



## Debt and disconnection figures 2006-07

Each year we collect information from water companies about the number of water disconnections and other debt related matters such as the number of court actions taken<sup>1</sup>. Attached is a set of tables showing the information for 2006-07 (1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007). Information on industry level trends in bad debt and associated recovery costs can be found in [RD 18/07](#).

Set out below is a summary of the key points arising from the companies' submissions.

### Non-domestic disconnections for non-payment of bills ([table 1](#))

Disconnection of non-domestic premises due to non-payment of bills fell by 42% during the reporting period from 11,311 in 2005-06 to 6,561 in 2006-07. This fall was largely due to a significant reduction in the number of non-domestic disconnections reported by one company.

### Disconnection of mixed-use premises for non-payment of bills

In 2004<sup>2</sup> we set out our view that water companies should not disconnect mixed-use premises for non-payment of bills, where any part of the premises is a private dwelling. This view has not changed.

Only one company (Dŵr Cymru) continues to routinely disconnect mixed-use premises<sup>3</sup>, although a small number of others noted that their policy reserves the right to disconnect premises in specific circumstances. Such cases will be assessed on an individual basis and these companies reported that disconnection would only take place as a last resort. These companies confirmed that no disconnections of mixed-use premises had actually taken place.

Two companies (including Dŵr Cymru) noted that the customer is always given the option of separating the supplies (thereby allowing disconnection of the commercial element) before disconnection takes place. A number of companies also noted that due to system constraints it is not always possible to identify mixed-use premises. As such, disconnection notices may be sent to such customers, and on occasion, the supply disconnected. However, if the company was to determine that the property was also used as someone's home, the supply would be immediately restored.

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<sup>1</sup> RD13/07, 'Reporting of water disconnections and other debt related matters: 2006-07'.

<sup>2</sup> RD14/04, 'Disconnection of mixed-use premises for non-payment of water charges – guidance to water companies'.

<sup>3</sup> However, a number of criteria are required to be met before disconnection takes place.

In 2006-07 only a small number<sup>4</sup> of mixed-use premises were disconnected for the non-payment of bills.

## **Domestic disconnections ([table 2](#))**

Since 1 July 1999 companies have not been allowed to disconnect domestic customers for non-payment of bills. However, companies can disconnect domestic customers for other reasons, such as if there is significant leakage.

Whilst most companies did not disconnect any domestic premises in 2006-07, 1,618 premises were disconnected during the year, 117% more than in 2005-06. Of those companies that commented the most common reasons for disconnecting domestic premises were either due to the owner requesting the disconnection or due to the premises being unoccupied.

This year we also asked companies to confirm whether they used 'void property notices'<sup>5</sup> and if so, the procedures followed to make sure that a property is empty before a notice is issued. Our view is that whilst these notices can play a useful role in companies' void management activities, they should only be used where the company has sufficient reason to believe that the property is empty. They should not be used as a debt recovery tool.

Of the companies that responded to this question, the majority confirmed that they did use these notices but explained that they were not used as part of their debt recovery procedures, but as part of their voids management process - to prompt any occupier to provide their details in terms of name and date of occupation, etc. All noted that no disconnections had subsequently occurred. All provided information on the processes used to ensure that the property was empty before issuing such notices.

The robustness of these procedures varied. Some companies make visits to the property or carry out online registry searches to ensure its void status. This complies with the good practice and expectations set out in our debt guidelines<sup>6</sup>. Others simply send a number of written notices in order to establish occupation.

## **Pre-court action notices ([table 3](#))**

The number of pre-court action notices increased by 4%, from 8.3 million in 2005-06 to 8.7 million in 2006-07. Most companies define 'pre-claim notices' or 'pre-court action notices' as written correspondence which warns the customer that they could face legal action for the non-payment of bills. These are normally issued in the latter stages of the debt recovery process, prior to a county court claim being issued. They

