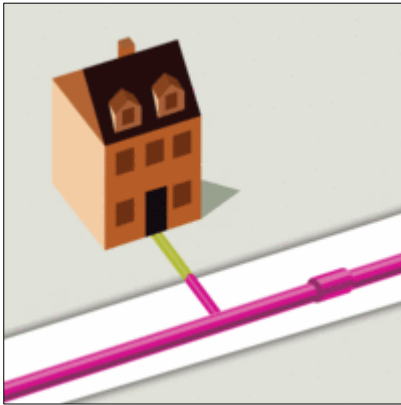
We are responsible for public sewers and drains. You are responsible for the drains that serve your property up to the boundary of your property. You are also responsible for:

- pipes connected to private treatment systems such as septic tanks, soakaways and private treatment works

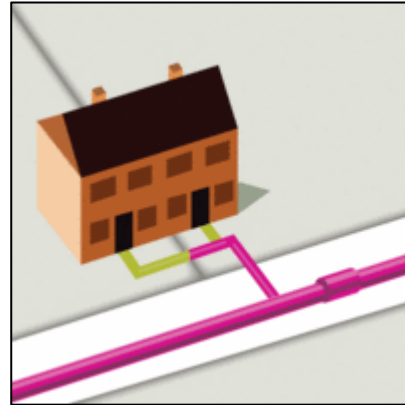
- other systems which do not connect to the public sewer such as surface water pipes which discharge directly to a watercourse
- internal drainage pipes or above ground pipework such as guttering or vent stacks

For shared supplies refer to the diagram below.

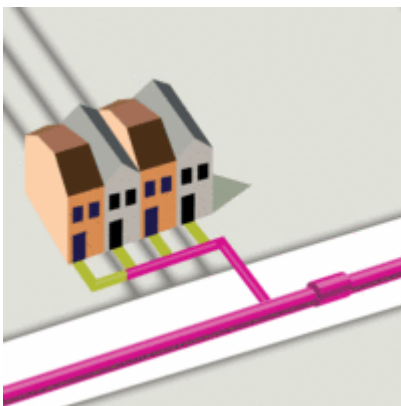
The diagram below shows the responsibility for pipework in different house types.



