

The background of the entire page is a light blue textured surface. Overlaid on this is a white line-art illustration of a park. At the top, a single bird is shown in flight. Below it, a path winds through the scene. On the right side, there are large, leafy trees. On the left, there are smaller trees and a row of tulips along the path. In the center, a man and a woman are walking hand-in-hand along the path. Above them, a small flock of birds is flying. The overall style is clean and modern.

# Bristol Water

Charges Scheme:  
1 April 2019 – March 2020

BRISTOL  
**WATER**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Annual Charges Publications

### Charges Scheme

Our charges to all **domestic customers** for the supply and billing of water.

### Wholesale Charges Schedule

Our wholesale charges to **licensed retailers** supplying eligible **non-household (business) premises**; and the wholesale element of our charges to **household customers** for the supply of water, and to New Appointments and Variations (NAVs).

### Charging Arrangements for New Connections

Our charges for setting up new water supply connections applicable to **developers, retailers, households and businesses**.

### Statement of Assurance

A statement of assurance provided by the Bristol Water plc. Board that our Charges Scheme, Wholesale Charges Schedule and Charging Arrangements for New Connection Service are compliant with the Ofwat charging rules.

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

**1.1.** Bristol Water provides water to customers within the area of supply shown in Appendix 2.

**1.2.** Bristol Water customers are billed by Bristol Wessex Billing Services Ltd (BWBSL – also known as Pelican), a company jointly owned by Bristol Water and Wessex Water, which is also responsible for billing Wessex Water customers for water and sewerage services.

**1.3.** All charges will be subject to VAT where appropriate and are stated net of VAT in this document. Domestic charges are zero VAT rated.

**1.4.** Customers are required to inform BWBSL of whether they are liable to pay VAT. A VAT declaration form will be sent to all non-household customers when they first provide us with billing information,

although for those eligible for the business retail market this type of information will be provided to their retailer and not BWBSL.

**1.5.** Ofwat's PR14 Price Determination set separate controls for wholesale and retail activities. The charges presented in this schedule represent the combined wholesale and retail tariffs.

**1.6.** This Charges Scheme applies to household (domestic) customers. Non-household customers eligible for the business retail market should refer to the charges information published by their retailer. Bristol Water publishes a separate schedule of charges which sets out the wholesale charges we charge business retail market licensed retailers and a charges arrangement document for developer services charges.



## 2. UNMEASURED WATER – DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS



**2.1.** Standing Charge per annum: **£33.00**

**2.2.** Charge per pound of Rateable Value: **£1.1090**

**2.3.** Trough Charges (for Domestic use) - Field troughs unless metered, fixed standpipes and similar devices will be charged at: £315.00 per annum.

**2.4.** Caravans – Where used as a main domestic residence, caravans are charged the standing charge plus 75% of the standard RV charge. For 2019/20 the charge per pound of rateable value for caravans is: 83.17p.

**2.5.** WaterSure+ tariffs for vulnerable domestic unmeasured customers – This charge applies to customers who meet the eligibility criteria for the WaterSure+ tariff (as detailed on page 14 of this charges scheme), but are not able to be charged on a measured basis, as a meter cannot be installed at their property. The charge is set at the lower of the charge based on the rateable value, the applicable assessed charge to the number of bedrooms, or the average charge paid by domestic measured customers, which for 2019/20 is: £163.

**2.6.** Vacant Properties – Unfurnished, unmeasured vacant properties are not charged.

**2.7.** If an unfurnished unmeasured property is undergoing refurbishment or renovation, unmeasured charges are legally payable. The

customer may however switch to a measured charge, by having a water meter installed (see Switching to measured charges on page 11). Where there is evidence of low water usage during the works, we may agree to charge only 50% of the unmeasured charges due, on a pro rata basis for the period of refurbishment or renovation. The customer or the person carrying out the works must notify the Company and request this reduction in the charges. If a property is being used for storage, it will be considered occupied with full charges made against the owner of the premises.

**2.8.** If a property is unoccupied due to the customer being hospitalised or residing in care, charges will not normally apply, provided there is no water use at the property. The customer or their representative should contact BWBSL at the earliest possible opportunity to inform them of this situation.

**2.9.** Following the death of the sole occupier of a property, charges will not normally apply (from the date of death), provided there is no water use at the property. The deceased's executors should contact BWBSL at the earliest possible opportunity to inform them of these circumstances.

**2.10.** Sprinkler Charges - An unmeasured customer using a sprinkler or other automatic garden-watering device will be charged an annual fee of £50. The Company reserves the right to selectively meter customers using sprinklers or other automatic garden-watering devices, as described on page 13 of this charges scheme.

## 3. MEASURED WATER – DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS

**3.1. Standing Charge: £41.00** per annum

**3.2. Volumetric Charge** per cubic metre of water: **£1.3328**

**3.3. Assessed Charges** – Where it is not possible to fit a meter and the customer does not wish to remain on Rateable Value charging, an assessed charge will be levied. This will consist of the Standing Charge plus a charge per bedroom of:

- First Bedroom: £71.17
- Each Additional Bedroom: £47.45

**3.4. Customers in sheltered accommodation** may be eligible for a discounted level of assessed charge – see page 10 for details.

**3.5. Where an assessed charge property is occupied by one person** we will not charge for additional bedrooms. Customers must contact BWBSL to inform us of their eligibility for this discount. Proof of single-occupancy may be required.