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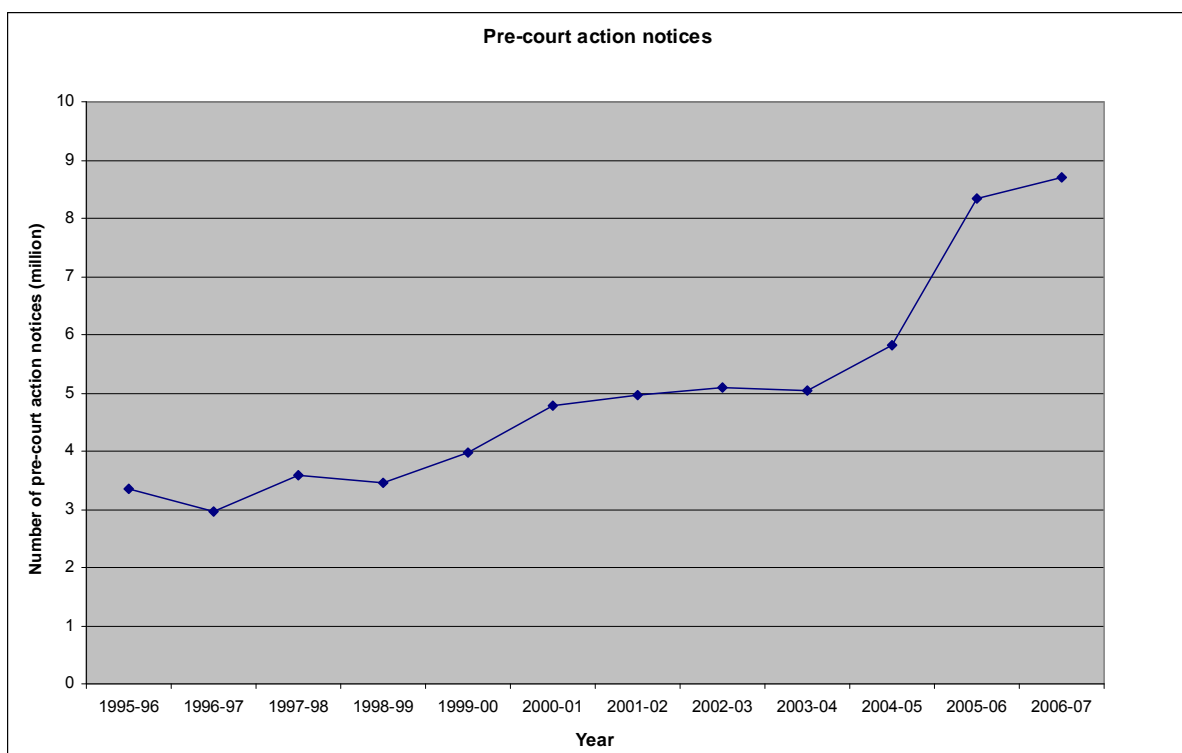
<sup>4</sup> Not all companies were able to separate out the number of mixed-use premises disconnected for non-payment of bills from the number of non-domestic premises disconnected for non-payment of bills.

<sup>5</sup> Notices which typically state that a property is believed to be empty and therefore the supply will be disconnected to reduce the risk of leakage or contamination of the water supply.

<sup>6</sup> Available on the Ofwat website [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)

do not include the issue of the first bill. Other forms of contact with the customer, such as telephone calls, are not generally classed as a pre-claims notice<sup>7</sup>.

The graph below shows how the number of pre-court action notices has increased since 1995-96.