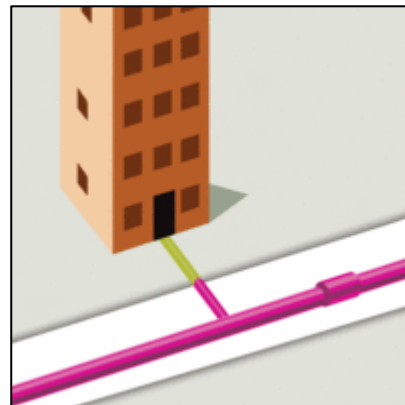
Detached



Semi-detached




Terraced

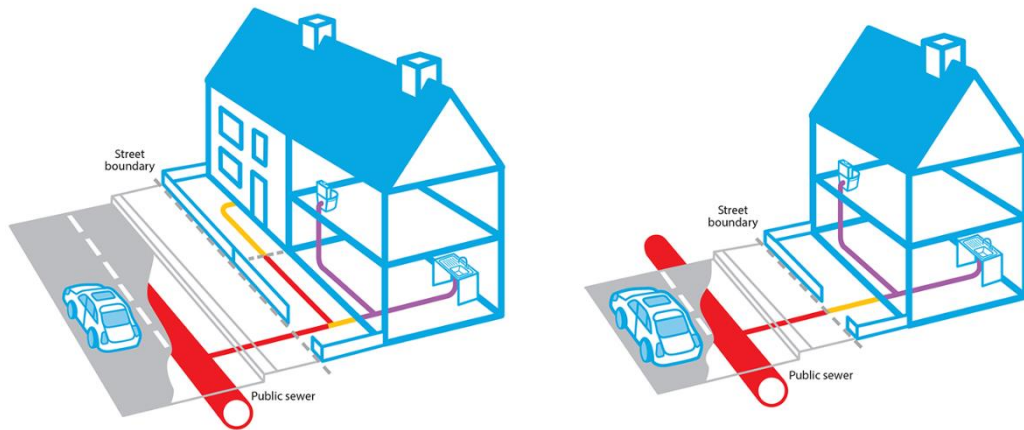


Flat or multiple dwelling

 Public sewer/drain– responsibility of sewerage company

 Privately owned– responsibility of property owner

 Property boundary



For information on sewer flooding please visit the **My Water** section of our website or **our leaflet entitled 'LEAFLET 4 – Sewers and wastewater'**.

Statutory water and sewer maps

We keep records of water and sewerage pipework at our offices and you have the right to view these maps. If you would like to make an appointment speak to our customer services team on **03300 242020**. There may be charges for paper copies of the maps. We can also provide maps by email, again there may be a charge for this service. Charges are laid out in our Schemes of charges and may differ from site to site, you can view our Schemes of Charges in the **Your site documents** page of our website or request a copy from our customer services team.

New connections

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 at the end of this leaflet.

Complete form ????

Additional charges for new properties

An infrastructure charge may 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 charges can be found ????](#)

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.

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. Self-lay organisations can become accredited under the Water Industry Registration Scheme (WIRS) which is recognised by all the water companies and Water UK.

Under WIRS, Lloyd's Register carries out technical assessments of the service providers who elect to be accredited for contestable works associated with installing water infrastructure.

Areas covered by WIRS include:

- design
- construction
- connections
- commissioning
- project management
-

Lloyd's Register offers an independent assessment and registration process that includes assessing the self-lay organisation's management procedures and processes. Lloyd's Register maintains a current list of [WIRS-accredited self-lay organisations](#).

Before a self-lay organisation can carry out work, they must be approved by us. The forms to complete can be found on the [Working with us page of our website](#).

Sewer connections

Connecting to a public sewer

You are entitled to have your drain or private sewer connected to our public sewers, subject to certain practical requirements. 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, see the [Working with us page of our website](#) for how to apply for a connection. We will let you know within 21 days whether we can accept your proposals and what the costs will be. We 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 charge for our inspecting the work or undertaking it ourselves.
- 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 we opt 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.

Complete form ????

Requisitioning and provision of public sewers

If you live in an area which is not served by a public sewer, we are not obliged to 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. We must provide the sewer within 6 months of the agreement between us. 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 we require 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 wastewater disposal facilities. This can only happen where the following criteria are met:

- the properties must be domestic and built before 20 June 1995; and

- two or more properties must be experiencing amenity or environmental problems, e.g. odour, flooding of land or property, pollution of watercourses; and
- 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 us once a connection has been made.

Contact details

Ofwat

WIRS

Section 5 Charges and payment

You can find information on the charges that apply to your property in our Scheme of Charges for your site. The Schemes of Charges can be found in the **Your site documents** section of our website or you can ask for a copy to be sent to you by our customer service team on **03300 242020**.

Responsibility for charges

The occupier(s) living in a property is legally responsible for payment of the water and wastewater services. Tenants are responsible for paying for the services we provide unless the landlord tells us otherwise. If your landlord has agreed to pay your water services charges for you, they must confirm this to us in advance. Landlords must provide tenants' details otherwise they may be held liable for a proportion of the charges. To register your details with us go to the **Register your details** form on our website or call us.

Types of charges

We have two types of charges for our services

- metered charges for properties where the water is supplied through a meter (including a fixed charge and a volumetric charge)
- unmetered charges for properties that do not have a meter, these may be based on the rateable value of a property (if the information is available) or an assessed charge for more recent properties

The chargeable rateable value of the property is:

- rated properties – the Rateable Value of the property

- 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
- 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.

