



**Scottish  
Water**

Trusted to serve Scotland



**Our services – your rights**  
our customer charter



Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We believe in quality of service and work around the clock to provide you with clear, fresh water as well as waste water services. We continually invest in new resources to deliver improvements that meet your needs as well as meeting industry standards.

This booklet tells you about the services that we promise to provide you with. We call these our service standards. They help you to know what to expect from us. We explain to you what your rights are and what happens if we don't keep our promises to you. In some cases, we will make an automatic offer of a payment and in others we ask that you get in touch with us and we will investigate a possible payment.

We are committed to making sure that you always have someone to speak to when you call us and have staff on hand to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on our Customer Helpline.

# An Overview of Our Promises



## Appointments

We'll arrive when we say we will.



## Written response to a complaint

If you do wish to make a formal complaint, we'll issue a response as soon as we can.



## Water quality

You'll have access to a safe, reliable supply of water.



## Connection services

We won't cause an unnecessary delay in arranging your connection.



## Billing enquiries

If you contact us about an issue with your bill, we'll try and sort it out there and then.



## Planned interruptions

We'll give you plenty of notice if we need to turn off your water.



## Unplanned interruptions

If there is a burst on our network, we'll work to get it restored as soon as possible.



## Waste water flooding

We won't flood your home or garden.



## Water in gas pipes

We'll take immediate action if you discover water in your gas pipes.



## Water pressure outcome

We'll let you know the results of investigating your water pressure as soon as possible.



## Water meter applications

We'll process your water meter application without unnecessary delay.

# Our promises to you

## Appointments

We will offer you an appointment for either the morning or afternoon or a 2-hour time slot on a particular day. If our representative does not turn up at the appointed time or we do not give you 24 hours' notice of a change in the appointment, you will automatically receive £30.

## Complaints

If you do have a concern about any of our services or a representative, please call us on our **Customer Helpline** on **0800 0778778** and tell us about it.

We will always try to deal with your call there and then. If we cannot do this, we will ring you back. If you ask for a written response, we promise to send you one within 5 working days. If we do not do this, you will automatically receive £30.

If you have completed our formal complaints process, but remain dissatisfied with our handling of your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to investigate it on your behalf. Their information is on page 13.

## Water quality

You can be confident that your water is safe to drink because we regularly check the quality to ensure it meets the required standards. Drinking water in the UK is subject to some of the tightest regulations in the world. In the unlikely event that a restriction has to be placed on the use of your water (such as a 'boil water' or 'do not use' notice) for more than 3 months, and is caused by Scottish Water's pipework, you can apply for a payment of 100% of your annual water charges.

## Connections to the existing water network

If you require a water or waste water connection, you must submit a formal application and any supporting designs and details of consultations with relevant bodies. If all information is provided and approved, we will provide you with approval and a quotation to connect within 28 days. If there is evidence that we have caused a delay in connecting you, you may be able to claim a rebate of your connection charge. Payment will be £30 per day where it is up to and including a 32mm outside diameter pipe or £150 per day where the pipe is greater than 32mm outside diameter. Payments are up to a maximum of 100% of the connection charge.



## Paying your bill

You normally pay for your water and waste water services through your local authority along with your council tax payments.

For other services, such as if you have a water meter or need sludge removing from a septic tank, we will send you an accurate bill. If you call to question an item on your bill, we will do our best to sort the issue out immediately. If we need to review your account after your enquiry, we will get back to you with a response within 5 working days. If we do not, you will automatically receive £30.

If you ask to change the way you pay your bill, we will respond within 5 working days. If we fail to do this, you will automatically receive £30.

## Turning off your water supply

### When it's planned

Sometimes we need to turn off your water to carry out essential maintenance and repair work to protect the supply and quality of your water. If this work is planned to last longer than 4 hours, we will send a letter to give you at least 48 hours notice. We may also use our website, social media, local TV or radio.

If we do not give you this warning, or we do not restore your supply when we said we would, you can contact us to claim £30. You can also claim £30 for every 12-hour period that you are without water.

