

Our charges and your bills

We're proud to be one of the lowest cost providers of water and wastewater services. In this section, you can find out more about:

- our charges and how they're calculated
- all about your bill
- surface water drainage, highway drainage and foul water
- unmetered and metered properties
- asking us to fit a water meter.

Our charges and how they're calculated

Ofwat, our economic regulator, reviews our prices every five years and sets the level of charges for each year within that five-year period. This price review takes into consideration the day-to-day costs of running our business, as well as the investment required to maintain and improve our water and wastewater pipes, sewers and treatment works.

Every financial year (1 April to 31 March), we publish our charges scheme and tariff leaflets which are approved by the Consumer Council for Water and Ofwat. These leaflets include helpful information about the way we charge you, along with our range of tariffs. You can find it online at thameswater.co.uk/charges or you can call us on **0800 980 8800** and we can post copies to you.

Your bill

Who sends your bill?

Most of our customers receive both clean water and wastewater services from us. The bills we send you will detail both your clean water and wastewater charges. For those customers who receive only one of our services, the way you receive your bills may be different depending on where you live and which service we provide. You may either receive separate bills from your clean water and waste water providers or you may receive just one bill, which includes the clean/wastewater charges on behalf of the other company.

We try to make sure your bill is as easy to understand as possible. It will include a summary of our charges, along with the payments you've made. You'll also find other useful information about how your bill is worked out and how to pay.

If you don't have a water meter, your bill is based on an unmetered annual set amount, plus a fixed charge. If you have a water meter your bill is based on your meter readings, plus a fixed charge. If you receive water and wastewater services from us these charges are shown separately. Find out all about our charges at thameswater.co.uk/charges.

To get more help in understanding your bill, visit our interactive guide at thameswater.co.uk/billexplained.

In any circumstance, if you receive a bill from us and you don't think we should have sent it to you, please call us on **0800 980 8800**.

If you use our services you must expect to pay for them. For options on how to pay your bill, please visit thameswater.co.uk/waystopay.

Our Customer Guarantee Scheme

If you write to us to query the accuracy of your bill, we will respond to you as quickly as possible but usually it is within ten working days of receiving your request. If we do not provide a detailed response to your query within ten working days, you will automatically receive a payment of £30. In most cases this payment will be made as a credit to your water services account.

For more information on our Customer Guarantee Scheme, please visit thameswater.co.uk/ourguarantees.

Paying your bill

If you're the occupier of a property, you're liable for the charges due, unless we have a written agreement that says otherwise. For example, we may have an agreement with your landlord saying they're responsible for the charges.

There are lots of ways to pay your bill, such as:

- Direct Debit - online at [thameswater.co.uk/direct](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/direct) or by calling **0800 980 8800**
- Debit/credit card - online at [thameswater.co.uk/pay](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/pay) or using our automated system on **0800 980 8800**
- Online - visit [thameswater.co.uk/pay](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/pay)
- At some banks - you'll need your giro slip from your bill. Always check with the bank before visiting
- PayPoint outlet - you'll need your payment card
- By post - send a cheque or postal order to Thames Water Utilities Ltd, PO Box 234, Swindon, SN38 3TW
- At the Post Office - they usually charges a processing fee for this service

For more information visit [thameswater.co.uk/waystopay](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/waystopay) or call us on **0800 980 8800**.

Difficulty paying?

If you're having trouble paying your water bill, please call us straight away on **0800 980 8800**. We can talk together about the best way to manage your payments and let you know what help is available. Alternatively, please visit [thameswater.co.uk/helppaying](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/helppaying) to see what other help is available from us.

Our Customer Guarantee Scheme

If you write to us to request to change the way you pay your bill, for example, method of payment or timescales, we will respond to you as quickly as possible. If we can't agree to your request, we will let you know within five working days of receiving your contact. If we do not provide a detailed response to your request within five working days, you will automatically receive a payment of £30. In most cases this payment will be made as a credit to your water services account. For more information on our Customer Guarantee Scheme, please visit [thameswater.co.uk/ourguarantees](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/ourguarantees).

Landlords and tenants

Where a landlord has agreed to pay the charges, we'll send the bill to your landlord. However, we don't get involved in disputes between landlords and tenants about who pays.

We'll normally bill the occupier of the property for the use of our services if there's any dispute about who is responsible for making the payment.