## Claims and judgments ([table 4](#) and [table 5](#))

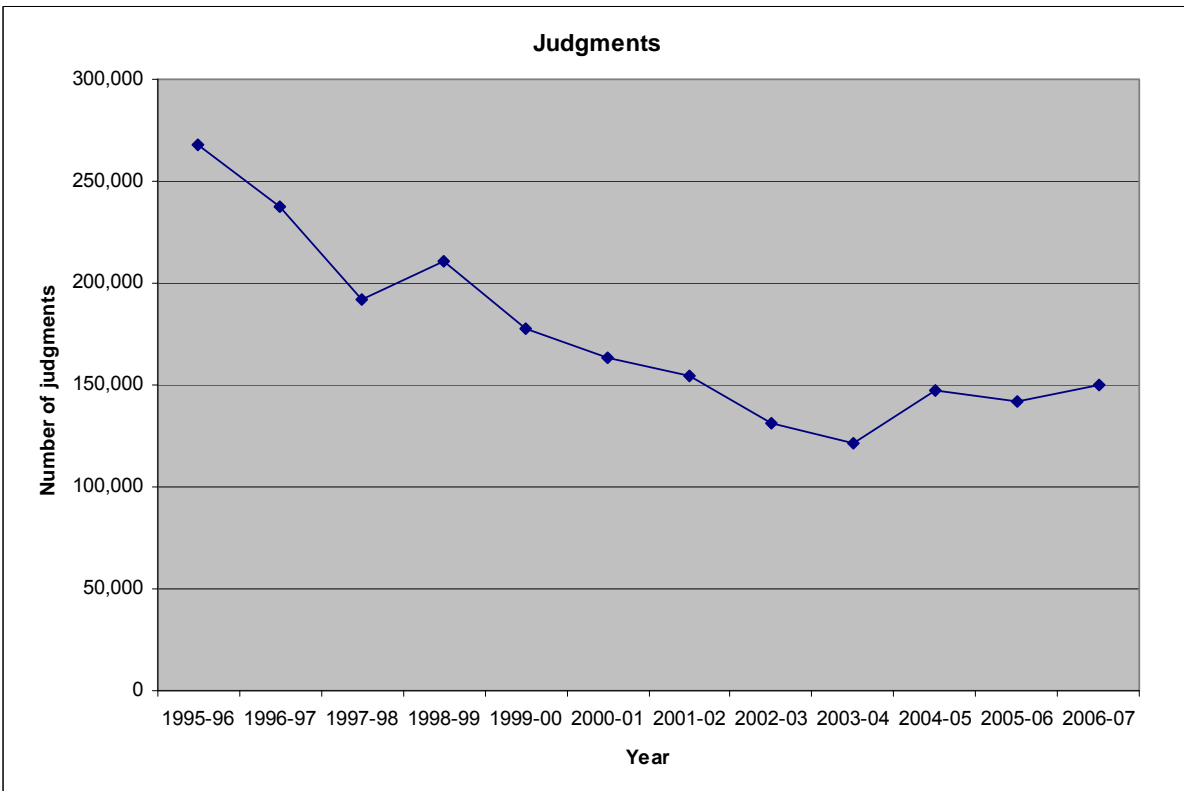
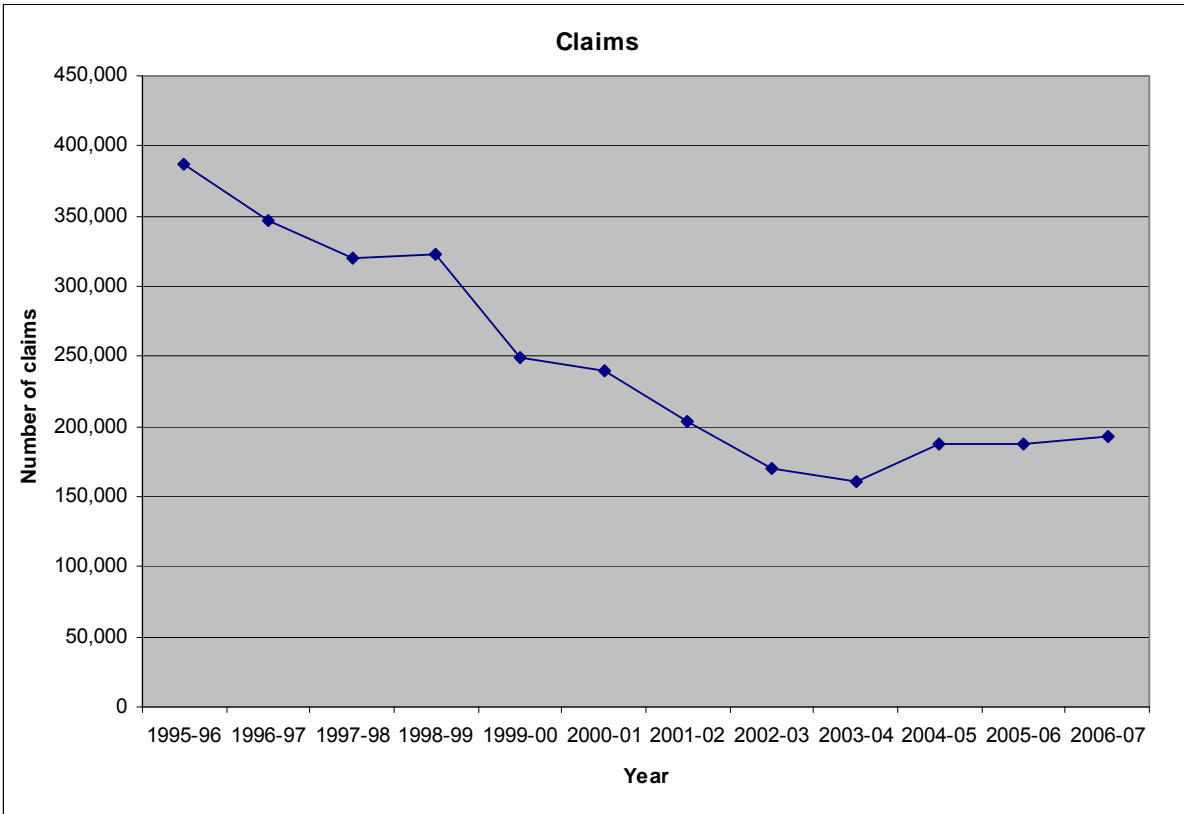
The number of county court claims and judgments made for the non-payment of domestic bills fell by 3% and 6% respectively between 2005-06 and 2006-07. In 2006-07 nearly 193,000 and 142,000 county court claims and county court judgments were made.

Most companies report the number of pre-court action notices, claims and judgments based on the actual number issued, and not the number of customers receiving them. Therefore, the numbers will include double counting where a customer receives more than one pre-court action notice, claim or judgment during the year.

The graphs below show how the number of claims and judgments have fallen since 1995-96.

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<sup>7</sup> One company explained that telemessages are included in their figures.



**Solicitors' fees ([table 6](#))**

Most companies charge a solicitor's fee when issuing a county court claim and add this to the customer's outstanding debt. The amount charged generally increases with the size of the debt, typically ranging from £50 to £100.

## **Payment methods and frequencies**

For the companies that could provide information on the number of customers paying by different frequencies and methods, the most common payment method was direct debit. This was typically used by 40-60% of customers. The use of other payment methods varied widely between companies, with cheque and cash payments being popular in a number of areas.

The most common payment frequency was monthly, with around half of customers paying this way. The next most common payment frequency was half yearly.

It should be noted that some companies were not able to provide the information in the format required or had to make a number of assumptions in order to provide the information.

## **Effectiveness of debt recovery methods**

In line with our 'Dealing with customers in debt' guidelines<sup>8</sup> companies continue to report the use of a wide variety of debt recovery methods, frequently tailored to suit the needs of individual customers.

Many companies explained that recovery paths will typically be segmented by a behavioural score which will be based on a number of factors such as previous payment history. The exact type and timing of recovery actions taken will vary according to the individual customer's circumstances.

