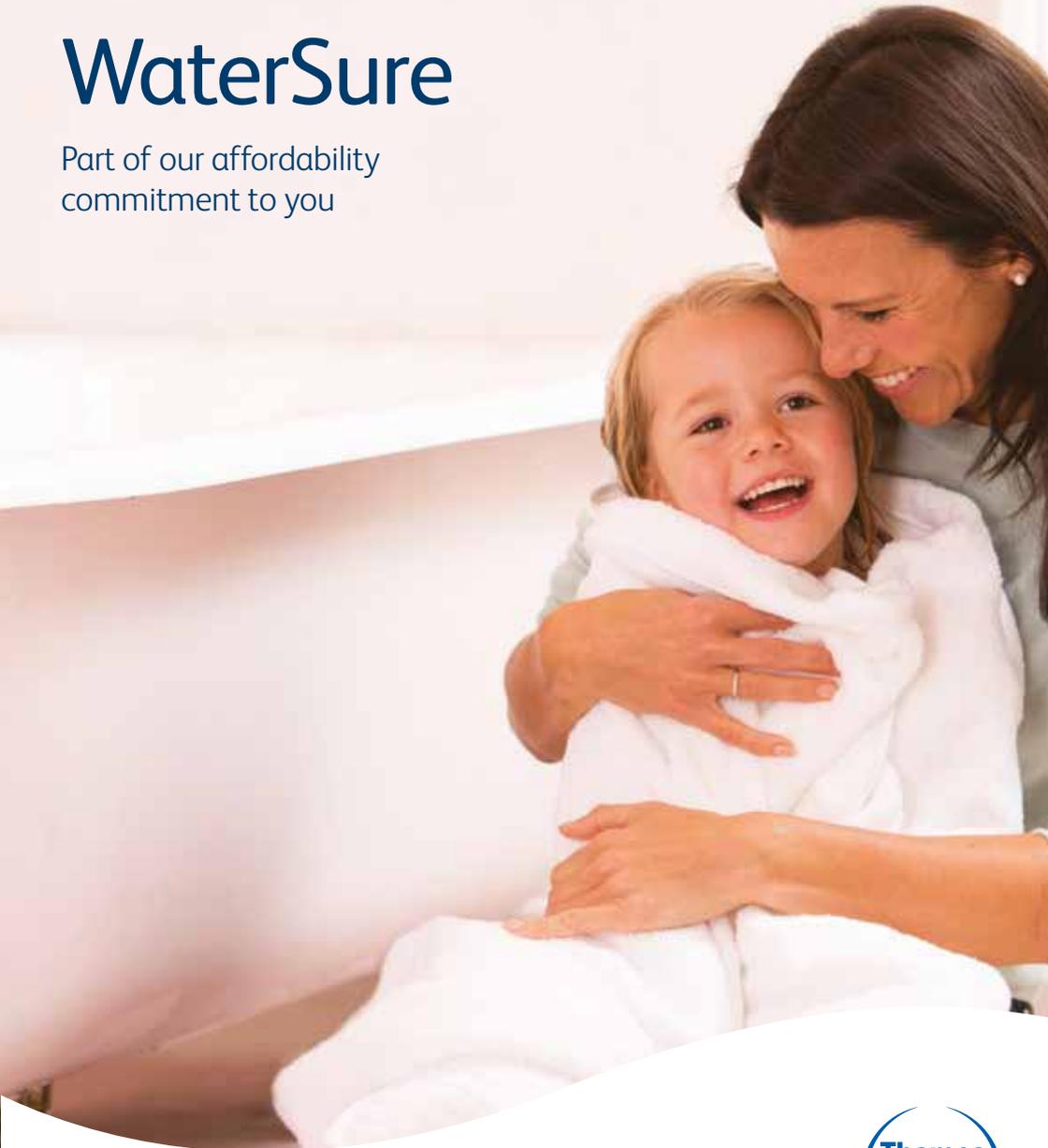


WaterSure

Part of our affordability
commitment to you



WaterSure – what is it and who is it for?

We understand that paying bills can be a worry, particularly for households with low incomes.

WaterSure is just one of the ways we can help make things easier, by capping eligible customers' bills.

It is available for all our residential customers who have a water meter and meet specific eligibility criteria. If you do qualify, WaterSure will cap your annual bill at £374 so you won't have to pay more than that, no matter how much water you have to use. This figure is made up of £198 for your water and £176 for your wastewater services.

If your water use during the year does not go past £374 in charges, you will only be charged for what you've used.

Assuming your application is successful, the cap will be applied from the start of the billing period in which the application was received. This is normally the date of your last meter reading, up to six months previously.

How do I know if I'm eligible?

To qualify for Watersure, you must have three or more children under the age of 19 years living in your household, or you or someone in your household must have a medical condition that requires a lot of water. Someone living in the household must also receive one or more of the benefits listed below:

- Housing benefit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit (except for families who receive the family element only)
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

Please note: If you receive different benefits which are not listed above you will not qualify for WaterSure.

How do I qualify by having a large family?

To qualify for WaterSure for having a large family, someone in your household must receive one of the benefits listed above, and someone living in the household must also be receiving Child Benefit for at least three children, who all live at the house and are less than 19 years old.

How do I qualify because of a medical condition?

To qualify for WaterSure because of a medical condition, someone in your house must receive one of the benefits listed and have been diagnosed with one of the medical conditions listed below.

- Abdominal stoma
- Desquamation (flaky skin loss)
- Weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
- Crohn's disease
- Ulcerative colitis
- Incontinence
- Renal failure requiring home dialysis (except where your health authority contributes to the cost of your water)
- Any other medical condition that has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner that means they need to use a lot of water.

How do I apply?

