

Ofwat (The Water Services Regulation Authority) is a non-ministerial government department. We are responsible for making sure that the water and sewerage sectors in England and Wales provide customers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price.

Your water and sewerage bill 2009-10

Ofwat – Protecting consumers, promoting value and safeguarding the future

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How are bills changing?

Water and sewerage bills change every year, and so may be higher from one year to the next. In April 2009, the average household water and sewerage bill in England and Wales will go up by £13.33 (which includes 3% inflation). Your own bill may go up by more or less than this amount.

How much your bill goes up will depend on which company supplies your water and sewerage services. Each company faces different challenges in delivering services to consumers, and so costs and charges vary.

It will also depend on whether you pay for your water based on the rateable value of your home (that is, you are 'unmetered'), or whether you have a meter and pay for the amount of water you use.

Unmetered customers will find examples of this year's charges on pages 8-10. Metered customers will find examples of this year's charges on pages 11-13.

About 35% of households in England and Wales currently have a water meter. We expect this to rise to 37% by March 2010.

You should note that you may receive your water supply from one company and your sewerage service from another. This could mean that you get a separate bill from each company.

How are bills changing?

Bills are going up so that each water company can continue to deliver the high-quality services that customers need and expect, as well as safeguarding the environment. By 2010, bills will have paid towards:

- maintaining pipes, sewers and treatment works (including laying, renewing or relining more than 20,000 kilometres of water mains), so that essential services are protected for the future;
- a major programme of environmental schemes to improve rivers and coastal waters; and
- preventing or reducing internal flooding from overloaded sewers into homes that are currently at high risk of flooding.

What do I get for my money?

Your water and sewerage services cost about 94p a day on average. A litre of tap water, supplied and taken away, costs just 0.23p. This compares with 45p for a pint of milk or about 66p for a daily newspaper.

The examples below are a guide to what you get for your money. Remember, your company may charge more (or less) than this, so what you get for your money may be more or less than shown.

You can get more information on your company's charges on our website at www.ofwat.gov.uk.



How can I reduce my bills?

If you are unmetered, you could save money by switching to a meter. This applies especially if you do not use much water or you live in a property with a high rateable value.

Your company will be able to tell you how much you may be able to save. Alternatively, you could try our water savings calculator on our website at www.ofwat.gov.uk.

Should you decide to switch to a meter, then your company will fit one at your property for free, unless it is impractical or too expensive to do so. If this is the case, your company will offer you an assessed charge. This is an approximation of how much water you might use if you were on a meter. The way the assessed charge is worked out varies from company to company.

If you think that your bill is higher with a meter than it would have been without one, you can go back to an unmetered basis of charging. You must do this within 12 months of switching.

If you are already on a meter, then the water saving tips on our website may help you to save water and energy.

What if my circumstances mean that I have to use a large amount of water?

We appreciate that some customers (such as those people with certain medical conditions, or who have three or more children under 19) may need to use large amounts of water.

If such customers have meters, and meet certain criteria, they are protected from paying large bills under the WaterSure scheme. You should contact your company if you think you are eligible. Unmetered customers will be charged according to the rateable value of their home, regardless of how much water they use.

How can I make paying my bill easier?

Each company offers a range of ways to pay your bill. Some of these could allow you to spread the cost of your bill (for example, by paying a set amount each month). Contact your company for more information on the options available. You may be able to find your company's contact details on your last bill or on our website at www.ofwat.gov.uk.

Is there anything I can do if I have a problem paying my bill?

You should contact your company immediately if you are having difficulty paying your bill. It is in the company's interest to help you sort out any problems you are having. Your company can discuss ways to help you manage any debt and give you advice about how you may be able to reduce future bills.



What if I think my bill is wrong?

If you think your bill is wrong, get in touch with your company so that it can investigate and make any corrections. If you are not satisfied with your company's response, you can ask your local Consumer Council for Water office to investigate (see pages 14-15). However, you must still pay your bill, even if you disagree with the amount. If you don't pay your bill, your company may take legal action against you.



How does Ofwat protect my interests?

It is our role to protect consumers and promote value now and in the future.