**3.6. WaterSure+ tariffs for vulnerable domestic measured customers** – This charge applies to customers who meet the eligibility criteria for the WaterSure+ tariff (see page 14 of this charges scheme), and have a meter installed at their property. The charge is set at the lower of the charge based on actual water consumption, or the average charge paid by domestic measured customers, which for 2019/20 is: £163.

**3.7. Leakage Allowance** – The following allowances are given, subject to certain conditions as detailed in our domestic leakage code of practice booklet:

- a) First leak** – 100% of consumption above normal usage
- b) Second leak** – 50% of consumption above normal usage
- c) Where the leak occurs on internal pipework** within the property or as a result of faulty plumbing, allowances may be given on a discretionary basis.

**3.8. Additional leakage allowances** may be provided on a discretionary basis.

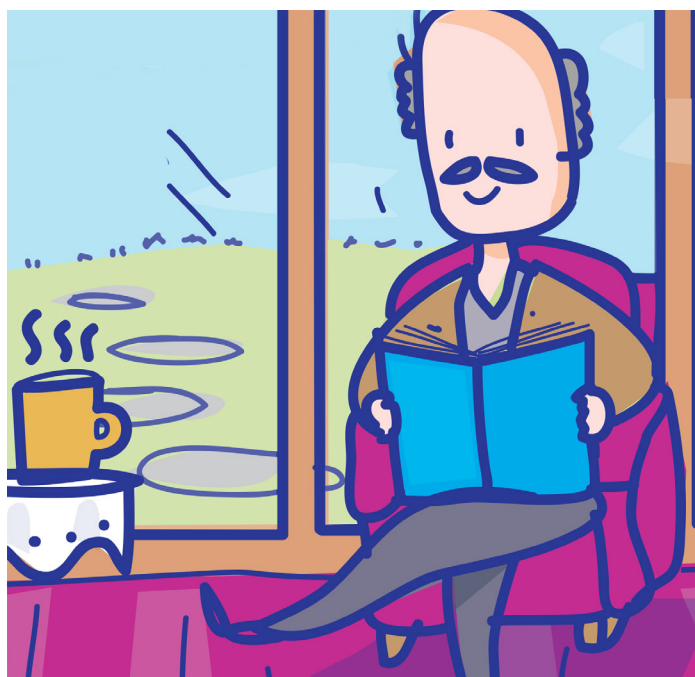
**3.9. Vacant Properties** – Measured vacant

properties are not charged a standing charge where no consumption is recorded, however meter readings will still be taken and if any consumption is recorded then normal standing and volumetric charges will apply.

**3.10. Premises that are undergoing refurbishment or being used for storage** will be considered occupied, with charges made to the owners of the premises

**3.11. If a property is unoccupied** due to the customer being hospitalised or residing in care charges will not normally apply, provided there is no water use. The customer or their representative should contact BWBSL at the earliest possible opportunity to inform them of this situation.

**3.12. Following the death of the sole occupier** of a property, charges will not normally apply (from the date of death), provided there is no water use. The deceased's executors should contact BWBSL at the earliest possible opportunity to inform them of these circumstances.



## 4. MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

**4.1.** Plumbing Inspections – we are required by law to inspect plumbing installations for compliance with statutory regulations. Initial inspection and up to two re-inspections are free of charge. If contraventions remain, all subsequent re-inspections will be charged at a fixed price of £72.

**4.2.** Where we are requested to attend a site meeting or carry out an inspection on a specific date and, upon attending, the work is not ready for inspection or the person with whom the meeting was requested fails to attend, the Company reserves the right to levy a charge for the abortive visit. Such charges will be made at a fixed price of £72.

**4.3.** The estimated cost of the work will be billed to the customer and will be payable in advance. Where necessary we will provide a pipework

specification for the customer to do pipework alterations themselves. Any adjustment between the estimate and the actual cost will either be billed or returned to the customer following the completion of the work.

**4.4.** Resizing and/or resiting of meters - Customers may request us to move a meter at any time after the first year of installation. Where a customer requests that the meter attached to their supply is downsized or resited, before approving such a course of action, we will inspect the location to assess whether this is appropriate. A non-refundable inspection charge of £70 will be made for this service.

**4.5.** If the re-siting of the meter is to meet the needs of an elderly or disabled customer this service will be provided free of charge.

**4.6.** Standpipe Hire Charges are as set out in Table 1:

Table 1 – Standpipe Hire Charges

	15 mm	64 mm
Weekly Hire charge – subject to a minimum charge of 4 weeks	£20.00	£45.00
Twelve months hire– payable in advance	£832	£1872
Deposit*	£150	£300
Registration Fee (non-refundable)		£50
Water consumption charged per cubic metre	£1.3328	£1.3328

\*Refundable subject to condition on return and may be offset against outstanding fees for hire charge and water usage

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**4.7.** All standpipe hire charges are subject to VAT except for the deposit.

**4.8.** In addition the current charge per cubic metre listed above will be charged for all water recorded used through the standpipe meter. If the User fails to provide accurate meter readings, Bristol Water shall be entitled to estimate the number of units of water used and charge accordingly.

**4.9.** Temporary Turn Off of supplies – If a customer wishes their supply to be temporarily turned off we will do so free of charge. Subsequent restoration of supply will incur a fee of £68 during standard hours (Monday-Friday excluding Bank Holidays 8am – 5pm) where no pipework modification is required, or £91 outside of standard hours. This option is only available for measured customers. We do not allow domestic troughs to be temporarily turned off, and an annual standing charge must be paid for these unless they are permanently disconnected. If a non-standard reconnection is required, involving excavation or pipework modifications, we will provide a quotation to carry out this work.