## **When it's unplanned**

We are continually investing in our water network across Scotland, but sometimes pipes crack or collapse causing interruptions to your water supply. We will restore your supply within 12 hours from the time we find out about it. If a large water main has burst, it may take us longer. In this case, we promise to restore your water within 48 hours of us finding out. If we cannot do this, we will provide you with regular updates on the situation. If your water supply is not restored within these timescales, you can claim £30, then £15 for every 12-hour period after this that you are without water.

If you report 2 interruptions in the same financial year, caused by a failure in the network that isn't related to work we are carrying out, you can apply to claim a payment of 25% of your annual water charges. If you experience and report subsequent interruptions within the same financial year, you can claim a further 25% for each of those subsequent interruptions, to a maximum of 100% of your water charges.

## **During a major incident affecting a large area**

Occasionally large numbers of our customers are affected by a disruption to the water supply. In these instances we may declare the event a major incident and this is usually when more than 13,500 properties are affected. When this happens, you can count on us to do the following.

- We will give you regular updates. This may be done using social media, our website, radio, local TV, using loudhailers in the street or leaflets through your door.
- We will provide alternative supplies of water (such as bottled water or static tanks) within 24 hours of declaring a major incident.
- We will deliver a reasonable supply of drinking water to every customer who is on our confidential additional support register. If we are told about a customer with additional requirements during the incident, we will supply drinking water to them. For more information on our additional support register or to tell us about a customer that may need additional support, please see page 14 of this leaflet.

If we fail to meet any of the promises to customers directly affected by a declared major incident, we will support customers who have been affected and who would like to claim compensation up to a maximum of £90 per household and incident. The level paid will be dependent on your individual circumstances at the time of the incident.



## How do we calculate the timescales?

The clock starts ticking once we're aware of an interruption to supply and have all the relevant information to arrange our attendance. This could be from a phone call, email or message on social media.

The clock stops ticking once the supply is restored to your cold water kitchen tap. This may be just a trickle initially (depending on where your property is on the network) and it may be discoloured, however it will return to normal.

## If your property is flooded or at risk of flooding

If the inside of your home is flooded with waste water from our sewers, we promise to send someone out within 4 hours of you contacting us. On our visit we will investigate the cause of the problem and report back our findings to you. If you need to make a claim for compensation to cover any losses, we would always advise that you do this through your household insurance policy. This is because your claim is likely to be processed more quickly as legal liability (responsibility) for the cause does not need to be proved. We will refund your insurance excess if you suffer waste water flooding from our sewers within your home unless the flood was caused by extreme weather conditions or your own actions (such as inappropriate items flushed down the toilet or drain).



You may also automatically receive a payment equal to your total waste water charge for the year.

Where you have suffered external flooding (where you cannot access your property without stepping through sewage flooding within your property boundary OR your land is extensively flooded and effectively destroyed) you can apply for a payment of 50% of your annual waste water charges for each occasion up to 100% in any financial year.

If your property has been identified as being at risk of internal flooding, and added to our internal flooding register, you will receive a letter with an annual automatic offer of a payment of your waste water charges while your property remains on our register.

Our flooding payments offered to customers are the equivalent of at least a waste water charge band D rate.

## Water in your gas pipe

If you notice water coming from a gas appliance, such as cooker or gas fire (not a condensate pipe from a condenser boiler, which does carry water through when heating) or if you lose your gas supply because water has got into your gas pipe, contact our **Customer Helpline 0800 0778778** immediately.

We will contact SGN (who maintain the gas pipes) to make sure the supply is safe and will phone you back within 2 hours to let you know what happens next. If we don't do this, we will automatically pay you £30.

## Water pressure

We aim to provide your water at a pressure of at least 1 bar at the boundary of your property. This level of pressure should allow you to fill a bucket with 10 litres of water in around one minute. If you think your pressure is lower than 1 bar, please call our **Customer Helpline** on **0800 0778778**.

We will investigate the pressure levels and get back to you within 5 working days. If we do not, you will automatically receive £30.

If your property is featured on our low pressure register, you will receive an annual letter with an automatic offer of a payment of your water charges as long as your property remains on the register.