- We set limits on how much each company can charge its customers. We do this every five years. Our next review will take place later this year, when we will set limits for 2010-15.
- We make sure that your water and sewerage bill does not go up by any more than is necessary to provide the standard of service you expect. Bills are about 30% lower than they would have been without our regulation.
- We encourage companies to become more efficient. This benefits customers by lowering the companies' costs.
- Every year, we check that each company's charges are in keeping with our price limits. We also make sure that charges are fair and do not discriminate between different groups of customers.
- We check that each company delivers the services and improvements they have said they will deliver.
- We also compare their performance to make sure they maintain high levels of service, including protecting the environment. This encourages all companies to achieve the best standards for customers.
- We take action against a company if it does not meet its obligations to customers.

Bills for unmetered customers

If you do not have a meter, in general you pay for your water based on the rateable value of your home. There may be some exceptions to this.



As a guide, we have set out some examples for customers whose homes have rateable values of £100 and £300.

Unmetered bills* – water

Water and sewerage companies	Annual bill in £ for customers whose homes have rateable values of			
	£100		£300	
	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)
Anglian Water:				
– Anglian	185.67	12.20	267.95	10.38
– Hartlepool	130.26	6.79	130.26	6.79
Dŵr Cymru¹	177.29	8.53	314.23	15.09
Northumbrian Water:				
– North East	118.50	3.87	207.70	6.81
– Essex & Suffolk:				
– Essex	105.52	4.32	231.56	9.46
– Suffolk	153.14	6.01	374.42	14.53
Severn Trent Water²	84.82	3.77	254.46	11.31
South West Water	232.17	17.52	471.11	35.56
Southern Water	82.84	2.80	189.44	8.40
Thames Water²	92.00	3.31	222.00	7.93
United Utilities	130.50	6.50	287.50	15.50
Wessex Water	139.38	6.62	404.14	19.86
Yorkshire Water:				
– Yorkshire	143.30	5.74	358.30	14.34
– York	89.36	3.63	211.96	8.63

* Bill = fixed charge + (rateable value charge x rateable value of property).

Water only companies	Annual bill in £ for customers whose homes have rateable values of			
	£100		£300	
	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)
Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water	83.47	-1.18	206.41	-3.54
Bristol Water	103.24	3.96	259.72	9.88
Cambridge Water	70.70	0.90	163.70	1.90
Dee Valley Water:				
– Chester	95.51	9.65	196.15	11.15
– Wrexham	131.81	-3.70	239.29	-2.08
Folkestone & Dover Water	165.03	19.11	392.41	46.33
Portsmouth Water³	68.00	3.00	124.90	3.70
South East Water:				
– Eastbourne	119.06	5.77	315.18	15.31
– Mid Kent	132.10	11.18	280.30	25.54
– Mid Southern	77.76	3.77	191.28	9.31
– Mid-Sussex	125.34	6.04	334.02	16.12
– West Kent	112.41	5.45	295.23	14.35
South Staffs Water	60.90	2.34	182.70	7.02
Sutton & East Surrey Water:				
– Croydon	74.27	0.56	148.81	1.68
– Northern Area	148.64	1.68	148.64	1.68
– Southern Area	100.02	0.86	226.06	2.58
Tendring Hundred Water	120.08	-0.15	293.78	-0.37
Three Valleys Water:				
– Colne Valley	83.25	2.50	176.35	5.30
– Lee Valley	93.87	2.81	208.21	6.23
– Rickmansworth	82.07	2.46	172.81	5.18
– North Surrey	84.49	2.53	180.07	5.39

Notes:

1. Dŵr Cymru's bills reflect a rebate from the company of £11 for water in 2009-10 and £10.50 in 2008-09.
2. For the purposes of charging their unmetered customers, Severn Trent Water is divided into zones and Thames Water is divided into areas. The companies can give you more information on these zones and areas. We have given the bills for Severn Trent's zone 4 and Thames' area 6 as examples.
3. Portsmouth Water's bill applies from 1 July 2009. The company applies a minimum charge of £68 on properties with a rateable value lower than £134.

Unmetered bills – sewerage

Water and sewerage companies	Annual bill in £ for customers whose homes have rateable values of			
	£100		£300	
	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)
Anglian Water	218.15	13.80	306.15	11.28
Dŵr Cymru ¹	238.98	12.87	428.68	23.17
Northumbrian Water	154.84	4.85	256.52	8.55
Severn Trent Water ²	88.72	5.07	266.16	15.21
South West Water	343.13	15.25	817.19	10.35
Southern Water	167.98	10.50	391.38	31.50
Thames Water ²	70.54	3.64	139.62	6.92
United Utilities	135.40	9.70	406.20	29.10
Wessex Water	134.85	8.76	390.55	26.28
Yorkshire Water	164.16	10.99	409.56	27.79

Notes:
 1. Dŵr Cymru's bills reflect a rebate from the company of £11 for sewerage in 2009-10 and £10.50 in 2008-09.
 2. For the purposes of charging their unmetered customers, Severn Trent Water is divided into zones and Thames Water is divided into areas. The companies can give you more information on these zones and areas. We have given the bills for Severn Trent's zone 4 and Thames' area 6 as examples.