**4.10.** Permanent Disconnection of supplies – Requests for a permanent disconnection must be made in writing to: New Supplies Section, Bristol Water, Bridgwater Road, Bristol BS13 7AT. In some circumstances disconnections may incur a charge.

**4.11. LeakStop**

**a)** The Company operates a scheme to assist domestic customers to repair leaks on supply pipes which are customers' responsibility. The scheme is subject to conditions contained in the LeakStop leaflet, available on the Bristol Water website.

**b)** The company may choose to provide additional assistance at its discretion in certain circumstances.

**4.12.** Firefighting – No charge is made for the availability of the supply of water, or the water taken, for fire extinguishing or the testing of fire extinguishing apparatus

**4.13.** Infrastructure Charges – Details of infrastructure charges and their basis of calculation are contained within our New Connection Charging Arrangements publication. The charge is based on a five year average forecast expenditure on network reinforcement and the total unit charge for 2019/20 is £334.



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## 5. BILLING ARRANGEMENTS – JOINT WATER AND SEWERAGE BILLING

**5.1.** The following arrangements are in place for the billing of Bristol Water customers only.

**5.2.** Bristol Water is responsible for the supply of water within the area shown on page 20.

**5.3.** Wessex Water, an entirely separate company, is responsible for the provision of sewerage services in this area.

**5.4.** For the convenience of customers and the two companies, a joint company, BWBSL, is responsible for providing combined bills to Bristol Water and Wessex Water customers.

### **5.5. Payment Dates**

**5.5.1.** Bills for main measured and unmeasured charges are payable as follows:

**5.5.2. Unmeasured Charges –** Unmeasured charges are payable in advance on 1st April of each year. Unmeasured charges can be paid in two equal instalments on 1 April and 1 October or alternatively bills may be paid in instalments. Where any instalment is not paid by the due date the whole bill, less any payments already made, becomes due immediately.

**5.5.3. Measured Charges –** Most measured customers are sent a bill every six months. Bills are payable immediately although different payment options are available. Where bills span financial years, they are apportioned on a daily basis for the old and new charging rates.

**5.5.4. Billing Adjustments –** Whilst the Company strives to ensure that all bills for charges are correct, in the case of error it reserves the right to make retrospective adjustments. This will always happen if the adjustment is in the customer's favour. We will not make retrospective adjustments in our favour if there is clear evidence of a failure or error by the Company.

### **5.6. Payment Options**

#### **5.6.1. Direct Debit**

**a)** Unmeasured customers can elect to make a single payment of the amount due annually, to pay half-yearly, or to make ten monthly payments. Monthly payments are taken from

May each year. We offer "DD anyday", so customers can choose which day of the month Direct Debit payments are taken on.

**b)** Customers with measured accounts can elect to make a single payment of the amount due, to pay half-yearly, or to make 12 monthly payments. We offer "DD anyday", so customers can choose which day of the month Direct Debit payments are taken on.

**c)** For more information please visit [www.bristolwater.co.uk/my-bill/#ways-to-pay](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk/my-bill/#ways-to-pay)

**5.6.2. Cash –** Customers can pay by cash, free of charge, at any PayPoint outlet, the Post Office or the BWBSL office in Nailsea. You can pay by cash, cheque or Postal Order at any bank. You will not normally have to pay a fee at your own bank. Customers should not send cash through the post. Payment cannot be made directly at Bristol Water's Head Office on Bridgwater Road, Bristol or at any other Bristol Water site.

**5.6.3. By cheque (payable to BWBSL) –** Customers can pay by cheque at their own bank or by posting the cheque to BWBSL. Customers can pay free of charge by cheque at BWBSL's offices at Nailsea, and normally at their own bank. Customers will need to check with their own bank whether any charges will be made.

**5.6.4. Credit/Debit Card –** Customers can pay by Credit or Debit Card over the telephone.





The Company reserves the right to charge an additional fee of 1.5% of the value of the payment for payments made by Credit Card. You can also make card payments via our website [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk).

#### **5.6.5. Online / TV / Telephone / Remote Banking**

Online – you can pay online with your credit/debit card at [www.billpayment.co.uk](http://www.billpayment.co.uk)\*

Pay by Telephone, TV, PC or remote banking – please quote sort code 40-02-50 and account number 61229737.\*

*\*Payment should be made to Bristol Wessex Billing Services Ltd, quoting the 13-digit reference number shown in the box on the top right hand side of the bill.*

#### **5.6.6. Standing Order**

Very few of our customers choose to pay this way as it has to be reset each year when prices change. For those customers who do choose to pay by this method there are the same payment plans available as for Direct Debits.

#### **5.7. Paying by instalments**

**6.7.1.** Choices are monthly (10 for unmeasured customers), 23 fortnightly or 46 weekly payments. There is no charge provided payment is made in cash at the Post Office, PayPoint or at the office in Nailsea, and normally at your own bank.

**5.7.2.** Unmeasured instalment plans run from May to February, and payments are revised for the May payment. Measured customers have their payments reviewed annually, and can spread payments over twelve months.

**5.7.3.** If the plan is cancelled, customers are asked to make contact to make alternative payment arrangements. Otherwise a recovery process will be started which can result in court action which will lead to additional incurred costs being added to the bill. This debt recovery procedure is described in further detail in our Debt Recovery Code of Practice, available on request from BWBSL.

#### **5.8. Customers on Benefit**

**5.8.1.** Customers who receive Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers allowance, or Income Based Pensions Credit, Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit can apply for deductions from their benefit to be paid directly to BWBSL. Direct payments will only be made when customers have fallen into arrears and there is no other suitable method to deal with the debt.