## Water meters

When you apply for a water meter, we will first have to carry out a survey to make sure that a meter can be fitted. We will charge you for this service. Within 10 working days of your application, we will let you know what alterations to pipework may be involved and what they will cost. If we don't do this, you'll automatically receive £30.

We aim to fit your meter within 15 working days of agreeing the arrangements and receiving your payment. If we do not fit the water meter by the date agreed with you, you will only pay the annual fixed charge element once the meter is installed and working.

## Making a claim

If you want to make a claim for any of the service standard payments explained in this leaflet, you must do this within 3 months of the incident. You can find our contact details on page 14 of this leaflet.

For the automatic payments that we describe in this leaflet, you will receive a payment within 10 working days, once we have received the required information. If you do not, we will pay you a further £30.

Sometimes there are circumstances that we cannot control, such as severe weather. This may include unusually low temperatures which are not seasonally typical. It may also include high winds, severe snow or heavy rain, each of which may have the potential to cause danger to life or widespread disruption. Additionally, we cannot control industrial action or the actions of others. In these circumstances we cannot guarantee the above promises. However, we will clearly explain to you our reasons why.



## Summary table of our service standard payments

Service Standard	Automatic payment?	Do you need to claim?	Payment amount
<b>Appointments</b> – keeping appointments made more than 24 hours in advance.	Yes		£30
<b>Written response to a formal complaint</b> – respond within 5 working days.	Yes		£30
<b>Water quality</b> – affecting the water quality where a ‘boil water’ or ‘do not use notice’ is in place for more than 3 months.		Yes	100% of your annual water charges.
<b>Connection services</b> – where evidence confirms that we have caused a delay.		Yes	£30 a day if it is up to and including a 32mm outside diameter pipe. £150 a day if it is greater than 32mm outside diameter pipe (up to 100% of the connection charge).
<b>Respond to questions about your bill and changing your payment methods</b> – respond within 5 working days.	Yes		£30
<b>Planned interruptions</b> – warn you 48 hours in advance, supply restored within time given – payment if we fail to warn or your supply is not restored at the time we have given.		Yes	£30 + £30 for each further 12 hours without water.
<b>Unplanned interruptions</b> – (burst main and so on) restore within 12 hours (48 hours for a large main supplying a large area).		Yes	£30 + £15 for each further 12 hours without water.  If you report 2 interruptions in the same financial year, caused by a failure in the network that isn't related to work we are carrying out, you can apply to claim a payment of 25% of your annual water charges. If you experience and report subsequent interruptions within the same financial year, you can claim a further 25% for each of those subsequent interruptions, to a maximum of 100% of your water charges.
<b>Internal waste water flooding</b> – Caused by waste water from our sewers.	Yes		Equal to your yearly waste water charge per incident (minimum payment of Band D rate and up to £1000).

Service Standard	Automatic payment?	Do you need to claim?	Payment amount
<b>Internal waste water flooding</b> – Caused by waste water from our sewers (cont)	Yes		If your property is at a high risk of internal flooding due to overloaded sewers, and is added to our internal flooding register, you will receive your annual waste water charge (minimum payment of Band D rate).
<b>External waste water flooding</b> – Caused by waste water from our sewers.		Yes	If your property is significantly affected from flooding outside you can apply for a payment of 50% to 100% of your annual waste water charges (where you cannot access your property without stepping through sewage flooding within your property boundary OR your land is extensively flooded and effectively destroyed (minimum payment of Band D rate).
<b>Water in gas pipes</b> – give you a call within 2 hours of reporting the fault to give details of what happens next.	Yes		£30
<b>Water pressure</b> – we will tell you the outcome of our investigations within 5 working days.	Yes		£30 If your property is placed on our low-pressure register due to ongoing pressure issues you will receive the water charges you have paid for the year.
<b>Water meters</b> – applications. We will let you know the outcome within 10 working days of your application.	Yes		£30

- Water and waste water charges are paid through your Local Council and they are calculated based on your house banding.
- We have a register to work out known properties that are at risk from internal flooding or low pressure. We only use this register to identify customers that are eligible for a payment against these measures.
- For other payments relating to water or waste water charges we need a copy of your council tax bill and customers are only entitled to a maximum of one payment of water and/or waste water charges in any financial year and up to a maximum of £1000.