Many companies also noted an increased use of externally sourced data, such as from credit reference agencies, which can help to make sure that customers are targeted with the most appropriate action.

Companies noted that recovery actions are more effective at the earlier stages of the process and that ensuring customers are set up on the most appropriate payment method at the outset is a key factor in recovering payment.

Whilst some debt recovery actions were felt to be cost-effective, for example outbound telephone calls, others depended on the individual company. For example, whilst some companies noted that doorstep collection was an effective method of debt collection and was being used on an increasing basis, others did not feel that it was cost effective and had chosen to withdraw it.

Most companies have become more selective in the use of court action in recent years. Where court action is not felt to be an appropriate recovery method, for example, where it is clear that the customer cannot afford to pay, companies tend to refer the customer to social agencies such as Citizens' Advice, or to a charitable trust fund or restart scheme.

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<sup>8</sup> Updated in April 2007 and available from our library or at [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)

Those companies that offer such schemes reported success rates of up to 80% in rehabilitating the customer, although one company noted that the payment rate after three years had fallen to around 22%.

Many companies are trialling new projects in the area of debt recovery, including monthly billing, 24-hour payment lines, use of text messages and the allocation of specific geographic areas to individual water inspectors.

## **Enforcement actions**

Companies' use of enforcement measures and their ratings of the effectiveness of the different enforcement methods varies across the industry.

Overall, charging orders<sup>9</sup> and attachment of earnings<sup>10</sup> continue to be rated as the most effective enforcement methods, but these depend on the customer owning a property or being in employment. Warrants of execution<sup>11</sup> were also felt to be effective by some companies.

Whilst some companies have increased their use of the court system, others do not use this route or are using it more selectively because it can be expensive, time consuming and not always effective.

## **Service and Performance Team September 2007**

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<sup>9</sup> An order of the court placing a 'charge' on the debtor's property, such as a house or piece of land. The charge means that if the property is sold, the charge has to be paid first before the proceeds of the sale can be given to the debtor.

<sup>10</sup> A method by which money will be stopped from the debtor's wages to pay a debt and as such will only help if the debtor is in paid employment.

<sup>11</sup> Where a bailiff of the court is ordered to seize property to the value of the amount owed by the debtor, to satisfy the debt.

**Table 1. Non-domestic disconnections for the non-payment of bills**

	Total:		Disconnections per 10,000 customers in 2006-07 <sup>1</sup>	% change 2005-06 - 2006-07	Total number of non-domestic disconnections:						
	2006-07	2005-06			2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99
Anglian <sup>2</sup>	23	113	2	-80%	132	143	94	84	122	59	13
Dwr Cymru	482	828	47	-93%	1,485	692	650	294	464	330	68
Northumbrian <sup>3</sup>	254	167	25	52%	393	174	131	201	216	171	158
United Utilities	1,674	1,696	91	-1%	2,573	3,099	1,686	2,461	2,238	1,783	144
Southern	68	96	11	-29%	110	124	120	142	90	145	112
Severn Trent	644	569	33	13%	489	732	990	594	304	174	184
South West	51	36	7	42%	26	3	47	27	17	66	171
Thames	2,554	6,983	124	-63%	7,339	8,990	3,652	419	338	329	449
Wessex	10	4	2	N/A	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Yorkshire	56	82	4	-32%	45	84	52	45	56	64	30
<b>Water &amp; sewerage company total:</b>	<b>5,816</b>	<b>10,574</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>-45%</b>	<b>12,592</b>	<b>14,041</b>	<b>7,422</b>	<b>4,268</b>	<b>3,845</b>	<b>3,121</b>	<b>1,331</b>
Bristol	37	24	10	54%	8	6	8	13	7	16	11
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	16	12	10	33%	14	10	32	21	17	33	40
Cambridge	3	4	3	-25%	4	2	2	0	4	6	17
Dee Valley	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	1	1	3	11	17
Essex & Suffolk <sup>3</sup>	100	73	N/A <sup>3</sup>	37%	93	81	48	61	132	81	103
Folkestone & Dover	8	5	15	60%	4	5	21	17	19	2	0
Hartlepool <sup>2</sup>	58	45	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A	87	91	58	57	114	33	7
Mid Kent	25	44	12	-43%	33	61	30	25	5	15	10
South East	136	141	31	-4%	189	194	894	725	34	0	0
Portsmouth	10	12	5	-17%	20	6	4	11	16	6	5
Sutton & East Surrey	1	1	1	N/A	0	1	0	1	0	9	0
South Staffordshire	249	140	83	78%	87	69	161	137	301	206	105
Tendring Hundred	11	17	26	-35%	26	5	17	7	2	1	0
Three Valleys	249	337	40	-26%	234	4	52	60	58	29	102
<b>Water only company total:</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>1,018</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>417</b>
<b>Industry total:</b>	<b>6,561</b>	<b>11,311</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>-42%</b>	<b>13,211</b>	<b>14,404</b>	<b>8,644</b>	<b>5,286</b>	<b>4,311</b>	<b>3,569</b>	<b>1,748</b>

1: Calculated using the number of non-households billed for water taken from table 7, 2006-07 June return.