Common billing agreements

A common billing agreement may be set up if we've been unable to meter each separate property, for example, a block of flats that share a common water supply pipe. This is where a single landlord, freeholder, managing agent or other person or body, known as the consumer, accepts responsibility for a single bill. This single bill is the combined charge for all the properties supplied by the shared pipe.

The bill payer may pass on the charge to each household customer, but the charge is limited under the water resale order. For details about the provisions of the water resale order, visit www.ofwat.gov.uk.

Wastewater services

The wastewater services that we provide and charge for include:

- the taking away of rainwater (surface water) from your property
- highway drainage
- the removal of foul water
- the treatment of wastewater.

Removal of rainwater (surface water drainage)

The guttering and drains that collect rainwater at most properties is then connected to our sewers and we are responsible for taking it away. If your drains do not connect into sewerage system, then it is likely that the rainwater will drain into a watercourse or soakaway.

If you believe rainwater from your property doesn't drain to our sewers, you can get more information on how to claim a rebate at thameswater.co.uk/swd. Or you can call us on **0800 980 8800**. Your current bill shows you the actual reduction for the period of that bill, if you do qualify.

Highway drainage

Highway drainage is the rainwater that runs into the highway drains and then into our public sewers. This then becomes our responsibility to treat.

Foul water

Foul water is the wastewater from sinks, baths and toilets which is then treated at our sewage treatment works. If your property isn't connected to our sewer system, then it's likely the foul water is collected in a septic tank or cesspit. We aren't responsible for the upkeep or emptying of septic tanks or cesspits. You will need to let us know if you think you are being charged for wastewater services that we don't provide for you.

Unmetered properties

If you don't have a water meter at your property, your bill is based on an unmetered charge basis. This will usually be the chargeable (rateable) value of your property. If you asked us to fit a meter and for some reason we couldn't, you may be on our assessed household charge, based on your number of bedrooms. Find out more about our charges at thameswater.co.uk/charges.

To help explain what all the parts on your bill mean, we've built an interactive tool for you to explore, visit thameswater.co.uk/billexplained.

Paying your unmetered bill

Payment is due in full on 1 April, at the beginning of the charging year. However, you can spread the cost over the year if you wish. You can choose to pay:

- for the whole year by 1 April
- in two equal payments, payable by 1 April and 1 October
- in monthly instalments, payable from 1 April and monthly thereafter.

If you move into a property after 1 April, we'll let you know when your payment is due. Or, you can set up a two, eight, ten or twelve monthly payment plan with us. To learn more about the various ways in which you can pay your bill please visit thameswater.co.uk/waystopay.

A handy guide detailing all of our charges can be found at thameswater.co.uk/charges.

Metered properties

Why do we encourage water metering

Every five years, we, like all other water companies in England and Wales, publish a plan on how we aim to ensure that there's enough water for future generations. More information on our plans can be found at thameswater.co.uk/fittingmeters.

We all have a part to play to make sure there's enough water for everyone, now and in the future. As part of our campaign to get everyone using water wisely, we encourage our customers to have a water meter fitted if they don't already have one. Having a water meter means you can monitor the amount of water you use and pay for your usage, plus a fixed charge. This is the fairest way to pay for water.

Metering charges

If you have a water meter, we charge you on the amount of water recorded by your meter, plus a fixed charge. The wastewater services part of the bill is also based on your meter readings.

To help explain what all the parts on your bill mean, we've built an interactive tool for you to explore. You can take a look at thameswater.co.uk/billexplained.

Sending your bill

We'll send your bill every six months based on an actual meter reading whenever we can. If we send you an estimated bill, we'll adjust your bill when the meter is next read. Or, if safe to do so, you can read your own meter and let us know your meter reading here. We'll then send you an updated bill. You can also call us on **0800 980 8800**.

We aim to read your meter at least once a year to make sure you receive at least one bill per year based on an actual meter reading rather than an estimate.

Worried about an unexplained high bill

If your meter reading is higher than usual and you feel you haven't used more water than normal, then please visit thameswater.co.uk/highbill. Alternatively, please call us on **0800 980 8800**, so we can offer advice and if necessary arrange a visit to investigate.

If you think you've got a leak

If the problem is a leak, we're responsible if the leak is on the meter itself. Legally you're responsible for repairing leaks on your water supply pipe but we'll offer to fix the leak for free, find out more at thameswater.co.uk/burstsandleaks. If you think you have a leak on your supply pipe call us on **0800 316 9800** for more advice and information.