Bills for metered customers

People who have a meter pay for their water and sewerage services based on how much water they use. As a guide, we have set out some examples for customers who use 60, 160 and 270 cubic metres (m³) of water a year.



60m³ of water a year

This is the amount consumed by an average single person using about 165 litres of water a day



160m³ of water a year

This is the amount consumed by an average family of three using about 150 litres of water each a day



270m³ of water a year

This is the amount consumed by an average family of five using about 150 litres of water each a day



Metered bills* – water

Water and sewerage companies	Annual bill in £ for consumption each year of					
	60m ³		160m ³		270m ³	
	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)
Anglian Water:						
– Anglian	98.78	5.48	232.82	13.50	374.33	22.09
– Hartlepool	79.49	4.79	181.37	11.66	287.50	18.98
Dŵr Cymru¹	103.03	4.06	239.74	9.99	390.12	16.51
Northumbrian Water:						
– North East	85.99	2.53	177.81	5.24	278.81	8.22
– Essex & Suffolk:						
– Essex	90.82	2.14	190.68	4.21	300.52	6.49
– Suffolk	112.36	2.61	248.12	5.46	397.45	8.59
Severn Trent Water²	101.72	6.30	231.78	14.35	374.84	23.21
South West Water	133.63	9.55	302.74	21.66	488.76	34.98
Southern Water	81.75	1.37	174.05	3.77	275.58	6.41
Thames Water²	93.88	4.62	207.01	10.66	331.45	17.31
United Utilities	112.14	5.50	249.04	13.00	399.63	21.25
Wessex Water	119.64	6.23	290.71	16.61	478.89	28.03
Yorkshire Water:						
– Yorkshire	101.20	4.00	221.80	8.70	354.46	13.87
– York	65.98	2.63	133.68	5.33	208.15	8.30

* Bill = fixed charge + (consumption x volumetric charge).

Metered bills – water (continued)

Water only companies	Annual bill in £ for consumption each year of					
	60m ³		160m ³		270m ³	
	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)
Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water	83.24	2.08	185.31	5.54	297.59	9.34
Bristol Water	97.78	2.12	205.75	4.65	324.52	7.43
Cambridge Water	76.08	2.68	157.88	5.48	247.86	8.56
Dee Valley Water:						
– Chester	82.01	4.88	173.02	11.01	273.13	17.75
– Wrexham	86.50	5.18	185.00	11.81	293.35	19.10
Folkestone & Dover Water	110.96	3.29	245.52	7.21	393.53	11.52
Portsmouth Water²	63.80	1.84	126.80	3.24	196.10	4.78
South East Water:						
– Eastbourne	107.31	3.38	256.16	7.39	419.90	11.80
– Mid Kent ³	85.08	4.76	198.32	12.70	317.34	21.44
– Mid Southern	68.81	2.36	153.49	4.67	246.64	7.21
– Mid-Sussex	111.32	3.47	266.86	7.64	437.96	12.23
– West Kent	92.62	3.00	216.98	6.39	353.77	10.12
South Staffs Water	80.55	4.61	167.71	9.54	263.58	14.96
Sutton & East Surrey Water:						
– Northern Area	78.58	2.94	166.74	6.44	263.71	10.29
– Southern Area	94.10	3.53	208.13	8.01	333.56	12.94
Tendring Hundred Water	121.86	4.63	282.09	10.72	458.34	17.42
Three Valleys Water	82.93	3.42	174.15	7.12	274.49	11.19

Notes:

1. Dŵr Cymru's bills reflect rebates from the company of £11 for water in 2009-10 and £10.50 in 2008-09.
2. Portsmouth Water's bill applies from 1 July 2009.
3. Anglian Water's yearly bill for 60m³ is based on its SoLow tariff. Mid Kent's yearly bill for 60m³ is based on its low-user tariff. Bills for 160m³ and 270m³ are based on standard charges.

