



Your right
to complain
about your water or
sewerage company

CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR



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Water and sewerage companies provide services to millions of homes and businesses every day. Usually everything goes right, but sometimes companies get things wrong. This can leave customers disappointed or angry, and wanting to complain. This leaflet tells you how to make a complaint and where you can get some help or advice.

You have the right to complain if you are dissatisfied with the service you have received, your company has not answered a question properly, failed to do something they should have, or caused a problem with your water supply or sewerage service. Whatever the reason for your dissatisfaction, the company should try to resolve it. A formal complaint gives the company a chance to put things right.

How the Consumer Council for Water can help you

In most cases the company will resolve your complaint satisfactorily. But if you are dissatisfied with their answer you can ask us for help. The Consumer Council for Water has a statutory duty to represent your interests. We may investigate your complaint against your company if it was not satisfactorily addressed

through their procedure.

We are entirely independent from the economic regulator Ofwat and the water and sewerage companies. Our service is free of charge and confidential, except for our contact with your company.

We may also pass your details on to a reputable market research company who may survey your satisfaction with CCWater's involvement in your complaint. Please let us know if you would prefer not to be surveyed.

Sometimes, we may decide that what the company did was correct (for example, their action may have been a legal requirement), but we will give you a full explanation if that is the case. The Consumer Council for Water cannot change the law, and if you are unhappy with our explanation you should write to your MP to ask them to raise the matter with the Government.

Our staff have detailed knowledge of the policies and procedures of the companies in their area, and are often able to get the company to reconsider their decision and where appropriate, pay you some compensation.

Our full complaints procedure is available upon request.

Three steps to complaining

1. All water and sewerage companies have a formal complaints procedure. Details of how to contact the company are shown on the back of your bill. It is best to send a letter or e-mail because it helps you to explain why you're dissatisfied and helps the company to understand exactly what to look at.

The Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) requires all companies to reply within 10 working days of receiving your written complaint. If they do not, you are entitled to a payment or credit on your account which they should make automatically.

You can make a telephone complaint and someone in the company should write down what you have said and agree it with you. Telephone complaints are regulated differently to written complaints.

2. If you are dissatisfied with their first reply you can ask the company to review their decision at a higher stage.

3. You can contact us at any time about a complaint. We check that the company's complaint procedure has been exhausted before we formally investigate your concerns. If it has not, we will send them your complaint and ask that they contact

you and tell us how they resolved it so we are sure it has been dealt with properly.

If you are unhappy with us

We will do our best to:

- ◆ Handle your complaint professionally.
- ◆ Provide you with prompt replies and clear explanations.
- ◆ Keep you informed of how your complaint is progressing.
- ◆ Explain what else you can do if we cannot deal with your complaint.
- ◆ Explain what you can do if you are still dissatisfied.

Please tell us if you are unhappy with the way we handled your complaint. If you wish, you can ask the Chair of the Regional Committee to review what we did. They will write to tell you their decision and what, if anything, will be done. If you remain unhappy, our Chief Executive (or his designate) and an Independent Board Member will review the matter and write to you.

If you still remain dissatisfied you can ask your MP to refer the Consumer Council for Water's handling of the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman; Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Improving our service

We are keen to find out what customers think of our performance. You can help us by filling in and returning a short Consumer Satisfaction Survey that we will send you after we have closed your complaint. Your feedback will help us improve our service and represent customers better in future.

Getting in touch

E-mail - you can e-mail your complaint either via our website www.ccwater.org.uk or directly to the relevant office.

Letter - if you can, please write to us about your complaint. This ensures we have a clear record of the reasons why you are dissatisfied and how you would like your complaint resolved.

If it is difficult for you to write, please telephone us. We will write down what you say and read it back to make sure you are happy.

Telephone - you can call us on a local rate number (subject to your service provider) or a national rate number. If we are unable to take your call, you can leave a message on our answer phone and we will call you back as soon as possible.