If your property is unmetered, you can choose to have a meter installed and pay metered charges (there may be costs involved in installing the meter depending upon your pipework layout, contact our customer services team for more information). If we do not supply your water service, you will need to contact your water supplier directly, their contact information can be found on the **Your Location** page of our website and in your Scheme of Charges. If your water supplier is able to fit a meter they will share the details with us.

Billing

We send household bills out twice a year, usually in April and October. Some non household customers will get more frequent bills. We will send the bill to the address registered on our system. We can provide bills by email if requested. If you require assistance with your bill or need it in a special format (large print, translated, spoken or any other special format) please speak to our customer services team on **03300 242020**.

Payment

You can choose to pay your charges in full or in instalments (we currently offer six monthly, monthly, fortnightly and weekly plans). If you prefer a different instalment plan, then please contact our customer services team, we aim to be as flexible as possible to help you with your bill.

We accept payment by the following methods:

- Direct Debit (download a form from the **Pay my bill** page on the website or contact our customer service team)
- Bank transfer (see your bill for details)
- Credit/debit card online (visit the **Online Payment** page on our website) or by phone on **03300 242020**

- Cheque (write your customer reference number on the back of the cheque, please note that we do not accept post-dated cheques), send your cheque to: Albion Water Limited, 1

GSS – If a customer has wrongly paid money for a service not provided, 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.

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.

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the **Document library** on our website or our leaflet **'LEAFLET 8 – GSS'**

Help with charges

If you are struggling to pay your bill, please make sure you contact our customer services team as soon as possible. They will check your account and make sure that you are on the correct tariff and using the most convenient payment method for your situation. They will also provide information on the tariffs and schemes that we offer to help including;

- WaterSure – a special tariff for customers on a meter who use high volumes of water. To qualify you must be in receipt of certain benefits and have three or more children or a medical condition that means you use a lot of water.
- Special Assistance Fund (SAF) – a restricted fund, to qualify you must be in receipt of certain benefits and have a bill for the full year.
- Water Direct – a scheme run in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) where payment for water bills is deducted directly from benefits if you receive a qualifying benefit.

For more information on the help available please see the [Your bill](#) section of our website or the leaflet entitled **'LEAFLET 6 – Billing and help with bills'**

These tariffs and schemes are not available to non household customers. If you are a non household customer and are unable to pay your bills please contact our customer services team on **03300 242020** to discuss your options.

Non payment and debt recovery

Our services have to be paid for. We will pursue charges where they are not being paid. If we do not receive payment after sending your bill and you have not contacted us to set up a payment plan, we will send you a reminder. We will also send a reminder or contact you if you miss a planned payment.

If you do not contact us after we have sent the reminder, we will contact you to inform you of our intention to ask the County Court to issue a claim for non-payment. If you had been paying by

instalments and have not responded to a reminder letter and we have not been able to contact you, you will receive a combined notice of cancellation of your instalment plan and intention to issue a Claim covering the whole amount of debt.

At this point we will review your account and payment history and we may take one of the following actions:

- proceed to Court to request a Court Claim
- contact you again ourselves
- ask a debt Collection Agency to recover the outstanding money

Court claims

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 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.

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 the 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 contact us immediately on **03300 242020**.

Section 6 Business customers

Business customers in England (including charity, public sector and not-for-profit organisations) are able to switch their water and sewerage or trade effluent suppliers. For more information visit open-water.org.uk.

Section 7 Meters

If you have a meter installed at your property we aim to read it at least once a year. If we fail to do this we will compensate you, providing access was not restricted or denied. If we are unable to read your meter we will generate an estimated read 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 on **03300 242020**. You can inform the customer services team of your correct meter reading, we will then send you a revised bill. You can also submit your meter reading online using the **Submit a meter reading** page.

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 (as laid out in section 175 of the Water Industry Act 1991).

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 can 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 £70). 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

For information on how to request a meter installation, read your meter or any other issues, visit the **My meter** page on our website or read the leaflet entitled '**LEAFLET 7 – Meters**'.