2: Anglian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Hartlepool. The number of non-domestic disconnections made in the Hartlepool region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

3: Northumbrian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Essex & Suffolk. The number of non-domestic disconnections made in the Essex & Suffolk region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

**Table 2. Domestic disconnections**

	Number of domestic properties disconnected for reasons other than non-payment of bills (e.g. leakage, unoccupied properties): <sup>2</sup>					Number of domestic properties <u>still disconnected</u> for non-payment of bills as at: <sup>3</sup>			Total disconnected during the period:	
	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	31 March 2002	31 March 2001	31 March 2000	01 April 1999 -30 June 1999 <sup>4</sup>	1998-99
Anglian <sup>6</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	17	17	23	6	26
Dwr Cymru	114	53	1	0	N/A	5	3	10	0	165
Northumbrian <sup>1</sup>	574	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	6	9	0	0
United Utilities	0	0	0	N/A	834	0	0	5	1	82
Southern	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Severn Trent	N/A	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	25	47
South West <sup>5</sup>	229	43	71	79	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Thames	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	3	3	3	0	205
Wessex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	124
<b>Water &amp; sewerage company total:</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>649</b>
Bristol	0	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	0	11	9
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	1	0	18	12	11	1	0	2	21	111
Cambridge	0	0	1	0	8	0	4	8	6	21
Dee Valley	56	94	73	98	36	3	6	9	15	48
Essex & Suffolk <sup>1</sup>	7	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5	11	7	0
Folkestone & Dover	157	114	111	52	56	3	0	0	0	0
Hartlepool <sup>7</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	5	2	8
Mid Kent	189	196	138	196	66	1	1	1	28	79
South East	0	N/A	0	20	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Portsmouth	81	89	83	153	N/A	0	0	0	0	70
Sutton & East Surrey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	23
South Staffordshire	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	3	70
Tendring Hundred	210	125	31	51	14	0	0	0	0	0
Three Valleys	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
<b>Water only company total:</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>480</b>
<b>Industry total:</b>	<b>1,618</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>1,025</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>1,129</b>

1: Figures for Anglian and Northumbrian do not include Hartlepool and Essex & Suffolk figures respectively.

2: Changes were made to the reporting definitions in 2002-03 (RD20/03). This required companies to report the number of domestic disconnections for reasons other than non-payment of bills, e.g. leakage, health and safety, unoccupied properties, requested by customer etc. This accounts for the increase from 31 March 2002. Where companies have been unable to report this number a 'N/A' has been entered in this table.

3: Prior to 1 July 1999, companies could disconnect domestic properties for the non-payment of bills. The table shows how many domestic properties were disconnected for non-payment of bills prior to 1 July 1999 that remained disconnected as at 31 March 2000, 2001, 2002.

4: The ban on domestic disconnections for non-payment of bills began on 1 July 1999. The table shows the number of domestic disconnections for non-payment of bills for the period 1 April 1999 to 30 June 1999.

5: The number of domestic disconnections for South West Water for 2005-06 has been amended. The number (0) reported in last year's debt and disconnection statistics (RD10/06 - 2005-06) was incorrect and has been changed to 43.

6: Anglian Water were unable to provide separate data for domestic disconnections. In total 611 properties were disconnected for reasons other than the non-payment of bills in 2006-07.

7: Hartlepool Water were unable to provide data in the correct format. At the end of the period Hartlepool Water reported 2,675 properties as being unoccupied. Of these, 2,286 were domestic. Where the company is aware that a property is unoccupied, in most cases the supply will be turned off. However, this figure is a total number, and does not relate only to those disconnected during 2006-07.