Minicom - If you have a hearing impairment you can call us by minicom on 0121 345 1044.

In other languages - our offices have access to a telephone interpretation service covering over 100 languages if you prefer to talk to us in another language.

Fax - you can fax us your complaint.










In person - you can visit us to discuss your complaint in person. Please contact us for an appointment before visiting our offices to ensure that someone will be available.

Via a third party - a representative can obtain our consent form and ask you to sign it authorising them to act for you.

We can arrange to have our letters and leaflets supplied in large print or Braille format. Please call us on 0845 039 2837.

The right Consumer Council for Water office

The Consumer Council for Water office that can handle your complaint is shown alongside your company on the following two pages. Full contact details are on the inside back page.

Water Company	Region
	Albion Water
	Anglian Water
	Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water
	Bristol Water
	Cambridge Water
	Cholderton & District Water
	Dee Valley Water
	Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water
	Essex & Suffolk Water
	Folkstone & Dover Water
	Hartlepool Water
	Mid Kent Water (part of South East Water)
	Northumbrian Water

Water Company	Region	
	Portsmouth Water	London & South East
	Severn Trent Water	Central & Eastern
	South East Water	London & South East
	South Staffordshire Water	Central & Eastern
	South West Water	Western
	Southern Water	London & South East
	Sutton & East Surrey Water	London & South East
	Tendring Hundred Water	Central & Eastern
	Thames Water	London & South East
	Three Valleys Water	London & South East
	United Utilities North West	Northern
	Wessex Water	Western
	Yorkshire Water	Northern

Central & Eastern

Representing consumers of Severn Trent Water and South Staffordshire Water.

1st Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B2 4AJ

Telephone: 0121 345 1017
Local rate: 08457 023 953
Fax: 0121 345 1010
E-mail: central@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 4.30

Representing consumers of Anglian Water, Cambridge Water, Essex & Suffolk Water and Tendring Hundred Water.

Ground Floor, Carlyle House, Carlyle Road, Cambridge, CB4 3DN

Telephone: 01223 323 889
Local rate: 08457 959 369
Fax: 01223 323 930
E-mail: eastern@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 4.30

Western

Representing consumers of Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water, Bristol Water, Cholderton & District Water and Wessex Water.

2 The Hide Market, West Street, St Philips, Bristol, BS2 0BH

Telephone: 0117 955 7001
Local rate: 08457 078 268
Fax: 0117 955 7037
E-mail: wessex@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 4.30

Representing consumers of South West Water

1st Floor, Broadwalk House, Southernhay West, Exeter, EX1 1TS

Telephone: 01392 428 028
Local rate: 08457 959 059
Fax: 01392 428 010
E-mail: southwest@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 4.30

Northern

Representing consumers of Hartlepool Water, Northumbrian Water and Yorkshire Water.

8th Floor, Northgate House, St Augustine's Way, Darlington, DL1 1XA

Telephone: 01325 464 222 / 469 777
Local rate: 08457 089 367
Fax: 01325 369 269
E-mail: northumbria@ccwater.org.uk
yorkshire@ccwater.org.uk

Office hours: Mon to Fri 9.00 to 5.00

Representing consumers of United Utilities.

Suite 902, 9th Floor, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT

Telephone: 0161 236 6112
Local rate: 08457 056 316
Fax: 0161 228 6117
E-mail: northwest@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 9.00 to 5.00

London & South East

P.O. Box 61778, London, SW1P 9NB*

Telephone: 020 7831 4790
Local rate: 08457 581 658
Fax: 0121 345 1010
E-mail: londonandsoutheast@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 9.00 to 5.00

* Due to an office move please call ahead if you wish to arrange a personal visit.

Wales

Room 140, Caradog House, 1-6 St Andrew's Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BE

Telephone: 029 2023 9852
Local rate: 08457 078 267
Fax: 029 2023 9847
E-mail: wales@ccwater.org.uk
Office hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 to 4.30