GSS – If we fail to base at least one water bill a year on an actual reading we will pay you £10

For full details on this and all of our Guaranteed Service Standards please visit the **Document library** on our website or our leaflet '**LEAFLET 8 – GSS**'

Section 8 GSS

GSS

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme is a statutory scheme, which applies minimum performance standards to the regulated services of all water and sewerage companies and sets compensation level for any failures. 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 1 (below) we will pay you £50, and for those in section 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).

1 Keeping Appointments

When we make an appointment with you in writing or by phone, we will 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.

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

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.

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

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.

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 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

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 Water 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.

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 Water 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 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.

If we fail to pay this within 10 working days you can claim an additional £30 if you are a domestic customer or £50 if you are a business customer.

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

7 Low Water Pressure

We will maintain a minimum pressure in a communication pipe serving your premises with water at 7 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 Water 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.

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 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 Water or a person acting on behalf of its agents.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

15 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.

Payments in the event of drought

If we have to impose a drought order we will pay (or credit your account):

- £10 per day for household customers up to a maximum of our average household bill for the previous year
- £50 per day for non-household customer up to a maximum equal to the water charge paid by the customer in the previous year, if the customer has not paid a full year's water charges or a third party is responsible for the water charges, the maximum is set at £500

Section 9 Leakage

It is our duty under law to prevent water wastage caused by leaks on our system and to make sure that our networks are as efficient as possible.

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.

The free leak detection and supply pipe repair service is for household 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 and subject to the conditions set out in our leaflet **LEAFLET 3 - Leaks**) 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 householder's supply pipe and it is not covered by our free repair service, the householder will then be responsible for repairing the pipework. You can find an approved plumber at **watersafe.org.uk**. 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 Water 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 water) 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 services team on **03300 242020** they 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 service supplier if they are a different company.

For information on our leak detection and repair service please see [our leaflet entitled 'LEAFLET 3 - Leaks'](#), information is also available in the **My Water** section of the website.

Section 10 Complaints

We will deal with all complaints courteously, fairly, efficiently and as simply as possible.

We will put things right as quickly as possible, if we are not responsible for the cause of the complaint we will give you a full explanation of why we cannot help and we will help you find out who to contact for further assistance.

Some issues may take time to resolve, we will do everything we can to help you while the issue is being dealt with and we will keep you informed of the progress.

Complaints will be overseen by a member of 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.

When we respond to your complaint we will:

Thank you for contacting us.

Issue an apology where we are at fault.

Provide an 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.

Resolving complaints

If your complaint relates to an issue that is covered by our Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) we will pay you the compensation detailed (see LEAFLET 8 – GSS for further information).

If your complaint relates to an issue that is not covered by GSS we will consider compensation, taking into account the cause of the problem and any loss/damage suffered.

Monitoring complaints

All complaints will be recorded on the day they are received regardless of how they are made. Complaints are monitored internally to ensure that we respond within our target of 5 working days.

Complaints from customers who need extra assistance

If you need any assistance in making a complaint, we will work with you to make sure that you can make your complaint as simply as possible. Depending on the assistance required, it may mean that it takes longer to handle these complaints.

What to do if you are not happy with our initial response to your complaint

If you are not happy with the way in which we have handled a complaint, or action it has taken to resolve a problem, you can ask for the case to be reviewed by a senior manager.

If the relevant senior manager has been involved in a case previously the review will be carried out by another manager or the Director of Albion Water 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.

A substantive response will be sent within 10 working days. A £30 payment will be made automatically for failures to meet this target.

If you remain unhappy following review of your complaint

If you are still unhappy with the response after our review, you can ask CCW – The voice for water consumers to review your case.

CCW is an independent body. A complaint may be referred to them 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 contact details for CCW are:

CCW, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

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

Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 17:00

If you remain dissatisfied following CCW'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.