**Table 3. Number of pre-court action (pre-claims) notices/letters issued for the non-payment of domestic bills**

	Pre-claims total		Pre-claims per 10,000 water customers in 2006-07 <sup>1</sup>	Total Number of Water Custs. 2006-07 (000s) <sup>7</sup>	% change 2005-06 - 2006-07	Total pre-claims notices issued in:						
	2006-07	2005-06				2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99
Anglian <sup>3</sup>	1,164,760	1,041,674	6,300	1,849	12%	909,267	866,057	657,606	619,044	585,413	474,137	74,944
Dwr Cymru	476,352	507,776	3,998	1,192	-6%	474,525	416,603	518,649	347,856	187,481	179,590	135,692
Northumbrian <sup>4</sup>	296,342	231,921	1,701	1,742	28%	208,863	225,351	165,103	169,315	122,132	122,132	68,072
United Utilities	1,254,906	1,285,476	4,544	2,762	-2%	462,944	516,712	622,810	923,148	688,127	658,989	565,193
Southern	227,335	160,609	2,423	938	42%	154,261	147,160	174,600	112,000	196,000	210,000	214,000
Severn Trent	1,706,223	2,103,019	5,598	3,048	-19%	1,500,818	753,369	779,623	902,537	1,030,539	879,285	772,628
South West	186,413	179,001	2,799	666	4%	172,555	172,784	163,595	122,474	161,613	123,425	74,311
Thames	1,764,964	1,469,635	5,489	3,216	20%	711,017	884,613	632,543	586,587	547,336	424,416	593,922
Wessex	110,563	80,003	2,243	493	38%	39,923	98,870	137,474	59,604	129,024	126,075	112,575
Yorkshire	654,789	606,042	3,429	1,909	8%	560,380	347,900	355,891	512,184	506,620	221,682	322,186
<b>Water &amp; sewerage company total<sup>2</sup>:</b>	<b>7,842,647</b>	<b>7,665,156</b>	<b>4,402</b>	<b>17,814</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5,194,553</b>	<b>4,429,419</b>	<b>4,207,894</b>	<b>4,354,749</b>	<b>4,154,285</b>	<b>3,419,731</b>	<b>2,933,523</b>
Bristol	46,090	33,601	1,028	448	37%	7,819	22,861	27,468	24,506	79,737	252,040	83,656
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	6,582	4,564	376	175	44%	4,476	3,781	8,088	5,389	6,440	3,119	5,135
Cambridge	1,732	0	N/A <sup>5</sup>	112	N/A <sup>5</sup>	N/A <sup>5</sup>	9,643	5,690	2,591	13,645	15,959	16,158
Dee Valley	42,059	45,648	3,942	107	-8%	29,190	28,820	25,532	23,055	18,492	12,993	19,539
Essex & Suffolk <sup>4</sup>	128,834	95,746	N/A	N/A	35%	89,746	85,639	97,994	93,824	66,068	47,006	97,633
Folkestone & Dover	19,219	21,543	2,885	67	-11%	17,357	14,266	22,200	25,946	4,495	2,922	4,981
Hartlepool <sup>3</sup>	6,350	7,685	N/A	N/A	-17%	6,968	6,747	6,624	7,809	7,329	6,563	12,529
Mid Kent	37,077	27,330	1,665	223	36%	32,479	27,465	28,097	12,914	16,146	14,073	12,802
South East <sup>6</sup>	84,150	102,052	1,534	549	-18%	60,972	42,570	193,432	N/A <sup>6</sup>	26,664	19,463	12,372
Portsmouth	56,815	54,982	2,088	272	3%	45,986	39,985	41,908	48,138	52,014	51,836	53,059
Sutton & East Surrey	5,192	4,488	209	248	16%	7,755	2,596	45,375	11,852	18,994	43,130	37,305
South Staffordshire	334,596	289,301	6,663	502	16%	335,063	334,321	397,816	401,769	336,557	61,076	120,068
Tendring Hundred	15,264	25,726	2,294	67	-41%	20,647	17,062	944	7,858	8,187	7,466	5,820
Three Valleys	204,145	71,352	1,740	1,173	186%	68,093	72,947	75,569	49,122	37,688	67,352	37,971
<b>Water only company total:</b>	<b>852,921</b>	<b>680,587</b>	<b>2,163</b>	<b>3,943</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>629,837</b>	<b>616,317</b>	<b>872,119</b>	<b>613,140</b>	<b>619,059</b>	<b>604,998</b>	<b>519,028</b>
<b>Industry total:</b>	<b>8,695,568</b>	<b>8,345,743</b>	<b>3,997</b>	<b>21,757</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5,824,390</b>	<b>5,045,736</b>	<b>5,080,013</b>	<b>4,967,889</b>	<b>4,773,344</b>	<b>4,024,729</b>	<b>3,452,551</b>

1: Calculated using the number of households billed for water taken from table 7, 2006-07 June return.

2: Totals for water and sewerage companies includes pre-claims issued for non-payment of sewerage only bills as well as water and sewerage bills.

3: Anglian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Hartlepool. Pre-claims notices issued in the Hartlepool region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

4: Northumbrian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Essex & Suffolk. Pre-claims notices issued in the Essex & Suffolk region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

5: Cambridge were unable to provide data for 2004-05.

6: South East were unable to provide data for 2001-02.