All you need to do is send us a completed application form and a few documents depending on which reason you are applying for. You can download the application form from thameswater.co.uk/watersure or give us a call on **0800 980 8800** and we will post you one straight away. Lines are open between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and between 8am and 6pm on Saturday.

What do I need to send to you?

All applicants need to send a copy of the current notice of entitlement to any of the benefits or tax credits listed being received by a member of the household. If the benefit is paid straight into a bank account, you can send a copy of the latest bank statement which shows the benefit being paid in instead.

If you are applying because you have a large family, you also need to send a copy of the latest notice of entitlement to Child Benefit for all of the qualifying children living at the address. If the benefit is paid straight into a bank account, again, you can send a copy of the latest bank statement which shows the Child Benefit being paid in instead.

If you are applying because you or someone in your household has a medical condition, you also need to confirm a few details about the condition on the application form and send us some medical evidence, such as a copy of a repeat prescription form or a doctor's certificate, explaining the condition and why you need to use extra water. You can ask for copies of these from your surgery, clinic or hospital.

The address to send all this information to is provided in the application form.

What can I expect from you?

Once we receive your application, we will check whether you are eligible for WaterSure or if we need some more information from you, the medical practitioner or JobCentre Plus to make a decision.

We will contact you within five working days to let you know what is happening.

If your application is successful, we will move you on to WaterSure and apply the cap from the start of the current billing period. If it is unsuccessful, we will let you know why.

What if I only get wastewater services from you?

If we send you bills for wastewater services based on meter readings supplied by another company that provides your water, you can apply directly to us as described above and will receive the same leaflets and information as our customers who receive both water and wastewater services.

If you successfully apply through your water-only company, we will put you on the WaterSure scheme within five days of them telling us you have been approved for their scheme.

What if I get my bill from another water company?

If you get sent bills from another company on our behalf they will send you similar information and advice about WaterSure, which is a Government-regulated tariff to help vulnerable customers and is offered by all water companies.

Next steps

You will receive information about WaterSure at least once per year. You can also find more information and advice at thameswater.co.uk/watersure or call our dedicated helpline on **0800 009 3652** for more help.

If you are already on the WaterSure tariff, we will send you a new application form and information around a year after the charge cap was last applied to your bills. If you do not return the new form within 20 working days, you will be taken off the WaterSure tariff and must apply again.

WaterSure *Plus*

You may also be eligible for our WaterSure *Plus* tariff, which gives eligible customers a 50 per cent discount on our standard tariffs. For full details of who is eligible and how to apply visit thameswater.co.uk/watersureplus.

How can you help me make regular payments?

We have lots of ways we can help you pay your bill including direct debits, payment cards and water direct, where we can ask the Department for Work and Pensions to send us a regular amount direct from your benefit. Some customers find this really helps as it can take away the worry of budgeting for your water bill. We can also look at how frequently you pay and can spread your bill monthly or even weekly.

How else can you help me with what I have to pay?

As well as applying for WaterSure, you can also order water-saving freebies to help save water, energy and money. Using our water efficient showerhead, shower timer, save-a-flush bag and tap inserts could save a family of four up to £180 on annual metered water and energy bills. Go to thameswater.co.uk/savingwater to order your freebies and find out other ways to save water.

We also have a customer assistance fund. This is something that you need to apply for but, if you are successful, it can completely pay off all of your old debt leaving you with this year's charges only.

Where can I find more information?

You can find more information on all of the affordability help options on our website at thameswater.co.uk/helppaying. You can also call us on 0800 980 8800.

What exclusions are there?

Households that normally would qualify for protection under the scheme will not do so where water is used for non-household purposes, for example automatically filling swimming pools or large, garden ponds, or garden watering with a sprinkler.

Disputes

Any dispute about whether or not a customer qualifies for protection will be subject to our standard complaints procedure, set out in our Customer Code of Practice.

We must be given the opportunity to respond before you contact the Consumer Council for Water.

Background

The Water Industry Act 1991, Section 143A, empowers the Secretary of State to specify "special provision... to be made for the purposes of assisting individuals who are or would be liable to pay any charges and who fall within any class of individuals appearing to the Secretary of State to require special provision".

The Regulations issued under that Section identify two such groups of individuals, together described as "Vulnerable customers". The 'WaterSure tariff' reflects those Regulations and a summary of the current position is set out within. If the Regulations change, then the principles of the WaterSure tariff will automatically change to reflect any changes to the legislation.

WaterSure legislation

This leaflet forms part of Thames Water's charges scheme 2016 - 2017. It sets out our procedure for implementing the statutory provisions for the protection of vulnerable customers under Section 143A of the Water Industry Act 1991. It is designed to comply with the Government Regulations and guidance issued by the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat).

It also sets out the procedure and provisions relating to WaterSure *Plus*, which is a social tariff that entitles some customers to reduced charges.

Contact us



thameswater.co.uk

You can contact us online to make a payment, tell us you're moving, provide a meter reading, send us an enquiry and much more.



Your bill and account

For queries relating to your bill, change of address, meter readings and other billing enquiries you can speak to our team on 0800 980 8800.

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm

Saturday 8am to 6pm

Textphone service if you are deaf or hard of hearing: 0800 316 6899.

Telephone self service

We have a wide range of self-service options available 24 hours a day including:

- Pay your bill with a debit or credit card
- Set up a Direct Debit or payment plan
- Check your balance

Water and wastewater services

For water and wastewater enquiries, emergencies and other non-billing enquiries you can call our team 24 hours a day on 0800 316 9800.

Textphone service if you are deaf or hard of hearing: 0800 316 9898

To contact us from abroad: +44 1793 366011



Thames Water, PO Box 286, Swindon SN38 2RA



This leaflet can be supplied in large print, braille or audio format upon request.