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 applications@watrs.org. Guidance notes are available on the website or you can ask for a copy to be sent to you by telephoning 0800 008 6909. Their address is:

WATRS, 100 St Paul's Churchyard, London, EC4M 8BU

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;

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

Legal redress

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.

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.

Contact details

Our contact details are set out below.

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,
Clearwater House
Castlemills
Biddisham
BS26 2RE**

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

CCW – The voice for water consumers

CCW

23 Stephenson Street

Birmingham

B2 4BH

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

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

Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 17:00

WATER REDRESS SCHEME (WATRS)

WATRS

100 St Paul's Churchyard

London

EC4M 8BU

Tel: 0800 008 6909

E-mail: applications@watrs.org

CITIZENS ADVICE (CA)

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: 0800 144 8848

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

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. The full Complaints Procedure is attached at Appendix 1 and can be found on our website in the **Document Library** as well as in our leaflet **'LEAFLET 9 – Complaints'**.

Section 11 CCW and WATRS

CCW – The voice for water consumers

CCW – The voice for water consumers 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 CCW Board. The team covering your area is based in Birmingham and their staff will deal with your enquiries (see below for their contact details).

CCW 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 CCW at any time, but usually it will not begin its own investigations until we have had the opportunity to resolve the complaint.

CCW – The voice for water consumers
23 Stephenson Street
Birmingham
B2 4BH

Telephone: **0300 034 2222**
online form: [Contact Us About a Complaint or Enquiry \(custhelp.com\)](https://www.ccwater.org.uk/contact-us)
e-mail: enquiries@ccwater.org.uk
website: www.ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 17:00

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 following a CCW investigation. WATRS, is designed to provide an independent, impartial and easy to use alternative to going to Court or a Tribunal. You can contact WATRS using the details below.

WATRS
100 St Paul's Churchyard
London
EC4M 8BU

Telephone: 0800 008 6909
e-mail: applications@watrs.org

Section 12 Useful contacts

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

CCW – The voice for water consumers

CCW, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH

Telephone: 0300 034 2222

online form: [Contact Us About a Complaint or Enquiry \(custhelp.com\)](http://custhelp.com)

e-mail: enquiries@ccwater.org.uk

website: www.ccwater.org.uk

Office hours: Mon to Fri 8:30 to 17:00

Water Redress Scheme (WATRS)

WATRS, 100 St Paul's Churchyard, London, EC4M 8BU

Telephone: 0800 008 6909

e-mail: applications@watrs.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.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

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

Telephone: 0800 144 8848

Section 13 Further information and publications

Our website is albionwater.co.uk and it contains full information on our services, as well as our regulatory documents, we also produce a series of customer leaflets that can be sent by email or post if required. To request a copy of any of our literature please call our customer services team **03300 242020**.

Number	Title	Subject
1	Water Quality	Taste and odour issues, water quality results, water hardness, fluoridation
2	Green water	Recycled water, uses for green water, water quality, pipework, plumbing alterations
3	Leaks	Identifying leaks, leak detection and repair service, finding approved plumbers
4	Sewers and wastewater	Pipework, blockages
5	New connections	How to apply for a new connection
6	Billing and help with bills	Billing information, our charges, help for customers experiencing financial difficulties
7	Meters	Requesting a new meter, how to read your meter, problems with your meter
8	GSS	GSS scheme, automated payment, compensation for late payment
9	Complaints	How to make a complaint, what to expect from Albion Water once you have raised a complaint, how to escalate a complaint that was not resolved to your satisfaction
10	Water efficiency	Advice on water efficiency
11	Priority Services	Priority services offered and how to register

APPENDIX 1

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, Clearwater House, Castlemills, Biddisham, BS26 2RE 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 Albion Water Customer Service Helpline: 03300 242020 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.

Albion Water Customer Service Helpline: 03300 242020

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: o 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.

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. Albion Water Customer Service Helpline: 03300 242020 CPGRO436.00

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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.