**5.8.2.** The payment consists of a deduction to cover the current year's bill plus a sum to reduce the arrears.

**5.8.3.** The amount paid in Direct Payments will not exceed 25% of the customer's total weekly benefit.

**5.8.4.** If other Direct Payments are already being taken for housing costs or fuel, the limit may already be reached and it will not be possible to include deductions for water charges.

**5.8.5.** Customers who would like to pay this way should contact BWBSL.

#### **5.9. Security Deposits**

**5.9.1.** The Company reserves the right to require non domestic customers to provide a security deposit in cash or some other form of security reasonably acceptable to the Company equivalent to one billing cycle plus three months of average charges ('the Security Deposit').

**5.9.2.** For customers billed monthly this will represent four months' charges, for customers billed half-yearly this will represent nine months' charges. Average charges will normally be based upon those payable in the previous year or in the case of new customers based on a reasonable estimate of charges to be paid in the current year.

**5.8.3.** A Security Deposit may be required where we consider it reasonably appropriate having regard to charges due to the Company and the customer's credit rating, credit and/or account history or



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financial resources ('the Credit Rating '). This security deposit is a guarantee of future payment of charges, and does not represent advance payment of charges.

**5.8.4.** The requirement for a Security Deposit may be reviewed by the Company or at the request of the customer to reflect changes in the volume of services provided or adjustments to the Credit Rating. After 2 years, where a Credit Rating improves the Security Deposit may be cancelled and any money deposited repaid with interest. Where a customer's Credit Rating deteriorates the Company may require the customer to provide a Security Deposit. Interest will be paid by the Company on any cash paid to the Company as a Security Deposit at the rate applying to sums deposits as security under s42(4) of the Water Industry Act.

**5.8.5.** Customers entering into any formal insolvency procedure – Where a Customer enters into any formal insolvency procedure (to include but not limited to liquidation, administration, receivership, bankruptcy, company or individual voluntary arrangement or equivalent procedure) we will apportion any charges on a daily basis up to the date immediately before the date the relevant insolvency procedure becomes effective ('the insolvency date'). Any apportioned charges after the insolvency date will be payable by the occupier of the property in question and fall due on the next day of occupation after the insolvency date and will not fall within the insolvency procedure. The charges will be payable by the person responsible for the payment of water and sewerage charges for the property in question on the same payment terms as would apply if the property had been newly connected on that day.

## 6. METHODS OF CHARGING

### 6.1. Unmeasured Charges

**6.1.1.** Customers on unmeasured charges are charged a standing charge, and a variable charge calculated by the Rateable Value (RV) of their property. Unmeasured customers may choose to switch to Measured Charges. Please refer to section 8 of this schedule.

**6.1.2.** Notional Rateable Value - Where unmeasured properties have been structurally altered then we will use a 'notional rateable value' that is based on comparable households or similar properties of the same type. These may be used on a temporary basis or as a permanent charge depending on circumstances. This will also apply where the property has been substantially altered so that the loading units have increased by 25%. (A standard property has a loading unit of 24 through such items as taps and other water fittings, see Appendix 1). These charges are detailed in Table 2 below.

**6.1.3.** Where none of these applies, a fixed annual fee of £264 will be used.

### 6.2. Measured Charges

**6.2.1.** Customers on measured charges are charged a standing charge, and a variable charge based on their water consumption, which is measured by a water meter fitted by Bristol Water.

**6.2.2.** We attempt to read each customer's water meter twice each year, and use the customer's actual water consumption as the basis of charging. When it has not been possible to obtain a meter

reading the bill will be estimated, on the basis of the customer's normal consumption.

**6.2.3.** If a customer believes that the consumption recorded on their bill is incorrect they may contact BWBSL who will investigate. A guide to the normal consumption of a household can be found on the Bristol Water website [www.bristolwater.co.uk](http://www.bristolwater.co.uk) and in the 'Now you've turned on to water metering' leaflet provided to new measured customers.

**6.2.4.** The customer may request that the meter is tested to check its accuracy. The cost of this to the customer is £70, plus VAT. If the meter is found to have been recording inaccurately the cost of the meter testing will not be payable.

### 6.3. Assessed Charges

**6.3.1.** Where a domestic customer has requested to be charged on a measured basis, but it is not possible to install a water meter at their property, the customer may be offered an assessed charge, based on the number of bedrooms in their property.

**6.3.2.** Where customers live in sheltered accommodation with communal laundry facilities, we may discount the bedroom-related portion of the assessed charge by 15%. Please contact BWBSL for more details of this discount.

### 6.4. Properties of Multiple Occupation

**6.4.1.** Where a property has been subdivided into letting rooms with a shared water supply we have no basis to bill the individual tenants and will charge the landlord or their agent.

Table 2 – Notional Rateable Values

Property Type	No. of Bedrooms	Notional RV £
Bedsit	1	80
Flat	1	110
Maisonette	2	140
	3	170
	4*	200
Terrace	1	170
	2	200
	3	230
	4*	260
Temporary Charge	Caravan	95

Property Type	No. of Bedrooms	Notional RV £
Semi-detached	1	230
	2	260
	3	290
	4*	320
Detached	1	290
	2	320
	3	350
	4*	380

\*Add £30 Notional RV for each additional bedroom

## 7. SWITCHING TO MEASURED CHARGES

**7.1.** Domestic customers who are charged on an unmeasured basis have the option to switch to a measured charge, by having a water meter installed. The cost of the meter installation is normally free to domestic customers. You can also apply for a meter online.