**Table 4. Number of county court claims made for the non-payment of domestic bills**

	Claims total		Claims per 10,000 water customers in 2006-07 <sup>1</sup>	Total Number of Water Customers, 2006-2007 (000s) <sup>5</sup>	% change 2005-06 - 2006-07	Total claims made in:						
	2006-07	2005-06				2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99
Anglian <sup>3 5</sup>	10,628	11,387	57	1,849	-6.7%	6,664	7,286	7,914	4,779	3,060	4,526	7,003
Dwr Cymru	159	128	1	1,192	24.2%	61	682	432	6	5,343	8,059	14,234
Northumbrian <sup>4</sup>	16,693	13,869	96	1,742	20.4%	11,364	16,705	15,308	16,607	19,734	22,460	15,679
United Utilities	15,497	10,663	56	2,762	45.3%	21,090	888	4	2,012	20,354	29,005	35,788
Southern	1,668	1,151	18	938	44.9%	457	338	123	68	35	50	3,599
Severn Trent	80,622	77,523	265	3,048	4.0%	81,534	58,623	77,917	98,581	96,193	90,950	92,030
South West	8,734	12,624	131	666	-30.8%	11,628	10,000	7,232	8,800	9,062	8,639	16,117
Thames	991	3,028	3	3,216	-67.3%	990	1,966	2,001	182	957	4,184	799
Wessex	6,437	5,070	131	493	27.0%	1,349	14,262	5,059	5,497	16,808	11,681	14,842
Yorkshire	29,896	29,877	157	1,909	0.1%	30,147	25,361	27,393	37,575	31,842	28,462	67,449
<b>Water &amp; sewerage company total<sup>2</sup>:</b>	<b>171,325</b>	<b>165,320</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>17,814</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>165,284</b>	<b>136,111</b>	<b>143,383</b>	<b>174,107</b>	<b>203,388</b>	<b>208,016</b>	<b>267,540</b>
Bristol	2,683	2,129	60	448	26.0%	742	6,772	4,255	2,388	2,826	2,646	6,450
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	815	631	47	175	29.2%	1,055	454	1,735	279	4,412	1,503	1,420
Cambridge	0	0	0	112	NA	42	2,264	2,000	2,220	2,663	3,716	2,997
Dee Valley	699	1,330	66	107	-47.4%	782	830	1,080	1,100	1,282	1,788	2,841
Essex & Suffolk <sup>4</sup>	4,811	4,652	N/A <sup>4</sup>	N/A	3.4%	4,446	5,234	8,658	7,125	4,952	2,967	4,546
Folkestone & Dover	0	0	0	67	N/A	0	0	11	321	613	536	1,790
Hartlepool <sup>3</sup>	954	1,880	N/A <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	0	1,722	1,751	1,005	1,668	908	7
Mid Kent	1,117	819	50	223	36.4%	970	625	1,074	1,976	1,993	1,309	4,951
South East	16	619	0	549	-97.4%	118	3,395	4,240	5	340	712	1,799
Portsmouth	3,509	4,675	129	272	-24.9%	2,548	0	746	6,058	8,144	8,921	9,815
Sutton & East Surrey	4,412	3,384	178	248	30.4%	3,267	1,816	1,460	1,977	1,908	1,970	2,160
South Staffordshire	7,849	7,370	156	502	6.5%	10,253	8,170	7,670	6,746	10,176	11,369	8,905
Tendring Hundred	53	0	8	67	N/A	0	0	83	379	765	903	1,531
Three Valleys	521	665	4	1,173	-21.7%	2,542	254	2,324	6,542	654	5,688	5,477
<b>Water only company total:</b>	<b>21,674</b>	<b>21,622</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>3,943</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>22,319</b>	<b>24,580</b>	<b>26,678</b>	<b>29,991</b>	<b>42,396</b>	<b>44,936</b>	<b>54,689</b>
<b>Industry total:</b>	<b>192,999</b>	<b>186,942</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>21,757</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>187,603</b>	<b>160,691</b>	<b>170,061</b>	<b>204,098</b>	<b>245,784</b>	<b>252,952</b>	<b>322,229</b>

1: Calculated using the number of households billed for water taken from table 7 of 2006-07 June returns.

2: Totals for water & sewerage companies include claims issued for non-payment of sewerage only bills as well as water and sewerage bills.

3: Anglian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Hartlepool. The number of claims made in the Hartlepool region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only

4: Northumbrian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Essex & Suffolk. The number of claims made in the Essex & Suffolk region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

5 Anglian's 2006-07 numbers include a small number of commercial customers

**Table 5. Number of county court judgments made for the non-payment of domestic bills**

	Judgments total		Judgments per 10,000 customers in 2006-07 <sup>1</sup>	Total Number of Water Customers, 2006-07 (000s)	% change 2005-06 - 2006-07	Total Judgments in:						
	2006-07	2005-06				2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99
Anglian <sup>3,8</sup>	8,103	9,471	44	1,849	-14%	5,147	6,139	6,160	3,918	2,756	3,369	5,470
Dwr Cymru	148	107	1	1,192	38%	56	492	408	2	1,436	4,080	8,622
Northumbrian <sup>4</sup>	13,842	10,847	79	1,742	28%	10,119	13,777	18,671	10,020	15,009	14,934	10,734
United Utilities <sup>7</sup>	12,721	8,341	46	2,762	53%	17,399	766	225	1,185	15,198	19,516	18,264
Southern	988	630	11	938	57%	229	169	99	55	27	47	2,529
Severn Trent	66,780	58,733	219	3,048	14%	64,643	37,794	51,039	71,719	55,532	65,452	56,517
South West	6,232	8,387	94	666	-26%	6,218	5,871	4,146	5,400	5,103	5,138	12,813
Thames	1,187	1,662	4	3,216	-29%	1,071	1,605	1,744	140	708	2,642	1,128
Wessex	5,759	5,275	117	493	9%	212	12,720	4,475	5,052	12,664	9,842	9,531
Yorkshire <sup>6</sup>	16,795	24,130	88	1,909	-30%	26,097	22,090	23,910	36,656	28,098	22,447	54,078
<b>Water &amp; sewerage company total<sup>2</sup>:</b>	<b>132,555</b>	<b>127,583</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>17,814</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>131,191</b>	<b>101,423</b>	<b>110,877</b>	<b>134,147</b>	<b>136,531</b>	<b>147,467</b>	<b>179,686</b>
Bristol	2,401	2,216	54	448	8%	117	6,032	3,404	2,499	2,897	2,724	6,204
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	719	510	41	175	41%	573	347	1,519	163	3,319	1,103	1,159
Cambridge	0	0	0	112	NA	42	1,768	430	1,744	2,022	3,027	2,389
Dee Valley	558	954	52	107	-42%	618	679	770	731	737	1,052	1,638
Essex & Suffolk <sup>4</sup>	4,194	3,731	N/A <sup>4</sup>	N/A	12%	3,880	4,354	6,878	5,759	3,960	1,856	1,319
Folkestone & Dover	0	0	0	67	N/A	0	0	3	228	268	390	599
Hartlepool <sup>3</sup>	343	1,529	N/A <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	0	956	1,625	1,185	1,670	686	7
Mid Kent	874	554	39	223	58%	850	518	939	1,949	1,723	1,031	3,520
South East	16	517	0	549	-97%	117	2,465	3,841	N/A <sup>5</sup>	300	668	926
Portsmouth	2,417	366	89	272	560%	1,746	0	713	3,807	6,268	6,264	5,092
Sutton & East Surrey	3,350	2,978	135	248	12%	2,096	1,116	1,166	1,269	1,849	1,548	1,248
South Staffordshire	6,253	5,640	125	502	11%	7,467	7,043	4,825	5,345	6,965	8,687	5,343
Tendring Hundred	47	0	7	67	N/A	0	0	62	325	416	543	1,459
Three Valleys	481	548	4	1,173	-12%	2,228	210	2,951	1,830	469	2,772	3,106
<b>Water only company total:</b>	<b>17,116</b>	<b>14,283</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>3,943</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15,854</b>	<b>20,178</b>	<b>20,623</b>	<b>19,890</b>	<b>27,233</b>	<b>32,351</b>	<b>30,903</b>
<b>Industry total:</b>	<b>149,671</b>	<b>141,866</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>21,757</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>147,045</b>	<b>121,601</b>	<b>131,500</b>	<b>154,037</b>	<b>163,764</b>	<b>179,818</b>	<b>210,589</b>