Metered bills – sewerage

Water and sewerage companies	Annual bill in £ for consumption each year of					
	60m ³		160m ³		270m ³	
	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)	2009-10	Change from last year (£)
Anglian Water¹	136.87	8.03	279.98	17.99	420.91	28.30
Dŵr Cymru²	153.25	9.33	303.66	19.03	469.12	29.71
Northumbrian Water	120.91	3.34	208.44	5.92	304.71	8.75
Severn Trent Water³						
– Property-based charge:						
– Flat/terrace	90.53	3.96	174.92	7.15	267.75	10.66
– Semi-detached	118.76	5.57	203.15	8.76	295.98	12.27
– Detached	146.85	7.17	231.24	10.36	324.07	13.87
– Rateable value-based charge:						
– Zone 4	127.21	6.05	211.60	9.24	304.43	12.75
South West Water	185.01	12.94	447.56	9.71	736.37	6.16
Southern Water	141.41	5.53	298.47	14.97	471.25	25.34
Thames Water	80.46	4.30	136.22	8.13	197.55	12.34
United Utilities	155.44	9.60	272.84	20.60	401.98	32.70
Wessex Water	133.99	9.01	287.31	19.02	455.98	30.04
Yorkshire Water	118.75	7.26	247.57	15.05	389.27	23.62

Notes:

1. Anglian Water's yearly bill for 60m³ is based on its SoLow tariff. The bills for 160m³ and 270m³ are based on standard charges.
2. Dŵr Cymru's bills reflect rebates from the company of £11 for sewerage in 2009-10 and £10.50 in 2008-09.
3. Severn Trent Water's customers pay for their surface water drainage either through a fixed charge based on the property type or a charge based on the rateable value. We have given an example of the bill for each property type and a bill based on a rateable value of £200 for customers in zone 4.

The Consumer Council for Water

The Consumer Council for Water represents water and sewerage customers in England and Wales. It is independent of both the water companies and us. If you have a question about your bill, please contact your company first. If you are not satisfied with your company's response, you can ask your local Consumer Council for Water office to investigate.

We have given you the details for each office here.

Consumer Council for Water Central For customers of Severn Trent Water and South Staffordshire Water

First Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B2 4AJ
Phone: 0121 345 1013 or 0845 702 3953
Fax: 0121 345 1010
Email: central@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water Eastern For customers of Anglian Water, Cambridge Water, Essex & Suffolk Water, and Tendring Hundred Water

Ground Floor, Carlyle House, Carlyle Road, Cambridge CB4 3DN
Phone: 01223 323889 or 0845 795 9369
Fax: 01223 323930
Email: eastern@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water London and South East

For customers of Southern Water,
Thames Water, Three Valleys Water,
Sutton & East Surrey Water, Folkestone
& Dover Water, Portsmouth Water, and
South East Water

PO Box 61778, London SW1P 9NS
Phone: 020 7831 4790 or 0845 758 1658
Email: londonandsoutheast@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water Northern For customers of Northumbrian Water, Yorkshire Water, and Hartlepool Water

Eighth Floor, Northgate House, St Augustine's Way, Darlington DL1 1XA
Phone: 01325 469777 or 0845 708 9368
Fax: 01325 369269
Email: northumbria@ccwater.org.uk or
yorkshire@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water Northern For customers of United Utilities

Suite 902, Ninth Floor, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6LT
Phone: 0161 236 6112 or 0845 705 6316
Fax: 0161 228 6117
Email: northwest@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water South West For customers of South West Water

First Floor, Broadwalk House, Southernhay West, Exeter EX1 1TS
Phone: 01392 428028 or 0845 795 9059
Fax: 01392 428010
Email: southwest@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water Wales For customers of Dŵr Cymru, Albion Water, and Dee Valley Water

Room 140, Caradog House, 1-6 St Andrew's Place, Cardiff CF10 3BE
Phone: 029 2023 9852 or 0845 707 8267
Fax: 029 2023 9847
Email: wales@ccwater.org.uk

Consumer Council for Water Western For customers of Wessex Water, Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water, Bristol Water, and Cholderton & District Water

2 The Hide Market, West Street, St Philips, Bristol BS2 0BH
Phone: 0117 955 7001 or 0845 707 8268
Fax: 0117 955 7037
Email: wessex@ccwater.org.uk

www.ccwater.org.uk
Phone: 0845 039 2837