**7.2.** Customers who wish to switch to a measured charge should contact BWBSL, who will send them the leaflet "Do you want a water meter?" This leaflet is also available on our website. This explains the benefits of metering and contains information from which a customer can estimate whether it might be beneficial for them to switch to a meter. If the customer wants to proceed, they complete an application form contained in the booklet and send it to BWBSL, who consider the application form to be the statutory document known as a 'Measured Charges Notice' which signifies the start of the process set out by law. The following section describes these processes as they apply for household and commercial customers. For both classes of customer, any meter fitted remains the property of Bristol Water.

### **7.3. Household properties**

**7.3.1.** We will arrange to survey the property and fit a meter within 45 working days of receipt of the completed application (60 working days for applications received in March, April, May or June). If, due to circumstances within our control, we fail to do so within this time scale, and if a meter is eventually fitted, then we will cease unmeasured charges from 45 working days (60 working days for applications received in March, April, May or June) after the date the application was received, but will not charge any measured charges until the meter is fitted. Generally meters will be fitted externally in a chamber in the footpath or garden. On some occasions they may be fitted inside the house and in these cases, a radio frequency device will be fitted on top of the meter to enable us to read the meter from outside the property.

**7.3.2.** The meter will be fitted free unless:

- It will be necessary to separate the customer's service pipe where it is shared with other customers
- It will be necessary to install additional meters\* because the customer is served by more than one supply
- There would need to be substantial alterations

to existing plumbing or the building to enable the meter to be installed

- Meter has been unlawfully removed

*\*A second meter may be fitted free of charge provided this does not incur disproportionate costs.*

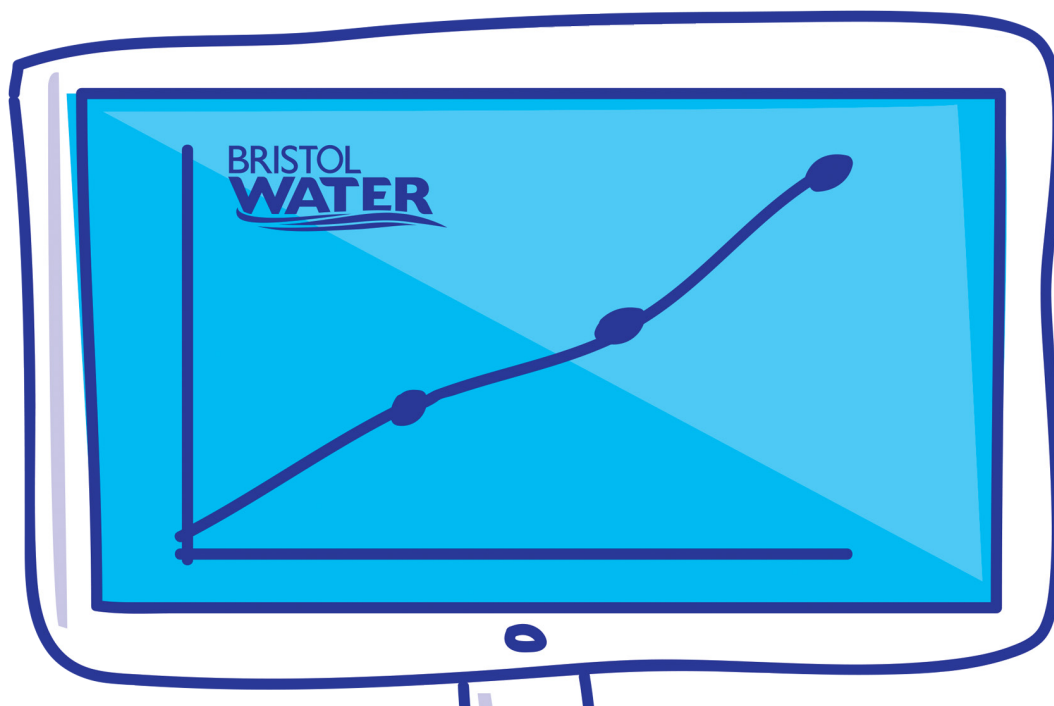
**7.3.3.** In these cases the customer will need to make the alterations themselves to enable a meter to be fitted free. We will provide a specification for the meter fitting position. The customer can also ask us to fit a meter in an alternative location. Individual quotations will be provided which will include an allowance equal to the price of providing the free meter option in our preferred position. Where the meter is re-sited in order to allow access by a disabled or infirm customer no charge will be made.

**7.3.4.** Where the customer fails to complete all the necessary works within three months of the application, the application will be cancelled and a fresh application made when the works are ready.

**7.3.5.** Where, following a survey or notification by the customer that any necessary alterations to the pipework have been completed, we can proceed to fit the meter, the meter will be fitted within 45 working days (60 working days for applications received in March, April, May or June) and the customer brought onto the new measured charging basis. If we fail to fit the meter within this timescale, we will change the customer's basis of charging to being a measured customer from the date the meter is fitted.







**7.3.6.** In the very few cases where it will not be possible to fit meters at all, or the necessary alterations could be unduly expensive, the customer will then be charged at the lower of the relevant assessed charge or their Rateable Value charge.

**7.3.7.** In cases of multi-occupancy buildings e.g. a block of flats where the flats cannot be individually metered, we will be prepared to consider a single meter which will be the responsibility of one individual or management company acceptable to Bristol Water. Responsibility for dividing up the bill rests with the occupiers. In the event of non-payment the agreement will be void and all flats will revert to Rateable Value charging, retrospectively for the period equivalent to the outstanding debt.