If there's a leak on your water supply pipe, we'll adjust your charges for the first leak at your property, as long as:

1. The leak is fixed within six weeks of us confirming the leak.
2. It wasn't caused by your negligence.
3. It wasn't one you should have known about and could have repaired sooner.

If we adjust your water supply charges, we'll also adjust the wastewater charges.

We won't adjust your water charges for any future leaks, but you may be entitled to an adjustment of your wastewater charges.

You're also responsible for the water pipes and appliances inside your home. This includes maintenance and repairs, at your cost.

Setting up a metered payment plan

If you've got a water meter, you don't have to pay your water bill in one go. To learn more about the various ways you can pay your bill please visit thameswater.co.uk/waystopay.

You don't think your meter's working properly

Water meters are extremely reliable and accurate. They're approved for accuracy by manufacturers and trading standards officers before leaving the factory. If a meter isn't working properly it tends to under record rather than over record. So, where meter readings are higher than expected, this generally means more water has been used since the last meter reading, you've got a leak on your water supply pipe, or a leak inside your home.

If you think your meter isn't working properly please contact us here at thameswater.co.uk/contactus or call us on **0800 980 8800**. We'll investigate, let you know what we've found, and replace your meter if we need to.

Adjusting your account

If your bill is higher than normal because of a leak or faulty meter, we'll credit your account with an amount we think you have used based on previous usage. If your bill is lower than normal because of a faulty meter we'll only backdate additional charges if

1. We've sent your meter away to be tested.
2. It's proven your meter gave the wrong measurements.
3. We've sent a copy of the test results to you.

Testing meters

If you ask us to test your meter, we can either do this ourselves or we can ask an independent company to carry out full weights and measures testing off-site.

If you would like your meter to be tested please contact us here at thameswater.co.uk/contactus or call us on **0800 980 8800** and ask for your meter to be checked. If your meter is found to be accurate, we reserve the right to make a charge for this service which is currently up to a maximum £70.

Tampering with meters

It is a criminal offence to tamper with a water meter. Water meters remain the property of Thames Water.

Moving home

Reading your meter on your last day

If you're moving home, please read your meter on your last day if you can and it's safe to do so. You can then give us your meter reading and new address details by completing the online form here at thameswater.co.uk/move or you can call us on **0800 980 8800**.

If you're unable to read your meter

If you're unable to read your meter, we can send you an estimate of your final bill. Or you can tell us up to 28 days before you move so we can arrange to read your meter.

If you give us less than two days prior notice, you may remain responsible for the metered charges up to:

- 28 days after we find you're no longer responsible for the account
- the date the meter is normally read (the end of the charging period)
- the date a new occupier tells us they're responsible for the charges at the property.

Once we've got all the information we need, we'll send you your final bill within six working days. If there's a credit on your account we'll either transfer your credit to your new Thames Water account, or process a refund within five to 15 days, depending on the amount we owe you and the way you made your payments.

Moving into your home

If you move into a metered property, you'll have to pay the metered charges. You can't change to an unmetered charge.

Please read your meter on the date you move in, if you're able to and it is safe for you to do so. You can then give us your meter reading and set up your new metered account using our online form here at thameswater.co.uk/move or call us on **0800 980 8800**.

If you're unable to read your meter, please call us on the above number so we can arrange to come and do this for you. We also have a legal right to meter properties where there is a total change in occupation.

Getting a water meter

Metering all our customers is at the centre of our Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) that has been approved by the Secretary of State. This plan sets out what we aim to do to make sure there's enough water for future generations.

Our area was designated as being in an area of serious water stress by the Secretary of State for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs in 2007 and so we were required to consider the case for progressive (previously termed as selective and compulsory) water metering as part of the statutory WRMP. Legal powers were granted for compulsory metering in 2012 on approval of WRMP09. Find out more information about why we are metering our customers by visiting at thameswater.co.uk/fittingmeters.

Fitting water meters at all properties across our region means we'll understand exactly how much water is being used by customers, and how much is being lost in transit through leaks. It will help us find and fix leaks quicker.

Meters also encourage customers to use less water, 12% less on average. Once we have fitted a meter, we're offering home visits, where we'll provide expert advice on how to use less water, thereby saving customers' money.