For more information on what the standards cover and the level of payment available, call our **Customer Helpline** on **0800 0778778** or visit our website at **[www.scottishwater.co.uk/yourrights](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/yourrights)**.

# Who does what in the water industry in Scotland

## The Scottish Government

### Scottish Government Ministers

Phone: **0845 278 1999**

**[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)**

Ministers:

- own us and report to Parliament on our activities;
- set up the legal framework we work to;
- set our aims;
- set out what charges are based on;
- provide us with funding; and
- consider some types of appeal.



### The Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland (DWQR)

Phone: **0131 244 0190**

**[www.dwqr.org.uk](http://www.dwqr.org.uk)**

The regulator:

- is an independent body appointed by Scottish Government Ministers to monitor the quality of drinking water;
- makes sure we keep to our drinking water quality standards;
- inspects and assesses our water treatment works;
- inspects and assesses our sampling and analysis procedures; and
- sets improvement targets for water quality.



### The Water Industry

#### Commission for Scotland

Phone: **01786 430 200**

**[www.watercommission.co.uk](http://www.watercommission.co.uk)**

The Commission:

- promotes the interests of customers;
- sets our charge limits at the lowest level possible;
- approves our Code of Practice;
- reports on our performance each year; and
- helps encourage competition in the water industry.



### Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Phone: **0800 377 7330**

**[www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)**

The Ombudsman:

- investigates complaints which have not been satisfactorily sorted out;
- publishes reports and promotes the interests of customers;
- may make recommendations to Government Ministers, the Scottish Government, Scottish Water, the Water Industry Commission, Scottish Environment Protection Agency or the Drinking Water Quality Regulator; and
- is independent of us and the industry regulators.

# How to contact us



## Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS)

Phone: **03454 04 05 06**

**[www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)**

Citizens Advice Scotland;

- Represents the interests of consumers within Scotland's water industry.
- Supports citizens advice bureaux to provide free information, advice and advocacy.



## The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

Phone: **0800 80 70 60 (pollution hotline)**

Phone: **0845 988 1188 (floodline)**

**[www.sepa.org.uk](http://www.sepa.org.uk)**

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency:

- sets standards for and monitors waste water and other discharges into streams, rivers, estuaries and the sea;
- regulates new water schemes;
- keeps records of river flows and warns of possible floods from rivers.

## Customer Helpline 0800 0778778

Scottish Water operates a freephone Customer Helpline (but there may be a charge if you use a mobile) to handle any of your enquiries; this line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can also send us an email at

**[customer.services@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@scottishwater.co.uk)**

If you have a speech or hearing difficulty, you can use the **Text Relay service on 18001 0800 0778778**.

Our main offices have an induction loop if you have a hearing aid.

## Additional Support Register

If you have a disability or medical condition or other reason where you need extra support from us, please contact us and we can add your name, address and your support needs to our confidential register. Further information can be found at **[www.scottishwater.co.uk/support](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/support)**.

We can offer a range of other formats of documents free of charge. For information and to ask for another format, such as a translation, large-print version, copy in Braille or on audio disc, please contact our **Customer Helpline on 0800 0778778** or visit **[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)**.

# Keeping up to date and getting in touch

We are always working so the cycle never stops – find out more about Scottish Water, our services and keep up to date with what we are doing in your area:

## Visit



[www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)

## Follow us



[facebook.com/scottishwater](https://facebook.com/scottishwater)



[@scottish\\_water](https://twitter.com/scottish_water)

## Email



[customer.services@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@scottishwater.co.uk)

## Call



Customer Helpline free 24/7  
0800 0778778

## Text (SMS)



To receive free texts (SMS)\* to keep up to date about our work or service updates, such as having no water supply, in your area – please text **'Update' with your postcode to 82228**.

Alternative formats of this leaflet can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and a variety of languages, please call our Customer Helpline.

If you have a disability, medical condition or other reason where you may need additional assistance from Scottish Water then please contact us and we can add your name, address and requirements to our confidential Additional Support Register.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.

\* For more info and T&Cs visit [www.scottishwater.co.uk/textterms](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/textterms)