**7.3.8.** In cases where multiple dwellings such as blocks of flats or caravan sites are already supplied through a single meter, the right for individual units to opt for a meter is not available. If an individually metered account is required, the owner or tenant should contact the person responsible for paying the metered account.

**7.3.9.** CCWater provides a calculator on its website to help customers decide if they would save money by switching to a meter [www.ccwater.org.uk/watermetercalculator/](http://www.ccwater.org.uk/watermetercalculator/)

#### **7.4. Non-household properties**

**7.4.1.** Non-household customers wishing to

switch to a meter should contact their retailer.

#### **7.5. Reversion for meter optants: household only**

**7.5.1.** Domestic customers who have elected to change their method of charge from a Rateable Value based charge to a measured basis, have the right to request reversion back to a Rateable Value basis subject to certain conditions. Reversion is not permitted for commercial customers.

**7.5.2.** Only the person who served the original notice requesting the change to a measured basis, or anyone living in the property at the time of the notice, may request reversion.

**7.5.3.** A customer may then opt again to switch to measured charges, but a customer is only permitted to revert to unmeasured charges once during their occupancy of a property.

**7.5.4.** Over the first 24 months following the meter installation, BWBSL will read the meter at least twice and the customer will receive bills at six monthly intervals. Customers will have one month following receipt of their fourth measured bill, or within 24 months of the meter installation, whichever is the later, to tell BWBSL whether they wish to remain on the meter or change back to a Rateable Value based charge. If the customer does not request reversion, BWBSL will assume they want to continue to be charged on a measured basis. This is a process controlled by law and unless the customer has asked to revert to unmeasured charges they cannot change back to an unmeasured supply at that property.

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**7.5.5.** Customers may not revert back to unmeasured charges if one or more of the following situations apply to the property:

- The principal use of the property is no longer a home.
- There is garden watering other than by hand.
- Water is used to replenish a swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.
- Water is used to replenish a lake or pond with a capacity of over 10,000 litres.
- Water is used in a bath with capacity of over 230 litres.
- Water is used in a power or multiple jet shower.
- Water is used in a unit incorporating reverse osmosis or in conjunction with a water treatment unit which produces a waste water discharge or which requires the use of water for regeneration or cleaning.
- Where the property is in an area of water scarcity, so determined by the Secretary of State.

#### **7.6.** Disputes about meter options

**7.6.1.** If customers have any queries they should contact us. As a normal procedure, we will review costs and attempt to resolve differences directly with the customer. If the dispute cannot be resolved with us, the customer may contact Ofwat, who can be asked to investigate. Ofwat's decision on this matter will be final and binding on both parties.

#### **7.7.** Selective metering

**7.7.1.** Customers can choose to remain on existing unmeasured charges unless one of the following applies, in which case we reserve the right to meter compulsorily at our expense. We have an ongoing policy of metering some properties on change of occupier.

- a)** There is a change of occupier of the property
- b)** The principal use of the property is no longer a home
- c)** There is garden watering other than by hand
- d)** Water is used to replenish a swimming pool
- e)** Water is used to replenish a lake or pond that exceeds a combined capacity of over 10,000 litres
- f)** Water is used in a bath with a capacity of over 230 litres
- g)** Water is used in a power or multiple jet shower
- h)** Water is used in a unit incorporating reverse osmosis or in conjunction with a water treatment unit which produces a waste water discharge or which requires the use of water for regeneration or cleaning
- i)** Where the property is in an area of water scarcity, so determined by the Secretary of State
- j)** The property is defined as a non-household customer and included in the competitive retail market
- k)** Where the property is believed to be void (the property has no occupier paying unmeasured or assessed charges).

## 8. WATERSURE+ CUSTOMERS

**8.1.** Domestic measured customers may be eligible for a reduced charge in certain circumstances. This reduced charge is the average measured bill for domestic customers, where this is lower than their actual bill based on measured consumption.

**8.2.** Domestic unmeasured customers may also be eligible for the WaterSure+ tariff, if a meter cannot be fitted at their property. This charge is the lower of the charge based on the Rateable Value, the applicable assessed charge to the number of bedrooms, or the average charge paid by domestic customers

**8.3.** The current WaterSure+ charge is detailed on page 4 of this charges scheme.

**8.4.** To be eligible for this charge the conditions are that:

**8.4.1.** The customer, or any other person who lives at the property, is in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- a) Income Support
- b) Income-related JobSeekers Allowance
- c) Housing Benefit
- d) Council Tax Benefit
- e) Working Tax Credit
- f) Pension Credit
- g) Child Tax Credit (except families in receipt of the family element only)
- h) ESA (Employment and Support Allowance)
- i) Universal Credit

**8.4.2.** And that either the same person receives child benefit for three or more dependent children under the age of 19 who live in the household, or that any person residing in the property is receiving treatment for one or more of the following medical conditions and if the condition causes them to use a significant volume of water.

- a) Desquamation (flaky skin loss)
- b) Weeping skin disease (eczema, psoriasis, varicose ulceration)
- c) Incontinence
- d) Abdominal stomas or
- e) Renal failure requiring home dialysis
- f) Crohn's disease
- g) Ulcerative colitis

**8.4.3.** We will also consider requests for assistance from customers in receipt of

the specified benefits who have other medical conditions, including mental health conditions, which involve significant use of water.

**8.4.4.** The customer or other qualifying person must occupy the whole or part of the property as their only or principal home. Where the customer occupies only part of the property, this must still be the principal purpose of the property.