Benefits of having a meter

Meters are the fairest way to pay, as you only pay for what you use, putting you in better control your bill. Find out more on what your metered bill could be by visiting thameswater.co.uk/fittingmeters.

When will meters be fitted

We aim to meter all our customers by 2030 and have already started work in London. You can find out more about the programme and when we'll be working in your area by visiting thameswater.co.uk/mymeter.

How we will support our customers

We recognise that moving on to a water meter is a significant change to how you'll pay your water bill. Before fitting the meter we aim to speak to you face to face to explain why we are fitting meters and what the next steps are. Once the meter has then been fitted we offer home visits, where we'll install the latest water saving devices and provide expert advice on how to use less water, helping you control your future water bill.

Your adjustment period

If we fit your meter as part of our progressive metering programme, we will help you adjust by not charging you on a metered account straight away - unless you choose to switch sooner. This gives you the comfort of knowing your bill won't change straight away unless you want it to. We'll send comparison letters showing what you could pay on a meter, compared to your current bill, during this time.

At the end of the adjustment period, you will be automatically switched on to a metered bill and you will not be able to switch back to an unmeasured account.

Ask us to fit a meter

If we are not currently fitting water meters in your area you can ask us to fit a meter now by visiting thameswater.co.uk/requestameter and completing the online request form. Alternatively, call us on **0800 980 8800** and use our automated self-service facility.

Once you've asked us to fit a meter, we'll aim to do so within 50 calendar days. After your meter has been fitted, you will be charged on the water recorded by your meter plus a fixed charge straight away. You will receive your first metered bill within six months of the meter being fitted.

If we don't fit your water meter within 50 calendar days, you'll only pay fixed charges from the date we received your request, to the date we actually fit your meter. You'll then be charged for your future water and wastewater services based on meter readings.

Changing your mind

We aim to meter all customers by 2030. If you apply for a meter earlier you won't be able to revert back to unmetered charges if the programme has reached your area or we are scheduled to install your meter shortly. Our region has been deemed an area of water stress by the Secretary of State. This means we need to meter all our customers to maintain secure water supplies.

Where we'll fit your meter

We prefer to fit your new meter outside in the pavement. If it isn't possible to fit your meter in the pavement, we'll need an appointment with you to find an alternative location. This could be under your drive, garden or inside your home next to your stop tap. This service is free.

If you decide you would like the meter fitted in a different place to the one we've picked, and this would cost more, we will ask you to pay the difference in cost. However, if you are registered disabled and the meter needs to be in a different location so you can access it more easily, we'll re-site the meter wherever we can at our cost.

Type of meter we will fit

We're currently installing masts across London to allow us to read meters remotely and plan to have full coverage by 2019. There may be a small number of customers where we are unable to get readings, due to topographical reasons, but we'll visit to read these meters. Smart water meters have lots of benefits, including helping us to spot leaks quicker and allowing you to see your daily water use online.

For the rest of the region we will fit an automatic meter read (AMR) meter, which will allow us to walk past and take a meter read remotely. This type of meter can be converted in to a smart meter when we have the right infrastructure in this region.

What we'll do if we can't fit a meter

If for some reason we can't fit a meter, we'll put you on our Assessed Household Charge. Just visit thameswater.co.uk/charges.

This charge is based on your number of bedrooms and includes a fixed charge. We currently have five bands in this tariff.

- Band 1 - one bedroom or none.
- Band 2 - two bedrooms.
- Band 3 - three bedrooms.
- Band 4 - four bedrooms.
- Band 5 - five bedrooms or more.

For customers who live on their own, we also have a single occupier tariff.

We understand that paying water bills can be a worry, particularly for those customers who are on a low income or are in financial hardship. We have a range of tariffs and services available to help those customers who need it most to keep on top of their water bill. More information about the schemes and tariffs detailed below can be found on our website at thameswater.co.uk/help-paying.

New homes, garden sprinklers and swimming pools

Meters are fitted in all new homes. We also have the legal right to compulsorily fit a meter at a household property if there's a change in occupancy.

We also fit water meters at properties where there's an automatic garden sprinkler or an automatically filled swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres. This is due to the large amount of extra water they use.

The average sprinkler uses 540 litres of water per hour, equivalent to the amount used by a family of four in one day. Normal unmetered water bills don't cover this kind of usage. So, if you have an automatic garden sprinkler or an automatically filled swimming pool, please let us know so we can fit a water meter.