1: Calculated using the number of households billed for water taken from table 7 of 2006-07 June returns.

2: Totals for water and sewerage company Judgments include those issued for non-payment of sewerage only bills as well as water and sewerage bills.

3: Anglian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Hartlepool. The number of Judgments made in the Hartlepool region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

4: Northumbrian's figures for 2001-02 onwards include those of Essex & Suffolk. The number of Judgments made in the Essex & Suffolk region in these years are shown separately for illustrative purposes, but are not included in the water only company total for 2001-02 onwards.

5: South East were unable to provide data for 2001-02 Judgments.

6: The number of Judgments reported in 2005-06 for Yorkshire has been amended. The number (19,772) reported in last year's debt and disconnection statistics (RD10/06 - 2005-06) was incorrect and has been changed to 24,130.

7: United Utilities' 2006-07 numbers include a small number of commercial customers as they were unable to split the number of county court judgments between domestic and commercial customers.

8: Anglian's 2006-07 numbers include a small number of commercial customers.

**Table 6. Solicitor's fees charged when issuing a county court claim**

	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-00	1998-99
<b>Water &amp; sewerage companies:</b>									
Anglian	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50.00	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50
Dwr Cymru	£51.45	Follows CP rules <sup>1</sup>	N/A	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£10.00	£10.00
Northumbrian	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£0.00	£27.50
United Utilities	£50.00 - £100.00	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
Southern	£50.00 - £80.00	£27.5 - £62.25	£27.50 - £62.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50
Severn Trent	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	Lord chancellor's <sup>2</sup>	£50.00	Lord chancellor's <sup>2</sup>	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
South West	£50.00 - £100.00	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
Thames	At Claim - £80.00 At Judgement - £22.00	£57.00 to £116.13 <sup>3</sup>	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£31.25
Wessex	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
Yorkshire	£50 - £80	£50 - £80	£50 - £80	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
<b>Water only companies:</b>									
Bristol	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£30 - £80	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50	£27.50
Bournemouth & West Hampshire	£0	£0	N/A	£40-£80	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Cambridge	£0	£0	N/A	£23.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Dee Valley	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Essex & Suffolk	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50 - £100	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	not given - av of £58.47	£27.50
Folkestone & Dover	£0	£0	N/A	£0.00	£0.00	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50	£27.50
Hartlepool	£20 - £110	£20 - £110	£15 - £113	£23.00	£30.00	£20.00	£20.00	£15.00	£20.00
Mid Kent	£50	£50	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
South East <sup>4</sup>	Set by court	Set by court	£50.00	N/A	£0.00	N/A <sup>4</sup>	£20.00	£20.00	£20.00
Portsmouth	£0	£0	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Sutton & East Surrey	£50	£50	£50.00	£50.00	£20.00	£30.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
South Staffordshire	£20 - £110	£20 - £110	£20 - £110	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
Tendring Hundred	£80.00 - £110.00	£0	N/A	N/A	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50
Three Valleys	No charges made	£27.36 avg.	£50.26	N/A	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£27.50

1: Charged in accordance with the prevailing Civil Procedure rules.

2: Severn Trent solicitor's fees were as the Lord Chancellor's scale fee.

3: Thames Water charge an average of £116.13 per claim. Thames Water's debt collection agency charge £57.00 per claim.

4: South East were unable to provide data for 2001-02 solicitor's fees.