**8.5.** Customers who come into either of these categories should contact BWBSL for an application form. Completed forms must be returned to BWBSL including evidence to support the claim in the specified format. BWBSL will then calculate which types of billing arrangement are available so that the applicant can make their choice. Customers may register at any time of the year. If accepted, the entitlement will last for one year unless that is part way through a billing period, in which case the entitlement will cease at the end of the next billing period. Customers who want to keep their entitlement have to resubmit the registration form and evidence. BWBSL will remind customers 28 days before their entitlement is due to end. At that time, it will send them another application form and details of evidence required. If circumstances change, customers must tell us although they may stay on the tariff until the end of a billing period. Claims may be subject to checking by the Company or third parties acting as agents on our behalf.

**8.6.** Successful applicants to the WaterSure+ tariff will be charged on that tariff for the entire billing period in which their application is made.

**8.7.** We are required by legislation to also offer the standard WaterSure tariff, which is set at the level of the average household bill, £189.



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## 9. ASSIST TARIFF

**9.1.** Where a household customer or resident of a qualifying premises, as defined in section 9.4.2, is experiencing substantial difficulty in paying their bill, they may be eligible for the Bristol Water Assist Tariff.

**9.2.** Applicants must provide a full financial statement via an independent debt advice agency approved by Bristol Water, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux, Talking Money, Age UK or StepChange Debt Charity, or a recognised self-help tool or an assisted self-help tool may be used.

**9.3.** The debt advice or other agency must confirm to us that on the evidence of a completed means assessment form the applicant's household is not able to afford a level of payment that meets their current annual bill for services provided by Bristol Water to the premises.

### **9.4. Eligibility Criteria**

**9.4.1.** To qualify for the Assist Tariff the following requirements must be met:

- a)** In the case of premises that are not used solely as a person's home, the other use is not the principal use of the premises
- b)** Water supplied to the premises is not used for watering a garden (other than by hand) by means of any apparatus, or for automatically replenishing a pond or swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.

**9.4.2.** The requirements for eligible organisations are that:

- a)** The qualifying organisation is a not for profit organisation or registered charity that provides housing for persons likely to be eligible under section 9.4.1;
- b)** The premises are owned by the qualifying organisation and primarily used for the housing of eligible persons under section 9.4.1;
- c)** An appropriate level of charge will be set according to the occupancy of each property used for the housing of persons under paragraph 9.4.2.b.

**9.4.3.** We would expect to see all or some of the following in a successful application:

- i.** The household can demonstrate reasonable outgoings that are greater than income;

- ii.** There is evidence that a household is cutting back on other essentials such as food and heating to pay water (and sewerage) charges;

- iii.** Where the household is not claiming benefits, the water bill is likely to be greater than 5% of income after housing costs – unless there is evidence that essential water use is being rationed;

- iv.** The household is in arrears with one or more other "priority" creditors (e.g. mortgage and council tax).

**9.4.4.** We would be likely to reject an application if

- i.** The customer does not accept a free water meter (despite being able to afford a meter bill);

- ii.** The customer's water use is very high without good reason;

- iii.** There is evidence that the customer is favouring non-priority debtors (e.g. store cards and catalogues) over current water charges;

- iv.** The customer has significant savings;

- v.** The debt agency's assessment of the customer's ability to pay water charges is very low compared to other utilities.

### **9.5. Application Process**

**9.5.1.** Applications for the Bristol Water Assist Tariff:

**9.5.1.1.** Must be made by the qualifying person or such other occupier of the premises who may be responsible jointly or otherwise to pay the charges for services provided to the premises.

**9.5.1.2.** Must be supported by reasonable evidence of qualification for assistance.





**9.5.1.3.** Must be supported by a completed means assessment in a form prescribed by the Company relating to the entire income of those residing at the premises and would be liable to pay charges under the Water Act and such other evidence as the Company may demand.

**9.5.1.4.** May result in the Company seeking verification with the applicant's consent from a potential qualifying person's registered Jobcentre Plus of evidence to support their application

## **9.6. Decision**

**9.6.1.** Applications to the Assist Tariff will be reviewed by the Company and the Company will determine whether it is satisfied that the assessment made by the debt agency about the ability of the applicant's household to pay is accurate. If the application is successful the Company will determine which level of Assist Tariff is appropriate for the customer. The Company's decision about eligibility for the Assist Tariff will be final and will take into account all relevant circumstances about the household's financial circumstances and how they have arisen.

**9.6.2.** If an applicant is not successful then no further application for eligibility may be made by the applicant until six months has elapsed or there has been a material change of circumstance in the customer's financial circumstances.

## **9.7. Re-application process**

**9.7.1.** Customers accepted onto the Assist

Tariff must reapply annually for the tariff on the anniversary of their first successful application. The Company will require proof of eligibility to the benefits listed above, confirmation that there has been no material change in the household's financial circumstances and reserves the right to request the customer to submit a new means assessment via a debt advice agency.

**9.7.2.** If the customer does not reapply or fails to provide the necessary evidence or provides evidence to show that their financial situation has improved, the Company reserves the right to vary the Assist Tariff level of apply standard charges as appropriate.

**9.7.3.** Where an application is made or where a customer agrees to pay the Assist Tariff the Company reserves the right to apply the Assist Tariff to premises occupied by such persons already on a payment arrangement that does not cover their annual bill for services provided without the need for a formal means assessment by a debt advice agency.

**9.8** No other rebates or allowances whether set out in this schedule of charges or otherwise will apply to those customers paying the Assist Tariff.

## **9.9 Assist Tariff structure**

**9.9.1.** The Company will assess the application according to the customer's financial situation and apply the appropriate level of Assist Tariff.

**9.9.2.** The Assist Tariff consists of six levels, providing varying levels of discount against the average bill charged to domestic customers in that charging year.

**9.9.3.** For 2019/20 the Assist Tariff charges are as set out in Table 3:

Table 3 – Assist Charges

Assist Level	Tariff	Discount Against Average Bill
0	£23	88%
1	£48	75%
2	£82	57%
3	£116	39%
4	£148	22%
5	£151	20%

## 10. PENSION CREDIT SOCIAL TARIFF

**10.1** Customers who receive Pension Credit or the State Pension as the sole source of their income are eligible for our Pension Credit Social Tariff.

**10.2** This tariff provides a 20% discount on normal household tariffs, as detailed in Table 4 below.

**10.3** Applications to join this tariff should be made directly to the Company, by contacting BWBSL by email or telephone, using the contact details provided on page 18 of this document.

**10.4** Customers must provide reasonable evidence

of their qualification for this tariff to support their application.

**10.5** Customers are not eligible for the Pension Credit Social Tariff where:

**a)** in the case of premises that are not used solely as a person's home, the other use is not the principal use of the premises

**b)** Water supplied to the premises is not used for watering a garden (other than by hand) by means of any apparatus, or for automatically replenishing a pond or swimming pool with a capacity greater than 10,000 litres.

Table 4 – Pension Credit Social Tariff Charges

	Standing Charge	Variable Charge
Measured Household	£32.80	£1.0663/m <sup>3</sup>
Unmeasured Household	£26.40	£0.8872/ERV
Assessed Charge	£32.80	£56.94 - First Bedroom £37.96 - Additional Bedrooms

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## 11. CONTACT DETAILS

### **BWBSL (For Billing Enquiries):**

**Address:** 1 Clevedon Walk, Nailsea, Bristol BS48 1WA

**Tel:** 0345 600 3600 (Monday – Friday, 8am to 6pm)

**Website:** <https://www.bristolwater.co.uk/my-bill/#ways-to-pay>

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

### **Bristol Water (For Operational Enquires):**

**Address:** Bridgwater Road, Bristol, BS13 7AT

**Tel:** 0345 702 3797 (Emergency Service only between 6pm and 8am)

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

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

### **Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat)**

**Address:** Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham, B5 4UA

**Tel:** 0121 644 7500

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

**Email:** [enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Consumer Council for Water:**

This independent committee aims to protect customers' interests and investigate customer complaints free of charge.

**Address:** Consumer Council for Water, C/O 1st Floor, Victoria Square House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B2 4AJ

**Tel:** 0300 034 2222 (8.30-17.00 Mon-Fri)

**Email:** [enquires@ccwater.org.uk](mailto:enquires@ccwater.org.uk)

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

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## 12. COMPLAINTS AND COMPENSATION POLICIES

### 12.1 Complaints Procedure

Bristol Water has formal complaints procedures which customers should follow if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service. These procedures can be obtained on request from the Company, or via the following links:

### 12.2. Water Supply Enquiries and Complaints

<https://www.bristolwater.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/COPOperationalEnquiriesComplaints-2016-1.pdf>

### 12.3. Billing Enquiries and Complaints

<https://www.bristolwater.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Billing-enquiries-and-complaints-JV.pdf>

### 12.4. Compensation Policy

Bristol Water is required by statute to adhere to the Guaranteed Standards Scheme, which provides for compensation to customers in the event of service failures.

In addition, we have our own Bristol Water Bond, which increases the range and value of compensation payments available to customers.

The Bristol Water Bond can be obtained on request from the Company, or from our website :

[https://www.bristolwater.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/BW-our-promiseHPOD\\_A4\\_ARTnew5.pdf](https://www.bristolwater.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/BW-our-promiseHPOD_A4_ARTnew5.pdf)

## 13. APPENDIX 1 – LOADING UNITS FOR CALCULATING THE RELEVANT MULTIPLIER

Water Fitting/Appliance	Loading Unit
WC flushing cistern	2
Wash basin in a house (see note 2)	1.5
Wash basin elsewhere	3
Bath (tap nominal size 3/4" or 20 mm) (see note 3)	10
Bath (tap nominal size larger than 3/4" or 20 mm) (see note 3)	22
Shower	3
Sink (tap nominal size 1/2" or 15 mm)	3
Sink (tap nominal size larger than 1/2" or 15 mm)	5
Spray tap	0.5
Bidet	1.5
Domestic appliance (subject to minimum allowance of six loading units per house) (see notes 4 and 5)	3
Communal or commercial appliance (see note 4)	10
Any other water fitting or outlet including a tap but excluding a urinal or water softener	3



## Notes to table

1. Any fitting includes any plumbing, dedicated space or planning or other provision for that fitting.
2. 'House' means any building or part of a building which is or will be occupied as a private dwelling. This includes a flat, boat or caravan connected to the water supply.
3. 'Bath' includes a whirlpool or Jacuzzi.
4. 'Domestic appliance' means any water-using appliance including a dishwasher, washing machine and waste disposal unit in a house. Communal or commercial appliance means any water-using appliance including a dishwasher, washing machine and waste disposal unit other than in a house, including communal facilities.
5. A minimum of six loading units shall be included for each house for domestic appliances whether or not the dwelling has any such appliances. This does not apply where neither a washing machine nor a dishwasher can be provided and there is no plumbing, outlet, dedicated space or planning or other provision for either appliance in the house.

## 14. APPENDIX 2 – BRISTOL AREA OF SUPPLY

